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The Black Iron Prison of Philip K. Dick

CONTENTS

I: 2-3-74	3
II: The Valis Trilogy	8
III: First Period	23
IV: Second Period	43
V: Third Period	68
Notes	76
Appendix: A Chronology of Composition	98
Bibliography	103

I: 2-3-74

In February and March of 1974, Philip K. Dick communicated directly with God. Or aliens. Or an artificial intelligence satellite. Or his dead twin sister. Or the KGB. Or the CIA/FBI/IMF. Or his own self, contacting him either from the future or from an alternate "present" in a parallel dimension. Or, and he considered this along with every other possibility, he had simply gone insane, and his otherwise inexplicable experiences could be explained by temporal lobe epilepsy, brain damage due to his past drug use, multiple personality disorder, and/or the onset of acute schizophrenia.<sup>1</sup>

There are some slight variations in the different accounts of Philip K. Dick's "2-3-74" experience, but all the accounts begin with a pharmacy delivery girl wearing a fish necklace. On January 15, 1982, in an interview with Gwen Lee, Dick gave what is very likely the last recorded account of 2-3-74:

It just, it all started when I was on Pentothal and a girl came to the door with some medication from the pharmacy. Some pain medication. And she was wearing a Christian fish sign. And I was dazed from the Pentothal and dazed from the pain and I saw the fish sign and a strange funk came over me and I said--now, I was in terrible pain you know and I'm reaching for the bag and I said, "What is that?" and it shone when the sun struck it and it blinded me. And she put a finger against it and she said this is a sign used by the early Christians and when she said that, I remembered, I remembered. Back all the way to the time of Acts. I remembered events

that took place in the book of Acts. I remembered it all and just for a fraction of a second and then it was gone and then during the next month it began to break through. It broke through this world of the early Christians, and I saw it here and now. Saw it here and now. It was here. Some of us who are Christians and some of us who are not. And this terrible iron empire. And I found out that it is the name of the particular age that this is associated with, the age of iron. The Romans had designated it the age of iron. And I saw this--it was called The Empire--and I kept saying to Tess, I said, "Earlay, Earlay"--and it's Sanskrit, and it means "angry soldiers." I said, the Roman soldiers will kill us. Because we are Christians. The Roman soldiers would kill us. And I taught her--here, I'll show you what I taught her, come here, give me your hand. OK, when you shake hands, go like that and describe two arcs, intersecting arcs, that's the fish sign, that's the fish sign. And there were other things that I knew, so that I could identify another Christian, without anybody else knowing. And other things like that. And I remembered sitting with the Eleven, with the Twelve, it was after Jesus' death. There were only eleven of us. The Lord was gone, and he was about to return. And they were real happy, they were terribly happy. But he wasn't with us, but we remembered--we could literally remember--we could remember the Lord. We were joyful. We were just incredibly joyful. And this lasted for a year [...].<sup>2</sup>

Over a very short period of time, a vast amount of information was "fired" (his terminology) into Philip K. Dick's brain. This

information ranged from the universal--the spurious and artificial nature of reality, man's relationship to the Divine--to the personal--Dick's infant son's birth defect, which could have proven fatal had not a mysterious voice informed Dick of the defect, and told him to bring his son to the hospital. Besides saving his son's life, this voice--which Dick alternately attributed to Saint Thomas,<sup>3</sup> Bishop James A. Pike,<sup>4</sup> the Holy Spirit, Pallas Athena,<sup>5</sup> and Asklepios<sup>6</sup> --thought accurately and fluently in Greek, a language that Dick himself did not know.<sup>7</sup>

Though he attended less than a single term of college, Dick was considerably educated in the literary, philosophical, and religious classics, and this shows in his ongoing analysis of 2-3-74.<sup>8</sup> According to Dick, vast amount of his gained knowledge took the form of prenatal memory, which he used as evidence for Plato's linked concepts of anamnesis and pre- and post-life immortality.<sup>9</sup> On October 19, 1980, Dick wrote:

[T]here can only be prenatal memory if you existed before your birth. You realize this, too; this is a large part of the anamnesis; in fact, this is why I have used this term all along. Plato is right; the anamnesis is of a prenatal life. This was my realization when I saw the Christian fish sign.<sup>10</sup>

Christianity may be the thickest thread in his re-weaving of the nature of reality, but Dick touched on a wide variety of religious and philosophical thought in his "revelations" of 1974. Five days after he wrote the above passage, he expressed his opinion on the fragmentary and widespread nature of truth:

Probably the wisest view is to say: the truth--like the Self--is splintered up over thousands of miles and years; bits are found here and there, then and now, and must be re-collected; bits appear in the Greek naturalists, in Pythagoras, in Plato, Parmenides, in Heraclitus, Neo-Platonism, Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism, Taoism, Mani [...], orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Orphism, the other mystery religions. Each religion or philosophy or philosopher contains one or more bits, but the total system interweaves it into falsity [...]. This alone, in itself, is a fascinating thought: here in our spatiotemporal world we have the truth but it is splintered--exploded like the eide--over thousands of years and thousands of miles and (as I say) must be re-collected, as the Self or Soul or eidos must be. This is my task.<sup>11</sup>

Dick spent the remaining eight years of his life on this "re-collecting," recording his philosophical musings in a two-million-word (roughly eight-thousand-page) philosophical journal which he called his "Exegesis."<sup>12</sup> Consequently, he spent less time on his fiction during this final period of his career, and what fiction he did write was heavily influenced by 2-3-74.

No single theory adequately accounts for what happened and what Dick learned from his "visions." On November 17, 1980, he wrote: "I thought, then, an infinite number of explanations, in succession, that explained 2-3-74; each single one of them yielded up an infinite progression of flipflops, of thesis and antithesis, forever."<sup>13</sup> That Dick had a genuine theophany is difficult for

even the religious to believe; that the entire experience was an after-effect of his earlier use of LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs fails to account for his instantly gained (and accurate) knowledge of Greek and of his son's "undiagnosed right inguinal hernia which had popped the hydrocele and gone down into the scrotal sac."<sup>14</sup> Regardless of one's opinion as to its cause, it is clear that 2-3-74 was the most relevant event in Philip K. Dick's life. In marking the beginning of his third period of writing, and inspiring what many believe are his finest and most thought-provoking science fiction novels, 2-3-74 plays a crucial role in any serious analysis of Dick's work; when dealing with his final three novels--Valis, The Divine Invasion, and The Transmigration of Timothy Archer, simply known as the Valis trilogy--an understanding of 2-3-74 is indispensable. A comprehensive analysis of 2-3-74, especially if one considers the two-million-word Exegesis, would take volumes. My coverage of 2-3-74 is far from exhaustive, but it should serve to prepare the reader for my forthcoming look at the Valis trilogy and the theme of the Black Iron Prison, which will henceforth be the focal point of my study. After I detail Dick's use of the theme in his final three novels, I will progress through his preceding forty-one science fiction and mainstream novels in the order in which they were written, tracing the presence and the development of the Black Iron Prison in each work.<sup>15</sup> I hope to show, by the end of my study, that the roots of the Black Iron Prison were present from the beginning of Dick's career, even if the theme did not make an explicit appearance until his Valis trilogy.

## II: THE VALIS TRILOGY

Valis (w. 1978; p. 1981)

A few pages into the opening chapter of Valis,<sup>16</sup> Philip K. Dick revealed that Horselover Fat, the focal character of Valis, and Phil Dick, the novel's narrator and author, are one and the same.<sup>17</sup> He made no attempt to disguise his life in his fiction, and both frightened and delighted his fans with the publication of the largely autobiographical Valis in 1981. He had described his mystical experiences in letters to his close friends, but for most of his readers, Valis served as an introduction to 2-3-74:

Fat told me another feature of his encounter with God: all of a sudden the landscape of California, USA, 1974 ebbed out and the landscape of Rome of the first century C.E. ebbed in. He experienced a superimposition of the two for a while, like techniques familiar in movies. In photography. Why? How? God explained many things to Fat but he never explained that [...].<sup>18</sup>

Dick himself supplied the explanation, that the "landscape of California, USA, 1974" was an illusion, and that mankind was stuck in the oppressive Roman regime without realizing it. This particular description of the illusory and deceptive layering of reality Dick named the "Black Iron Prison":

[D]uring the interval in which he had experienced the two-world superimposition, he had seen not only



California, USA, of the year 1974 but also ancient Rome, he had discerned within the superimposition a Gestalt shared by both space-time continua, their common element: a Black Iron Prison. This is what the dream referred to as "the Empire." He knew it because, upon seeing the Black Iron Prison, he had recognized it. Everyone dwelt in it without realizing it. The Black Iron Prison was their world.

Who had built the prison--and why--he could not say. But he could discern one good thing: the prison lay under attack. An organization of Christians, not regular Christians such as those who attended church every Sunday and prayed, but secret early Christians wearing light gray-colored robes, had started an assault on the prison, and with success. The secret, early Christians were filled with joy.

Fat, in his madness, understood the reason for their joy. This time the early, secret, gray-robed Christians would get the prison, rather than the other way around.<sup>19</sup>

That the Black Iron Prison is an anti-Christian construct remains consistent throughout the Valis trilogy and the Exegesis.<sup>20</sup> Its builder is not named in the above passage, but is usually Satan or some other malign deity, or--in rarer instances--is mankind itself.<sup>21</sup> Another consistent aspect of the Black Iron Prison is that the prison can and will be destroyed, and that its prisoners will be set free into what Dick calls the Palm Tree Garden.<sup>22</sup> At times Philip K. Dick considered himself captive, freed from the prison by a savior (or the Savior); at other times,

particularly in creating the character Horselover Fat, he counted himself among the "gray-robed Christians" whose job it was to set the prisoners free. Midway through Valis, Horselover Fat speaks to his friend Phil about looking for the incarnate Savior on the Earth:

"The Savior? Yeah, I'll find him. If I run out of money I'll come home and work some more and go look again. He has to be somewhere. Zebra<sup>23</sup> said so. And Thomas inside my head--he knew it; he remembered Jesus just having been there a little while ago, and he knew he'd be back. They were all joyful, completely joyful, making preparations to welcome him back. The bridegroom back. It was so goddam festive, Phil; totally joyful and exciting, and everyone running around. They were running out of the Black Iron Prison and just laughing and laughing; they had fucking blown it up, Phil; the whole prison. Blew it up and got out of there... running and laughing and totally, totally happy. And I was one of them."<sup>24</sup>

In this part of Valis the Black Iron Prison acts as a quasi-historical construct (in that the "Iron" refers to the iron age) displaced in orthogonal time (in that it exists in the present, not the past): it literally represents the Roman empire which is ultimately destroyed by a group of underground Christians which includes Phil Dick himself.

Just a few pages later, Dick focuses on the metal,<sup>25</sup> rather than the historical, significance of iron, to create an entirely different image of the Black Iron Prison:

Fat conceives of the universe as a living organism into which a toxic particle has come. The toxic particle, made of heavy metal, has embedded itself in the universe-organism and is poisoning it. The universe-organism dispatches a phagocyte. The phagocyte is Christ. It surrounds the toxic metal particle--the Black Iron Prison--and begins to destroy it.<sup>26</sup>

As he did with his other ideas in Valis, Dick further develops his microbiological interpretation of the spurious world--the Black Iron Prison as toxin and Christ as phagocyte--in his Exegesis: "the BIP is an ossified complex in the macromind (brain) which must be dissolved. The Holy Spirit is like [...] a medication." Dick goes on to explain that there has been "no progress or change in the complex for 2000 years."<sup>27</sup> For Dick, lack of change, stasis of any sort, always results in the entropic decay of the reality-system; as a result, the process of entropy is tightly intertwined with the thematic of the Black Iron Prison.

In "Two Source Cosmogony," Entry 47 of the Tractate: Cryptica Scriptura (which is a condensed version of the Exegesis that Dick included within and as an appendix to Valis), Horselover Fat relates the decay of the universe to the development of the Black Iron Prison:

It was the One's purpose for our hologramatic universe to serve as a teaching instrument by which a variety of new lives advanced until ultimately they would be isomorphic with the One. However, the decaying condition of hyperuniverse II introduced malfactors which damaged our hologramatic universe. This is the origin of entropy, undeserved suffering, chaos and death, as well

as the Empire, the Black Iron Prison; in essence, the aborting of the proper health and growth of the life forms within the hologramatic universe.<sup>28</sup>

Swiss psychoanalyst Ludwig Binswanger associated this natural, and unpleasant, process of entropy with the schizophrenic world view in the course of his writings in existential psychology.<sup>29</sup> He came to call this entropically-obsessive perspective the "tomb world," a psychoanalytic invention which Dick consciously wove into his work.<sup>30</sup> Dick did this in ways that were subtle--using words such as decay, crumble, cobweb, weeds, dust, kipple, and gubble--as well as the obvious--inserting "tomb world" in the middle of a descriptive passage. Gregg Rickman was one of the first critics to note the connection between the developed concept of the Tomb World and the Black Iron Prison:

In many of Dick's novels his protagonists struggle, like Mary [from Mary and the Giant], to escape what in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep is called "the tomb world," the "gubble-gubble" world of Martian Time-Slip, the world of entropy and decay.<sup>31</sup> Late in his life he called this world the world of the "Black Iron Prison," and identified it as the world we live in.<sup>32</sup>

When the Black Iron Prison is destroyed (either toppled by the Christians or consumed by the Christ-phagocyte), it is replaced by what Dick called the Palm Tree Garden--for how better to counter a Tomb World than with a Garden World? Dick hints at the existence of the Palm Tree Garden--a literal return to Eden after the imprisonment of the artificial world--in Horselover Fat's 18th

"Tractate" Entry: " 'The Empire never ended,' but in 1974 a cypher was sent out as a signal that the Age of Iron was over; the cypher consisted of two words: KING FELIX, which refers to the Happy (or Rightful) King."<sup>33</sup> Later the character Phil Dick ponders the meaning of this cypher, which seems to indicate "the end of the age of the Black Iron Prison and the beginning of the age of the Garden of Palm Trees in the warm sun in Arabia ('Felix' also refers to the fertile portion of Arabia)."<sup>34</sup> The Palm Tree Garden receives little attention in Valis, largely because it is introduced as a theme relatively late in the novel, but Dick gives it (and the Black Iron Prison) further consideration in the "sequel" to Valis, The Divine Invasion.<sup>35</sup>

#### **The Divine Invasion (w. 1980; p. 1981)**

Dick's follow-up to Valis is not a sequel in the strictest sense. Unlike Valis, which is crazy and speculative yet still grounded in the "reality" of California in the 1970s, The Divine Invasion is set in the far future, takes place largely outside our solar system, and has a deity for a main character. None of the familiar Valis characters make an appearance in this novel, although some minor players are mentioned in conversation.<sup>36</sup> Dick was well aware of how much The Divine Invasion differed from its predecessor:

Really, then, DI simply continues the fundamental theme of VALIS--but does not seem to do so [...]. DI is not so loose a sequel to VALIS as it might seem ([...] in the shift from Gnosticism, the present, realism, to Kabala, the future, fantasy).<sup>37</sup>

One way the two novels complement each other is through their treatment of the Black Iron Prison and the Palm Tree Garden.

The novel opens by introducing the boy Emmanuel, the male aspect of the godhead who has lost his memory of his divinity, and the man Elias, who is the prophet Elijah. On the first page, Dick hints that Emmanuel will undergo anamnesis<sup>38</sup> and thus grounds the novel in his own experience, his anamnesis of 2-3-74. In the next section of the first chapter, we are introduced to Herb Asher--a man who is dead, but kept in cryonic suspension in a sort of half-life.<sup>39</sup> Dick does not use the term "Black Iron Prison" to denote Herb Asher's situation, but the basic idea--that he is trapped and does not realize it--is there from the start: "he was in the part of his cycle where he was under the impression that he was still alive."<sup>40</sup> To further stress that Herb--who represents all of mankind in this novel--has always been a prisoner, Dick imprisons Herb Asher before his cryonic suspension, by placing him and Emmanuel's mother Rybys inside small living "domes" on the hostile world of CY30 II. In his Exegesis and in Valis Dick proposed that time, in addition to space, was false, and this uncertainty about the spatiotemporal world manifests itself again in The Divine Invasion:

What is the true time? [Herb] asked himself. Me here in the ship or back in my dome before I met Rybys or after she is dead and Emmanuel is in school? And I have been in cryonic suspension, for a matter of years. It has to do or had to do or will have to do with my spleen.<sup>41</sup>

Herb Asher goes from one prison to another, unsure of the reality of time and space, and can only be freed from this perceptual

prison by Emmanuel--though Emmanuel must first remember his own identity before he can free others.

His anamnesis begins relatively early<sup>42</sup> in the novel, and the ordeal is filled with images of life and death--the former a portrayal of the Edenic Palm Tree Garden, the latter taken straight from the Bardo Thödol, or the Tibetan Book of the Dead.<sup>43</sup> Not surprisingly, Dick uses this opportunity to slip into the novel some more of his dense Exegetical musings,<sup>44</sup> though he does this with more subtlety here than in Valis. The notion of the oppressive Roman Empire also carries over into The Divine Invasion, this time as a hypocritical, xenophobic, religious police state (the Christian-Islamic Church) that worships its Enemy and attempts to kill its God.<sup>45</sup> The Black Iron Prison is not named explicitly until halfway through the novel, after the reader is familiar with the aforementioned police state, when Emmanuel's anamnesis is complete:

What a tragic realm this is, he reflected. Those down here are prisoners, and the ultimate tragedy is that they don't know it; they think they are free because they have never been free, and do not understand what it means. This is a prison, and few men have guessed. But I know, he said to himself. Because that is why I am here. To burst the walls, to tear down the metal gates, to break each chain. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox as he treadeth out the corn, he thought, remembering the Torah. You will not imprison a free creature; you will not bind it. Thus says the Lord your God. Thus I say.

They do not know whom they serve. This is the heart of their misfortune: service in error, to a wrong thing.

They are poisoned as if with metal, he thought. Metal confining them and metal in their blood; this is a metal world. Driven by cogs, a machine that grinds along, dealing out suffering and death... They are so accustomed to death, he realized, as if death, too, were natural. How long it has been since they knew the Garden. The place of resting animals and flowers. When can I find for them that place again?

There are two realities, he said to himself. The Black Iron Prison, which is called the Cave of Treasures, in which they now live, and the Palm Tree Garden with its enormous spaces, its light, where they originally dwelt. Now they are literally blind, he thought. Literally unable to see more than a short distance; far-away objects are invisible to them now. Once in a while one of them guesses that formerly they had faculties now gone; once in a while one of them discerns the truth, that they are not now what they were and not now where they were.<sup>46</sup>

This is a very important passage in The Divine Invasion for many reasons, not the least of which because it offers a new interpretation of the Black Iron Prison, called here the "Cave of Treasures."

Dick used a significant amount of Plato in his writing, from anamnesis (Valis and The Divine Invasion) to ideal forms (Ubik); the "Cave of Treasures" is just one more example.<sup>47</sup> Within Plato's cave<sup>48</sup> there are captive men, chained so that they cannot move even their heads, able to see only the shadows on the cave wall projected from the fire behind them. They have been chained there



their entire lives, and are aware of no greater vision than shadows, and no greater sound than the reverberating echoes of their unseen comrades. Several times Plato calls the cave a prison and, like Philip K. Dick would do twenty-three-hundred years later, Plato shows what happens when one of the prisoners is released from his bondage:

And at first he would most easily discern the shadows and, after that, the likenesses or reflections in water of men and other things, and later, the things themselves, and from these he would go on to contemplate the appearances in the heavens and heaven itself, more easily by night, looking at the light of the stars and the moon, than by day the sun and the sun's light.

[...]

And so, finally, I suppose, he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true nature, not by reflections in water<sup>49</sup> or phantasms of it in an alien setting, but in and by itself in its own place.<sup>50</sup>

Plato does not say who imprisoned the men in the cave, but Philip K. Dick, in The Divine Invasion, makes it clear who designed the Black Iron Prison: it is Satan, mocking God's "legitimate" creation with a spurious, artificial interpolated creation of his own. This is the medieval "Ape of God" theory.<sup>51</sup> Late in The Divine Invasion, Satan (here named Belial) is such a good deceiver that he tricks Emmanuel into releasing him from his cage. Emmanuel then ponders mankind's fate:

What will become of them now? he asked himself. The

people whom he wished to free. What kind of prison will Belial contrive for them with his endless ability to contrive prisons? Subtle ones and gross ones, prisons within prisons; prisons for the body, and, worse by far, prisons for the mind.

The Cave of Treasures under the Garden: dark and small, without air and without light, without real time and real space--walls that shrink and, caught tight, minds that shrink.<sup>52</sup>

Ultimately, Belial is defeated.<sup>53</sup> The Savior (Emmanuel) has not yet revealed himself, but he will do so, and will tear down the prison state--the Tomb World--and erect the Garden World in its place.

**The Transmigration of Timothy Archer (w. 1981; p. 1982)**

Dick considered The Transmigration of Timothy Archer to be the last part of the Valis trilogy, even though it is primarily a mainstream (non-science fiction) work which contains no references to Valis or to any of the characters from the first two novels. However, the novel is intimately connected with 2-3-74,<sup>54</sup> as Dick uses the character of Timothy Archer (based on his friend, the late Bishop James Pike) and that character's daughter-in-law, Angel Archer, in the same way that he used Horselover Fat and Phil Dick in Valis: the former jumping from one crazy or mystical theory to the next,<sup>55</sup> the latter down-to-earth and cynical. Angel Archer has an epiphany one night while reading Dante's Divine Comedy and drinking cheap bourbon, in severe pain from a recent root canal operation--the parallels between this and Dick's own

"theophany," which began when he was in severe pain from the removal impacted wisdom teeth, are no coincidence. Angel Archer reflects on her experience in language that echoes Philip K. Dick's views on pain and epiphany:

God save me from another night like that. But goddamn it, had I not lived out that night, drinking and crying and reading and hurting, I would never have been born, truly born. That was the time of my birth into the real world; and the real world, for me, is a mixture of pain and beauty, and this is the correct view of it because these are the components that make up reality. And I had them all there that night, including a packet of pain-pills to carry home with me from the dentist's, after my ordeal had ended. I arrived home, took a pill, drank some coffee, and went to bed.<sup>56</sup>

The titular transmigration, Bishop Timothy Archer's spirit entering Bill Lundborg's body after his (the Bishop's) death near the end of the novel,<sup>57</sup> parallels Dick's own possession by Thomas/Valis/Christ in 1974--both when the Bishop's spirit begins thinking in Greek and medieval Italian,<sup>58</sup> and when Bill feels as though a large amount of information has been "fired" into his brain:

"Because of Tim in me, I know a lot of things; it isn't just belief. It's like--" [Bill] gestured earnestly. "Having swallowed a computer or the whole Britannica, a whole library. The facts, the ideas, come and go and just whizz around in my head; they go too fast--that's the problem. I don't understand them; I can't remember

them; I can't write them down or explain them to other people. It's like having KPFA turned on inside your head twenty-four hours a day, without cease. In many respects, it's an affliction. But it's interesting."<sup>59</sup>

The influence of 2-3-74 on this novel is clear, whereas the Black Iron Prison and the Palm Tree Garden are considerably more difficult to detect.

The Black Iron Prison does not make an explicit appearance in The Transmigration of Timothy Archer: "iron filings" are used<sup>60</sup> with no literal or thematic connection with prisons, and the few "prisons" that are in the novel are not described as black. However, it is still useful to look at Dick's use of the prison in this novel. When Timothy Archer speaks of the possibility of an afterlife (which is one way of looking at the Palm Tree Garden), he relates life to a prison (bringing Plato once again into the equation):

"What you see is not world but a representation formed in and by your own mind. Everything that you experience you know by faith. Also, you may be dreaming. Had you thought of that? Plato relates that a wise old man, probably an Orphic, said to him, 'Now we are dead and in a kind of prison.' Plato did not consider that an absurd statement; he tells us that it is weighty and something to think about."<sup>61</sup>

Later Angel Archer discusses the prison in relation to Beethoven's only opera, Fidelio: "The prisoners in Fidelio when they're let out into the light... it is one of the most beautiful passages in

all music."<sup>62</sup> Philip K. Dick's use of musical terms and references in his work is widespread and significant enough to warrant another study, though it is interesting to see how he connects his different themes (here, the Black Iron Prison and music). In his earlier (1976) lecture "Man, Android, and Machine," after expressing his hope that the "tyranny of the Soviet bloc" would be thrown down, Dick also spoke of the Black Iron Prison in connection to Beethoven's opera:

This is what I think of when I grasp the idea of springtime: the lifting of the iron doors of the prison and the poor prisoners in Beethoven's Fidelio, let out into the sunlight. Ah, that moment in the opera when they see the sun and feel its warmth. And at last, at the end, the trumpet call of freedom sounds the permanent end of their cruel imprisonment; help, from outside, has arrived.<sup>63</sup>

Shortly after Dick's later (novel) reference to Fidelio, Angel comments on the final movement Beethoven added to his Thirteenth Quartet, an allegro in place of the original "Grosse Fuge": "I've read that it was the last thing he wrote. That little allegro would have been the first work of Beethoven's fourth period, had he lived. It's not really a third-period piece."<sup>64</sup> Philip K. Dick himself separated his writing into periods,<sup>65</sup> and I believe Angel's comment reflects on the idea that Dick was entering his own fourth "movement" with The Transmigration of Timothy Archer.<sup>66</sup> Had Dick lived, he would have likely continued to develop the theme of the Black Iron Prison in his next novel, An Owl in Daylight.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately, he died on March 2, 1982, and An Owl in

Daylight was never written.

## III: FIRST PERIOD

Having considered Dick's use of the Black Iron Prison in his Valis trilogy, I will now turn the focus of my study to his earliest-written works, in order to investigate Dick's gradual development of the theme and to further analyze its sources and its importance in Dick's work as a whole.

Once, in a cheap science fiction novel, Fat had come across a perfect description of the Black Iron Prison but set in the far future. So if you superimposed the past (ancient Rome) over the present (California in the twentieth century) and superimposed the far future world of The Android Cried Me a River over that, you got the Empire, the Black Iron Prison, as the supra- or trans-temporal constant.<sup>68</sup>

Philip K. Dick reused and reinterpreted his favorite themes in all forty-four of his novels, and the Black Iron Prison is no exception. The term "black iron prison" may not have appeared as a whole until he began writing his Exegesis shortly after 2-3-74, but the idea was present--in varying degrees and forms--in the majority of his earlier fiction. I would like to trace the gradual development of the Black Iron Prison in Dick's pre-Valis novels, discussing the works in the order of composition (see Appendix) rather than the order of publication. I will begin with Dick's earliest-written<sup>69</sup> and posthumously-published mainstream novel, Gather Yourselves Together.

**Gather Yourselves Together (w. 1949-50; p. 1994)**

The word "iron" appears ten times in Dick's novel Gather Yourselves Together, mostly in meaningless occurrences of iron beds and waffle irons.<sup>70</sup> Late in the novel Verne Tildon accuses a communist Chinese man of helping erect "[a] new Church with a new Pope, ruling the people with an iron club, dictating to them, telling them what to think and do and believe."<sup>71</sup> This is perhaps the only relevant use of "iron" in this book, as Verne's simplistic description of an authoritarian regime foreshadows the oppressive police-state of the Black Iron Prison. Of particular interest to this study is Verne's earlier statement to Harry Liu: "Some of [the cyclic historians] seem to think our time is going into a period like the Roman period. About the time of Christ. Or later. When the Empire began to retreat. When the pax was beginning to break up."<sup>72</sup> This is a figurative early version of Dick's concept of orthogonal time--that we are literally living in the first century C.E. and don't know it. However, there is a twist: here the Roman Empire is used to describe the protagonists, whereas the communist Chinese paradoxically take the place of the early Christians. Further adding to its subtle foreshadowing of Dick's later writing, Gather Yourselves Together is filled with imagery of the Tomb World<sup>73</sup> and of the Garden World.<sup>74</sup> In an afterword to the novel, Dwight Brown wrote that "in the end, Gather Yourselves Together is much more successful as a historical document than as a novel. Gather shows us just how early some of Dick's themes and tropes began to develop."<sup>75</sup> I agree with Brown's assessment.



**The Cosmic Puppets (w. 1953; p. 1956, 1957)**

Dick's first science fiction novel is considerably more straightforward than his later works, but it is filled with thematic imagery. The Black Iron Prison draws largely on the Hindu veil of Maya, and The Cosmic Puppets contains his first fictional use of this veil, the mist-like layer of illusion which prevents us from seeing the real world. In this novel, the real world is the valley town of Millgate, Virginia, which has been occluded as a result of a localized cosmic battle of Zoroastrian proportions: the "thick blanket of blue haze that [collects] around the distant peaks"<sup>76</sup> turns out to be the bodies of the battling deities Ormazd and Ahriman:

[Ahriman's] body was the mass of blue-gray haze, or what he had thought was haze. Where the mountains joined the sky, the immense torso of the man came into being.

He had his arms out over the valley. Poised above it, above the distant half. His hands were held above it in an opaque curtain, which Barton had mistaken for a layer of dust and haze.<sup>77</sup>

Shortly after Ted Barton realizes what has happened to the valley, he attempts to escape; but escape from the valley, like escape from the Black Iron Prison, proves impossible:

He would have expected something weird. Something vast and macabre, an ominous wall of some sort, mysterious and cosmic. A supraterrrestrial layer barring the road.

But he was wrong. It was a stalled lumber truck. An

ancient truck, with iron wheels and no gear shift.<sup>78</sup>

Later, William Christopher (the only other person in the town who realizes that they are trapped, and that the town is fake), explains what happened to the old Millgate:

"It wasn't destroyed. It was buried. It's under the surface. There's a layer over it. A dark fog. Illusion. They came and laid this black cloud over everything. But the real town's underneath. And it can be brought back."<sup>79</sup>

The first altered object that Christopher and Barton "bring back" to its original state is a tire iron, which had been transformed, through Ahriman's meddling, into a ball of string.<sup>80</sup> When the tire iron is restored it acts as a symbol of Christopher and Barton's new power: earlier the Black Iron Prison (the three words are not stated explicitly but the seed of the idea is there) had them in its grip; now Barton has it (represented by the tire iron) in his grip. Carrying the tire iron with them, Barton and Christopher then act as the town's savior, Barton in particular as the Valis figure that enters the occluded area from outside and helps bring back the hidden, real world. It is no coincidence that the first part of the town that is restored after the tire iron is the city park--the Garden World which always appears when the veil of Maya is lifted and--in Dick's later novels--when the Black Iron Prison is destroyed.<sup>81</sup>

There are other Black Iron Prison-related "echoes" of Dick's later work in The Cosmic Puppets. Near the end of the novel Doctor Meade quotes 1 Corinthians 13:12: "We see as through a glass,

darkly."<sup>82</sup> Dick used this passage frequently in his later novels in relation to the Black Iron Prison but by that time it was hardly a "new" theme. There is also an early echo of Emmanuel's anamnesis in The Divine Invasion, when Barton reminds Meade, who has temporarily forgotten his identity, that he is the deity Ormazd.<sup>83</sup> He also prepares the way for A Maze of Death when he suggests that some of the people in the artificial town of Millgate do not want the real Millgate restored, because they "prefer the illusion."<sup>84</sup> Much of the symbolic imagery in this novel is obvious, but even in this early work Dick's subtle wordplay becomes apparent: more often than he describes the valley being shrouded in haze, he uses phrases such as "his eyes filmed over"<sup>85</sup> to inform the reader that a certain amount of visual deception is in effect. While some of Dick's themes may have appeared in Gather Yourselves Together, it is in The Cosmic Puppets, Dick's earliest science fiction novel, that we first see the veil of Maya--a foundational element of the Black Iron Prison--taken literally.

#### **Solar Lottery (w. 1953-54; p. 1955)**

While Dick's first published novel, The Solar Lottery, is an interesting read, it is irrelevant to the study of the Black Iron Prison. The "BIP" appears neither explicitly nor implicitly, and the three instances of the word "iron" serve no thematic purpose, even in retrospect.<sup>86</sup>

#### **The World Jones Made (w. 1954; p. 1956)**

Much as The Cosmic Puppets is Dick's first serious

application of the veil of Maya, The World Jones Made is Dick's first attempt to incorporate in a novel the police-state aspect of the Black Iron Prison. In this novel, the police state takes the form of the government-sanctioned philosophy of Relativism, where all viewpoints are equally valid, and promoting one's opinion--whether religious, philosophical, or a simple matter of taste--is a punishable offense: the women go to labor camps, and the men go to prison.<sup>87</sup> When Floyd Jones, a precog, begins accurately predicting future events, he is promptly arrested for the crime of starting a religious movement. In his "antiseptic police cell," he reflects on how his precognitive abilities allow him to experience everything twice: as a result, the present is really the past, "stale events, dry and dusty, sagging under the smothering blanket of dull age."<sup>88</sup> The combination of the literal prison cell--a microcosmic representation of the Relativistic government--with clear Tomb World imagery is an indication of this novel's relevance to the development of the Black Iron Prison. In addition to the police state and the literal prisons in this novel, the talent of seeing into the future acts as its own imprisoning device, a fatalistic curse rather than an empowering blessing: "Nobody has a choice," Jones reflects. "Not me or you--nobody. We're all chained up like cattle. Like slaves."<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, Jones is released from his bondage the only way possible for a precognitive--through death. As for the fate of the rest of humanity, the solution is to leave the prison of the Earth entirely--through the genetic engineering of humans who can survive on, and colonize, Venus. These new humans begin trapped in their own literal prison, a large, artificial womb-like Refuge which simulates, in a laboratory on Earth, Venusian conditions.<sup>90</sup> Because of their modified physiology, they can only survive

outside of their "black moist sack"<sup>91</sup> for so long; when they are let out at the beginning of the novel, the seven "Venusians" need to be rescued and brought back to the Refuge in the "Van," which one scientist describes as their "iron lung."<sup>92</sup> When they are removed from their Earthly prison and transported to Venus, they are suddenly free to roam the entire surface of their new home planet. What is most important to this study is their decision to set up a new, agrarian society in their colonization of Venus: after their release from the Tomb World they choose to create a Garden World.<sup>93</sup> When I add to this basic framework a consideration of the novel's Judeo-Christian subtext, primarily its neo-Edenic conclusion,<sup>94</sup> I can only conclude that the Black Iron Prison was born in the mid-fifties, even if Dick waited twenty years to give it a name.

**Mary and the Giant (w. 1953-55; p. 1987)**

As in Dick's other mainstream novels, the presence of the Black Iron Prison in Mary and the Giant is subtle at best. Like Gather Yourselves Together, this novel is filled with imagery of the Tomb World and of the Garden World; although here Dick renders the movement from the entropic prison to the chthonic garden in a more refined manner. When Mary quits her job at California Readymade--the first step she takes in her spiral of isolation which gives the novel its shape--she leaves the office on foot and eventually "[stops] to lean against the corrugated iron side of a fertilizer plant."<sup>95</sup> She then hitchhikes to Tweany's house in the "colored section" of town:

The house, the great three-story house of gray fluting

and balconies and spires, juttred from its yard of weeds, broken bottles, rusting tin cans. There was no sign of life; the shades on the third floor were down and inert.<sup>96</sup>

Within a span of a few pages, Dick supplies the reader with "black" (the "Negro" Tweany with whom Mary has a brief affair) and "iron" (the fertilizer plant), along with a description of the Tomb World. The "prison" is missing, but appears implicitly when Mary further descends into isolation, moving from her parents' house to sharing an apartment to, later in the novel, renting a slummy apartment in the colored neighborhood by herself (again, note the use of "iron" in the Tomb-Worldly description):

With growing horror she surveyed her room; it was clean, dark, and smelled of mold. There was one small window over the iron, high-posted bed and one larger window on the far wall over the dresser. The carpet was frayed. A mended rocking chair occupied one corner. There was a tiny closet, a sort of upright drawer constructed of plywood by some amateur handyman long since gone.<sup>97</sup>

The early version of the Black Iron Prison that exists in Mary and the Giant is not literal, political, or spatiotemporal, but rather private and psychological, a prison of the mind. Her psychological retreat into her idios kosmos (private world)<sup>98</sup> is especially apparent when Mary eats at the La Poblana restaurant with her then-lover and employer Joseph Schilling.<sup>99</sup> Schilling later reflects on Mary's isolation:

She could not believe even those who were on her side. For her, nobody was on her side. Gradually she had been cut off and isolated; she had been maneuvered into a corner, and she sat there now, her hands in her lap. She had no other choice. There was no other place for her to go.<sup>100</sup>

Ultimately, Mary is saved from the prison of her idios kosmos by Paul Nitz, as the novel's final chapter leaps ahead to show Mary in the Garden World (a city park), pregnant with Paul's child.<sup>101</sup> Within a single page, Dick uses the word "Mary," "baby," and "church." The Christian parallels also extend to the unborn child's father, since Paul was not only the "founder" of the Christian Church, but also the writer of 1 Corinthians 13, one of the primary Christian influences on Dick's Black Iron Prison.

### **Eye in the Sky (w. 1955; p. 1957)**

Eye in the Sky further develops the idios kosmos in a science fiction setting, and introduces the theme of the iron curtain to the development of the Black Iron Prison. The premise is relatively simple: eight visitors to the Bevatron particle accelerator are caught in an accident and "zapped" by a high-energy beam. For the remainder of the novel, they experience a koinos kosmos (shared world) based on the private world views--experienced one at a time--of several of the main characters. At the same time that they are perceptually imprisoned in each other's minds, their bodies are literally imprisoned in the metal<sup>102</sup> ruins of the Bevatron platform.<sup>103</sup> This imprisonment works on many different levels; not only are the Bevatron accident victims

trapped inside each other's minds on a literal, psychological level, but they are often subjected to an idios kosmos that is a frightening ideological prison in itself. The first "world creator" is Silvester, who dreams up a Panoptic<sup>104</sup> nightmare: a giant eye in the sky, the Eye of God, always watching, a "presence that was always nearby. Always listening."<sup>105</sup> Later in the novel, when the beam's effect on their minds begins to wear off, they can see the rubble of the particle accelerator behind the world that they perceive: "The dim outlines of the real world wavered and ebbed, visible behind this distorted fantasy. As if even the creator of the scene around them had developed certain fundamental doubts."<sup>106</sup> As is necessary in a traditional model of the Black Iron Prison, the prisoners are in the end freed from outside forces, the accelerator workers and paramedics who exist just beyond the veil, tearing through the metal rubble to set their people free. (Dick later calls these individuals the "Palm Tree Garden task force."<sup>107</sup> ) While those involved in the particle accelerator accident do not leave the experience with a divine revelation vide 2-3-74, they do gain an appreciation for how others perceive the world:

"I've seen a lot of aspects of reality I didn't realize existed. I've come out of this with an altered perspective. Maybe it takes a thing like this to break down the walls of the groove. If so, it makes the whole experience worth it."<sup>108</sup>

Dick extends his analysis of the personal prejudice and bigotry inherent in the koinos kosmos to the larger, related realm of anti-communist conspiracy and the fear of "Iron Curtain



Countries."<sup>109</sup> One of the main characters, Jack Hamilton, loses his job because his employers suspect his wife may be involved with the "enemy":

"Ninety-nine percent of your wife may be average red-blooded American--she may cook well, drive carefully, pay her income tax, give money to charity, bake cakes for church raffles. But the remaining one percent may be tied into the Communist Party. And that's it."<sup>110</sup>

In his later novel Radio Free Albemuth, Dick revisits this theme of politico-ideological paranoia and connects it with 2-3-74; with that in mind, one can see that the fear-governed irrationality of the late-fifties Eye in the Sky government is a precursor to the oppressive police-state which acts as the political manifestation of the Black Iron Prison.

Dick writes extensively in his Exegesis of his "meta-novel," a group of works (the exact number varies from time to time) which can be read as a thematic whole which illustrates the nature of our occlusion through the Black Iron Prison. His early conception of his meta-novel included the following novels: Eye in the Sky, Time Out of Joint, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, Ubik, A Maze of Death, Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said, and A Scanner Darkly.<sup>111</sup> He later added to this list his novels Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, Man in the High Castle, Martian Time Slip, Galactic Pot-Healer, The Penultimate Truth, and Now Wait For Last Year; he also added his stories "Impostor," "Faith of Our Fathers," "We Can Remember it for You Wholesale," "Electric Ant," and "Retreat Syndrome."<sup>112</sup> In all the variations of this meta-novel, Eye in the Sky is present. In 1978 he wrote the following

in his Exegesis:

Yes, we are asleep like they are in EYE & we must wake up & see past (through) the dream--the spurious world with its own time--to the rescue outside--outside now, not later. Perception of the PTG task force is not perception of a future event, but, as in EYE, of what is really there now.<sup>113</sup>

**The Man Who Japed (w. 1955; p. 1956)**

In this rather lighthearted novel, Philip K. Dick creates an obsessively moral and serious society. Morec (an abbreviation of Moral Reclamation) is a satirically exaggerated version of his usual police state--complete with regular community morality meetings,<sup>114</sup> prominent statues of revered moral figures, banned "pornographic" books,<sup>115</sup> and the obligatory slave labor camps.<sup>116</sup> Without knowing why, Allen Purcell, the hero, "japes" the aforementioned prominent statue of Major Jules Streiter by removing its head and painting the statue red as if it were bleeding from its stump.<sup>117</sup> He later confesses his act to a psychiatrist (who is labeled a "heretic" and must work outside the law in this society of projected perfection), and reflects on how the psychiatrist, too, is a product of Morec, and how different the world must have been before Moral Reclamation:

The Dutch Reformed Church [was] alive even in this troubled heretic... the power of that iron<sup>118</sup> revolution that had crumbled the Age of Waste, put an end to "sin and corruption," and with it, leisure and peace of

mind--the ability simply to sit down and take things easy. How must it have been? he wondered. In the days when idleness was permitted. The golden age, in a sense: but a curious mixture, too, an odd fusion of the liberty of the Renaissance plus the strictures of the Reformation. Both had been there; the two elements struggling in each individual. And, at last, final victory for the Dutch hellfire-preachers...<sup>119</sup>

Late in the novel, Gretchen condemns the Panoptic prison that is Moral Reclamation:

"[In this society] everything becomes--tainted. The fear of contamination; fear of committing an indecent act. Sex is morbid; people hounded for natural acts. This whole structure is like a giant torture chamber, with everybody staring at one another, trying to find fault, trying to break one another down."<sup>120</sup>

John Purcell has the opportunity to escape the Tomb World<sup>121</sup> of Morec in the novel, to live his life in the "Other World" Mental Health resort on the fourth planet of the Vega system, but he realizes that however pleasant this world may be, it is artificial.<sup>122</sup> There he discovers that real, authentic discontent is preferable to artificial happiness, and he leaves as soon as he can to return to Earth. Once there he devises and carries out a plan to help others break free from their morally restrictive lives: by televising the ultimate "jape," a joke which both mocks and discredits a significant hero in the history of Moral Reclamation.<sup>123</sup> In The Man Who Japed, humor is the explosive that

weakens the foundations of the Black Iron Prison.

**The Broken Bubble (w. 1956; p. 1988)**

Unfortunately, The Broken Bubble contains few elements of the Black Iron Prison. In the sixteenth chapter, within a short story written by one of the characters, there is a prison, a few references to Rome, and some vague Tomb World/Garden World imagery,<sup>124</sup> but these are only significant in that they show how often Dick revisits the same themes; they do not work together to create an early Black Iron Prison. The word "iron" is used elsewhere in the book but it is devoid of thematic meaning.<sup>125</sup>

**Puttering About in a Small Land (w. 1957; p. 1985)**

Like Solar Lottery and The Broken Bubble, the mainstream novel Puttering About in a Small Land lacks significant Tomb/Garden World imagery, and does not use the word "iron" in a way that is relevant to this study.<sup>126</sup>

**Time Out of Joint (w. 1958; p. 1959)**

Early in Time Out of Joint Ragle Gumm lounges in a park, surrounded by the warmth of the Garden World. He looks in the distance and sees some ruins: the Tomb World. Inside the ruins, in its cellars, caves, and vaults, kids are playing, unaware of the danger, unaware that they might "suffocate or die of tetanus from being scratched on a rusty wire."<sup>127</sup> Right from the start the Tomb World is apparent,<sup>128</sup> but it is ignored by the adults basking in the warmth of the city park. But the illusion does not last.

Shortly after Ragle notices the ruins, he walks to a soft drink stand to get something to drink, and the stand disintegrates in front of him; in its place is a small slip of paper which reads "SOFT-DRINK STAND."<sup>129</sup> This is not the first slip of paper that Ragle finds, nor will it be the last.<sup>130</sup> Later his nephew offers an explanation for the holes in reality and the mysterious slips of paper, a theory similar to the "Ape of God" theory presented in The Divine Invasion:

With a wink to Ragle, Vic said to his son, "Tell us what's wrong, then."

Sammy said, "They're trying to dupe us."

"He heard me say that," Marge said.

"Who's trying to dupe us?" Vic said.

"The--enemy," Sammy said, after hesitating. [...]

Sammy considered and finally said, "The enemy that's everywhere around us."<sup>131</sup>

Later, in a scene which was likely "borrowed" for the film The Truman Show,<sup>132</sup> Ragle tries to leave town and is thwarted by a bus station with lines that, hour after hour, simply do not move.<sup>133</sup> As in The Truman Show, it is clear that this is no accident, that "they" are trying to prevent Ragle from leaving town; both main characters overhear people talking about them over the radio.<sup>134</sup> And, as Truman Burbank will do in Peter Weir's film forty years later, Ragle eventually hijacks a vehicle of his own<sup>135</sup> (Truman more or less abducts his "wife" in the process) and, because he is so determined, learns the truth about the reality of the world that he lives in: specifically, that the year is 1997 rather than 1959,<sup>136</sup> that his town had been constructed for him, and that the

reason he felt like the world revolved around him was because it did. Near the end of the novel Ragle's sister ponders the irreality of her world:

And her intuition, then, grew. A sense of the finiteness of the world around her. The streets and houses and shops and cars and people. Sixteen hundred people, standing in the center of a stage. Surrounded by props, by furniture to sit in, kitchens to cook in, cars to drive, food to fix. And then, behind the props, the flat, painted scenery. Painted houses set farther back. Painted people. Painted streets. Sounds from speakers set in the wall. Sammy sitting alone in a classroom, the only pupil. And even the teacher not real. Only a series of tapes being played for him.<sup>137</sup>

As I have shown, Time Out of Joint works nicely with the concept of the Black Iron Prison--it varies from the model primarily in that Ragle frees himself from his prison, rather than being freed by an outside force, but all the other elements are there: the Tomb World, the Palm Tree Garden (ironically, the park at the beginning of the novel is a rather fake Garden), the sense of irreality and imprisonment, and the breaking free.<sup>138</sup> In addition to these thematic elements, Time Out of Joint includes relevant uses of metal and "iron," most of which are used in descriptions of containment,<sup>139</sup> imprisonment,<sup>140</sup> or the nature of reality.<sup>141</sup>

**In Milton Lumky Territory (w. 1958; rew. 1959; p. 1985)**

In Milton Lumky Territory contains a few references to

"iron"<sup>142</sup> and some Tomb World imagery,<sup>143</sup> but does not play a significant part in the development of the Black Iron Prison.

**Dr. Futurity (w. 1953; p. 1954; rew. 1959; p. 1960)**

Despite its obviously hurried execution, the paradox-ridden, H. G. Wells-inspired<sup>144</sup> Dr. Futurity actually plays a part in the development of the Black Iron Prison. When Dr. Parsons travels into the future, he learns of the widespread practice of euthanasia--the central dogma of this youthful, disease-free, death-obsessed<sup>145</sup> police state--inside a hotel with a "wrought-iron railing."<sup>146</sup> After he saves an injured woman's life (rather than "putting her to sleep") he is arrested and promptly sent off-planet to a prison colony.<sup>147</sup> When he is in transit to Mars two men rescue him and die in the process; Dr. Parsons then reflects on their sacrifice: "Only a few minutes ago the two men had hurried out of here, across to the prison ship; now they were dead, and now he was here in their place."<sup>148</sup> This use of Christian symbolism fits well within the framework of the Black Iron Prison--specifically, the notion that one is freed from the Black Iron Prison by an outside Savior (Valis, Zebra, Ubik, or Christ in Dick's Exegesis).

**Confessions of a Crap Artist (w. 1959; p. 1975)**

Dick's most accomplished mainstream novel--the only non-science fiction novel that he was able to publish during his lifetime--does not, unfortunately, contain much of the Black Iron Prison. Like Puttering About in a Small Land, the novel contains only meaningless uses of the word "iron."<sup>149</sup> Gwen and Fay talk

about ancient Rome,<sup>150</sup> but because this is a mainstream story, Rome does not exist as another layer of reality behind the spatiotemporal world of California in the late fifties. However, the novel does have as a major theme psychological imprisonment, otherwise known as the institution of marriage. After he finalizes his divorce, Nathan Anteil reflects on how he was trapped in an adulterous relationship with a controlling and sadistic woman:

I must have let myself get mixed up in something horrible, he thought. It's as if the whole sky is a web that dropped over me and snared me. Probably she's the one who did it; Fay arranged all this, and I had nothing to do with it. I have no control of myself or anything that's happened. So now I'm waking up. I'm awake, he thought. Discovering that everything has been taken away from me. I've been destroyed, and now that I'm awake all I can do is realize it; I can't do anything.<sup>151</sup>

Unfortunately for Nathan, there is no Savior to extricate him from his prison. The novel's message, if it must have one,<sup>152</sup> is summed up best by the crackpot mystic Mrs. Hambro: "We all have to suffer."<sup>153</sup>

**Vulcan's Hammer (w. 1953-54; p. 1956; rew. 1959-60; p. 1960)**

Vulcan's Hammer depicts a world run by computers-- specifically, the very intelligent Vulcan 3<sup>154</sup> and its obsolete predecessor Vulcan 2--and raises some very interesting questions about human reliance on technology. Unfortunately, it deals with said questions in what is unquestionably Philip K. Dick's worst



novel.<sup>155</sup> With a heavy hand, Dick explicitly states the theme of the novel within its own pages: "which is the machine and which is the man?"<sup>156</sup> Even more painfully, he answers this question at the end of the novel:

"Pawns," Fields was saying. "We humans--god damn it, Barris; we were pawns of those two things. They played us off against one another, like inanimate pieces. The things became alive and the living organisms were reduced to things. Everything was turned inside out, like some terrible morbid view of society."<sup>157</sup>

The Vulcan 2 is described in Tomb World terms and accepts punched "iron oxide tape"<sup>158</sup> (rather than spoken commands), so it is safe to say that when it and its successor rule the government and make decisions that affect the entire human race, mankind is effectively enslaved by the Black Iron Prison--but this is a prison of totalitarian bureaucracy, the government-sanctioned genocide of free will, a prison of their own making:

It isn't T-class men in gray suits, black shiny shoes and white shirts, carrying briefcases, who are using the symbolic pencil beams. It's mechanical flying objects, controlled by a machine buried beneath the earth. But let's be realistic. How different is it really? Hasn't the true structure come out? Isn't this what always really existed, but no one could see it until now?<sup>159</sup>

Father Fields says in this novel that "there are slow murders and fast murders, [...] body murders and mind murders."<sup>160</sup> Vulcan's

Hammer is about the slow murder of the mind through unquestioning acceptance of nonhuman (computer) rule: a worthy topic, but churned out only for the money.

At some point in his or her career, every writer needs to pay the bills.

**The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike (w. 1960; p. 1984)**

Dick's darkest mainstream work The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike contains an "iron pipe" on the second page that has nothing to do with the Black Iron Prison.<sup>161</sup> Unfortunately, this first thematically-empty "iron" sets the standard for the rest of the novel.

**Humpty Dumpty in Oakland (w. 1960; p. 1987)**

Like most of Dick's other mainstream novels, Humpty Dumpty in Oakland does not add much to the development of the Black Iron Prison. Written fourteen years before Dick's "theophany," the novel comes tantalizingly close to explicitly spelling out the three-word term--an "ominous black-iron overpass" is followed, a page later, by "San Quentin Prison"<sup>162</sup> --but these occurrences, and every other use of the word "iron,"<sup>163</sup> are rather devoid of thematic value.

## IV: SECOND PERIOD

**The Man in the High Castle (w. 1961; p. 1962)**

In his Hugo Award-winning novel Man in the High Castle, Philip K. Dick creates an alternate history where the Allies have lost the war, and the former United States is divided between Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. He handles the story relatively straight, with only a few twists that connect the novel's alternate history with our own reality. One of these twists is the novel-within-the-novel, Hawthorne Abendsen's alternate history book The Grasshopper Lies Heavy, which portrays a world in which the Axis powers lost the war and did not conquer America.<sup>164</sup> The other twist relates to the first, and is the most beautiful and the most thematically relevant scene in the book: when Mr. Nobusuke Tagomi, aided by a piece of abstract jewelry sold to him by Robert Childan,<sup>165</sup> briefly crosses over into the alternate, true reality described in Abendsen's work of "fiction," thereby discovering the falsity of his own world. Tagomi's crossover begins, like Ragle Gumm's, in a park (a living, fertile location which becomes more and more like the Valis trilogy's Palm Tree Garden with every subsequent appearance in a Dick novel). He holds the piece of silver jewelry in his hand and questions it, uses it as a focal point for meditation. He is entranced by it, like Philip K. Dick would be entranced by a fish necklace worn by a pharmacy delivery girl years later; like the fish necklace, the piece of silver acts as a catalyst for a mystical, reality-shattering experience.<sup>166</sup> Mr. Tagomi even recalls 1 Corinthians 13 in his metaphysical questioning of the jewelry: "When I was a

child I thought as a child. But now I have put away childish things. Now I must seek in other realms. I must keep after this object in new ways."<sup>167</sup> He then moves to a consideration of the Tomb World:

Metal is from the earth, he thought as he scrutinized. From below: from that realm which is the lowest, the most dense. Land of trolls and caves, dank, always dark. Yin world, in its most melancholy aspect. World of corpses, decay and collapse. Of feces. All that has died, slipping and disintegrating back down layer by layer. The daemonic world of the immutable; the time-that-was.

And yet, in the sunlight, the silver triangle glittered. [...] Not dank or dark object at all. [...] The high realm, aspect of yang: empyrean, ethereal.<sup>168</sup>

Already in this passage Dick has combined existential psychology (Binswanger's "tomb world"), Pauline philosophy (Corinthians), metallurgy, fantasy archetypes (Dick was a fan of Tolkien<sup>169</sup>), and Taoism (yin and yang); he then adds references to the smoky afterlife of the Tibetan Book of the Dead and the Hindu veil of Maya.<sup>170</sup> When Mr. Tagomi is transported to an alternate reality, he once again reflects on 1 Corinthians 13:

Mists cleared?

He peeped about. Diffusion subsided, in all probability. Now one appreciates Saint Paul's incisive word choice... seen through glass darkly not a metaphor, but astute reference to optical distortion. We really do

see astigmatically, in fundamental sense: our space and our time creations of our own psyche, and when these momentarily falter--like acute disturbance of middle ear.<sup>171</sup>

It is relevant that the piece of jewelry is silver and not, like other pieces of jewelry in the novel, made from "hot-forged black iron,"<sup>172</sup> because this particular piece acts to free Mr. Tagomi rather than imprison him: it is the yang to the Black Iron Prison's yin.<sup>173</sup>

**We Can Build You (w. 1962; p. 1969, 1972)**

Unfortunately, We Can Build You does not add anything useful to the study of the Black Iron Prison, its primary theme being "What is human?" rather than "What is real?"

**Martian Time-Slip (w. 1962; p. 1963, 1964)**

Martian Time-Slip is a novel about "the world-views of disturbed persons, of encapsulated individuals cut off from ordinary means of communication, isolated."<sup>174</sup> Specifically, it is a novel about schizophrenics, and how they are "out of phase in time."<sup>175</sup> There are two schizophrenic main characters in this novel--Manfred Steiner and Jack Bohlen, the latter having largely recovered from his illness--and they each view aspects of reality which are hidden from the "healthy" majority of the population. Jack sees the inhuman, mechanical underpinnings of the present world,<sup>176</sup> whereas Manfred sees the entropic process at work, the natural decay of all living and nonliving things:

Bending over her he saw her languid, almost rotting beauty fall away. Yellow cracks spread through her teeth, and the teeth split and sank into her gums, which in turn became green and dry like leather, and then she coughed and spat up into his face quantities of dust. The Gubbler had gotten her, he realized, before he had been able to. So he let her go. She settled backward, her breaking bones making little sharp splintering sounds.<sup>177</sup>

What Manfred experiences is not illusion, but a compression and an exaggeration of the real: it is the Tomb World,<sup>178</sup> and it is the Black Iron Prison. He even extrapolates a vision of the future based on the singularly negative trend of entropy. Midway through the novel he sketches a picture of a future settlement on Mars, a settlement that hasn't been built yet:

The boy had sketched the buildings as they would appear to an observer on the ground. As they would appear, Jack realized, to someone seated where we are right now.

[...]

The buildings were old, sagging with age. Their foundations showed great cracks radiating upward. Windows were broken. And what looked like stiff tall weeds grew in the land around. It was a scene of ruin and despair, and of a ponderous, timeless, inertial heaviness.<sup>179</sup>

At first Manfred can only be reached through recordings made on "iron-oxide tape" and played back at slower speeds.<sup>180</sup> By the end

of the novel, however, he finds others who perceive the world, and the passage of time, as he does: with the native Martian Bleekmen, he is able to escape, finally, his prison of schizophrenia-induced social isolation.<sup>181</sup>

**Dr. Bloodmoney (w. 1963; p. 1965)**

Dick's post-apocalyptic novel Dr. Bloodmoney fits nicely in the development of the Black Iron Prison, although it has nothing particularly new to add. When Doctor Bluthgeld considers the way he perceives the world, literally minutes before the bombs fall and tear his world apart, he thinks of a cave:

He heard, as he walked, a dull, deep echo which rose from his own footsteps, from his shoes striking the pavement; not the sharp brisk noise that a woman's shoe might make, but a shadowy, low sound, a rumble, almost as if it rose from a pit or cave.<sup>182</sup>

There are literal "caves" that follow: sidewalk shelters and prison-like basements where people huddle as they wait for the bombs to fall<sup>183</sup> (in fact, Doctor Bluthgeld is the only main character who is above the surface at the time of impact<sup>184</sup> ). The universal nature of the prison is made clear when Hoppy Harrington tires of waiting beneath the earth:

In his impatience he began to beat on the cartons. The drumming filled the darkness, as if there were many living things imprisoned, an entire nest of people, not just Hoppy Harrington alone.<sup>185</sup>

There is another prison in the novel--the body of young Edie Keller, inside which her underdeveloped twin brother resides.<sup>186</sup> Bill Keller is immobile and effectively blind--particularly when his spirit is transferred into the body of a worm, a creature which has no eyes of its own.<sup>187</sup> But, just as the survivors of the nuclear holocaust rose from their caves and began anew, so is Bill released from his Black Iron Prison when he is snatched up by an owl with "tremendously good eyesight." Shortly after he is swallowed by the owl, he takes control of the creature and uses it to look for a human body of his own.<sup>188</sup> In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me."<sup>189</sup> In Dick's Dr. Bloodmoney, Stuart McConchie says, "I hid once in the sidewalk. [...] But I came up out of the sidewalk; I didn't stay there."<sup>190</sup>

**The Game-Players of Titan (w. 1963; p. 1963)**

Midway through The Game-Players of Titan, Pete Garden's wife asks him if he had a psychotic episode, since he thought that the psychiatrist Doctor Philipson was not a human, but a vug. He responds: "Not by a long shot. I had a moment of absolute truth."<sup>191</sup> Pete met with the psychiatrist because he felt "disembodied, as if the world about [him was] not quite real,"<sup>192</sup> and he later learns that his drunken vision was correct, that Doctor Philipson was, and is, an alien vug:

"See," Mary Anne said quietly, swiftly, "everyone has the potential for Psionic talent. In severe illness and



in deep psychic regression--" She broke off. "Anyhow, Peter Garden, you were psychotic and drunk and on amphetamines and hallucinating, but basically you perceived the reality that confronts us [...]. You see?"

He did not see; he did not want to see.

Petrified, he drew away from her.<sup>193</sup>

Like Martian Time-Slip before it, The Game-Players of Titan deals with the horrific, the hidden reality of the mentally ill, the unshared (and unwanted) space of the psychotic self. Much of this hidden reality is revealed in a sequence of xenophobic encounters inside a motel "contained by an ornamental railing of black iron."<sup>194</sup> The Game-Players of Titan contains a prison: it is the prison of expanded and unshared individual perspective,<sup>195</sup> of the idios kosmos, a very personal version of the Black Iron Prison proper.

#### **The Simulacra (w. 1963; p. 1964)**

The Simulacra contains a stratified society like Dick's later novels The Zap Gun and Our Friends From Frolix 8 but it is not a true police state. As the title suggests, the novel deals more with artificial humans than artificial reality, and so the novel has little relevance to this study.

#### **Now Wait for Last Year (w. 1963; rew. circa 1965; p. 1966)**

When Dr. Eric Sweetscent visits Wash-35--the artificial reconstruction of mid-thirties Washington, D.C. on the surface of Mars--he is at first taken in by the illusion; but his bubble

bursts (and in close connection with black iron):

The ship taxied from Connecticut Avenue onto McComb Street and soon was parking before 3039 with its black wrought-iron fence and tiny lawn. When the hatch slid back, however, Eric smelled--not the city air of a long-gone Terran capital--but the bitterly thin and cold atmosphere of Mars; he could hardly get his lungs full of it and he stood gasping, feeling disoriented and sick.<sup>196</sup>

Illusion and iron are connected again just a few pages later, when Eric explains to Jonas how Wash-35 is not entirely unreal, since it represents a previously-existing reality. Eric asks if Jonas objects to listening to a recording of a symphony in his apartment. Jonas says that the recording of the symphony and the re-creation of Washington, D.C. are entirely different; Eric disagrees (note the re-use of "iron oxide tape" from Vulcan's Hammer):

"The orchestra isn't there, the original sound has departed, the hall in which it was recorded is now silent; all you possess is twelve hundred feet of iron oxide tape that's been magnetized in a specific pattern... it's an illusion just like this. Only this is complete." [...] We live with illusion daily, he reflected. When the first bard rattled off the first epic of a sometime battle, illusion entered our lives. The Iliad is as much a fake as those robant children [...].<sup>197</sup>

In addition to the Black Iron Prison as universal,

artifactual illusion, Now Wait for Last Year considers the personal prison of spatiotemporal perception, when Eric Sweetscent takes the tempogogic drug JJ-180<sup>198</sup> (a substance that literally moves him around in time): caught in the future, "he felt trapped in a membrane of crushing density, unable to act or escape from action, caught in a halfway land between."<sup>199</sup> The reason he took JJ-180 in the first place was to help his wife, who is addicted to the drug and requires an antidote that will be invented in the future. Before the drug institutionalizes her, she "exert[s] [power] over him, trapping him and hugging him to her"<sup>200</sup> --in a sense, she is one more layer of iron imprisoning Eric Sweetscent. But when she weakens from the drug, she too is imprisoned; late in the novel, thinking also about his wife's illness, Eric reflects on how the harsh life of prostitutes ensures their premature arrival in the Tomb World:

The trouble with such girls, he thought, is that they get so old so fast. What you hear is true; by thirty they're worn out, fat [...]; all that remains is the black, burning eyes peering out from beneath the shaggy brows, the original slender creature still imprisoned somewhere within but unable to speak any longer, play or make love or run. [...] alive in the past, perishing in the present, a corpse made of dust in the future.<sup>201</sup>

In the face of this imprisoning entropy, Eric contemplates committing suicide with the "black carton" of g-Totex blau, but ultimately decides against it, wishing instead to stay with and nurture his sick wife.<sup>202</sup>

**Clans of the Alphane Moon (w. 1963-64; p. 1964)**

Philip K. Dick's Clans of the Alphane Moon contains several types of prisons. The most obvious of these is the former mental institution on Alpha III M2 which was, in the words of its former patients (who destroyed it and subsequently formed a self-sustaining colony) a "concentration camp [...] for purposes of slave labor."<sup>203</sup> As is the fate of all Black Iron Prisons, this "hospital" was torn down, and its patients released from their "original imprisonment"<sup>204</sup> (note how this language reflects "original sin," which is later connected with the construction of the Black Iron Prison). What is different about this prison is that it was torn down before the novel begins, rather than at the end or just after the end. However, it was quickly replaced by the fearful, Iron Curtain-like<sup>205</sup> rule of the Manses (the clan of former manic-depressives); Dick uses images of iron and communism (the red and black flag) to describe the Manses' war vehicles:

As [Gabriel Baines] started to turn his car around, something rumbled and clanked past him [...]; it was a crawling monster if not a super-monster. Cast of high-process iron as only the Manses knew how to bring off, sweeping the landscape ahead with its powerful lights, it advanced flying a red and black flag, the battle symbol of the Manses.<sup>206</sup>

The leader of the Manses, Howard Straw, is related to iron on a later occasion--not only does he have "countless irons in the fire," but he also has a "handsome wood and black-iron table."<sup>207</sup> Another type of prison in this novel is one that Dick has explored before, the personal prison of mental illness: in this case,

paranoid schizophrenia (with emphasis on the paranoid). Gabriel Baines, when dealing with a woman who is not paranoid, becomes all the more aware of his imprisoning illness: "In fact she made him feel rigid and metallic, encased in thick steel like some archaic weapon of a useless, ancient war."<sup>208</sup> If the reader can empathize with his painful condition, then the reader will also share in his triumph when he breaks free of his paranoiac prison, when he acts, for the first time in his life, "not to save himself, but to save someone else."<sup>209</sup>

**The Crack in Space (w. 1963, 1964; p. 1964, 1966)**

The Crack in Space was originally entitled Cantata 140, after Bach's Wachet auf (Sleepers Wake), and there is no better way to encapsulate its story and theme than by its older title. On a literal level, the novel deals with the waking of millions of "bibs" from their sleep (people who, to avoid poverty, choose to enter cryogenic stasis until the job market can offer them employment). On metaphoric level, the novel describes the "waking up" of an entire population as they discover and learn the truth about "Alter-Earth,"<sup>210</sup> an orthogonally coeval Garden World which is the final destination of the literally-sleeping "bib" population.<sup>211</sup> That the Earth is on its way to becoming a Tomb World is made especially clear by a visit to a second Alter-Earth, this one filled with "decay and silent, utter death"<sup>212</sup> --but it does not take any stretch of the imagination to detect in this novel the dichotomy of the Black Iron Prison and the Palm Tree Garden. The Crack in Space does add further thematic relevance to the word "iron" because, as Dick writes, "metal is evil. It belongs inside the Earth with the dead. It is part of the once-

was, where everything goes when its time is over."<sup>213</sup> On a related note, the inhabitants of Alter-Earth do not construct their flying machines and vehicles out of metal, but--as is fitting of a denizen of the Garden World--out of wood.<sup>214</sup> Many of Dick's previous novels hint at its existence, but The Crack in Space is the first to show the Palm Tree Garden (although, I should mention, it is not explicitly named).

**The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch (w. 1964; p. 1965)**

The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, the author's self-named "Satanic Bible,"<sup>215</sup> is a crucial piece of Dick's meta-novel in that it depicts the evil magician-like creator of the Black Iron Prison. As Dick would write later (and I would not consider this an anachronistic reading), Palmer Eldritch is "the arrogant one, the blind God (i.e., the artifact), which supposes itself to be the one true God [and creates] evil delusional worlds."<sup>216</sup> What is relevant about Palmer Eldritch's drug Chew-Z--as opposed to the older, communal drug Can-D--is that it transports its user into a world of his or her own, a private entropic<sup>217</sup> hell unaffected by spatiotemporal physics and under the sovereign control of its evil deity, Palmer Eldritch. In relation to Eldritch's perversions of the created world (his "aping of God"), Dick explicitly references both the Hindu veil of Maya<sup>218</sup> and the Judeo-Christian "original curse"<sup>219</sup> --further establishing his imaginative study of theodicy as part of the legacy of the Black Iron Prison. If there is a message that Dick wanted his readers to take from this novel, it is expressed by Anne Hawthorne, a hovel-dweller on Mars who resists the temptation to take Chew-Z: "Isn't miserable reality better than the most interesting illusion?"<sup>220</sup> Palmer Eldritch

brings with him the "negative trinity of alienation, blurred reality, and despair,"<sup>221</sup> but in the end his prison crumbles and his curse fades away: Barney Mayerson--stuck in a subsurface hovel on the dusty plains of Mars--plants and tends a Garden.<sup>222</sup> In his essay "Man, Android, and Machine" he writes: "We have been so many Palmer Eldritch moving through the cold fog and mists and twilight of winter, but now soon we will emerge and lift the war mask of iron to reveal the face within."<sup>223</sup>

**The Zap Gun (w. 1964; p. 1965, 1966, 1967)**

With the exception of a single passage in which Josef Stalin is called "the final Man of Iron,"<sup>224</sup> the use of the word "iron" in The Zap Gun lacks thematic weight.<sup>225</sup> The Black Iron Prison does make an appearance, but as a man-made artifact--a weapon of war to be used against the invaders from Sirius--rather than an all-encompassing suprahuman construct. The weapon is disguised as a toy, a small maze with a miniature, intelligent prisoner, and it traps its user through the user's own empathy for the prisoner's plight:

The maze was simple enough in itself, but it represented for its trapped inhabitant an impenetrable barrier. Because the maze was inevitably one jump ahead of its victim. The inhabitant could not win, no matter how fast or how cleverly or how inexhaustibly he scampered, twisted, retreated, tried again, sought the one right (didn't there have to be a one right?) combination. He could never escape. He could never find freedom. Because the maze, ten-year battery powered, constantly

shifted.<sup>226</sup>

Simple yet to the point, this "toy" demonstrates the futility of trying to escape the Black Iron Prison--and suggests that whatever power is outside may either be unable or unwilling to extricate its prisoners.

**The Penultimate Truth (w. 1964; p. 1964)**

The Penultimate Truth, Dick's paranoid and overtly political Cold War novel, depicts a world in which the majority of the population lives underground in "ant tanks,"<sup>227</sup> slaving away to support the ongoing war that is decimating the surface of the planet. In any case, this is the illusion: the reality is that the war has long since ended, and the rich world leaders living on the surface have made peace with each other, and are fabricating evidence of the "war" to keep their own people imprisoned underground. (In his essay on Dick's use of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in The Penultimate Truth, Merritt Abrash draws a parallel between the underground tanks and Plato's cave.<sup>228</sup> ) There is a single mention of "black iron" in the novel, and it appears at an intriguing part of the narrative: when David Lantano speaks to Nicholas St. James about the fictional aspect of world leaders, in particular the "historical" Roman leaders such as Nero and Claudius, Dick describes Lantano's wife as sitting on a "long wrought black iron and foam-rubber couch."<sup>229</sup> The first sentence of Dick's novel alerts the reader to the presence of the veil of Maya, and sets the tone for the rest of the novel: "A fog can drift in from outside and get you; it can invade."<sup>230</sup> In the end, this novel is about that misty veil of lies, the deception governments employ in



exercising power over those in the "darker, more cramped prisons below."<sup>231</sup>

**The Unteleported Man or Lies, Inc. (w. 1964-65; p. 1966, 1983, 1984)**

The Black Iron Prison appears most clearly in The Unteleported Man (later expanded into Lies, Inc.) as the planet Whale's Mouth. Trails of Hoffman, Inc., wants the people of the overpopulated Terran police state<sup>232</sup> to believe that Whale's Mouth is an Edenic Paradise, a relatively unpopulated world "of tall grass, of odd but benign animals, of new and lovely cities built by robot-assists."<sup>233</sup> To help relieve the population problem at home, the corporation offers economically-priced tickets to Whale's Mouth, but there is a catch: the tickets are one-way only, and the emigrants must teleport rather than travel by ship. Any avid Philip K. Dick fan would guess (correctly) that Whale's Mouth is not what it's advertised to be: it is not Elysium, but a Spartan military dictatorship.<sup>234</sup> It is another police state wrapped in the guise of the Garden World, a Black Iron Prison obscured by the Tomb-Worldly, "decayed-eyed [...] employees of THI."<sup>235</sup> The Penultimate Truth and The Unteleported Man are similar in that they both treat the growing theme of the Black Iron Prison as a man-made conspiracy, one originating in the government and the other more corporate in nature.

**Counter-Clock World (w. 1965; p. 1967)**

Counter-Clock World does not contain the Black Iron Prison per se, but it follows the theme's general movement from the Tomb

World to the Garden World in its depiction of a universe running backwards. In a world influenced by the Hobart Phase, a person begins life by being excavated inside the "dilapidated spiked-iron pole fence of the cemetery,"<sup>236</sup> and ends life by reentering his or her mother's womb. Conversations begin with goodbye and end with hello. Food goes in the anus and, in private, exits the mouth; the food is then separated, repackaged, and returned to stores. Even without an oppressive Roman police state or a more authentic world existing behind known "reality," one can easily see in Counter-Clock World the movement from the entropic (the natural way of things, but also the Tomb World and the Black Iron Prison) to the chthonic (the womb as literal and spiritual rebirth, the afterlife as presented in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and the Palm Tree Garden). Without this movement the larger theme of the Black Iron Prison would not exist.

#### **The Ganymede Takeover (w. 1964-66; p. 1967)**

The Ganymede Takeover, Dick's collaboration with Ray Nelson, contains some vague hints of the stratified police state in that the population of Earth has been subjugated by telepathic Ganymedeans--but this is the extent to which the novel adds (or doesn't add) to the theme of the Black Iron Prison.

#### **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (w. 1966; p. 1968)**

In Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? Dick uses an artifact similar to the maze trap in The Zap Gun but based on another device he created at approximately the same time: the little black box from his short story "The Little Black Box." When one uses the

"black empathy box"<sup>237</sup> of Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? he or she is "fused" with the religious figure Mercer (much as the user of the maze "toy" is fused empathically with the maze's prisoner), as well as every other person presently using the empathy box. Once fused, the users enter what is explicitly described as the "tomb world"<sup>238</sup> --but despite all these similarities to the Black Iron Prison, the empathy box (which is designed in such a way that only humans, and not androids, can use it<sup>239</sup> ) seems to work as its opposite. Rather than isolating its users (v. Chew-Z in The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch), it serves to bring them together (v. Can-D). Though it is suggested that the shared world of the empathy box is fake, this is only a symbolic aspect of the empathy box in that it suggests a certain level of artificiality present in the "real" world; as Rick Deckard says late in the novel, "Mercer isn't a fake [...] unless reality is a fake."<sup>240</sup> This possibility is reinforced by Deckard's visit to the fake, duplicate police station--a scene which was not included in the movie adaptation Blade Runner and which, according to Dick, was not adequately developed,<sup>241</sup> but a scene that nevertheless undermines the crumbling grounds of reality in the novel:

"I don't think you understand the situation," Garland [a police inspector at the alternate station] said. "This man--or android--Rick Deckard, comes to us from a phantom, hallucinatory, nonexistent police agency allegedly operating out of the old departmental headquarters on Lombard. He's never heard of us and we've never heard of him--yet ostensibly we're both working the same side of the street."<sup>242</sup>

With the illusory nature of the duplicate police station and the suggestion that this illusion may extend to the rest of "reality," the Tomb World imagery inherent in both the use of the empathy box and the "kipple"<sup>243</sup> of the outside world, and the anti-imprisoning nature of the empathy box itself, one can easily see the Black Iron Prison at work in a novel which most critics study only for its relevance to Dick's "What is human?" theme.

**Nick and the Glimmung (w. 1966; p. 1988)**

Dick's only novel written for children, Nick and the Glimmung contains a single reference to "iron"<sup>244</sup> but does not further the study of the Black Iron Prison.

**Ubik (w. 1966; p. 1969)**

Ubik, like The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, is another significant piece of Dick's meta-novel. In its depiction of half-life, a near-death cryogenic state similar to Herb Asher's stasis in The Divine Invasion, it draws heavily on the Tibetan Book of the Dead,<sup>245</sup> Plato's "ideal objects,"<sup>246</sup> and Binswanger's Tomb World.<sup>247</sup> The focal characters in Ubik are (nearly) dead and, until the end of the novel, do not fully realize it. Caught in the regressive world of the tomb, they are subject to the whims of a twisted creator deity, a "polymorphic, perverse agency which likes to watch"<sup>248</sup> --the ape of God, here the dead boy Jory<sup>249</sup> : "It's as if, [Joe] thought, some malicious force is playing with us, letting us scamper and twitter like debrained mice. We amuse it. Our efforts entertain it."<sup>250</sup> However, there is a Savior, the

patriarchal boss-figure Glen Runciter, who contacts the "half-lifers" from the realm of the living, and gives them spray cans of Ubik to counteract the force of entropy:

"One invisible puff-puff of economically priced Ubik banishes compulsive obsessive fears that the entire world is turning into clotted milk, worn-out tape recorders and obsolete iron-cage elevators,<sup>251</sup> plus other, further, as-yet-unglimpsed manifestations of decay. You see, world deterioration of this regressive type is a normal experience of many half-lifers, especially in the early stages when ties to the real reality are still very strong. [...] But with today's new, more-powerful-than-ever Ubik, all this is changed!"<sup>252</sup>

Ubik clearly depicts the Black Iron Prison (half-life), its malicious ruler (Jory), and the Savior (Runciter) who reaches into the Black Iron Prison to redeem his flock, offering them the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ubik), but the novel's significance to this study does not end there. It "foreshadows" Dick's knowledge of Greek in 1974 when Tippy Jackson "dream[s] lines of poetry [she doesn't] know."<sup>253</sup> It also reflects 1 Corinthians 13:12 when Joe "felt all at once like an ineffectual moth, fluttering at the windowpane of reality, dimly seeing it from outside."<sup>254</sup> In the end, however, Dick adds yet another twist to his construct of the Black Iron Prison by suggesting that Glen Runciter, too, may be stuck in half-life without realizing it<sup>255</sup> --which implies that even God is not outside the illusion. Dick would later write in his Exegesis that "we are not dead but we are as if dead; we are

enslaved, and in a prison."<sup>256</sup>

**Galactic Pot-Healer (w. 1967-68; p. 1969)**

Dick's novel Galactic Pot-Healer does not follow the traditional model of the Black Iron Prison (people trapped in an illusory, entropic world, who ultimately break free or are rescued by a Savior, after which they enter the Palm Tree Garden), but it does add some interesting dimensions to the prison's constituent elements. Early in the novel, we get a look at the fully-automated job-locating machine Mr. Job, which will stubbornly shut itself off in the middle of supplying employment advice if the user has not deposited enough coins. In one character's frustrated description of Mr. Job, Dick attaches another layer of meaning to the word "iron":

Mr. Job, turning itself off, is the ultimate visage of black iron, old iron from antediluvian times. The ultimate rebuff. If there is a supernatural deafness, [Joe] thought, it is that: when the coins you are putting into Mr. Job run out.<sup>257</sup>

Dick has already connected iron with the Tomb World, but his use of "antediluvian" carries connotations of the Judeo-Christian Fall--which prepares the way for Dick's later novels in which the "original curse" is the primeval source of the Black Iron Prison. Furthermore, if the reader harbors any doubt that the "black" in Black Iron Prison represents the evil half of a Zoroastrian struggle, the yin in the cosmic moral balance, then these doubts should be dispelled by Galactic Pot-Healer's blatantly symbolic Black Cathedral and Black Glimmung, and their respective

relationships to their polar opposites.<sup>258</sup>

**A Maze of Death (w. 1968; p. 1970)**

In his bleakly pessimistic novel A Maze of Death, Philip K. Dick further examines the possibility of a man-made Black Iron Prison--although until the end of the novel, the reader is unaware of mankind's involvement in the creation of the spurious world. Before Ben Tallchief dies early in the novel, he has a vision of iron and entropy:

He saw two stars collapse against one another and a nova form [...]. He saw it turn from a furiously blazing ring into a dim core of dead iron and then he saw it cool into darkness. More stars cooled with it; he saw the force of entropy, the method of the Destroyer of Forms, retract the stars into dull reddish coals and then into dust-like silence.<sup>259</sup>

Later, Seth Morley senses that "the whole landscape [is] false... as if [...] those hills in the background, and that great plateau to the right, are a painted backdrop [...] contained in a geodetic dome."<sup>260</sup> Shortly thereafter, Maggie Walsh suggests that the landscape alters according to their expectations, and that this makes them prisoners:

"Specktowsky speaks about us being 'prisoners of our own preconceptions and expectations.' And that one of the conditions of the Curse is to remain mired in the quasi-reality of those proclivities. Without ever seeing

reality as it actually is."

"Nobody sees reality as it actually is," Frazer said. "As Kant proved. Space and time are modes of perception [...]."

[...]

"Specktowsky says that ultimately we can see reality as it is," Maggie Walsh said. "When the Intercessor releases us from our world and condition. When the curse is lifted from us, through him."

Russell spoke up. "And sometimes, even during our physical lifetime, we get momentary glimpses of it."

"Only if the Intercessor lifts the veil<sup>261</sup> for us," Maggie Walsh said.<sup>262</sup>

Ultimately, the veil is lifted, and the prisoners learn their true situation: they are not on Delmak-0 or on Earth, but on board the ship Persus 9. They created their illusory world as a deliberate escape from reality, which is a lifetime imprisoned within their ship as it orbits a dead star.<sup>263</sup> "Isn't it amazing," Frazer says earlier, "the lengths people will go to in an unconscious effort to block their having to face reality."<sup>264</sup> Dick wrote the following in his essay "Man, Android, and Machine":

What we must realize is that this deception, this obscuring of things as if under a veil--the veil of Maya, it has been called--this is not an end in itself, as if the universe is somehow perverse and likes to foil us per se; what we must accept, once we realize that a veil (called by the Greeks dokos) lies between us and reality, is that this veil serves a benign purpose.<sup>265</sup>



**Our Friends From Frolix 8 (w. 1968-69; p. 1970)**

Our Friends From Frolix 8 does not contain the Black Iron Prison proper, but does showcase some of its regular accompaniments. Primarily, the novel showcases the Roman police-state--a xenophobic, totalitarian, class-based regime that imprisons people on Luna who read banned religious texts.<sup>266</sup> But the novel also reiterates what Dick said about the color black in Galactic Pot-Healer:

"Isn't black the color of death?" Ild asked.

"It is, yes," Nick said.

"Then are they [the black troopers of the police-state] death?"

"Yes."

[...]

Amos Ild took a black crayon and drew. Nick watched as stick figures emerged. A man, a woman. And a black, four-legged, sheep-headed animal. And a black sun, a black landscape with black houses and squibs.<sup>267</sup>

Nick Appleton is able to transcend it all through love; when he realizes that he is in love, "it's as if [he] had a glimpse, saw past the curtain of mundane life, saw how and what [he] needed to be happy."<sup>268</sup> This may not be the can of Ubik restoring reality to an illusory world, but it is as close as Our Friends From Frolix 8 gets.

**Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said (w. 1970; rew. 1973; p. 1974)**

Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said revisits the police state of Our Friends From Frolix 8, but has significantly more to say about the Black Iron Prison. In the first half of the novel, the words "iron" and "prison" are used separately and somewhat meaninglessly; but in the second half of the novel, the word "iron" appears whenever a character learns something about a hidden reality. For instance, when Police General Felix Buckman intuits the truth about Jason Taverner--that he does not truly exist in his world--he "felt an enormous hunch overwhelm him; it gripped him with paws of iron."<sup>269</sup> Later, when Taverner's veil tears and he momentarily returns to the world he occupied at the beginning of the novel, he is in Buckman's "three story, Spanish style house with black iron railings on the balconies."<sup>270</sup> Buckman's sister--whom Taverner is with when his reality breaks down--wears "black shiny pants" and a "wrought-iron buckle."<sup>271</sup> Taverner comes up with several explanations for his situation, including the possibility that the police state is real and his memories of his former life are drug-induced hallucinations:

Maybe I am only one of a great number of people leading synthetic lives of popularity, money, power, by means of a capsule. While living actually, meanwhile, in bug-infested, ratty old hotel rooms. On skid row. Derelicts, nobodies. Amounting to zero. But, meanwhile, dreaming.<sup>272</sup>

Dick would later say that the novel prophesied 2-3-74, because it deals with the illusory world of the police state, behind which is hidden the Roman empire:

I retain memories of that other world. [...] The world of Flow My Tears is an actual (or rather once actual)

alternate world, and I remember it in detail. I do not know who else does. Maybe no one else does. Perhaps all of you were always--have always been--here. But I was not. In March 1974 I began to remember consciously, rather than merely subconsciously, that black iron prison police state world. Upon consciously remembering it I did not need to write about it because I have always been writing about it.<sup>273</sup>

In my examination of Dick's pre-1974 novels, I hope to have shown the truth of this last statement--that, in some degree or another, Dick had written about the Black Iron Prison from the start.

## V: THIRD PERIOD

In February and March of 1974, Philip K. Dick communicated directly with God. Or aliens. Or an artificial intelligence satellite. Or his dead twin sister. Or the KGB. Or the CIA/FBI/IMF. Or his own self, contacting him either from the future or from an alternate "present" in a parallel dimension. Or, and he considered this along with every other possibility, he had simply gone insane, and his otherwise inexplicable experiences could be explained by temporal lobe epilepsy, brain damage due to his past drug use, multiple personality disorder, and/or the onset of acute schizophrenia.

It was the single most influential experience in his life, and it initiated his final period of writing.

**A Scanner Darkly (w. 1973; rew. 1975; p. 1977)**

Dick began writing A Scanner Darkly before 2-3-74 but finished it sometime after. 2-3-74 makes an explicit appearance<sup>274</sup> early in the novel, when Dick describes the drug-induced vision of S. A. Powers:

He had, a few years ago, been experimenting with disinhibiting substances affecting neural tissue, and one night, having administered to himself an IV injection considered safe and mildly euphoric, had experienced a disastrous drop in the GABA fluid of his brain. Subjectively, he had then witnessed lurid phosphene activity projected on the far wall of his bedroom, a frantically progressing montage of what, at

the time, he imagined to be modern-day abstract paintings.

For about six hours, entranced, S. A. Powers had watched thousands of Picasso paintings replace one another at flash-cut speed, and then he had been treated to Paul Klees, more than the painter had painted during his entire lifetime.<sup>275</sup>

Inspired by his vision, S. A. Powers invented the scramble suit, an ever-changing holographic disguise which hides the physical characteristics--hair, face, skin color, even gender--of its wearer; it is worn by undercover cops to protect their lives and their false identity in the drug world. However, as the novel progresses, it becomes more and more difficult for one such undercover cop to reconcile his work identity--Fred--with his undercover identity--Bob Arctor. Late in the novel, monitoring his own house with a holographic scanner, he has to remind himself of his identity:

When you get down to it, I'm Arctor, [Fred] thought. [...] I'm slushed; my brain is slushed. This is not real. I'm not believing this, watching what is me, is Fred--that was Fred down there without his scramble suit; that's how Fred appears without the suit!<sup>276</sup>

The title of the novel--a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13:12--is found in Fred/Bob's musings on the imperfections of the holographic scanner, and what that tells him about mankind's perception of reality in general:

What does a scanner see? he asked himself. I mean,

really see? Into the head? Down into the heart? Does a [scanner] see into me--into us--clearly or darkly? I hope it does [...] see clearly, because I can't any longer these days see into myself. I see only murk. Murk outside; murk inside.<sup>277</sup>

He further considers the Pauline epistle when he undergoes evaluation at the police psychology testing lab:

A darkened mirror, he thought; a darkened scanner. And St. Paul meant, by a mirror, not a glass mirror--they didn't have those then--but a reflection of himself when he looked at the polished bottom of a metal pan. [...] It is not through glass but as reflected back by a glass. And that reflection that returns to you: it is you, it is your face, but it isn't. And they didn't have cameras in those old days, and so that's the only way a person saw himself: backward.

I have seen myself backward.<sup>278</sup>

In his Exegesis Dick wrote the following about A Scanner Darkly:

Mainly, it strives to show that we are fucked up in a way which precludes our being able to be aware of it--the most ominous kind of occlusion (ignorance). It points to the need of outside intervention.<sup>279</sup>

The novel does not present a cosmology as in Dick's Exegesis and Valis trilogy, but it is relevant to the Black Iron Prison in that it "goes into the anatomy of the occlusion."<sup>280</sup>

Deus Irae (w. 1964-75; p. 1976)

A large portion of Deus Irae was written before 1974 but, like A Scanner Darkly, the novel was finished in 1975 and was directly influenced by 2-3-74. When Carleton Lufteufel makes his first appearance, he has a painful lump in his forehead which he can't stop touching--referring to his own experience with pain, Dick calls this the "sore-tooth reaction." He then experiences a "[pulsing] light within his head," and visualizes his pain as a "crown of iron [which] came down, settled upon his brow, drew tighter, fit him. It tightened and felt like a circlet of dry ice about his head."<sup>281</sup> Considerably later in the novel, after Lufteufel is killed, his retarded daughter Alice experiences a lifting of the veil of Maya--and a permanent transcendence of her disability--similar to Dick's mid-seventies "theophany":

An unusual sense of understanding things began to course through her, a kind of alertness which she could not recall from any time ever. [...] A membrane of some nature had been removed from her mind; she could see in the sense that she could comprehend now what she had never comprehended. Gazing around her, she saw in truth, in very truth, a different world, a world comprehensible at last [...].

[...]

And the membrane which had, all her life, occluded her mind--it remained gone. Her thoughts remained clear and distinct, and so they were to remain, for the rest of her life.<sup>282</sup>

The veil of Maya is universal, however, and Lufteufel's death

releases the entire world from their religious oppression. The Edenic Palm Tree Garden makes its most explicit appearance yet when the veil is finally lifted:

Somewhere, [Dr. Abernathy] thought, a good event has happened, and it spreads out. He saw to his amazement palm trees. [...] The warm air, the palm trees... funny, he thought, I never noticed any palm trees growing around here. And dry dusty land, as if I'm in the Middle East. Another world; touches of another continuum. I don't understand, he thought. What is breaking through? As if my eyes are now opened, in a special way.<sup>283</sup>

Dr. Abernathy then thinks--reinvigorating the notion (presented in A Maze of Death) that the veil of Maya may fulfill a good purpose--that perhaps "God occludes men to fulfill His will."<sup>284</sup> The Black Iron Prison is present and developed in Deus Irae, although it is not named explicitly until Radio Free Albemuth.

#### **Radio Free Albemuth (w. 1976; p. 1985)**

Radio Free Albemuth, like its rewrite Valis, contains Philip K. Dick as a focal character and largely autobiographical accounts of 2-3-74.<sup>285</sup> Here the Horselover Fat character--the side of Dick that wants to believe in the fantastic and the supernatural explanations for his experience--is Nick Brady. The science fiction writer Philip K. Dick remains skeptical until he "personally [sees] Valis heal Nicholas and Rachel's little son of a birth defect."<sup>286</sup> Dick (the character) relates that "something had intervened in Nicholas's life and destroyed the hold that bad



karma had on him. Something had severed the iron chains."<sup>287</sup> The Black Iron Prison makes its appearance five chapters later, and it is considerably more political<sup>288</sup> than its later manifestation in Valis:

I was in effect exactly like those captured Americans: a prisoner of war. I had become that in November 1968 when F.F.F.<sup>289</sup> got elected. So had we all; we now dwelt in a very large prison, without walls, bounded by Canada, Mexico, and two oceans. [...] Most people did not appear to notice. Since there were no literal bars or barbed wire, since they had committed no crimes, had not been arrested or taken to court, they did not grasp the change, the dread transformation, of their situation. It was the classic case of a man kidnapped while standing still.<sup>290</sup>

Early in the novel, Dick writes that the United States is a figurative "extension through linear time of the Roman republic,"<sup>291</sup> but as the novel progresses, he makes it clear that the Empire never ended, and that it still literally exists today, in a world coeval with our own.<sup>292</sup> In his portion of the novel, Nick Brady further describes the Roman prison and the secret Christians that oppose it:

I sensed the Empire without seeing it, sensed a vast iron prison in which human slaves toiled. I saw as if superimposed on the black metal walls of this huge prison certain rapidly scurrying figures in gray robes: enemies of the Empire and its tyranny, a remnant opposed

to it. And I knew, from a deep internal clock down within my own self, that the true time was A.D. 70, that the Savior had come and gone but would soon return. The gray-robed hurrying remnant, with a feeling of joy, awaited and prepared for his return.<sup>293</sup>

As in Valis, the Black Iron Prison will not last forever, and will be replaced by the Palm Tree Garden on the Savior's return, His divine invasion<sup>294</sup> into the spurious world:

He would breach through into our linear time, our world: mounted on a great white horse, he would ride into existence followed by his mounted host, all of them with swords and shields and glistening helmets. Colors would glow as banners waved, tassels bounced, helmets glinted. And the black iron walls of the prison would fall before him.<sup>295</sup>

The Palm Tree Garden does not make an explicit appearance in Dick's paranoid political thriller. Radio Free Albemuth ends with the character Philip K. Dick receiving a fifty-year prison sentence to prevent him from writing the truth into his science fiction novels.<sup>296</sup>

Radio Free Albemuth was initially rejected by Dick's agent, and would not be published until three years after his death. Rather than revise his manuscript, Dick reworked its major themes--including the Valis entity, the coexistence of the Roman empire, and the Black Iron Prison--into a completely new novel, which was accepted and published as Valis in 1981. The world now knew about 2-3-74, and would forever read his work in a new

light.<sup>297</sup>

\* \* \*

I hope to have given the reader not only an understanding of the developed theme of the Black Iron Prison as depicted in Philip K. Dick's Valis trilogy, but a broad overview of the theme's presence and gradual development in all of the author's longer works. Some of Dick's novels contained only a few of the supporting themes, such as the veil of Maya or the Tomb World, or merely drew a vague correlation between an iron object (such as an old elevator) and the concept of physical imprisonment. A few of Dick's novels did not contain the Black Iron Prison at all. However, I see the roots of the Black Iron Prison forming in Dick's mind in the early fifties, revealed subtly in his earliest novels Gather Yourselves Together and The Cosmic Puppets, and reworked again and again until it is named in the Exegesis, Radio Free Albemuth, and the Valis trilogy. I hope to have shown that though 2-3-74 was a major point in the development of the Black Iron Prison, it is hardly its genesis.

## NOTES

Because there are no standard editions of Dick's work, I have referred to his novels by chapter and section (5.2, for example, being the second section of the fifth chapter). Unless otherwise noted, I have referred to all other works by page number.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Kinney xxiii, xxix. Jay Kinney offers some of the latter, more scientific explanations for Dick's 1974 experiences in the introduction to Dick's In Pursuit of Valis. Dick was at times highly skeptical, and also considered schizophrenia a possible cause for his experiences (Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 82). The other explanations are given in so many sources that exhaustive citation proves impossible, with the exception of the less-common explanation that Dick had been contacted by his twin sister who had died in infancy (Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 246). Dick's Exegesis (portions of which are printed in In Pursuit of Valis and The Shifting Realities), Valis, and his Selected Letters are the best places to start if one wishes to study 2-3-74 in greater depth.

<sup>2</sup> Lee 149-151.

<sup>3</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 51.

<sup>4</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 3.

<sup>5</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 37.

<sup>6</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 18.

<sup>7</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 10.

<sup>8</sup> In an interview with Paul Williams, Dick said, "I found that I couldn't go into a class and listen to discourses on Locke and Mill and Hobbes, but I could read the books" (Williams 54).

<sup>9</sup> Plato, Phaedo 72e-77d.

<sup>10</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 106.

<sup>11</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 111-112. See also 109.

<sup>12</sup> Philip K. Dick had at one point given it the longer title "The Dialectic: God Against Satan, and God's Final Victory Foretold and Shown" but he most often referred to it as the Exegesis. Dick's own definition of "exegesis" is "a theological term meaning a piece of writing that explains or interprets a portion of scripture" (Dick, Valis 2.1).

<sup>13</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 45.

<sup>14</sup> Dick, Valis 2.1.

<sup>15</sup> I have chosen not to discuss Philip K. Dick's short stories in this study for purposes of length; I trust that my deliberate omission will not mislead the reader to believe that Dick's short stories are of no value in a thematic study of his work.

<sup>16</sup> "Valis" is an acronym for "Vast Active Living Intelligence System" (Dick, Valis epigraph), and is a common name for what contacted Dick in 1974.

<sup>17</sup> Dick, Valis 1.1.

<sup>18</sup> Dick, Valis 3.2.

<sup>19</sup> Dick, Valis 4.1.

<sup>20</sup> Like much of the philosophy in the Exegesis, the Black Iron Prison appears to be a largely Christian construct, but has many non-Christian influences, such as the Greek concept of dokos, the Hindu "veil of Maya," and Klingsor's prison-like castle from Wagner's Parsifal (Dick, Valis 8.2). I will return to these other sources as they correlate with the Black Iron Prison elsewhere in Philip K. Dick's work.

<sup>21</sup> Of particular importance here is Dick's novel A Maze of Death, which focuses on a man-made version of the Black Iron Prison.

<sup>22</sup> The Palm Tree Garden is mentioned in Valis but receives a more thorough treatment in The Divine Invasion.

<sup>23</sup> Zebra is a form of God which disguises itself in order to invade the Black Iron Prison and rescue its captives. For more on Zebra, see The Divine Invasion and the Exegesis (Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 135).

<sup>24</sup> Dick, Valis 8.1.

<sup>25</sup> See my note on the relationship between "ferrous" and Farris F. Fremont in my later examination of Radio Free Albemuth.

<sup>26</sup> Dick, Valis 8.2.

<sup>27</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 144.

<sup>28</sup> Dick, Valis 6.3.

<sup>29</sup> See Binswanger's Being-in-the-World 113, 284-289. For more on Dick's use of the Swiss existential psychiatrists, see Wolk, "The Swiss Connection" 101-119.

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence Sutin notes Dick's use of Binswanger in a footnote to Dick's Exegetical writings (Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 143).

<sup>31</sup> In relation to this passage, Rickman refers to Philip K. Dick's letter of June 8, 1969 to SF Commentary. This letter, addressed to Bruce Gillespie, is printed in Philip K. Dick: Electric Sheperd (Gillespie 32-33) as well as the first volume of Dick's collected letters (Dick, Selected Letters 1938-1971 263-265).

<sup>32</sup> Rickman, To The High Castle 64.

<sup>33</sup> Dick, Valis 10.1.

<sup>34</sup> Dick, Valis 10.2.

<sup>35</sup> Dick's working title for The Divine Invasion was Valis Regained.

<sup>36</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 6.2.

<sup>37</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 195.

<sup>38</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 1.1.

<sup>39</sup> Dick does not use the term "half-life" in The Divine Invasion, but there are clear similarities between Herb Asher's near-death condition and the half-life concept as presented in Dick's earlier novel Ubik.

<sup>40</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 1.2.

<sup>41</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 8.1.

<sup>42</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 4.2.

<sup>43</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 4.3. The passage employing afterlife imagery from the Tibetan Book of the Dead is at the end of this section: "A low murmuring sound moved slowly across the face of the void, across the deep. Heat could be seen; at this transformation of frequency heat appeared as light, but only as a dull red light, a somber light. He found it ugly." See also Ubik's description of half-life for similar imagery of dull, red, smoky lights. There Dick explicitly cites the Tibetan Book of the Dead as the source of the imagery (Ubik 2.1). In a letter to Rich Brown (Dick, Selected Letters 1938-1971 214), as well as in the headnote to The Man in the High Castle, Dick revealed which version of the Bardo Thödol he used; I have listed this edition in the bibliography.

<sup>44</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 5.3.

<sup>45</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 7.3, 8.3. Regarding the mass displacement of worship from Deity to Enemy, Dick wrote an applicable entry in his Exegesis: "The underlying secret [...] is that the true king [...] has been deposed & an impostor [...] rules in his place, as (if he were) him. [...] That's part one. Part two is that the true God [...] has filtered back in on the periphery. But the impostor is at the civil & church center. Thus people think they are worshiping Christ-YHWH-Ubik but aren't; they are under a spell (of delusion--which Christ/YHWH freed me of in 2-74)" (Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 192-193).

<sup>46</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 10.2.

<sup>47</sup> Dick discussed Plato's cave in a conversation with Paul Williams on October 31, 1974, six years before he wrote The Divine Invasion (Williams 72).



<sup>48</sup> Plato, Republic 7.514-517. (As is often the case with Plato, the cave does not abruptly cease to be a topic, but slowly evolves into something new; 7.517 marks the end of the descriptive imagery but the ideas raised by the metaphor continue to be reworked.)

<sup>49</sup> There is a similarity between Plato's "reflections in water" and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (Holy Bible, NIV, 1 Cor. 13:12). Philip K. Dick drew largely on this verse throughout his work; he even used a variant of the King James translation, "For now we see through a glass, darkly" (Holy Bible, KJV, 1 Cor. 13:12), for the title of his novel A Scanner Darkly. In his lecture "Man, Android, and Machine" he made a very explicit connection between the Pauline epistle and the Platonic cave: "[Paul] is referring to the familiar notion of Plato's, that we see only images of reality, and probably these images are inaccurate and imperfect and not to be relied on. I wish to add that Paul was probably saying one thing more than Plato in the celebrated metaphor of the cave: Paul was saying that we may well be seeing the universe backwards" (Dick, The Dark-Haired Girl 207, and Dick, The Shifting Realities 214-215).

<sup>50</sup> Plato, Republic 7.516b.

<sup>51</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 15.1.

<sup>52</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 18.1.

<sup>53</sup> Dick, The Divine Invasion 19.2.

<sup>54</sup> See Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 202.

<sup>55</sup> In his Exegesis, Dick commented on this considerably autobiographical aspect of Timothy Archer: "There is a certain quality of Jack Isidore [Confessions of a Crap Artist] in Bishop Archer: The capacity to believe anything, any pseudoscience as theosophy. The 'fool in Christ,' naive & gullible [and] rushing from one fad to another, typical of California" (Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 229).

<sup>56</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 9.1.

<sup>57</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 14.1.

<sup>58</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 15.1, 15.3.

<sup>59</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 15.1.

<sup>60</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 5.3.

<sup>61</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 8.1.

<sup>62</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 8.1. There is another reference to Fidelio in 14.1.

<sup>63</sup> Dick, The Dark-Haired Girl 224, and Dick, The Shifting Realities 226-227.

<sup>64</sup> Dick, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer 8.1.

<sup>65</sup> In 1968 he wrote that when he completed Man in the High Castle, "another point had been passed in my career--and, as before, I didn't realize it. All I knew was that I wanted to write more and more books; the books got better and the publishers were more interested in them" (Dick, "Self Portrait" 13, and Dick, The Shifting Realities 16).

<sup>66</sup> Because The Transmigration of Timothy Archer was his last novel, one can only speculate, as with Beethoven's Thirteenth Quartet, about the novel marking a new period in Dick's writing. I think that, had he lived to write more, this might have proven the case; unfortunately, we will never know. Philip K. Dick considered Timothy Archer the most difficult novel he had ever written; after he completed it, he vowed that he would write science fiction from that point on, because the process of writing the novel nearly killed him (Lee 135). I believe that the stress Dick had accumulated while working on Timothy Archer played a large role in his stroke and subsequent heart failure of March 2, 1982.

<sup>67</sup> See Gwen Lee's What if Our World is Their Heaven? for more on this unrealized book.

<sup>68</sup> Dick, Valis 4.1. Note Dick's humorous combination of the titles Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? and Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said in the name of his invented "cheap science fiction novel."

<sup>69</sup> There is some room for interpretation here. See the Appendix for more on my decision to treat Gather Yourselves Together, rather than The Cosmic Puppets, as Dick's earliest extant novel.

<sup>70</sup> The novel contains three occurrences of "iron bed" (Dick, Gather Yourselves Together 2.2), a singular appearance of a clothes iron (5.3), three "waffle iron[s]" (9.1, 11.1, 12.4), a single "iron club" (17.1), and two uses of "iron" in describing a particularly cold-blooded Chinese man who is "like a snake. Iron. Iron and blood" (19.2).

<sup>71</sup> Dick, Gather Yourselves Together 17.1 (emphasis mine).

<sup>72</sup> Dick, Gather Yourselves Together 17.1.

<sup>73</sup> One of these Tomb World passages gives the impression that the real world is somehow fake: "The sky was held together with tacks and gum and sticky tape. It cracked and was mended, cracked and was mended again. It crumbled and sagged, rotted and swayed in the wind" (Dick, Gather Yourselves Together 14.2). See also 4.4 and 16.4.

<sup>74</sup> Dick, Gather Yourselves Together 14.1.

<sup>75</sup> Brown 291.

<sup>76</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 5.3.

<sup>77</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 5.3.

<sup>78</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 6.1 (emphasis mine).

<sup>79</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 7.1.

<sup>80</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 8.1.

<sup>81</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 9.1. For more Garden World imagery, see 14.1 and 15.1.

<sup>82</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 11.1.

<sup>83</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 14.1.

<sup>84</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 11.1.

<sup>85</sup> Dick, The Cosmic Puppets 3.2.

<sup>86</sup> The character Reese Verrick has "thick iron-streaked hair" and "iron-hard fingers" (Dick, Solar Lottery 1.2, 16.1). Moreover, we learn that the ship which is on its way to the Flame Disc contains an "iron cot" (9.3).

<sup>87</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 6.2.

<sup>88</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 6.1.

<sup>89</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 6.2.

<sup>90</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 12.1, 15.3.

<sup>91</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 6.1.

<sup>92</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 1.2.

<sup>93</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 16.2.

<sup>94</sup> Dick, The World Jones Made 20.1.

<sup>95</sup> Dick, Mary and the Giant 6.1. Later Mary lounges against an "iron railing" (14.1).

<sup>96</sup> Dick, Mary and the Giant 6.2.

<sup>97</sup> Dick, Mary and the Giant 19.3.

<sup>98</sup> Though he was familiar with the concept, Dick most likely did not know the term idios kosmos when he wrote Mary and the Giant.

<sup>99</sup> Dick, Mary and the Giant 20.1.

<sup>100</sup> Dick, Mary and the Giant 21.2.

<sup>101</sup> Dick, Mary and the Giant 22.1.

<sup>102</sup> This metal is not iron, although there are several other interesting uses of the word "iron" in this book. When the accident victims are trapped inside Mrs. Pritchett's prudish Victorian mind, they see a trouser-wearing horse (Mrs. Pritchett does not appreciate naked animals!) "attached to a cart full of scrap iron" (Dick, Eye in the Sky 9.2). Later (still in Mrs. Pritchett's idios kosmos) we learn that a new "Iron Age city" had been discovered and is being unearthed in the Middle East (10.1). McFeyffe, the creator of the final koinos kosmos, is described as having "massive, iron-hard muscles" (16.1). Near the end of the novel there is some "scrap iron" and a few "corrugated iron shed[s]" (16.2), none of which seem to carry any thematic weight.

<sup>103</sup> Dick, Eye in the Sky 9.1.

<sup>104</sup> See Foucault, Discipline and Punish 3.3. I have not found any evidence that Dick read Michel Foucault, and do not wish to imply that he had; if he did, it would have been during the last few years of his life, and it would not have affected his early novels such as Eye in the Sky. I offer this reference simply for the added interpretive insight Foucault offers when reading Philip K. Dick's work.

<sup>105</sup> Dick, Eye in the Sky 7.1, 7.3.

<sup>106</sup> Dick, Eye in the Sky 15.1.

<sup>107</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 184.

<sup>108</sup> Dick, Eye in the Sky 16.2.

<sup>109</sup> Dick, Eye in the Sky 1.2.

<sup>110</sup> Dick, Eye in the Sky 1.2.

<sup>111</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 166.

<sup>112</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 179-182.

<sup>113</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 184.

<sup>114</sup> Dick, The Man Who Japed 7.1.

<sup>115</sup> The "pornographic" book in question is James Joyce's Ulysses (Dick, The Man Who Japed 9.2). This was a particularly political detail, considering the novel's controversial, and precedent-setting, acceptance in America.

<sup>116</sup> Dick, The Man Who Japed 3.1.

<sup>117</sup> Dick, The Man Who Japed 4.1.

<sup>118</sup> This is the only significant use of iron in the novel. Other instances include an "iron-oxide-impregnated tape" (Dick, The Man Who Japed 1.1), Mr. Hadler who "stood like iron" (3.1), an "electric waffle iron" (9.3), and "iron-haired" Phyllis Frame (21.1).

<sup>119</sup> Dick, The Man Who Japed 8.1. Reading this passage I am reminded of Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, since Dick seems assured in his knowledge of the connection between the Protestant Reformation and the end of leisure which, according to Weber, spawned modern capitalism.

<sup>120</sup> Dick, The Man Who Japed 17.2.

<sup>121</sup> There are two major references to the Tomb World in this novel: the ruins of Hokkaido (4.1), and the Mogentlock Building, which is actually described as "a vast tomb" (9.1).

<sup>122</sup> Dick, The Man Who Japed 13.2, 14.1.

<sup>123</sup> Dick, The Man Who Japed 23.3.

<sup>124</sup> Dick, The Broken Bubble 16.2.

<sup>125</sup> For instance, there is an "iron cage" or "iron trap" elevator in the McLaughlen Building (Dick, The Broken Bubble 1.2, 13.1), a "soldering iron" (5.2), and a "fence and iron gate" in front of Art and Rachael's house (9.1).

<sup>126</sup> Roger Lindahl nails "a sheet of galvanized iron" onto a door (Dick, Puttering About in a Small Land 7.1); moreover, there is a "steam iron" (8.1), Liz Bonner who "didn't have time to iron a bra" (11.2), some "electric irons" (21.1), "shavers and toasters and irons" (21.1), the phrase "another iron or so in the fire" (21.2), and more "soldering iron[s]" than I care to count (21.3).

<sup>127</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 3.3.

<sup>128</sup> For more Tomb World later in the novel, see Dick, Time Out of Joint 7.2 and 11.2.

<sup>129</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 3.3.

<sup>130</sup> Shortly thereafter, Sammy (Ragle's nephew) finds five more slips of paper at the Ruins (Dick, Time Out of Joint 4.3). From this point on, "Ruins" is consistently capitalized, having assumed--like the Tomb World--an archetypal significance.

<sup>131</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 5.4.

<sup>132</sup> I am not the first to come to the conclusion that the Peter Weir-directed and Andrew Niccol-scripted The Truman Show stole heavily from Time Out of Joint; see Butler 27-28.

<sup>133</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 7.2.

<sup>134</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 6.1.

<sup>135</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 7.2.

<sup>136</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 9.1. This particular detail also reminds me of The Wachowski Brothers' The Matrix, in which the hero learns that it is not the year 1999, that--in the real world, outside of the Matrix--roughly a century has passed.

<sup>137</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 14.4.

<sup>138</sup> Dick, Time Out of Joint 14.5.

<sup>139</sup> "At least he was safe here in the truck. Something around him. Shell of metal" (Dick, Time Out of Joint 8.2).

<sup>140</sup> In a scene where a truck driver is imprisoned in the back of his own truck, we learn that the truck has an "iron ladder" as well as a "tire iron" (Dick, Time Out of Joint 12.2).

<sup>141</sup> Handing a metal box (containing his collection of the labeled slips of paper) to his brother-in-law Vic, Ragle says "I give you the real" (Dick, Time Out of Joint 11.2).

<sup>142</sup> The novel contains, for instance, "galvanized iron" (Dick, In Milton Lumky Territory 4.2) and "corrugated iron machine shops" (9.2).



<sup>143</sup> Dick, In Milton Lumky Territory 8.2.

<sup>144</sup> See Dick, Dr. Futurity 7.2 for a time-travel scene that uses imagery lifted directly from the third chapter of Wells' The Time Machine. Dick drops Wells' name in his next novel (Dick, Confessions of a Crap Artist 1.1), so there is no question that he read the imaginative Victorian author.

<sup>145</sup> This world is "like the Egyptian society--death and life so interwoven that the world has become a cemetery, and the people nothing more than custodians living among the bones of the dead. They are virtually pre-dead, in their own minds" (Dick, Dr. Futurity 8.1).

<sup>146</sup> Dick, Dr. Futurity 3.1. See also 4.1 for more on the practice of euthanasia.

<sup>147</sup> Dick, Dr. Futurity 4.3.

<sup>148</sup> Dick, Dr. Futurity 7.1.

<sup>149</sup> For instance, Fay "could not bear to iron clothes" (Dick, Confessions of a Crap Artist 10.4).

<sup>150</sup> Dick, Confessions of a Crap Artist 6.1.

<sup>151</sup> Dick, Confessions of a Crap Artist 19.1. See also 19.2 for Nathan's further ruminations on his fate.

<sup>152</sup> In 1969 Dick would write that he no longer believed in writing messages in his novels (Dick, Selected Letters 1938-1971 245). Confessions of a Crap Artist was written in .

<sup>153</sup> Dick, Confessions of a Crap Artist 10.2.

<sup>154</sup> Vulcan 3 is so intelligent that it is considered a living being (Dick, Vulcan's Hammer 10.2).

<sup>155</sup> Dick himself said that his concept of hell was being stuck on an asteroid for the rest of eternity, forced to read his own books... "especially Vulcan's Hammer" (Apel 55).

<sup>156</sup> Dick, Vulcan's Hammer 9.2.

<sup>157</sup> Dick, Vulcan's Hammer 14.2.

<sup>158</sup> Dick, Vulcan's Hammer 3.2.

<sup>159</sup> Dick, Vulcan's Hammer 12.1.

<sup>160</sup> Dick, Vulcan's Hammer 8.1.

<sup>161</sup> Dick, The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike 1.1.

<sup>162</sup> Dick, Humpty Dumpty in Oakland 6.1.

<sup>163</sup> Some other uses of "iron" include timbers of a house which "had become like iron over the years" (Dick, Humpty Dumpty in Oakland 3.1), a "wrought-iron gate" (4.2), some "iron fences" (12.1), and what must be Dick's favorite cliché, "I got a couple of irons in the fire" (8.1).

<sup>164</sup> Dick, The Man in the High Castle 5.1.

<sup>165</sup> Dick, The Man in the High Castle 14.1.

<sup>166</sup> See Williams 138.

<sup>167</sup> Dick, The Man in the High Castle 14.2.

<sup>168</sup> Dick, The Man in the High Castle 14.2.

<sup>169</sup> Dick read the English editions of The Lord of the Rings in 1955-1956, "before the Tolkien cult got started," and he read The Hobbit when he was a child (Rickman, Philip K. Dick: In His Own Words 55-56).

<sup>170</sup> Dick, The Man in the High Castle 14.2.

<sup>171</sup> Dick, The Man in the High Castle 14.2.

<sup>172</sup> Dick, The Man in the High Castle 9.3.

<sup>173</sup> For more on the parallels between yin/yang and Black Iron Prison/Palm Tree Garden, see the Exegesis (Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 80-81, 145). For a further exploration of Taoism in The Man in the High Castle, see Warrick, "The Encounter of Taoism and Fascism in The Man in the High Castle" 27-52.

<sup>174</sup> Dick, Martian Time-Slip 3.3.

<sup>175</sup> Dick, Martian Time-Slip 7.2.

<sup>176</sup> Dick, Martian Time-Slip 5.2.

<sup>177</sup> Dick, Martian Time-Slip 10.3. See also 8.4, 9.3, 10.1, and 11.1.

<sup>178</sup> In this novel, mental illness is defined as "a narrowing, a contracting of life into, at last, a moldering, dank tomb, a place where nothing [comes] or [goes]; a place of total death" (Dick, Martian Time-Slip 9.2).

<sup>179</sup> Dick, Martian Time-Slip 9.2.

<sup>180</sup> Dick, Martian Time-Slip 3.3.

<sup>181</sup> Dick, Martian Time-Slip 16.4, 16.5.

<sup>182</sup> Dick, Dr. Bloodmoney 5.1.

<sup>183</sup> Dick, Dr. Bloodmoney 5.2, 5.4, 5.5.

<sup>184</sup> Technically, Dr. Bluthgeld survives the bombing, but when the smoke begins to clear he experiences the afterlife as it appears in the Tibetan Book of the Dead: empty, inert, and filled with a gloomy haze (Dick, Dr. Bloodmoney 5.1).

<sup>185</sup> Dick, Dr. Bloodmoney 5.5.

<sup>186</sup> The symbiosis of Edie and Bill Keller is based on Philip K. Dick's own deep connection with his twin sister, Jane Charlotte, who died less than two months after they were born (see Sutin 11-13, as well as Rickman, To The High Castle 2-10).

<sup>187</sup> Dick, Dr. Bloodmoney 13.1.

- <sup>188</sup> Dick, Dr. Bloodmoney 16.1.
- <sup>189</sup> Holy Bible, NIV, 1 Cor. 13:11.
- <sup>190</sup> Dick, Dr. Bloodmoney 15.3.
- <sup>191</sup> Dick, The Game-Players of Titan 10.3.
- <sup>192</sup> Dick, The Game-Players of Titan 10.2.
- <sup>193</sup> Dick, The Game-Players of Titan 11.2.
- <sup>194</sup> Dick, The Game-Players of Titan 14.1.
- <sup>195</sup> See Dick, The Game-Players of Titan 17.4.
- <sup>196</sup> Dick, Now Wait for Last Year 2.2.
- <sup>197</sup> Dick, Now Wait for Last Year 2.2.
- <sup>198</sup> JJ-180 alters one's sense of what Kant calls (in his Critique of Pure Reason) "categories of perception" (Dick, Now Wait for Last Year 3.1). For more on the orthogonal timelines that result from the use of this drug (which correspond somewhat to Dick's later layering of the Roman empire and California in the seventies), see 12.1.
- <sup>199</sup> Dick, Now Wait for Last Year 11.2.
- <sup>200</sup> Dick, Now Wait for Last Year 12.2.
- <sup>201</sup> Dick, Now Wait for Last Year 14.2 (my emphasis).
- <sup>202</sup> Dick, Now Wait for Last Year 14.2.
- <sup>203</sup> Dick, Clans of the Alphane Moon 10.1. In his earlier novel Vulcan's Hammer, Dick played with this same idea: that the hospital is not a place where "mentally unbalanced people [...] get well," but a "prison [...] where they send [people] who speak their mind" (Dick, Vulcan's Hammer 3.1).
- <sup>204</sup> Dick, Clans of the Alphane Moon 10.1.

<sup>205</sup> "Iron Curtain" appears earlier in this satirically paranoid novel, in connection with "Red Canada" (Dick, Clans of the Alphane Moon 7.2).

<sup>206</sup> Dick, Clans of the Alphane Moon 11.2.

<sup>207</sup> Dick, Clans of the Alphane Moon 13.6.

<sup>208</sup> Dick, Clans of the Alphane Moon 1.1.

<sup>209</sup> Dick, Clans of the Alphane Moon 11.2.

<sup>210</sup> Dick, The Crack in Space 11.2.

<sup>211</sup> Dick, The Crack in Space 8.2.

<sup>212</sup> Dick, The Crack in Space 12.3.

<sup>213</sup> Dick, The Crack in Space 11.1.

<sup>214</sup> Dick, The Crack in Space 9.1.

<sup>215</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 185.

<sup>216</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 75.

<sup>217</sup> Dick, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch 6.2.

<sup>218</sup> Dick, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch 11.1.

<sup>219</sup> Dick, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch 13.1.

<sup>220</sup> Dick, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch 8.3.

<sup>221</sup> Dick, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch 13.4.

<sup>222</sup> Dick, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch 10.1, 13.1.

<sup>223</sup> Dick, The Dark-Haired Girl 212, and Dick, The Shifting Realities 218. See the listing for Dick, "Man, Android, and Machine" for original publishing information.

<sup>224</sup> Dick, The Zap Gun 14.1.

<sup>225</sup> Uses of the word "iron" include some "iron oxide tape" (Dick, The Zap Gun 7.1), the "wonderful insignia-impregnated hard-as-black-iron hoop collar" worn by General Nitz (11.1), and the "black wrought-iron chair" in Lilo Topchev's motel room (15.1).

<sup>226</sup> Dick, The Zap Gun 29.1.

<sup>227</sup> Dick, The Penultimate Truth 3.1.

<sup>228</sup> Abrash 158.

<sup>229</sup> Dick, The Penultimate Truth 24.1.

<sup>230</sup> Dick, The Penultimate Truth 1.1.

<sup>231</sup> Dick, The Penultimate Truth 24.1.

<sup>232</sup> Dick, The Unteleported Man 1.2.

<sup>233</sup> Dick, The Unteleported Man 2.1.

<sup>234</sup> Dick, Lies, Inc. 16.1. This chapter was not included in the original printing of The Unteleported Man. For more on the complicated publishing history of this novel, see Sutin, Divine Invasions 304-305.

<sup>235</sup> Dick, The Unteleported Man 4.3.

<sup>236</sup> Dick, Counter-Clock World 1.3.

<sup>237</sup> Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 2.1.

<sup>238</sup> Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 3.1, 18.1.

<sup>239</sup> This is because androids lack empathy (Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 11.1).

<sup>240</sup> Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 21.1.

<sup>241</sup> See Dick, "Notes on Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" 1-3. The article is reprinted in Dick, The Shifting Realities 155-161.

<sup>242</sup> Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 10.1. See also 11.1.

<sup>243</sup> Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 6.1.

<sup>244</sup> The anti-pet man "had a mean, hard face, as if he cared about nothing. As if he lived in a world of ice and iron" (Dick, Nick and the Glimmung 2.3).

<sup>245</sup> Dick, Ubik 2.1, 10.2.

<sup>246</sup> Dick, Ubik 10.2.

<sup>247</sup> For a few of the many relevant Tomb World passages, see Dick, Ubik 7.2, 10.1.

<sup>248</sup> Dick, Ubik 13.1.

<sup>249</sup> Dick, Ubik 15.1.

<sup>250</sup> Dick, Ubik 7.1.

<sup>251</sup> There is another "iron cage" elevator later in the novel in which Joe Chip refuses to ride (Dick, Ubik 13.1).

<sup>252</sup> Dick, Ubik 10.1.

<sup>253</sup> Dick, Ubik 5.1.

<sup>254</sup> Dick, Ubik 10.1.

<sup>255</sup> Dick, Ubik 17.1.

<sup>256</sup> Dick, The Shifting Realities 348.

<sup>257</sup> Dick, Galactic Pot-Healer 1.3.

<sup>258</sup> Dick, Galactic Pot-Healer 12.1. It should be noted, however, that even inside the good Glimmung, one's senses are occluded; when Joe Fernwright is absorbed into the Glimmung's body, "he tried to see, but his eyes registered only a swirling, jello-like image, a film which obliterated rather than revealed the reality around him" (15.1). This polyencephalic fusion is a reworking of Can-D (The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch) and the empathy box (Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?).

<sup>259</sup> Dick, A Maze of Death 5.2.

<sup>260</sup> Dick, A Maze of Death 8.1.

<sup>261</sup> Dick hints at the existence of the veil of Maya in subtler ways; for example: "An ocean lay far off, pounding invisibly in the drifting curtain of dust and moisture" (Dick, A Maze of Death 8.1).

<sup>262</sup> Dick, A Maze of Death 8.1.

<sup>263</sup> Dick, A Maze of Death 15.1, 15.2.

<sup>264</sup> Dick, A Maze of Death 9.6.

<sup>265</sup> Dick, The Dark-Haired Girl 206-207, and Dick, The Shifting Realities 214. See the listing for Dick, "Man, Android, and Machine" for original publishing information.

<sup>266</sup> Dick, Our Friends From Frolix 8 6.1.

<sup>267</sup> Dick, Our Friends From Frolix 8 27.1

<sup>268</sup> Dick, Our Friends From Frolix 8 15.1.

<sup>269</sup> Dick, Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said 16.1.

<sup>270</sup> Dick, Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said 19.1. See also 21.1 for another "black iron railing."

<sup>271</sup> Dick, Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said 21.1.

<sup>272</sup> Dick, Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said 22.4.

<sup>273</sup> "If You Find This World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others" 19-20. Reprinted in Dick, The Shifting Realities 245.

<sup>274</sup> In an interview with D. Scott Apel, Dick said that the S. A. Powers scene in A Scanner Darkly was based on his own vision of abstract art, flashing one after the other for eight to ten hours (Apel 78).

<sup>275</sup> Dick, A Scanner Darkly 2.1.

<sup>276</sup> Dick, A Scanner Darkly 10.1.

<sup>277</sup> Dick, A Scanner Darkly 11.1.

<sup>278</sup> Dick, A Scanner Darkly 13.1.



- <sup>279</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 187.
- <sup>280</sup> Dick, In Pursuit of Valis 187.
- <sup>281</sup> Dick and Zelazny, Deus Irae 5.1.
- <sup>282</sup> Dick and Zelazny, Deus Irae 18.1.
- <sup>283</sup> Dick and Zelazny, Deus Irae 18.2.
- <sup>284</sup> Dick and Zelazny, Deus Irae 18.2.
- <sup>285</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 14.1.
- <sup>286</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 5.1.
- <sup>287</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 6.1.
- <sup>288</sup> This novel has much stronger ties to McCarthyism, government censorship, and the "Iron Curtain" than its rewrite. See, for instance, Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 26.3.
- <sup>289</sup> F.F.F., the initials of the Nixon-like American president Farris F. Fremont, were chosen because they represent the Number of the Beast, 666 (see Dick, Valis 9.5). "Farris" is similar to the adjective "ferrous"--meaning of, or containing, iron. Furthermore, Fremont's first direct quote in the novel begins with the words "Iron production" (Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 13.1).
- <sup>290</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 11.1.
- <sup>291</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 13.1.
- <sup>292</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 17.1.
- <sup>293</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 17.1.
- <sup>294</sup> For more on the "small, selective" invasion, see Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 25.2.
- <sup>295</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 17.1.
- <sup>296</sup> Dick, Radio Free Albemuth 30.1.
- <sup>297</sup> For more on Philip K. Dick's novel Valis, see Part II of this study. For more on 2-3-74, see I.