

SECOND VANCOUVER SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

La Deuxieme Conference de SF de Vancouver

Die Zweite Vancouver Zukunfts literatur Tagung

第 = 回 バンクーバー 空想科学小説集會

PHILIP K. DICK

February 18, 19, 1972

HOTEL BILTMORE

SF³, the SFU Science Fiction Society
c/o Student Society
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby 2, B.C.

UBC Science Fiction Society, SFFEN
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Vancouver 8, B.C.

PHILIP KINDRED DICK

by Ray Nelson

The Philip Dick is a huge, shambling, hairy bear found only in the dismal, sometimes snowbound wilderness of the Skeebowvian Alps, a portion of the San Francisco Bay Area that fortunately remains unexplored except by the braver sort of cute little Skeebowvian teenybop girls. He has been known to sit for months in his lair, gazing with unfocused eyes through his cracked picture window, meditating on the remarkable speed with which the Skeebowvian Quackgrass reconquers back the land we futile humans attempt to civilize.

Money runs out. Food runs out. His friends run out, carrying with them all of Phil's worldly goods, including his stamp collection and plastic model World War One planes, even his tear-stained photograph of Jean Harlow, but still he remains motionless in his chair. Wives leave. Children leave. Pet animals leave. Finally there is nobody left but his little dog, Mr. Sims, who licks his unmoving hand and whimpers. The faithful dog, too, might starve, except that it is able to kill an occasional beaver on the dam in Phil's bathtub.

Nobody knows what it is that sets the process in motion, but finally the dull, stupid, opaque eyeballs begin to glitter with a faint trace of something — is it irony, or is it maniacal glee, or simple lust? — and his fingers begin to twitch, only a little at first, then more and more. Mr. Sims goes mad with joy, leaping up to lick his master's face. The Philip smiles, then slowly, slowly leans forward and takes a pinch of snuff, which he raises to his nostrils and inhales with a quick, brutal snort.

He sneezes, and the sneeze blows the thick layer of dust off the typewriter that has been sitting in front of him all this time, waiting, the only possession his friends have not had the heart to rip off. He looks down, sees the typewriter as if for the first time in his life. He begins to type, and in an instant his fingers are flying. He wasn't a concert pianist for nothing! Page after page is filled with the mad dreams that flitted through his mind during his dormant period...short stories, novels, poetry in German and Latin (his favorite languages), letters to other writers' wives. It pours out of him in a torrent that seems endless as the water that pours over Niagara Falls. But is it endless? No, finally the river runs dry; the great hairy paws of the Philip Dick draw from the typewriter one last page on which is written the fateful words, "The End."

Then his kindly agent, Old Uncle Scotty, who has been watching him all along on closed circuit TV, arrives in a helicopter and gathers up the pages that now surround Phil on all sides like a Skeebowvian snowdrift. That's what an agent is for...to take these precious pages back to the outside world and see that they are published, so that every one can share the beautiful and terrible and funny dreams of the Skeebowvian Bear. Perhaps Phil makes a lot of money. Perhaps he is translated into a lot of different languages. Perhaps he gets a literary prize, like the Hugo or something. He doesn't care. He doesn't even know about it, for he has sunk once again into hibernation, the open-eyed sleep of a bear who just happens to also be a genius.

PHILIP K. DICK: WHAT IS HE REALLY LIKE?
(A PAGE FOR SKETCHES? QUOTES? NOTES? SCHEMATICS? AUTOGRAPHS? ETC.)

PROGRAM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

BALLROOM

5:00 pm -- ? Cash Bar Party 75 cents a drink
Masquerade
Films (Note: Things to Come will be discussed on Saturday)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

BALLROOM

9:45 am Talk: "H.G. Wells' 'Time Machine': The Fourth Dimension
as Prophecy"
by Mason Harris

10:45 am Panel: Things to Come
Moderator: John Wilson
Panelists: Mason Harris, John Park,
Susan Walsh, Ed Hutchings.

12:00 - 1:45 LUNCH (Films in ballroom)

1:45 pm Talk: "Belyaev, the Russian Jules Verne"
by Murray Shoolbraid

2:45 pm Panel: Social Consequences
Panelists: Marian Vaughan, Melez Massey, David Etter,
Marilyn Wool, Jack Schofield.

4:00 pm Talk: "THE HUMAN AND THE ANDROID: A Contrast Between the
Authentic Person and Reflex Machine"
by PHILIP K. DICK

5:30 - 7:00 DINNER

7:00 pm Talk: ~~Forgotten Heroes~~ of Swords and Sorcery
by Michael Bailey

8:00 - 12:00 Cash Bar Party

Program and times subject to change.

THINGS TO COME

THINGS TO COME (England 1936) Director: William Cameron Menzies. Screenplay: H.G. Wells. Based on the writings of: H.G. Wells and specifically the book The Shape of Things to Come (1933). Photography: Georges Perinal. Special Effects: Ned Mann, (Harry Zech, uncredited). Designer: Vincent Korda. Music: Sir Arthur Bliss. Costumes: Rene Hubert, John Armstrong. Producer: Alexander Korda for London Films.

Cast

Raymond Massey	John Cabal
Raymond Massey	Oswald Cabal
Ralph Richardson	The Chief
Maurice Braddell	Doctor Harding
Edward Chapman	Pippa Passworthy
Sophie Stewart	Mrs. Cabal
Derrick de Marney	Richard Gordon
Margaretta Scott	Roxana Black
Alan Jeayes	Grandfather Cabal
Pickles Livingstone	Horrie Passworthy
Anthony Hoiles	Simon Burton
Pearl Argyle	Catherine Cabal
Patricia Hilliard	Janet Gordon
Sir Cedric Hardwicke	Theotocopulos

As the film begins, it is Christmas, and the streets of "Everytown" are jammed with shoppers hurrying home. The words "War Scare" on a newspaper poster and "Merry Christmas" carefully chalked by a pavement artist are contrasted by rhythmic cutting, toys in a shop window followed by the grimly prophetic sign "Christmas Turkeys". In his home, John Cabal is entertaining his friends Passworthy and Harding. They discuss the war scare, none of them taking it as seriously as Cabal. Cabal states "If we don't end war, war will end us."

A moment later the threats of the newspaper posters become reality. Radio announcements of a bomber force crossing the British coast are followed by a sequence showing a city square being cleared of crowds by a flood of troops. A loudspeaker directs people to go home, and they panic, jamming the subways. The final shot moves across the square, now heaped with rubble, to linger eloquently on the half-buried body of a child.

Next are an extended montage of battle scenes, showing the treadmill of war. A man leaves his family, enters the army and melts into the marching shadows, never to be seen again. Tanks roll across the hills, men and armies die. Dates like tombstones mark off the years, and though the tanks become more futuristic and the dates more remote, the war is still the same.

Much more is said about the futility of war in a brief scene of an air battle in which John Cabal shoots down an enemy fighter pilot. As Cabal comforts the dying man, a child wanders up, and rather than see her killed by the poison gas leaking from his plane, the pilot gives her his gas mask. As the fumes become thicker, Cabal hands his pistol to the doomed man and takes off.

1966 comes. A corpse is spreadeagled on barbed wire. A dissolve—and all that is left are scraps of cloth and hair. We glimpse a newspaper—cost £4 Sterling—which announces in ill-set type that a "Wandering Sickness" is afflicting Europe; people are warned to avoid stagnant water and bomb craters. As a rolling title explains the disease and its most terrifying symptom, an uncontrollable urge to walk which ends in death, a crowd of ragged blank-eyed people grope over a hill.

"Everytown" reappears, now a ruined shell. A crooked sign says "Hospital" and from below frame a hand gropes up, clutches, and drags erect a pale, sweating man. Later, a girl lurches out into the square, and people run screaming as she shambles towards them. On top of a shattered cinema a man in furs orders a guard to shoot the woman, but finally does it himself. He is The Chief, warlord of the area and a symbol of everything Wells despised—militarism, capitalism, politics. He wears bulky robes of fur and a tin helmet with black plumes fastened to it, while his wife is decorated significantly with necklaces of coins.

The Chief is waging war against the Hill Tribes who have access to shale oil plants, but he cannot fight them effectively without aircraft. His chief engineer attempts to repair the ancient biplanes, but there are no materials. As The Chief is demanding that the engineer get the planes into the air, they see a strange black aircraft approaching which coasts to earth. The plane is piloted by John Cabal, his black leather clothing and chitinous glass-fronted helmet making him almost an alien.

Cabal and The Chief are a study in opposites, The Chief refusing to believe Cabal who claims that he is a representative of a society of scientists, The Airmen, who are remaking the world. Dismissing him as "some sort of aerial bus driver", The Chief locks Cabal up, then attacks the Hill Tribes with considerable success. But while his attention is diverted his engineer escapes and returns with the Airmen. A pacifying gas crushes all resistance, but the Airmen find that The Chief has unaccountably died from its effects, a symbolic sacrifice to dedicate the new society. "Dead, and his world dead with him", Cabal says triumphantly over the corpse. "Now begins the rule of the Airmen".

A century of scientific progress is shown, and the narrative re-emerges in Everytown of 2036, an aseptic city with transparent exterior lift tubes, international tv and a variety of similar technological advances. Oswald Cabal, grandson of John Cabal, is the city's leader, though he is hard pressed by a sculptor named Theotocopulous who demands a return to the old days when life was "short and hot and merry". The two men conflict most on the use of the Space Gun, a graduated electric cannon of vast dimensions. With it, Cabal proposes to send two young people, his own daughter and the son of Passworthy IV, on an expedition around the Moon.

Pursued by a mob with Theotocopulous at its head, Cabal and his group reach the Space Gun and manage to fire it just in time. In the final scene of the film, Cabal and Passworthy stand before a huge telescope mirror and watch the ship begin its journey into space.

Cabal watches the mirror intently, then cries to Pasworthy:

"There—there they go! That faint gleam of light."

"I feel that what we've done is monstrous."

"What we've done is magnificent...It is this—or that: all the universe or nothingness. Which shall it be, Passworthy? Which shall it be?"

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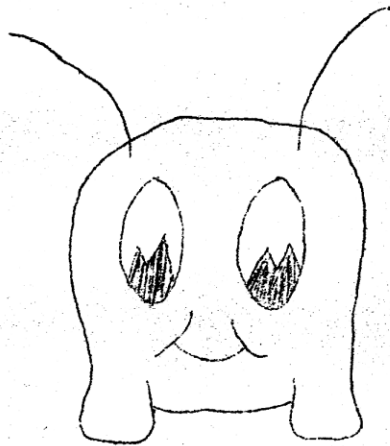
Canadian Footnote: b. 1896 in Ontario, brother of Vincent Massey, first native born Governor-General of Canada, and of the famous international Canadian firm of Massey Harris and Massey Ferguson. Mr. Raymond Massey's son, Geoffrey Massey of the architectural firm of Erickson-Massey designed Simon Fraser University.

More Notes On THINGS TO COME

In a letter to the Convention, Raymond Massey said; "Alexander Korda, who produced the picture at Denham Studios in 1934-5, gave Wells a contract unique in movie history. Besides writing the scenario, Wells was given absolute authority over every phase of production. On the whole, this unprecedented power in the hands of a man quite inexperienced in film writing, was exercised with discretion, even caution, but Wells' energy, imagination and wisdom completely justified Alex Korda's trust in him. He contributed far more to the film than a shooting script."

Sir Cedric Hardwicke was invited to replace an actor who had already filmed his part. Hardwicke had suggested that it would be more effective if Theotocopulous wore 1930 costume in the year 2055. But Wells would not hear of it. Hardwicke said "I am sure that Wells, unread today largely because he grew too earnest in old age, will come into his own again by reason of his sheer power as a visionary."

THINGS TO COME was often considered as a logical Metropolis, this film (a version cut for television) was written at the end of Wells' life reflecting his dogmatic vision of a thechnocratic future. It was intended as a discussion of the book but Wells soon found that all talk and no action made a dull film and so the directional factors helped. Wells still had a hand in every part of the production, sending notes to all departments constantly. Few technological advances were conceived nor were the views changed from those that Wells had held early in his life. But the movie was prophetic.



The following are notes
taken by Susan Walsh
during the course of VCON 2
and recorded on the blank pages
of her program book.

Many thanks to Susan Walsh for lending her copy (the ONLY copy known to exist!) to the archive for the purpose of copying and uploading to the archive web site.

The notes consist of:

Two pages of notes on the talk "BELYAEV, THE RUSSIAN JULES VERNE" given by Murray Shoolbraid,

One page of notes on the panel "SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES" [of SF?] which featured Marian Vaughn, Melez Massey, David Etter, Marilyn Wool, & Jack Schofield,

And

Four pages of notes on Philip K. Dick's signature address "THE HUMAN AND THE ANDROID, A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE AUTHENTIC PERSON AND THE MACHINE."

(Note: The four pages of notes on Dick's talk may be out of order. I tried to figure out the proper sequence as best I could.)

Belyaev - born 150 yrs pre-rev.
died 1945

1925 Prof. devil's head - 1st short story

15-16 yr career - TB of spine - long paralysis period
imagination did soar - scientific basis always as
impeccable as he could make it

Verne more prosecution wells over it not for ^{romantic} energy
- possible, probable assumptions he asks reader to

B like Verne in storytelling, but has W's social
consciousness - socialist milieu of 20s very
visible in his stories

1922 Alex. Tolstoy - Aelita - rebels on Mars

1926 - Hyper - gibes at Lenin

B - more optimistic

Best: 1933: The Leap into Nothingness -

[1938 - change in Sov. lit. (w. Stalin's rise)]

- Caps & crew afraid of Com. coup → space ships
to safety - Stuck w. Gen. Belshenkovs - Venus
(prehistoric monsters) - Caps stranded, Bols reb.
to Earth / spends time on sci. basis of spaceflote

Utilitarian view of Sf

- 1.
2. scientific fiction - no plot - Cornepack - just
- * 3 entertainment sugared, popularized science

* B's style - more papers available

(100yr history) ① Pashkov, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoyevski -- a
(Chekov) all had done fantasy
- black monk - & fantasy

② Utopian stream - from 1700s to 1830

③ Space opera - Belyaev - true Sf -
introduced many of sf's modern themes

Dr Devil's head → 1928 experiments on reviving organs
@ Rus. Ac. of Science [these not original w.B.]

Boydanov - \ Red Star 1908 - Socialist Utopia on Mars
in 1915 sequel

"Prof. Wagner's Inventions" - set of stories
separates halves of brain, body penetrable,
doesn't sleep

"Hoity Totty" - set in Berlin, mid-20s
Circus, truck elephant - "genius" human intelligence
breaks away -- is modification of Prof. Wagner
brain of Gen. Scientist named Ram - vision of
world thru senses of elephant w. human brain.

(36) Last Man of Atlantis - novel - owes much to Tolstoy's
Anna (inspirat) - Not fantastic, once basic
premise accepted - spaceship sequence, archeology,
background convincingly worked in.

"Sel" - daughter of ruler of Atlantis → name for Moon
among Americans - Prometheus an Atlantean

28 - "the Amphibious Man" - based on French
story - gills thru surgery - accepts Revolut
- influenced Capek's War w/ Neutro
Man without face

B, singlehandedly created \ sf novel
in S.U. - lay foundations

Others have come along since Stalin eg -

Stalin period hiatus on devel. of Sov. lit. pers. not yet at all

Social realism: must describe real in (3)
optimistic terms

— calls for a return to fantastic

Panel

Stand on Zanzibar - no consumer packages,
only do-it-yourself kits / ~~Chad~~ C. Mulligan
— hip crime vocabulary

Characters in sf adolescent

Book posits a world overpopulated &
antitold by media will be pop. of adolescents,
underdeveloped

SF writers show - \ gap at us until
we see "click" what's missing —

OR

SF was too influenced by own condition

SF as logical extension? —

But society of today is full of contradictions

power, motive, electronic hardware
for 1984 is here, but no one is
listen - out of carelessness,
boredom, indifference, "delinquency"
Phone Freaks
Difference - kids

Anarchist Totalitarian state seen ahead

ESB - Penfold

Snoper - scopes, etc. from Vietnam
Electronic checkpoint - County library
narcotics search even without cause

Optimistic pt: kids take electronic scanner
for granted, notice, allow for it

Street drugs unreliable - free labs ⇒
Quality control stations → test out latest batch

Other, ~~at~~ legal drugs - estab. drugs more
frighten - → pacificat → human → android
brain damage, soul damage

Schizoid personality - think, not feel true life
pacificat drugs → stable, predictable, no menace
(lithium carbon) → person re-fires self

Prim. mind \rightarrow animate environment

Af. nature \rightarrow puls- w. a purpose

mature = sane = scientific \rightarrow people = things
make friends into stones

Norbert Wiener — study machines to learn abt
humans (conflicting tropisms \leftrightarrow neurotic behavior)

So: learn abt environment by analyzing what we know
abt ourselves.

man may have to be restrained from hav- to try to
rape a sex-machine

Robot - constructs masquerade as humans

Now: Constructs are human - follow lines we follow,
try- to avoid short circuits in power supply,
avoid breakdown

Blend human & construct

intent — tropisms

Purpose — design, not desire [formal cause]

Free will may be a delusion for us
drives \leftarrow

fall - stones for all practical purposes
identical crystals to god

external world \rightarrow animate

humans \rightarrow animate, led by drives

what is it in us that is specifically human
vs. machine or insect behavior?

inauthentic human activity - men made
into mere use - restrict or free
man, on laughter, foolishness, play

Dying bird of authentic humanness
New kids - superciliousness to false idols,
hates / previous generations

authentic, genuine human desire vs. ^{unexamined} desires,
"desires"

To discover 1 world / 1 future in its
authentic form - observe a 16-yr-old
kid in his normal peregrinations

(^{our} Flit must be not only to 1 stars but into
ourselves

Robot - police car unattended, vacuum

even 1 base schemes / human beings are
preferable to 1 topisms / functions

only a human is never replaceable

(sailing ships, old cars, antiques?)

android - obedience, predictability

∴ youth unreliable (perverse, amoral, etc.)

← too much persuasion - mass media
overdone - too great eagerness to
make them learn - M.H. got everyone
down into mediocrity

Android - pigeon better at quality contr
no faulty parts → Integrity → suicidal
Dick - reject a part just for corn
[Yossarian editing]