

Ken Lopez, Bookseller Catalog

. **DICK, Philip K.** "*The Android and the Human*" (n.p.), (n.d.). First. Original manuscript for a speech given by Dick at the Vancouver SF Convention at the University of British Columbia, in March 1972. 42 ribbon-copy typewritten pages, with corrections and emendations throughout in Dick's hand. The speech was later published in *SF Commentary* in December, 1972 and then reprinted in *Vector* in March-April 1973. In a letter that accompanied its publication in *SF Commentary*, Dick wrote that "this speech [tried]... to sum up an entire lifetime of developing thought." He concluded that it contained, "I hope, the seed for my novels to come." An important piece of writing, which anticipated the themes and concerns of the novels of Dick's last decade. Manuscript material by Dick is very scarce, particularly of such significant content.

The Android and The Human

Philip K. Dick, 1972

It is the tendency of the so-called primitive mind to animate its environment. Modern depth psychology has requested us for years to withdraw these anthropomorphic projections from what is actually inanimate reality, to introject -- that is, to bring back into our own heads -- the living quality which we, in ignorance, cast out onto the inert things surrounding us. Such introjection is said to be the mark of true maturity in the individual, and the authentic mark of civilization in contrast to mere social culture, such as one find in a tribe. A native of Africa is said to view his surroundings as pulsing with a purpose, a life, which is actually within himself; once these childish projections are withdrawn, he sees that the world is dead, and that life resides solely within himself. When he reaches this sophisticated point he is said to be either mature or sane. Or scientific. But one wonders: has he not also, in this process, reified -- that is, made into a thing -- other people? Stones and rocks and trees may now be inanimate for him, but what about his friends? Has he not now made them into stones, too?

This is, really, a psychological problem. And its solution, I think, is of less importance in any case than one might think, because, within the last decade, we have seen a trend not anticipated by our earnest psychologists -- or by anyone else -- which dwarfs that issue: our environment, and I mean our man-made world of machines, artificial constructs, computers, electronic systems, interlinking homeostatic components -- all this is in fact beginning more and more to possess what the earnest psychologists fear the primitive sees in his

environment: animation. In a very real sense our environment is becoming alive, or at least quasi-alive, and in ways specifically and fundamentally analogous to ourselves. Cybernetics, a valuable recent scientific discipline, articulated by the late Norbert Wiener, saw valid comparisons between the behavior of machines and humans -- with the view that a study of machines would yield valuable insights into the nature of our own behavior. By studying what goes wrong with a machine -- for example when two mutually exclusive tropisms function simultaneously in one of Grey Walter's synthetic turtles, producing fascinatingly intricate behavior in the befuddled turtles -- one learns, perhaps, a new, more fruitful insight into what in humans was previously called "neurotic" behavior. But suppose the use of this analogy is turned the other way? Suppose -- and I don't believe Wiener anticipated this -- suppose a study of ourselves, our own nature, enables us to gain insight into the now extraordinarily complex functioning and malfunctioning of mechanical and electronic constructs? In other words -- and this is what I wish to stress in what I am saying here -- it is now possible that we can learn about the artificial external environment around us, how it behaves, why, what it is up to, by analogizing from what we know about ourselves.

Machines are becoming more human, so to speak -- at least in the sense that, as Wiener indicated, some meaningful comparison exists between human and mechanical behavior. But is it not ourselves that we know first and foremost? Rather than learning about ourselves by studying our constructs, perhaps we should make the attempt to comprehend what our constructs are up to by looking into what we ourselves are up to.

Perhaps, really, what we are seeing is a gradual merging of the general nature of human activity and function into the activity and function of what we humans have built and surrounded ourselves with. A hundred years ago such a thought would have been absurd, rather than merely anthropomorphic. What could a man living in 1750 have learned about himself by observing the behavior of a donkey steam engine? Could he have watched it huffing and puffing and then extrapolated from its labor an insight into why he himself continually fell in love with one certain type of pretty young girl? This would not have been primitive thinking on his part; it would have been pathological. But now we find ourselves immersed in a world of our own making so intricate, so mysterious, that as Stanislaw Lem, the eminent Polish science fiction writer, theorizes, the time may come when for example a man may have to be restrained from attempting to rape a sewing machine. Let us hope,

if that time comes, that it is a female sewing machine he fastens his intentions on. And one over the age of seventeen -- hopefully a very old treadle-operated Singer, although possibly regrettably past menopause.

I have, in some of my stories and novels, written about androids or robots or simulacra -- the name doesn't matter; what is meant is artificial constructs masquerading as humans. Usually with a sinister purpose in mind. I suppose I took it for granted that if such a construct, a robot for example, had a benign or anyhow decent purpose in mind, it would not need to so disguise itself. *Now*, to me, that theme seems obsolete. The constructs do not mimic humans; they are, in many deep ways, *actually* human already. They are not trying to fool us, for a purpose of any sort; they merely follow lines we follow, in order that they, too, may overcome such common problems as the breakdown of vital parts, loss of power source, attack by such foes as storms, short circuits -- and I'm sure any one of us here can testify that a short circuit, especially in our power supply, can ruin our entire day and make us utterly unable to get to our daily job, or, once at the office, useless as far as doing the work set forth on our desk.

What would occur to me as a recasting of the robot-appearing-as-human theme would be a gleaming robot with a telescan-lens and a helium battery power pack, who, when jostled, bleeds. Underneath the metal hull is a heart, such as we ourselves have. Perhaps I will write that. Or, as in stories already in print, a computer, when asked some ultimate question such as, "Why is there water?", prints out First Corinthians. One story I wrote, which I'm afraid I failed to take seriously enough, dealt with a computer which, when able to answer a question put to it, ate the questioner. Presumably -- I failed to go into this -- had the computer been unable to answer a question, the human questioner would have eaten *it*. Anyhow, I inadvertently blended the human and the construct, and didn't notice that such a blend might, in time, actually begin to become part of our reality. Like Lem, I think this will be so, more and more. But to project past Lem's idea: a time may come when, if a man tries to rape a sewing machine, the sewing machine will have him arrested and testify perhaps even a little hysterically against him in court. This leads to all sorts of spinoff ideas: false testimony by suborned sewing machines who accuse innocent men unfairly, paternity tests, and, of course, abortions for sewing machines which have become pregnant against their will. And would there be birth control pills for sewing machines? Probably, like one of my previous wives, certain sewing machines would complain that the pills made them

overweight -- or rather, in their case, that it made them sew irregular stitches. And there would be unreliable sewing machines that would forget to take birth control pills. And, last but not least, there would have to be Planned Parenthood Clinics at which sewing machines just off the assembly lines would be counseled as to the dangers of promiscuity, with severe warnings of venereal diseases visited on such immoral machines by an outraged God -- Himself, no doubt, able to sew buttonholes and fancy needlework at a rate that would dazzle the credulous merely metal and plastic sewing machines always ready, like ourselves, to kowtow before divine miracles.

I am being facetious about this, I suppose, but -- the point is not merely a humorous one. Our electronic constructs are becoming so complex that to comprehend them we must now reverse the analogizing of cybernetics and try to reason from our own mentation and behavior to theirs -- although I suppose to assign motive or purpose to them would be to enter the realm of paranoia; what machines *do* may resemble what we do, but certainly they do not have intent in the sense that we have; they have tropisms, they have purpose in the sense that we build them to accomplish certain ends and to react to certain stimuli. A pistol, for example, is built with the purpose of firing a metal slug that will damage, incapacitate or kill someone, but this does not mean the pistol *wants* to do this. And yet here we are entering the philosophical realm of Spinoza when he saw, and I think with great profundity, that if a falling stone could reason, it would think, "I *want* to fall at the rate of 32 feet per second per second." Free will for us -- that is, when we feel desire, when we conscious of wanting to do what we do -- may be even for us an illusion; and depth psychology seems to substantiate this: many of our drives in life originate from an unconscious that is beyond our control. We are driven as are insects, although the term "instinct" is perhaps not applicable for us. Whatever the term, much of our behavior that we feel is the result of our will, may control us to the extent that for all practical purposes we falling stones, doomed to drop at a rate prescribed by nature, as rigid and predictable as the force that creates a crystal. Each of us may feel himself unique, with an intrinsic destiny never before seen in the universe... and yet to God we may be millions of crystals, identical in the eyes of the Cosmic Scientist.

And -- here is a thought not too pleasing -- as the external world becomes more animate, we may find that *we* -- the so-called humans -- are becoming, and may to a great extent always have been, inanimate in the sense that *we* are led, directed by built-in tropisms, rather than leading. So we and

our elaborately evolving computers may meet each other halfway. Someday a human being, named perhaps Fred White, may shoot a robot named Pete Something-or-other, which has come out of a General Electric's factory, and to his surprise see it weep and bleed. And the dying robot may shoot back and, to its surprise, see a wisp of gray smoke arise from the electric pump that it supposed was Mr. White's beating heart. It would be rather a great moment of truth for both of them.

I would like then to ask this: what is it, in our behavior, that we can call specifically human? That is special to us as a living species? And what is it that, at least up to now, we can consign as merely machine behavior, or, by extension, insect behavior, or reflex behavior? And I would include, in this, the kind of pseudo-human behavior exhibited by what were once living men -- creatures who have, in ways I wish to discuss next, become instruments, means, rather than ends, and hence to me analogs of machines in the *bad* sense, in the sense that although biological life continues, metabolism goes on, the soul -- for lack of a better term -- is no longer there or at least no longer active. And such does exist in our world -- it always did, but the production of such inauthentic human activity has become a science of government and such-like agencies, now. The reduction of humans to mere use -- men made into machines, serving a purpose which although "good" in an abstract sense has, for its accomplishment, employed what I regard as the greatest evil imaginable: the placing on what was a free man who laughed and cried and made mistakes and wandered off into foolishness and play a restriction that limits him, despite what he may imagine or think, to the fulfilling of an aim outside of his own personal -- however puny -- destiny. As if, so to speak, history has made him into its instrument. History, and men skilled in -- and trained in -- the use of manipulative techniques, equipped with devices, ideologically oriented, themselves, in such a way that the use of these devices strikes them as a necessary or at least desirable method of bringing about some ultimately desired goal.

I think, at this point, of Tom Paine's comment about or another party of the Europe of his time: "They admired the feathers and forgot the dying bird." And it is the "dying bird" that I am concerned with. The dying -- and yet, I think, beginning once again to revive in the hearts of the new generation of kids coming into maturity -- the dying bird of authentic humanness.

This is what I wish to say to you here, today. I wish to disclose my hope, my faith, in the kids who are emerging now. Their world, their values. And, simultaneously, their imperviousness to the false values, the false idols, the false hates, of the previous generations. The fact that they, these fine, good kids, cannot be reached or moved or even touched by the "gravity" -- to refer back to my previous metaphor -- that has made us older persons fall, against our knowledge or will, at 32 feet per second per second throughout our lives... while believing that we *desired* it.

It is as if these kids, or at least many of them, some of them, are falling at a different rate, or, really, not falling at all. Walt Whitman's "Marching to the sound of other drummers" might be rephrased this way: falling, not in response to unexamined, unchallenged alleged "verities," but in response to a new and inner -- and genuinely authentic -- human desire.

Youth, of course, has always tended toward this; in fact this is really a definition of youth. But right now it is so urgent, if, as I think, we are merging by degrees into homogeneity with our mechanical constructs, step by step, month by month, until a time will perhaps come when a writer, for example, will not stop writing because someone unplugged his electric typewriter but because some unplugged *him*. But there are kids *now* who cannot be unplugged because no electric cord links them to any external power source. Their hearts beat with an interior, private meaning. Their energy doesn't come from a pacemaker; it comes from a stubborn, almost absurdly perverse, refusal to be "shucked," that is, to be taken in by the slogans, the ideology -- in fact by any and all ideology itself, of whatever sort -- that would reduce them to instruments of abstract causes, however "good." Back in California, where I come from, I have been living with such kids, participating, to the extent I can, in their emerging world. I would like to tell you about their world because -- if we are lucky -- something of that world, those values, that way of life, will shape the future of our total society, our utopia or anti-utopia of the future. As a science fiction writer, I must of course look continually ahead, always at the future. It is my hope -- and I'd like to communicate it to you in the tremendous spirit of optimism that I feel so urgently and strongly -- that our collective tomorrow exists in embryonic form in the heads, or rather in the hearts, of these kids who right now, at their young ages, are politically and sociologically powerless, unable even, by our Californian laws, to buy a bottle of beer or a cigarette, to vote, to in any way shape, be consulted about, or bring into existence the official laws that govern their and our society. I think,

really, I am saying this: if you are interested in the world of tomorrow you may learn something about it, or at least read about possibilities that may emerge to fashion it, in the pages of *Analog* and *F&SF* and *Amazing*, but actually, to find it in its authentic form, you will discover it as you observe a 16- or 17-year-old kid as he goes about his natural peregrinations, his normal day. Or, as we say in the San Francisco Bay Area, as you observe him "cruising around town to check out the action." This is what I have found. These kids, that I have known, lived with, still know, in California, are my science fiction stories of tomorrow, my summation, at this point in my life as a person and a writer; they are what I look ahead to - and so keenly desire to see prevail. What, more than anything else I have ever encountered, I believe in. And would give my life for. My full measure of devotion, in this war we are fighting, to maintain, and augment, what is human about us, what is the core of ourselves, and the source of our destiny. Our flight must be not only to the stars but into the nature of our own beings. Because it is not merely *where* we go, to Alpha Centaurus or Betelgeuse, but what we are as we make our pilgrimages there. Our natures will be going there, too. "Ad astra" -- but "per hominem." And we must never lose sight of that.

It would, after all, be rather dismaying, if the first two-legged entity to emerge on the surface of Mars from a Terran spacecraft were to declare, "Thanks be to God for letting me, letting me, click, letting, click, click... this is a recording." And then catch fire and explode as a couple of wires got crossed somewhere within its plastic chest. And probably even more dismaying to this construct would be the discovery when it returned to Earth, to find that its "children" had been recycled along with the aluminum beer cans and Coca Cola bottles as fragments of the urban pollution problem. And, finally, when this astronaut made of plastic and wiring and relays went down to the City Hall officials to complain, it would discover that its three-year guarantee had run out, and, since parts were no longer available to keep it functioning, its birth certificate had been cancelled.

Of course, literally, we should not take this seriously. But as a metaphor -- in some broad sense maybe we should scrutinize more closely the two-legged entities we plan to send up, for example, to man the orbiting space station. We do not want to learn three years from now that the alleged human crew had all married portions of the space station and had settled down to whirr happily forever after in connubial bliss. As in Ray Bradbury's superb story in which a fear-haunted citizen of Los Angeles discovers that the police car

trailing him has no driver, that it is tailing him on its own, we should be sure that one of us sits in the driver's seat; in Mr. Bradbury's story the real horror, at least to me, is not that the police car has its own tropism as it hounds the protagonist but that, within the car, there is a vacuum. A place unfilled. The *absence* of something vital -- that is the horrific part, the apocalyptic vision of a nightmare future. But, I, myself, foresee something more optimistic: had I written that story I would have had a teenager behind the wheel of the police car -- he had stolen it while the police officer is in a coffee shop on his lunch break, and the kid is going to resell it by tearing it down into parts. This may sound a little cynical on my part, but wouldn't this be preferable? As we say in California, where I live, when the police come to investigate a burglary of your house, they find, when they are leaving, that someone has stripped the tires and motor and transmission from their car, and the officers must hitchhike back to headquarters. This thought may strike fear in the hearts of the establishment people, but frankly it make me feel cheerful. Even the most base schemes of human beings are preferable to the most exalted tropisms of machines. I think this, right here, is one of the valid insights possessed by some of the new youth: cars, even police cars, are expendable, can be replaced. They are really all alike. It is the person inside who, when gone, cannot be duplicated, at any price. Even if we do not like him we cannot do without him. And once gone, he will never come back.

And then, too, if he is made into an android, he will never come back, never be again human. Or anyhow most likely will not.

As the children of our world fight to develop their new individuality, their almost surly disrespect for the verities we worship, they become for us -- and by "us" I mean the establishment -- a source of trouble. I do not necessarily mean politically active youth, those who organize into distinct societies with banners and slogans -- to me, that is a reduction into the past, however revolutionary those slogans may be. I refer to the intrinsic entities, the kids each of whom is on his own, doing what we call "his thing." He may, for example, not break the law by seating himself on the tracks before troop trains; his flouting of the law may consist of taking his car to a drive-in movie with four kids hidden in the trunk to avoid having to pay. Still, a law is being broken. The first transgression has political, theoretical overtones; the second, a mere lack of agreement that one must always do what one is ordered to do - especially when the order comes from a posted, printed sign. In both cases there is disobedience. We might applaud the first as Meaningful. The second

merely irresponsible. And yet it is in the second that I see a happier future. After all, there have always been in history movements of people in organized opposition to the governing powers. This is merely one group using force against another, the outs versus the ins. It has failed to produce a utopia so far. And I think always will.

Becoming what I call, for lack of a better term, an android, means as I said, to allow oneself to become a means, or to be pounded down, manipulated, made into a means without one's knowledge or consent -- the results are the same. But you cannot turn a human into an android if that human is going to break laws every chance he gets. Androidization requires obedience. And, most of all, *predictability*. It is precisely when a given person's response to any given situation can be predicted with scientific accuracy that the gates are open for the wholesale production of the android life form. What good is a flashlight if the bulb lights up only now and then when you press the button? Any machine must always work, to be reliable. The android, like any other machine, must perform on cue. But our youth cannot be counted on to do this; it is unreliable. Either through laziness, short attention span, perversity, criminal tendencies -- whatever label you wish to pin on the kid to explain this unreliability is fine. Each merely means: we can tell him and tell him what to do, but when the time comes for him to perform, all the subliminal instruction, all the ideological briefing, all the tranquilizing drugs, all the psychotherapy, are a waste. He just plain will not jump when the whip is cracked. And so he is of no use to us, the calcified, entrenched powers. He will not see to it that he acts as an instrument by which we both keep and augment those powers and the rewards -- for ourselves -- that go with them.

What has happened is that there has been too much persuasion. The television set, the newspapers -- all the so-called mass media, have overdone it. Words have ceased to mean much to these kids; they have had to listen too many. They cannot be taught, because there has been too great an eagerness, too conspicuous a motive, to make them learn. The anti-utopia science fiction writers of fifteen years ago, and I was one of them, foresaw the mass communications propaganda machinery grinding everyone down into mediocrity and uniformity. But it is not coming out this way. While the car radio dins out the official view on the war in Vietnam, the young boy is disconnecting the speaker so he can replace it with a tweeter and a woofer; in the middle of the government's harangue the speaker is unattached. And, as he expertly hooks up better audio components in his car, the boy fails even to

notice that the voice on the radio is trying to tell him something. this skilled craftsman of a kid listens only to see whether there is distortion, interference, or a frequency curve that isn't fully compensated. His head is turned toward immediate realities, the speaker itself, not the *flatus voci* dinning from it.

The totalitarian society envisioned by George Orwell in *1984* should have arrived by now. The electronic gadgets are here. The government is here, ready to do what Orwell anticipated. So the power exists, the motive, and the electronic hardware. But these mean nothing, because, progressively more and more so, no one is listening. The new youth that I see is too stupid to read, too restless and bored to watch, too preoccupied to remember. The collective voice of the authorities is wasted on him; he rebels. But rebels not out of theoretical, ideological considerations, only out of what might be called pure selfishness. Plus a careless lack of regard for the dread consequences the authorities promise him if he fails to obey. He cannot be bribed because what he wants he can build, steal, or in some curious, intricate way acquire for himself. He cannot be intimidated because on the streets and in his home he has seen and participated in so much violence that it fails to cow him. He merely gets out of its way when it threatens, or, if he can't escape, he fights back. When the locked police van comes to carry him off to the concentration camp the guards will discover that while loading the van they have failed to note that another equally hopeless juvenile has slashed the tires. The van is out of commission. And while the tires are being replaced, the other youth siphons out all the gas from the gas tank for his souped-up Chevrolet Impala and has sped off long ago.

The absolutely horrible technological society -- that was our dream, our vision of the future. We could foresee nothing equipped with enough power, guile, or whatever, to impede the coming of that dreadful, nightmare society. It never occurred to us that the delinquent kids might abort it out of the sheer perverse malice of their little individual souls, God bless them. Here, as a case in point, are two excerpts from the media; the first, quoted in that epitome of the nauseating, *Time*, is -- so help me -- what *Time* calls "the ultimate dream in telephone service" as described by Harold S. Osborne, former chief engineer of AT&T:

"Whenever a baby is born anywhere in the world, he is given at birth a telephone number for life. As soon as he can talk, he is given a watch-like device with ten little buttons on one side and a screen on the other. When he

wishes to talk with anyone in the world, he will pull out the device and punch on the keys the number. Then, turning the device over, he will hear the voice of his friend and see his face on the screen, in color and in three dimensions. If he does not see him and hear him, he will know that his friend is dead."

I don't know; I really don't find this funny. It is really sad. It is heartbreaking. Anyway; it is not going to happen. The kids have already seen to that. "Phone freaks," they are called, these particular kids. This is what the *L.A. Times* says, in an article dated earlier this year:

"They (the phone freaks) all arrived carrying customized MF'ers -- multi-frequency tone signals -- the phone freak term for a blue box. The homemade MF'ers varied in size and design. One was a sophisticated pocket transistor built by a PhD in engineering, another the size of a cigar box with an actual coupler attaching to the phone receiver. So far, these phone freaks had devised 22 ways to make a free call without using credit cards. In case of a slipup, the phone freaks also know how to detect 'supervision,' phone company jargon for a nearly inaudible tone which comes on the line before anyone answers to register calling charges. As soon as phone freaks detect the dreaded 'supervision,' they hang up fast.

"Captain Crunch was still in the phone booth pulling the red switches on his fancy computerized box. He got his name from the whistle found in the Cap'n Crunch breakfast cereal box. Crunch discovered that the whistle has a frequency of 2600 cycles per second, the exact frequency the telephone company uses to indicate that a line is idle, and of course, the first frequency phone freaks learn how to whistle to get 'disconnect,' which allows them to pass from one circuit to another. Crunch, intent, hunched over his box to read a list of country code numbers. He impersonated to the overseas operator, and called Italy. In less than a minute he reached a professor of classical Greek writings at the University of Florence."

This is how the future has actually come out. None of us science fiction writers foresaw phone freaks. Fortunately, neither did the phone company, which otherwise would have taken over by now. But this is the difference between dire myth and warm, merry reality. And it is the kids, unique, wonderful, unhampered by scruples in any traditional sense, that have made the difference.

Speaking in science fiction terms, I now foresee an anarchistic totalitarian state ahead. Ten years from now a TV street reporter will ask some kid who is president of the United States, and the kid will admit that he doesn't know. "But the President can have you executed," the reporter will protest. "Or beaten or thrown into prison or all your rights taken away, all your property -- everything." And the boy will reply, "Yeah, so could my father up to last month when he had his fatal coronary. He used to say the same thing." End of interview. And when the reporter goes to gather up his equipment he will find that one his color 3-D stereo microphone-vidlens systems is missing; the kid has swiped it from him while the reporter was blabbing on.

If, as it seems, we are in the process of becoming a totalitarian society in which the state apparatus is all-powerful, the ethics most important for the survival of the true, free, human individual would be: cheat, lie, evade, fake it, be elsewhere, forge documents, build improved electronic gadgets in your garage that'll outwit the gadgets used by the authorities. If the television screen is going to watch you, rewire it late at night when you're permitted to turn it off -- rewire it in such a way that the police flunky monitoring the transmission from your living room mirrors back *his* living room at *his* house. When you sign a confession under duress, forge the name of one of the political spies who's infiltrated your model airplane club. Pay your fines in counterfeit money or rubber checks or stolen credit cards. Give a false address. Arrive at the courthouse in a stolen car. Tell the judge that if he sentences you, you will substitute aspirin tablets for his daughter's birth control pills. Or put His Honor on a mailing list for pornographic magazines. Or, if all else fails, threaten him with your using his telephone credit card number to make unnecessary long distance calls to cities on other planets. It will not be necessary to blow up the courthouse any more. Simply find some way to defame the judge -- you saw him driving home one night on the wrong side of the road with his headlights off and a fifth of Seagram's VO propped up against his steering wheel. And his bumper sticker that night read: GRANT FULL RIGHTS TO US HOMOSEXUALS. He has of course torn the sticker off by now, but both you and ten of your friends witnessed it. And they are all at pay phones right now, ready to phone the news to the local papers. And, if he is still so foolish as to sentence you, at least ask him to give back the little tape recorder you inadvertently left in his bedroom. Since the off switch on it is broken, it has probably recorded its entire ten-day reel of tape by now. Results should be interesting. And if he tries to destroy the tape, you will have him arrested for vandalism, which, in the totalitarian state of tomorrow, will be

the supreme crime. What is your life worth in his eyes compared with a three-dollar reel of Mylar tape? The tape is probably government property, like everything else, so to destroy it would be a crime against the state. The first step in a calculated, sinister insurrection.

I wonder if you recall the so-called "brain mapping" developed by Penfield recently; he was able to locate the exact centers in the brain from which each sensation, emotion, and response came. By stimulating one minute area with an electrode, a laboratory rat was transfigured into a state of perpetual bliss. "They'll be doing that to all of us, too, soon," a pessimistic friend said to me, regarding that. "Once the electrodes have been implanted, They can get us to feel, think, do anything They want." Well, to do this, the government would have to let out a contract for the manufacture of a billion sets of electrodes, and, in their customary way, they would award the contract to the lowest bidder, who would build substandard electrodes out of secondhand parts... the technicians implanting the electrodes in the brains of millions upon millions of people would become bored and careless, and, when the switch would be pressed for the total population to feel profound grief at the death of some government official -- probably the minister of the interior, in charge of the slave labor rehabilitation camps -- it would all get fouled up, and the population, like that laboratory rat, would go into collective seizures of merriment. Or the substandard wiring connecting the brains of the population with the Washington D.C. Thought Control Center would overload, and a surge of electricity would roll backward over the lines and set fire to the White House.

Or is this just wishful thinking on my part? A little fantasy about a future society we should really feel apprehensive toward?

The continued elaboration of state tyranny such as we in science fiction circles anticipate in the world of tomorrow -- our whole preoccupation with what we call the "anti-utopian" society -- this growth of state invasion into the privacy of the individual, its knowing too much about him, and then, when it knows, or thinks it knows, something it frowns on, its power and capacity to squash the individual -- as we thoroughly comprehend, this evil process utilizes technology as its instrument. The inventions of applied science, such as the almost miraculously sophisticated sensor devices right now traveling back from war use in Vietnam for adaptation to civilian use here -- these passive infrared scanners, sniper scopes, these chrome boxes with dials and gauges

that can penetrate brick and stone, can tell the user what is being said and done a mile away within a tightly sealed building, be it concrete bunker or apartment building, can, like the weapons before them, fall into what the authorities would call "the wrong hands" -- that is, into the hands of the very people being monitored. Like all machines, these universal transmitters, recording devices, heat pattern discriminators, don't in themselves care who they're being use by or against. The scene of a street fracas where, for example, some juvenile has dropped a water-filled balloon into the sport scar of a wealthy taxpayer -- this vehicle, however fast, however well-armed and animated by the spirit of righteous vengeance, can be spotted by the same lens by which its superiors became aware of the disturbance in the first place... and notification of its impending arrival on the scene can be flashed by the same walkie-talkie Army surplus gadget by which crowd control is maintained when black gather to protest for their just rights. Before the absolute power of the absolute state of tomorrow can achieve its victory it may find such things as this: when the police show up at your door to arrest you for thinking unapproved thoughts, a scanning sensor which you've bought and built into your door discriminates the intruders from customary friends, and alerts you to your peril.

Let me give you an example. At the enormous civic center building in my county, a fantastic Buck Rogers type of plastic and chrome backdrop to a bad science fiction film, each visitor must pass through an electronic field that sets off an alarm if he has on him too much metal, be it keys, a watch, pair of scissors, bomb, .308 Winchester rifle. When the hoop pings -- and it always pings for me -- a uniformed policeman immediately fully searches the visitor. A sign warns that if any weapon is discovered on a visitor, it's all over for him - - and the sign also warns that if any illegal drugs are found on a visitor, during this weapons search, he's done for, too. Now, I think even you people up here in Canada are aware of the reason for this methodical weapons search of each visitor to the Marin County Civic Center -- it has to do with the tragic shootout a year or so ago. But, and they have officially posted notice of this, the visitor will be inspected for narcotics possession, too, and this has nothing to do with either the shootout or with any danger to the building itself or the persons within it. An electronic checkpoint, legitimately set up to abort a situation in which explosives or weapons are brought into the Civic Center, has been assigned an added police function connected with the authentic issue only by the common thread of penal code violation. To visit the county library, which is in that building, you are subject to search -- must in fact yield absolutely and

unconditionally -- for possession without juridical protection, built into the very basis of our American civil rights system, that some clear and evident indication exist that you may be carrying narcotics before a search can be carried against you. During this search I've even had the uniformed officer at the entrance examine the books and papers I was carrying, to see if they were acceptable. The next step, in the months to come, would be to have such mandatory checkpoints at busy intersections and at all public buildings -- including banks and so forth. Once it has been established that the authorities can search you for illegal drugs because you're returning a book to the library, I think you can see just how far the tyranny of the state can go -- once it has provided itself with an electronic hoop that registers the presence of something we all carry on us: keys, a pair of fingernail clippers, coins. The *blip*, rather a quaint little sound, which you set off, opens a door not leading to the county library but to possible imprisonment. It is that blip that ushers in all the rest. And how many other blips are we setting off, or our children will be setting off, in context that we know nothing about yet? But my optimistic point: the kids of today, having been born into this all-pervasive society, are fully aware of and take for granted the activity of such devices. One afternoon when I was parking my car on the lot before a grocery store, I started, as usual, to lock all the car doors to keep the parcels in the back seat from being stolen. "Oh, you don't have to lock up the car," the girl with me said. "This parking lot is under constant closed-circuit TV scan. Every car here and everyone is being watched all the time; nothing can happen." So we went inside the store leaving the car unlocked. And of course she was right; born into this society, she has learned to know such things. And -- I now have a passive infrared scanning system in my own home in Santa Venetia, connected with what is called a "digital transmitting box" which, when triggered off by the scanner, transmits a coded signal by direct line to the nearest law enforcement agency, notifying them that intruders have entered my house. This totally self-operated electronic detection system functions whether I am at home or not. It is able to discriminate between the presence of a human being and an animal. It has its own power supply. If the line leading from it is cut, grounded or even tampered with, the signal is immediately released, or if any other part of system is worked on. And Westinghouse will reinstall it wherever I live: I own the components for life. Eventually, Westinghouse Security hopes, all homes and businesses will be protected this way. The company has built and maintains a communications center near each community in the country. If there is no police agency willing or able to accept the signal, then their own communications center responds and guarantees to

dispatch law enforcement personnel within four minutes -- that is, the good guys with the guns will be at your door within that time. It does not matter if the intruder enters with a passkey or blows in the whole side of the house or, as they tell me it's being done now, bores down through the roof -- however he got in, for whatever reason, the mechanism responds and transmits its signal. Only I can turn the system off. And if I forget to, then -- I suppose, anyhow -- it's all over for me.

Someone suggested, by the way, that perhaps this passive infrared scanner sweeping out the interior of my house constantly "might be watching me and reporting back to the authorities whatever I do right there in my own living room." Well, what I am doing is sitting at my desk with pen and paper trying to figure out how to pay Westinghouse the \$840 I owe them for the system. As I've got it worked out now, I think if I sell everything I own, including my house, I can -- oh well. One other thing. If I enter the house -- my house -- and the system finds I'm carrying illegal narcotics on my person, it doesn't blip; it causes both me and the house and everything in it to self-destruct.

Street drugs, by the way, are a major problem in the area where I live -- that is, the illegal drugs you buy on the street are often adulterated, cut, or just plain not what you're told they are. You wind up poisoned, dead, or just plain "burned," which means "you don't get off," which means you paid ten dollars for a gram of milk sugar. So a number of free labs have been set up for the specific purpose of analyzing street drugs; you mail them a portion of the drug you've bought and they tell you what's in it, the idea being, of course, that if it has strychnine or film developer or flash powder in it, you should know before you take it. Well, the police saw through into the quote "real" purpose of these labs at one glance. They act as quality control stations for the drug manufacturers. Let's say you're making methedrine in your bathtub at home -- a complicated process, but feasible - and so every time a new batch comes out, you mail a sample to one of these labs for analysis... and they write back, "No, you haven't got it quite right yet, but if you cook it just perhaps five minutes longer..." This is what the police fear. This is how the police mentality works. And, interestingly, so does the drug pushers mentality; the pushers are already doing precisely that. I don't know... to me it seems a sort of nice idea, the drug pushers being interested in what they're selling. Back in the old days they cared only that you lived long enough to pay for what you purchased. After that, you were on your own.

Yes, as every responsible parent knows, street drugs are a problem, a menace to their kids. I completely, emphatically agree. At one time -- you may have read this in biographical material accompanying my stories and novels -- I was interested in experimenting with psychedelic drugs. That is over, for me. I have seen too many ruined lives in our drug culture in California. Too many suicides, psychoses, organic -- irreversible -- damage to both heart and brain. But there are other drugs, not illegal, not street drugs, not cut with flash powder or milk sugar, and not mislabeled, that worry me even more. These are reputable, establishment drugs, prescribed by reputable doctors or given in reputable hospitals, especially psychiatric hospitals. These are pacification drugs. I mention this in order to return to my main preoccupation, here: the human versus the android, and how the former can become -- can in fact be made to become - the latter. The calculated, widespread, and thoroughly sanctioned use of specific tranquilizing drugs such as the phenothiazines may not, like certain illegal street drugs, produce permanent brain damage, but they can -- and god forbid, they do -- produce what I am afraid I must call "soul" damage. Let me amplify.

It has been discovered recently that what we call mental illness or mental disturbance -- such syndromes as the schizophrenias and the cyclothymic phenomena of manic-depression -- may have to do with faulty brain metabolism, the failure of certain brain catalysts such as serotonin and noradrenalin to act properly. One theory holds that, under stress, too much amine oxidase production causes hallucinations, disorientations, and general mental breakdown. Sudden shock, especially at random, and grief-producing, such as loss of someone or something dear, or the loss of something vital and taken for granted -- this starts an overproduction of noradrenalin flowing down generally unused neural pathways, overloading brain circuits, and producing behavior which we call psychotic. Mental illness, then, is a biochemical phenomenon. If certain drugs, such as the phenothiazines, are introduced, brain metabolism regains normal balance; the catalyst serotonin is utilized properly, and the patient recovers. Or if a MAOI drug is introduced -- a mono amine oxidase inhibitor -- response to stress becomes viable and the person is able to function normally. Or -- and this right now is the prince charming hope of the medical profession -- lithium carbonate, if taken by the disturbed patient, will limit an otherwise overabundant production or release of the hormone noradrenalin, which, most of all, acts to cause irrational thoughts and behavior of a socially unacceptable sort. The entire amplitude of feelings, wild grief, anger, fear, any

and all intense feelings, will be reduced to proper measure by the presence of the lithium carbonate in the brain tissue. The person will become stable, predictable, not a menace to others. He will feel the same and think the same pretty much all day long, day after day. The authorities will not be greeted by any more sudden surprises emanating from him.

In the field of abnormal psychology, the schizoid personality structure is well defined; in it there is a continual paucity of feeling. The person thinks rather than feels his way through life. And as the great Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung showed, this cannot be successfully maintained; one must meet most of crucial reality with a feeling response. Anyhow, there is a certain parallel between what I call the "android" personalityss and the schizoid. Both have a mechanical, reflex quality.

I once heard a schizoid person express himself -- in all seriousness -- this way: "I receive signals from others. But I can't generate any of my own until I get recharged. By an injection." I am, I swear, quoting exactly. Imagine viewing oneself and others this way. Signals. As if from another star. The person has reified himself entirely, along with everyone around him. How awful. Here, clearly, the soul is dead or never lived.

Another quality of the android mind is the inability to make exceptions. Perhaps this is the essence of it: the failure to drop a response when it fails to accomplish results, but rather to repeat it over and over again. Lower life forms are skillful in offering the same response continually, as are flashlights. An attempt was made once to use a pigeon as a quality control technician on an assembly line. Part after part, endless thousands of them, passed by the pigeon hour after hour, and the keen eye of the pigeon viewed them for deviations from the acceptable tolerance. The pigeon could discern a deviation smaller than that which a human, doing the same quality control, could. When the pigeon saw a part that was mismade, it pecked a button, which rejected the part, and at the same time dropped a grain of corn to the pigeon as a reward. The pigeon could go eighteen hours without fatigue, and loved its work. Even when the grain corn failed -- due to the supply running out, I guess -- the pigeon continued eagerly to reject substandard parts. It had to be forcibly removed from its perch, finally.

Now, if I had been that pigeon, I would have cheated. When I felt hungry, I would have pecked the button and rejected a part, just to get my grain of

corn. That would have occurred to me after a long period passed in which I discerned no faulty parts. Because what would happen to the pigeon if, god forbid, *no* parts ever were faulty? The pigeon would starve. Integrity, under such circumstances, would be suicidal. Really, the pigeon had a life and death interest in finding faulty parts. What would you do, were you the pigeon, and, after say four days, you'd discerned no faulty parts and were becoming only feathers and bone? Would ethics win out? Or the need to survive? To me, the life of the pigeon would be worth more than the accuracy of the quality control. If I were the pigeon -- but the android mind: "I may be dying of hunger," the android would say, "but I'll be damned if I'll reject a perfectly good part." Anyhow, to me, the authentically human mind would get bored and reject a part now and then at random, just to break the monotony. And no amount of circuit testing could re-establish its reliability.

Let me now express another element that strikes me as an essential key revealing the authentically human. It is not only an intrinsic property of the organism, but the situation in which it finds itself. That which happens to it, that which it is confronted by, pierced by and must deal with -- certain agonizing situations create, on the spot, a human where a moment before there was only, as the Bible says, clay. Such a situation can be read off the face of many of the Medieval pietas: the dead Christ held in the arms of his mother. Two faces, actually: that of a man, that of a woman. Oddly, in many of these pietas, the face of the Christ seems much older than that of his mother. It is if an ancient man is held by a young woman; she has survived him, and yet she came before him. He has aged through his entire life cycle; she looks now perhaps as she always did, not timeless, in the classical sense, but able to transcend what has happened. *He* has not survived it; this shows on his face. In some way they have experienced it together, but they have come out of it differently. It was too much for him; it destroyed him. Perhaps the information to be gained here is to realize how much greater capacity a woman has for suffering; that is, not that she suffers more than a man but that she can endure where he can't. Survival of the species lies in her ability to do this, not his. Christ may die on the cross, and the human race continues, but if Mary dies, it's all over.

I have seen young women -- say eighteen or nineteen years old -- suffer and survive things that would have been too much for me, and I think really for almost any man. Their humanness, as they passed through these ordeals, developed as an equation between them and their situation. I don't mean to

offer the mushy doctrine that suffering somehow ennoble, that it's somehow a good thing -- one hears this now and then about geniuses, "They wouldn't have been geniuses if they hadn't suffered," etc. I merely mean that possibly the difference between what I call the "android" mentality and the human is that the latter passed through something the former did not, or at least passed through it and responded differently -- *changed*, altered, what it did and hence what it was; it *became*. I sense the android repeating over and over again some limited reflex gesture, like an insect raising its wings threateningly over and over again, or emitting a bad smell. Its one defense or response works, or it doesn't. But, caught in sudden trouble, the organism that is made more human, that becomes precisely at that moment human, wrestles deep within itself and out of itself to find one response after another as each fails. On the face of the dead Christ there is an exhaustion, almost a dehydration, as if he tried out every possibility in an effort not to die. He never gave up. And even though he did die, did fall, he died a human. That is what shows on his face.

"The endeavor to persist in its own being," Spinoza said, "is the essence of the individual thing." The chthonic deities, the Earth Mother, were the original source of religious consolation -- before the solarcentric masculine deities that arrived later in history -- as well as the origin of man; man came from Her and returns to Her. The entire ancient world believed that just as each man came forth into individual life from a woman he would eventually return -- and find peace at last. At the end of life the old man in one of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales "goes about both morning and late and knocks against the ground with his stick saying 'Mother, mother, let me in -- '" just as at the end of Ibsen's *Ghosts*, the middle-aged man, regressing into childhood at the end of his life as he dies of paresis, says to his mother, "Mother, give me the sun." As Spinoza pointed out so clearly, each finite thing, each individual man, eventually perishes... and his only true consolation, as he perishes, as each society in fact perishes, is this return to the mother, the woman, the Earth.

But if woman is the consolation for man, what is the consolation for woman?
For *her*?

I once watched a young woman undergo agonies -- she was eighteen years old -- that, just witnessing her, were too much for me. She survived, I think, better than I did. I wanted to console her, help her, but there was nothing I could do. Except be with her. When the Earth Mother is suffering, there is damn little

that individual finite man can do. This young girl's boyfriend wouldn't marry her because she was pregnant by another boy; he wouldn't live with her or find her a place to stay until she got an abortion -- about which he would do nothing; he wouldn't even speak to her until it was over -- and then, or so he promised, he would marry her. Well, she got the abortion, and we brought her to my home afterward to rest and recover, and of course the son-of-a-bitch never had anything to do with her again. I was with her during the days following her abortion, and really she had dreadful time, alone in a poor, large ward in a hospital in another city, never visited except by me and a couple of friends, never phoned by her boyfriend or her own family, and then at my home, afterward, when she realized her boyfriend was never going to get the apartment for them she had planned on, been promised, and her friends -- his friends, too -- had lost interest in her and looked down on her -- I saw her day by day decline and wilt and despair, and become wild with fear; where would she go? What would become of her? She had no friends, no job, no family, not even any clothes to speak of -- nothing. And she couldn't stay with me after she healed up. She used to lie in bed, suffering, holding the puppy she and I got at the pound; the puppy was all she had. And one day she left, and I never found out where she went. She never contacted me again; she wanted to forget me and the hospital and the days of healing and bleeding and learning the truth about her situation. And she left the puppy behind. I have it now. What I remember in particular was that in the two weeks she was with me after her abortion her breasts swelled with milk; her body, at least portions of it, didn't know that the child was dead, that there was no child. It was, she said, "in a bottle." I saw her, all at once, as a sudden woman, even though she had, herself, declined, destroyed, her motherhood; baby or not, she was a woman, although her mind did not tell her that; she still wore the cotton nightgown she had worn, I guess, while living at home while she went to high school -- perhaps the same easy-to-wash cotton nightgown she had worn since five or six years old. She still liked to go to the market and buy chocolate milk and comic books. Under California law it's illegal for her to buy or smoke cigarettes. There are certain movies, many in fact, that our law prevents her from seeing. Movies, supposedly, about life. On the trip to San Francisco to see the doctor about getting the abortion -- she was five and half months pregnant, nearing what California considers the limit of safety -- she bought a purple stuffed toy animal for 89 cents. I paid for it; she had only 25 cents. She took it with her when she left my home. She was the bravest, brightest, funniest, sweetest person I ever knew. The tragedy of her life bent her and virtually broke her, despite all I could do. But -- I think, I believe -- the force

that is her, so to speak the swelling into maturity of her breasts, the looking forward into the future of her physical body, even at the moment that mentally and spiritually she was virtually destroyed -- I hope, anyhow, that that force will prevail. If it does not, then there is nothing left, as far as I am concerned. The future as I conceive it will not exist. Because I can only imagine it as populated by modest, unnoticed persons like her. I myself will not be a part of it or even shape it; all I can do is depict it as I see the ingredients now, the gentle little unhappy brave lonely loving creatures who are going on somewhere else, unknown to me now, not recalling me but, I pray, living on, picking up life, *forgetting* -- "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," we are told, but perhaps it is better -- perhaps it is the only viable way -- to be able to forget. I hope she, in her head, has forgotten what happened to her, just as her body either forgot the lack of baby, the dead baby, or never knew. It is a kind of blindness, maybe; a refusal, or inability, to face reality.

But I have never had too high a regard for what is generally called "reality." Reality, to me, is not so much something that you perceive, but something you make. You create it more rapidly than it creates you. Man is the reality God created out of dust; God is the reality man creates continually out of his own passions, his own determination. "Good," for example -- that is not a quality or even a force in the world or above the world, but what you do with the bits and pieces of meaningless, puzzling, disappointing, even cruel and crushing fragments all around us that seem to be pieces left over, discarded, from another world entirely that did, maybe, make sense.

The world of the future, to me, is not a place, but an event. A construct, not by one author in the form of words written to make up a novel or story that other persons sit in front of, outside of, and read -- but a construct in which there is no author and no readers but a great many characters in search of a plot. Well, there is no plot. There is only themselves and what they do and say to each other, what they build to sustain all of them individually and collectively, like a huge umbrella that lets in light and shuts out the darkness at the same instant. When the characters die, the novel ends. And the book falls back into dust. Out of which it came. Or back, like the dead Christ, into the arms of his warm, tender, grieving, comprehending, loving mother. And a new cycle begins; from her he is reborn, and the story, or another story, perhaps different, even better starts up. A story told by the characters to one another. "A tale of sound and fury" -- signifying very much. The best we have.

Our yesterday, our tomorrow, the child who came before us and the woman who will live after us and outlast, by her very existing, what we have thought and done.

In my novel, *THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH*, which is a study of absolute evil, the protagonist, after his encounter with Eldritch, returns to Earth and dictates a memo. This little section appears ahead of the text of the novel. *It* is the novel, actually, this paragraph; the rest is a sort of post mortem, or rather, a flashback in which all that came to produce the one-paragraph book is presented. Seventy-five thousand words, which I labored over many months, merely explains, is merely there to provide background, to the one small statement in the book that matters. (It is, by the way, missing from the German edition.) This statement is for me my credo -- not so much in God, either a good god or a bad god or both -- but in ourselves. It goes as follows, and this is all I actually have to say or want ever to say:

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

This tosses a bizarre thought up into my mind: perhaps someday a giant automated machine will roar and clank out, "From rust we are come." And another machine, sick and dying, cradled in the arms of its woman, may sigh back, "And to rust we are returned." And peace will fall over the barren, anxiety-stricken landscape.

Our field, science fiction, deals with that portion of the life-cycle of our species which extends ahead of us. But if it is a true cycle, that future portion of it has in a sense already happened. Or, at least, we can on a basis almost mathematically precise map out the next, missing integers in the sequence of which we are the past. The first integer: the Earth Mother culture. Next, the masculine solar deities, with their stern, authoritarian societies, from Sparta to Rome to Fascist Italy and Japan and Germany and the USSR. And now, perhaps, what the Medieval pietas looked forward to: in the arms of Earth Mother, who still lives, the dead solar deity, her son, lies in a once again silent return to the womb from which he came. I think we are entering this third and perhaps final sequence of our history, and this is a society that our field sees

ahead of us which will be quite different from either of the two previous world-civilizations familiar in the past. It is not a two-part cycle; we have not reached the conclusion of the masculine solar deity period to return merely to the primordial Earth Mother cult, however full of milk her breasts may be; what lies ahead is new. And possibly, beyond that lies something more, unique and obscured to our gaze as of this moment. I, myself, can't envision that far; the realization, the fulfillment, of the Medieval pieta, as a living reality, our total environment, a *living* external environment as animate as ourselves -- that is what I see and no further. Not yet, anyhow. I would, myself, be content with that; I would be happy to lie slumbering and yet alive - - "invisible but dim," as Vaughn put it -- in her arms.

If a pieta of a thousand years ago, shaped by a Medieval artisan, anticipated in his -- shall we say -- psionic? hands, our future world, what, today, might be the analog of that inspired, precognitive artifact? What do we have with us *now*, as homely and familiar to us in our 20th century world, as were those everyday pietas to the citizens of 13th century Christendom, that might be a microcosm of the far-distant future? Let us first start by imagining a pious peasant of 13th century France gazing up at a rustic pieta and foreseeing in it the 21st century society about which we science fiction writers speculate. Then, as in a Bergman film, we segue to -- what now? One of us gazing at -- what?

Cycle -- and recycle. The pieta of our modern world: ugly, commonplace, ubiquitous. Not the dead Christ in the arms of his grieving, eternal mother, but a heap of aluminum Budweiser beer cans, eighty feet high, thousands of them, being scooped up noisily, rattling and spilling and crashing and raining down as a giant automated, computer-controlled homeostatic Budweiser beer factory - an autofac, as I called it once in a story -- hugs the discarded empties back into herself to recycle them over again into new life, with new, living contents. Exactly as before... or, if the chemists in the Budweiser lab are fulfilling God's divine plan for eternal progress, with *better* beer than before.

We see as through a glass darkly," Paul says in First Corinthians -- will this someday be rewritten as: "We see as into a passive infrared scanner darkly?" A scanner which, as in Orwell's *1984*, is watching us all the time? Our TV tube watching back at us as we watch it, as amused, or bored, or anyhow somewhat as entertained by what we do as we are by what we see on its implacable face?

This, for me, is too pessimistic, too paranoid. I believe First Corinthians will be rewritten this way: "The passive infrared scanner sees into *us* darkly," that is, not well enough to really figure us out. Not that we ourselves can really figure each other out, or even our own selves. Which, perhaps, too, is good; it means we are still in for sudden surprises, and unlike authorities, who don't like that sort of thing, we may find these chance happenings acting in our behalf, to our favor.

Sudden surprises, by the way -- and this thought may be in itself a sudden surprise to you -- are a sort of antidote to paranoia... or, to be accurate about it, to live in such a way as to encounter sudden surprises quite often or even now and then is an indication that you are not paranoid, because to the paranoid, nothing is a surprise; everything happens exactly as he expected, and sometimes even more so. It all fits into his system; maybe *all* systems -- that is, any theoretical, verbal, symbolic, semantic, etc. formulation that attempts to act as an all-encompassing, all-explaining hypothesis of what the universe is about -- are manifestations of paranoia. We should be content with the mysterious, the meaningless, the contradictory, the hostile, and most of all the unexplainably warm and giving -- total so-called inanimate environment, in other words very much like a person, like the behavior of one intricate, subtle, half-veiled, deep, perplexing, and much to be loved human being to another. To be feared a little, too, sometimes. And perpetually misunderstood. About which we can neither know or be sure; we must only trust and make guesses toward. Not being what you thought, not doing right by you, not being just, but then sustaining you as by momentary caprice, but then abandoning you, or at least seeming to. What it is actually up to we may never know. But at least this is better, is it not, than to possess the self-defeating, life-defeating spurious certitude of the paranoid -- expressed, by a friend of mine, humorously, I *guess*, like this: "Doctor, someone is putting something in my food to make me paranoid." The doctor should have asked, was that person putting it in his food free, or charging him for it?

To refer back a final time to an early science fiction work with which we are all familiar, the Bible: a number of stories in our field have been written in which computers print out portions of that august book. I now herewith suggest this idea for a future story; that a computer print out a man.

Or, if it can't get that together, then, as a second choice, a very poor one in comparison, a condensed version of the Bible: "In the beginning was the end."

Or should it go the other way? "In the end was the beginning." Whichever. Randomness, in time, will sort out which it is to be. Fortunately, I myself am not required to make the choice.

Perhaps, when a computer is ready to churn forth one or the other of these two statements, and android, operating the computer, will make the decision -- although, if I am correct about the android mentality, it will be unable to decide and will print out both at once, creating a self-canceling nothing, which will not even serve as a primordial chaos. An android might, however, be able to handle this; capable of some sort of decision-making power it might conceivably pick one statement or the other as quote "correct." But no android -- and you will recall and realize that by this term I am summing up that which is not human -- no android would think to do what a bright-eyed little girl I know did, something a little bizarre, certainly ethically questionable in several ways, at least in any traditional sense, but to me truly human, in that it shows, to me, a spirit of merry defiance, of spirited, although not spiritual, bravery and uniqueness:

One day while driving along in her car she found herself following a truck carrying cases of Coca Cola bottles, case after case, stacks of them. And when the truck parked, she parked behind it and loaded the back of her own car with cases, as many cases of bottles of Coca Cola as she could get in. So, for weeks afterward, she and her friends had all the Coca Cola they could drink, free -- and then, when the bottles were empty, she carried them to the store and turned them in for the deposit refund.

To that, I say this: God bless her. May she live forever. And the Coca Cola Company and phone company and all the rest of it, with their passive infrared scanners and sniper scopes and suchlike -- may they be gone long ago. Metal and stone and wire and thread did never live. But she and her friends -- they, our human future, are our little song. "Who knows if the spirit of men travels up, and the breath of beasts travels down under the Earth?" the Bible asks. Someday it, in a later revision, may wonder, "Who knows if the spirit of men travels up, and the breath of *androids* travels down?" Where do the souls of androids go after their death? But -- if they do not live, then they cannot die. And if they cannot die, then they will always be with us. Do they have souls at all? Or, for that matter, do we?

I think, as the Bible says, we all go to a common place. But it is not the grave; it is into life beyond. The world of the future.

Thank you.