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## **The Martians Are Always Coming: The Influence of Valentinian Gnosticism and Jungian Individuation Theory on Philip K. Dick's Depiction of his Spiritual Journey in the Valis Trilogy**

Criado Clegg, David Eduardo

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# The Martians Are Always Coming

The Influence of Valentinian Gnosticism and Jungian Individuation Theory on Philip K. Dick's Depiction of his Spiritual Journey in the *Valis* Trilogy



Hilma Af Klint. *The Swan, No. 1.*

David Criado

s1111426

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Supervisor: Dr. E. J. van Leeuwen

Second Reader: Prof.dr. P.Th.M.G. Liebrechts

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Hilma Af Klint's *The Swan, No. 1*. (1915) depicts a black swan and a white swan touching each other through a dividing line; a black and white border. A description of the painting on the website of the Guggenheim museum reads: "[i]n alchemy, the swan represents the union of opposites necessary for the creation of what is known as the philosopher's stone, a substance believed to be capable of turning base metals into gold. Here, Af Klint's black-and-white palette underscores the dualities of light and dark, male and female, life and death" (2). Af Klint's painting brings to mind a crucial passage in Philip K. Dick's *The Divine Invasion*, in which he paints a vivid picture of his interpretation of the individual's relationship with his Anima: "[Emmanuel:] I do not understand you. I cannot follow you. You dance toward me and then away.' '[Zina:] But as I do so, you awaken'" (178). This passage encapsulates the culmination of Dick's depiction of the spiritual journey in the *Valis* trilogy: the reconciliation of conscious and unconscious forces within the mind which leads to the discovery of the individual's inner divinity.

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No live organism can continue for long to exist  
sanely under conditions of absolute reality;  
even larks and katydids are supposed,  
by some, to dream.  
(Jackson, *Hill* 3)

### **Introduction**

The myriad worlds that sprung from Philip Kindred Dick's literary multiverse set the stage for a life-long journey toward spiritual enlightenment. Dick's research and writing focused on the twin major questions that, conjoined, compose the very soul of his writing: "What is Human?" and "What is Real?" (Sutin 113). Over the course of twenty-seven years, Dick dedicated forty-four novels and a hundred and twenty-one short stories to the examination of spiritual enlightenment, delving deep into all manner of interconnected sub-studies, such as alternate realities, alternate states of consciousness, psychosis, substance abuse, and fascism. Dick's decades-long metaphysical odyssey reached its apex in his final years, following a series of visions in February and March, 1974, during which Dick claimed to have received divine knowledge, or Gnosis, from a divine entity. He gave this divine entity the name "Valis," which is an acronym for "Vast Active Living Intelligence System" (Wakeling 195). Filled with a sense of prophetic duty to share his experiences and insights with the world, Dick laboured doggedly to pen a comprehensive tractate detailing his personal understanding of life, the human condition, the nature of reality, and, ultimately and most importantly, the aspect of spiritual enlightenment of which he had caught a glimpse during his visions of Valis. This eight-thousand page journal he called his *Exegesis* (2011); he gave it the subtitle *Apologia Pro Mia Vita*, underscoring its central importance to his literary legacy. From the *Exegesis*, Dick's *Valis* trilogy would be born: an attempt at communicating the central concerns of his mind-bogglingly complex magnum opus to the wider public through a more palatable medium.

For all its complexity, the fundamental message underlying Dick's gargantuan study can be reduced to two simple premises. Firstly, human life is meaningful and this meaning is conveyed through symbols found in myth and religion. Gnosis, or knowledge, of these symbols and their underlying meaning leads the individual to a closer connection between himself and the world which he inhabits. Secondly, the pursuit of Gnosis alone cannot lead to enlightenment. The individual cannot hope to learn all the secrets of the universe in a single lifetime. Therefore, he must also learn to have faith in his own, inner divinity, in order to embrace the unknown elements of existence. The first premise Dick based on his combined reading of Valentinian Gnosticism as well as the works of Carl Jung. The second premise originated in Jung's teachings alone.

Dick believed that the journey toward spiritual enlightenment should be conducted with a sense of playfulness, without a neurotic fixation on the outcome of the search. He also believed that sources of spiritual enlightenment are found in the most trivial of places. In *The Divine Invasion* (1981), Dick puts forward the idea that to "be not serious" (6) is a pivotal step upon the path toward spiritual enlightenment, while in *Valis* (1981) the "path to God lies through scattered pop-trash clues" (Sutin 259). Dick's novels themselves represent the kind of camouflaged enlightenment which he so frequently describes in his novels: in order to extract the wisdom concealed within their narratives, the reader must be geared toward deducing Gnosis while also having the faith that Gnosis might be encountered in the most unexpected places, including his own mind.

The monumental number of intertextual references that extend like vast roots throughout the pages of the *Valis* trilogy confirm the astonishing lengths to which Dick went to pursue Gnosis, delving deep into the realms of philosophy, psychology, religion, and literature. He jokingly admits: "[p]ossibly I have been influenced by too many diverse sources" (*Letter* 55-56), thus creating a challenge for anyone attempting to make sense of Dick's self-professed "thoroughly confused mind" (3) which has been "meddled with by a hopeless hodgepodge of influences" (56). His sources for the *Valis* trilogy alone include: Wagner, the Hermetic alchemists, the Rose Cross

Brotherhood, Apollonius of Tyana, Heraclitus, the Greco-Roman mystery religions, Hermes Trismegistos, Simon Magus, Bruno, Dante, Pythagoras, Empedocles, Schopenhauer, Wordsworth, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Tertullian, Yeats, Huxley, Alfred North Whitehead, Boehme, Augustine, Purcell, Heidegger, Tillich, Goethe, Plato, John Alegro, John Donne, Descartes, Heidegger, Beethoven, Schiller, Virgil, Binyon, C. H. Grandgent, Aeschylus, Menotti, Handel, Alban Berg, D. H. Lawrence, Shakespeare, Henry Vaughan, Plath, Heraclitus, Locke, Kant, Hume, Shannon, Koestler, and many more. Dick justifies his continual borrowing from other thinkers' works when describing Tim, the protagonist of *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (1982), who functions as Dick's literary alter-ego in the novel: "Tim's problem was that he didn't really think for himself, he picked up other people's ideas and believed they had come out of his own mind, whereas, in fact, he stole them ... But the ideas had value ... and Tim synthesised them. Tim brought various ideas together" (218). Dick's presentation of the parallels between the ideas of artists, philosophers, theologians, and psychologists across cultural, geographical, and temporal boundaries reveals his belief in the ubiquity and timelessness of spiritual wisdom and the interconnectedness of human thought and experience. Dick observed that certain ideas keep resurfacing through the ages, albeit surreptitiously, such as the notion that "for each person there are two worlds, the *idios kosmos*, which is a unique private world, and the *koinos kosmos*, which literally means shared world" (*Comment* 263). Dick's interest in the duality of experience was driven by the two sources which had the biggest impact on his *Valis* trilogy: Gnosticism and the works of Carl Jung.

Gnosticism describes a collection of ideas put forward by a group of early Christian theologians in a few surviving religious texts produced sometime between the first and sixth century A. D. (Rudolph 367). The Gnostics claimed to have been given insight into the true nature of God through visions (Chadwick 35). The Gnostics saw spiritual, not empirical, knowledge as the route to enlightenment, or even enlightenment itself (Jonas 32). Divine revelation of Gnosis is imparted on the individual by a prophetic figure, as Hendry explains: "Gnosis, as distinct from the rational type

of knowledge, means knowledge which per se brings healing and salvation. The Gnostic may acquire it by an act of divine revelation, chiefly through the mediation of a Saviour or Messenger” (qtd. in Haardt 3). The Gnostics distanced themselves from the traditional church, rejecting the gospels and writing their own ones (Rudolph 151). Although there were considerable differences between the various schools of Gnostic thought, the Gnostic teachings reveal a common culture that, according to Jonas, ”maintain[s] a radical dualism of realms of being — God and the world, spirit and matter, soul and body, light and darkness, good and evil, life and death — and consequently an extreme polarization of existence affecting not only man but reality as a whole: the general religion of the period is a dualistic transcendent religion of salvation” (32). This view of the dualistic nature of things contrasts starkly with cosmological dualism, the traditional Christian view in which a black-and-white moral distinction is made between opposites, such as good and bad. The Gnostics inspired Dick’s “two-source cosmology” (Sutin 12) and his depiction of the moral relativity and interchangeability of opposing forces on the macro-level of human history as well as on the micro-level of the individual psyche. In *Valis*, Dick, speaking through his fictional alter-ego Fat, describes his personal religious beliefs as “[b]asically ... Valentinian, second century C.E.” (97). For this reason, Dick’s cosmogony and religious ideas will be compared to the tenets of Valentinian Gnosticism.

Dick made no secret of his adoption of Carl Jung’s metaphysical theories on human psychology in his narratives. When asked by an interviewer in 1977 if he had read Jung early on in his career, Dick responded by saying: “[y]es. Yes, definitely. He was a major influence on me” (*Conversation* 51). Dick, a “well-versed Jungian” (Sutin 190) with a great deal of personal experience with Jungian therapy (49), adopted and wove many of Jung’s theories into the fibre of his novels, derived his characters from Jungian archetypes, and shared with Jung an interest in drawing parallels between the realms of psychology, metaphysics, philosophy, and spirituality. Dick also modelled the third stage of his heroes’ journey toward spiritual enlightenment strongly after



Jung's concept of "individuation" (*Archetypes* 64). Dick believed that his psychological struggles resulted from his inability to confront archetypal contents from "my collective unconscious" (Sutin 230): Jung's concept of the unconscious mind that connects the individual's personal experience and memory to that of all living things in the cosmos (*Archetypes* 6). The fate of Dick's heroes in the *Valis* trilogy confirms that Dick, like Jung, believed that to attain individuation, the individual must establish balance between the opposing forces that dwell within the collective unconscious. Jung took a keen interest in the Gnostic library, which he saw as "the historical counterpart of ... [his] psychology of the unconscious" (*Memories* 205). Despite the obvious similarities between Gnostic scripture and Jung's descriptions of the process of individuation, as exemplified through mythical symbolism, Jung disagrees with the Gnostics on one important matter: the source of enlightenment. While the Gnostics believed that enlightenment comes from God, Jung believed that enlightenment comes from within the individual. Dick ultimately adopts Jung's perspective, depicting divinity as the balanced collective unconscious; the inner peace that acts as the culmination of the individual's journey. In other words, the individual is guided by and toward his own divinity.

Three main themes can be observed to be at work in the *Valis* trilogy through which Dick represents the various stages of his heroes' spiritual journey: mental breakdown, the pursuit of Gnosis through religious study, and the culmination of the individuation process through the discovery of man's inner divinity. In *Valis*, Dick gives a semi-fictional account of his mental breakdown in the wake of his visionary experiences in February and March, 1974.<sup>1</sup> He explores the duality of life reflected in the duality of man by splitting his own personality into two separate characters: Phil Dick and Horselover Fat — which is what you get when you translate the Greek word *Philippos* and the German word *dick* into English.<sup>2</sup> Horselover Fat's mental breakdown as a

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<sup>1</sup> Dick refers to these visions as his 2-3-74 experiences, signalling the months and year in which they took place.

<sup>2</sup> To avoid confusion, Philip K. Dick the writer will be referred to Dick, Philip K. Dick the character as Phil, and Horselover Fat as Fat.

result, in part, of his 1970s California-inspired dystopian surroundings exposes Dick's critique of modern society's irrationality. Finally, *Valis* examines the importance of Gnosis as well as its limitations. In *The Divine Invasion*, the sequel to *Valis*, Dick imagines individuation as the coming together of two separate entities in a tale of his own cosmogony. Dick was in the process of writing the third and last novel in the trilogy, *The Owl in Daylight*, at the time of his death in 1982. His publisher published his last fully completed novel, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (1982), in its place, marketing it as the final entry in the *Valis* trilogy. Despite not being intended as such, it functions as a suitable end to the *Valis* trilogy, succeeding deftly in depicting the nuances of mental illness, the limitations of Gnostic research, and the crucial role of companionship in the individual's search for enlightenment.

In the next chapter, an overview will be provided of the major influences on Dick's depiction of the journey toward spiritual enlightenment in the *Valis* trilogy, namely the Valentinian myth of creation as well as Jung's theory of individuation. Furthermore, Jung's view of Gnosticism will be detailed in order to highlight the similarities between the teachings of Valentinus and Jung.

The rupture between faith and knowledge is a symptom  
of the split consciousness which is so characteristic  
of the mental disorder of our day.  
(Jung, *Undiscovered* 41)

## **Chapter 1. The Major Intellectual Influences on Dick's *Valis* Trilogy**

This chapter presents an overview of the two main influences on Dick's depiction of the spiritual journey: Valentinian Gnosticism and Jungian individuation theory. Dick's personal cosmogony, as he explains it in his *Exegesis*, will be compared to the Valentinian myth of creation in order to highlight the parallels between the two. Jung's descriptions of the process of individuation will also be compared with the Valentinian myth of creation, indicating the similarities between the two but also the single, key difference: where Valentinus describes the source of humanity's enlightenment as God, Jung envisions it as the collective unconscious.

### **1.1 The Valentinian Myth of Creation**

The core principle underlying the teachings of the various Gnostic preachers is the belief, as Segal points out, in "an antithetical dualism of immateriality, which is good, and matter, which is evil" (3). Segal further notes: "Gnosticism espouses radical dualism in human beings, the cosmos, and divinity; the primordial unity of all immateriality; the yearning to restore that unity; the present entrapment of a portion of immateriality in human bodies; the need for knowledge to reveal to humans that entrapment; and the dependence of humans on a saviour to reveal that knowledge to them" (3). De Conick indicates that the "quest for reality is the central feature of Gnostic spirituality. The Gnostics understand this quest to culminate in the direct knowledge of a supreme God who dwells outside the known universe. The god of their quest is a hidden, secret God, unknown to most people" (De Conick 53). Before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library in 1945, the best description of Valentinian Gnosticism could be found in *Against Heresies*, a work of

Christian theology written by Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyon, around the year 180 A.D. Irenaeus details the Valentinian creation myth as follows.

In the beginning of all things there was an “Æon” or Aeon, which literally means “ever-existing” and signifies “an emanation from the divine substance, subsisting co-ordinately and co-eternally with the Deity, the Pleroma still remaining one” (Irenaeus 517). This Aeon was called “Bythos,” meaning depth, and was “invisible and incomprehensible” (517). Bythos was accompanied by another Aeon, “Ennoia” (517), whose name means thought. From this first divine pair emanated a second pair of divine entities, “Noös,” which means understanding, and “Aletheia,” which means truth (517). Irenaeus describes the creation of many more pairs of male and female Aeons until a total number of thirty has been reached. These Aeons constitute the “Pleroma,” or fullness, which describes the totality of divinity (518). The Pleroma stands in contrast to the “Kenoma” (Lanzillotta 33), which represents the material world which is inhabited by mankind.

Of all the Aeons, only Noös is capable of understanding Bythos, the source of divinity. However, the last Aeon, “Sophia” (Irenaeus 518), or wisdom, is driven by an unrelenting urge to understand Bythos and separates herself from her divine counterpart, the Aeon “Theletos” (518), meaning desired, so that she might search for the source. Her failure results in a disruption of the Pleromatic harmony, which prompts a response from the other Aeons. They banish Sophia’s passion and give birth to a new Aeon to take her place: “Achamoth” (524), which also means wisdom. Achamoth produces the “Demiurge” (525), or world creator, who creates the Kenoma and consequently the human race. Human beings, unlike the Demiurge, carry within them a spiritual seed, a piece of the divine Pleroma, embedded in their souls by Achamoth, unbeknownst to the Demiurge.

In order for balance to be restored in the Pleroma, all spiritual beings that dwell in the Kenoma — Achamoth and the race of humans, that is — must reenter the Pleroma after gaining “Gnosis” (520), or knowledge and insight into divinity. The divine pair which Sophia destroyed

must also be reforged by the union of Achamoth and Jesus, who was created to become the divine counterpart of Achamoth (520) and allow for her Pleromatic reintegration. All this will occur at the end of time (532), since the spiritual beings trapped in the material world of the demiurge, namely those who have pursued Gnosis, will have been reintegrated into the Pleroma, which means that the Kenoma has served its purpose and will be destroyed, upon which all spiritual beings will be reunited with their respective divine counterpart.

In section 3.2 Dick's personal cosmogony, as described in the *Valis* trilogy, will be compared to Valentinus's myth of creation and depiction of man's return to the kingdom of God. This, in turn, will point to the many similarities between both cosmogonies and thus confirm the Valentinian influence on Dick's depiction of the journey toward spiritual enlightenment. In the following section, Dick's personal interpretation of Valentinian Gnosticism, as he describes it in his *Exegesis*, will be summarised.

## 1.2 Dick's Personal Gnosticism

Dick describes his own cosmogony in the *Exegesis*. His cosmogony was based heavily on the Valentinian myth of creation and dictates the events in the *Valis* trilogy. In the following paragraph, a summary of the main characteristics of Dick's cosmogony, as described in the *Exegesis*, is provided.

The creator of the world is "demented" (*Exegesis* 181) and not the true God. The material world is illusory, hiding the evil of the demented creator god, the demiurge (312). There is another realm, that of God, and human beings must direct all their efforts toward either returning to that realm or bringing it to them (541); Dick is unsure which of the two similar options is more accurate. Human beings have lived so-called real lives thousands of years ago in the realm of God. Gnosis is the remembrance of that past life, imparted on the individual by a messenger of God (110). Each individual has a divine twin who can awaken him from the shroud of anamnesis that lies over all

earthly beings (669). Entry to the realm of God is achieved after God grants the individual the ability to see through his eyes and thus to pierce “through the evil illusion of this world to the true world of the alien god” (755). Jesus Christ was the prophet of the true God, teaching his followers how to enter the realm of God while yet alive (174). Jesus may yet live, and might be leading the members of the true Christian church in secret so as to protect his followers from the demiurge (374). The division of the two realms and “two times” (127) will end with the victory of God, after which the invisible kingdom of God will become visible (536). Present time in the material world represents the period of judgment in which the forces of the universe must decide to whom each person has given their allegiance, as Dick explains: “I know, really know, that this is what God wants; I have chosen — at last — between the two sides that eternally have competed for my allegiance and between which I have always been divided all my life” (846). This choice is narrativised in *The Divine Invasion*.

The idea of juxtaposed forces within the individual’s psyche as the main obstacle on the path toward enlightenment is a core principle of Jung’s individuation theory, which will be described in the following section.

### **1.3 An Overview of Jungian Individuation Theory**

Jung brought together the fields of psychology and metaphysics by linking psychological well-being to the manner in which each individual derives meaning from experience. Without meaning, Jung maintains, the individual cannot find happiness. Jung’s process of individuation describes the individual’s search for meaning in his unconscious mind. Jung divides the unconscious mind into two opposing realms: the “personal unconscious” and the “collective unconscious” (*Archetypes* 6). As its name suggests, the personal unconscious derives its contents solely from personal experience. The collective unconscious, however, is “inborn” (6) and “constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us” (6).

In order to gain insight into the collective unconscious, the individual must, in either dreams or in visions, confront the “archetypes” (7): “the personification of “unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear” (8). Jung holds that since time immemorial, the archetypes have been channelled through symbols in myth, religion, spirituality, and art. These “mythologized processes of nature” (8) are “expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man’s consciousness by way of projection” (9). When an individual embarks upon a spiritual journey of self-discovery into the depths of his own unconscious mind, he is presented with the challenge of facing all aspects of his own true self, the confrontational aspect of which can prove highly challenging. The archetypes, as discussed by Jung, are “ones that play the chief part in an analysis of the masculine psyche” (44) and are therefore relevant to the discussion of Dick’s psyche as well as the psyches of his exclusively male heroes.

Jung assigned blame to the “religious formula for everything psychic” (10) for modern man’s unfamiliarity with the collective unconscious. “Dogma,” he states, “takes the place of the collective unconscious by formulating its contents on a grand scale” (14) by appropriating primordial symbols of the archetypes to the purposes of the church, thereby creating a rift between symbols and their primordial meaning. This, consequently, detaches the individual from his personal connection to symbols, transforming symbols into objects of “unreflecting belief” (*Undiscovered* 21). The most universal of all spiritual symbols, according to Jung, is the “mandala” (*Archetypes* 14), which represents spiritual enlightenment. At the turn of the twentieth century, Jung holds, man’s “spiritual dwelling has fallen into disrepair” as “the intellect usurps the seat where once the spirit was enthroned” (19). The modern individual’s ignorance of the influence of the contents of the collective unconscious upon his thoughts and actions causes irrational behaviour, as Jung points out: “mankind always stands on the brink of actions it performs itself but does not

control” (26). In order to take back control on a personal as well as on a collective level, humanity must reconnect with its soul.

The individual intent on reconnecting with his collective unconscious must confront several archetypes which represent the various aspects of the unconscious. Jung distinguishes two primary archetypes. The first is the “Shadow” (23): the “apprentice-piece” (32) who personifies the inherent evil of the collective unconscious which must be accepted by the individual before he can confront the unpleasant self-discoveries that await him. The second is the “Anima” (28), the most significant archetypal confrontation for the individual (32). The Anima represents the “magic breath of life” (29); she plays dangerous tricks on the mind of the individual in order to awaken within him a sense of activity, vitality, and attention to the present. Without her illusions and games, “man would rot away in his greatest passion: idleness” (29-30). The Anima consolidates the integration of both good and bad elements within the individual’s psyche because life consists of both and both are interchangeable, as Jung notes: “the good is not always beautiful and the beautiful not necessarily good” (31). An acceptance of the Anima leads the individual to the realisation that life is “crazy and meaningful at once. And when we do not laugh over the one aspect and speculate about the other, life is exceedingly drab, and everything is reduced to the littlest scale” (34). The Anima, when satisfied, grants passage to the Self, the final archetype, which Jung visualises as a mandala: “the traditional antidote for chaotic states of mind” (13). This process of individuation describes the transmigration of the “unconscious into consciousness” (43). Opposites and paradoxes that exist within and between both areas of the mind are no longer resisted but consolidated in a balanced psyche. During the confrontation with the Shadow and the Anima, the individual is assisted by minor archetypes such as the “wise old man,” (38) and the “mother archetype” (*Archetypes* 16), who provide wisdom and love, respectively.



The individual eventually discovers that the conscious, rational mind alone cannot successfully overcome the archetypes. A measure of faith is ultimately required to break through into the collective unconscious. Jung writes:

Only when all props and crutches are broken, and no cover from the rear offers even the slightest hope of security, does it become possible for us to experience an archetype that up till then had lain hidden behind the meaningful nonsense played out by the Anima. This is the archetype of meaning, just as the Anima is the archetype of life itself. (35)

The quest for individuation is completed through the realisation that the archetypes are as much a part of the individual's identity as his conscious mind, and must be integrated into consciousness to achieve a sense of balance between the opposing forces of the psyche through a "peculiar relativization of opposites" (39). The process of individuation therefore exemplifies that "interpretations are only for those who don't understand; it is only the things we don't understand that have any meaning. Man woke up in a world he did not understand, and that is why he tries to interpret it" (34). Jung's answer to the pursuit of knowledge in a nutshell, then, is faith.

In the following section, the influence of Valentinian Gnosticism on Jung's individuation theory as well as Jung's interpretation of Gnosticism will be explained.

#### **1.4 Jung's View of Gnosticism**

There are distinct parallels between the metaphysical psychology of Jung and the theology of the Gnostics. Segal writes:

Like Gnostics, contemporaries feel alienated from their roots and are seeking to overcome the alienation. They are seeking new outlets for their unconscious. Where Gnostics feel cut

off from the outer world, contemporaries feel cut off from the inner one. Contemporaries do not, like Gnostics, project their alienation onto the cosmos; through Jungian psychology they seek to discover their true selves within rather than outside themselves. They alone, then, have the chance fully to overcome their alienation. (18)

The parallels between Gnostic theology and Jungian theory have been confirmed by both Gnostic scholars as well as Jungian analysts, such as June Singer, who has written two books detailing the relationship between Gnosticism and Jung, Robert Segal, who has edited two books comparing Jung and Gnostic thought, and Edward F. Edinger, who has written a book about the confirmation of Jungian ideas within Gnosticism and early Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

Jung discovered Gnosticism in 1918 when attempting to find historical evidence to support his concept of the collective unconscious and was immediately drawn in (*Memories* 200). Jung saw Valentinus's cosmology as a metaphorical representation of the relationship between the conscious and unconscious mind. He saw "[c]reation" (Segal 19) as the development of the human psyche and Gnosis as knowledge of the importance of connecting with the the collective unconscious (*Aion* 350). In his descriptions of the process of individuation, Jung equates the symbolical journey into the collective unconscious to the journey of the Aeon Sophia to find Bythos (*Archetypes* 19), which he interprets as the primordial source of divinity. While Jung shares with the Gnostics a search for "reconnection with the lost essence of human nature," he deviates from the Gnostics in that he imagines the "rediscovered essence" as "entirely human, not divine" which lies "entirely within oneself, not within divinity as well" (Segal 48).

In the following chapter, the three main causes of Dick's mental breakdown will be discussed, which will provide an illuminating understanding of why Dick was drawn to Gnosticism and Jung in the first place.

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<sup>3</sup> The titles of the aforementioned books are provided in the Works Cited section.

They are all gone into the world of light!  
 And I alone sit lingring here;  
 Their very memory is far and bright,  
 And my sad thoughts doth clear.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill  
 My perspective (still) as they pass,  
 Or else remove me hence unto that hill,  
 Where I shall need no glass.<sup>4</sup>  
 (Vaughan qtd. in *Transmigration* 187-8).

## Chapter 2. The Significance of Dick's Mental Breakdown to his Spiritual Journey

The protagonists of the *Valis* novels all have one thing in common: they suffer some kind of mental breakdown which prompts their search for enlightenment. The *Valis* novels are heavily influenced by Dick's own experiences, to the point where it is at times hard to distinguish between autobiographical and fictional elements; especially in *Valis*, in which the main character is called Phil Dick and in which the events that take place strongly resemble Dick's own experiences. Dick was open about basing his characters on both himself as well as on his friends. He confessed:

I want to write about people I love, and put them into a fictional world spun out of my own mind, not the world we actually have, because the world we actually have does not meet my standards; I'm out of step. I should yield to reality. I have never yielded to reality. That's what SF is all about. If you wish to yield to reality, go read Philip Roth; read the New York literary establishment mainstream bestselling writers ... This is why I love SF. I love to read it; I love to write it. The SF writer sees not just possibilities but *wild* possibilities. It's not just "What if —". It's "*My God*; what if —". In frenzy and hysteria. The Martians are always coming. (qtd. in Sutin 4)

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<sup>4</sup> Dick adds: "By 'glass' Vaughan means a telescope" (188).

Due to the autobiographical nature of his work, it is important to have a cursory understanding of the roots of Dick's own psychological struggles, as assessed by Dick himself, in order to fully comprehend Dick's depiction of mental breakdown in the *Valis* novels. The three principle causes underlying Dick's psychological struggles which will be discussed in this chapter are: the untimely death of his infant twin sister, the — what he perceived as — irrationality of 1970s Californian society, and finally his visionary experiences in February and March of 1974. The following section will deal with the the so-called dark-haired girl, Dick's representation of his deceased twin sister Jane.

## 2.1 The Dark-Haired Girl

Before he was even a month old, a prematurely born Dick tragically suffered the loss of his twin sister, Jane, as a result of malnutrition. Sutin points out that the “trauma of Jane's death remained the central event of Phil's psychic life” and resulted in his “fascination with resolving dualist (twin-poled) dilemmas — SF/mainstream, real/fake, human/android, and at last ... in the two-source cosmology described in his masterwork *Valis*” (12). Although Dick had no conscious memory of his sister's death, his mother's repeated attempts to explain to him what had happened to Jane aroused in Dick, as a young child, a vivid image of his sister, tainted by the anguish that coloured his mother's descriptions of her (12). As an adult, Dick turned to Jungian psychology to overcome his persistent feelings of loss and grief, envisioning Jane as his Anima (12).

Virtually all of Dick's major novels cast a dark-haired, dark-eyed, mischievous, and often beautiful young girl as one of the main characters; some even include multiple characters approximating that description. The archetypal character of the “dark-haired girl” is “Phil's Anima and obsession” (Sutin 22). Dick explained that “it is a common theme in my writing that a dark-haired girl shows up at the door of the protagonist and tells him that his world is delusional” (*World* 22:37-22:51). He also pointed out that the dark-haired girl is “Jane-in-me-now, the Anima” (qtd. in

Sutin, 22). The relationship between Dick and Jane the Anima is visualised in Fig. 1, which shows a drawing which Dick made in his journal near the end of his life. In the drawing, Jane is equated with what most likely reads “Noös,” which, as mentioned earlier, is the name of the Valentinian Aeon who represents understanding, while Philip is equated with “faith” (19). They are entangled in a cyclic togetherness revolving in and out of the upper and lower realms, bound by love.

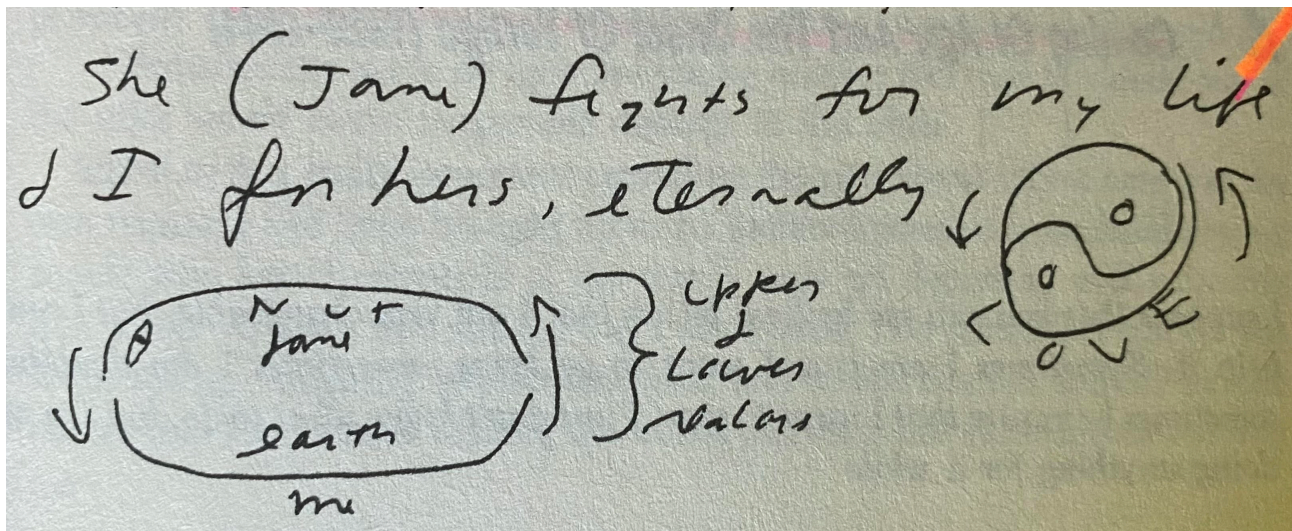


Fig. 1. “She (Jane) fights for my life & I for hers, eternally” (qtd. in Sutin 19).

Dick described his typical narrative formula as follows: “I had a term I used. Inner-projection stories. Stories where internal psychological contents were projected onto the outer world and became three-dimensional and concrete” (qtd. in Sutin 75). Dick projected his own process of individuation as a reunion with his lost twin and through repeated confrontations between his heroes — usually male, except in the case of *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, which, unusually, features a female narrator — and their archetypal counterparts in the pages of his books. Virtually all the female characters in the *Valis* trilogy are dark-haired and dark-eyed, signalling the central importance of the Anima in the novels as well as in Dick’s interpretation of the process of individuation. In *The Divine Invasion*, the god Yah’s Anima is personified by Zina (206), who introduces Yah’s reincarnated human persona Emmanuel to a different reality (178), which metaphorically represents the collective unconscious.

The material reality in which the protagonists of the *Valis* trilogy find themselves trapped is always represented as a satirical version of Dick's own milieu: 1970s California. In the following section, the aggravation of his protagonists' mental breakdown by their highly capitalist environment, will be discussed.

## 2.2 Dick's Vision of Plastic California

Dick's descriptions of life in 1970s California, which are as unsettling as they are humorous, paint a picture of a society which has no concern for the spiritual plight of the individual. In all three of the *Valis* trilogy novels, the authorities are described as "psychotic" and "filled with hate" (*Valis* 12). The government "monitors everything" (*Invasion* 43) and "does not even bother to justify war, now" (6). Government officials have no moral qualms at all with quietly disposing of "un-persons" (89), a term used within the context of the narrative to signify anyone who stands in the way of the government's agenda, legally or illegally. In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, the government controls "human minds" (137) by dictating reality as Angel, the novel's narrator, remarks: "[i]f you can float enough disinformation into circulation you will totally abolish everyone's contact with reality" (55). Individuals are conditioned to isolate themselves from their own humanity, as well as from their fellow humans. "Contact with another human," Herb Asher, *The Divine Invasion's* protagonist, muses, "[p]lease no" (10). It is not until later, upon the culmination of his spiritual journey, that he admits that "you shouldn't let anyone else determine your life" (*Invasion* 3). Resistance to the agenda of the psychotic authorities can be found in Berkeley, or "Berserkeley" (31) as Sutin puts it, where a waning population of hippies, intellectuals, and other countercultural archetypal characters make up "The Greater East Bay Co-Sexual Communal Free Love Exchange-Partners Enterprise, Unlimited" (*Transmigration* 158). Unfortunately, like everything else, spiritual enlightenment itself has become commodified: "[i]n California you buy enlightenment the way you

buy peas at the supermarket” (4). Berserkeley, it seems, has been corrupted by the plastic Californian way of life.

The word “plastic” — which pops up constantly in virtually all of Dick’s later novels — encapsulates the Californian way of life, according to Dick. This artificially produced material, a substitute for rugged natural resources such as wood or stone, does not stand the test of time like the materials which it has come to replace. Its cheapness and availability, qualities which have made it a perfect fit for industrialist purposes, by no means compensates for the damage it does to the environment. It breaks down easily, poisoning the soil and seas with particles which cannot be ingested by the earth, leaving tell-tale signs of its scarring of the planet in the vastest of landfills down to the smallest micro-plastics encountered within the very cells of the smallest organisms which dwell in the deepest corners of the world’s oceans. Plastic represents a very important theme in Dick’s body of work and especially so in his *Valis* trilogy: entropy, the chaos which suffocates life; Dick’s alter egos’ perpetual spiritual nemesis in each and every one of his stories. This force is attributed to the Demiurge, the false creator god who fashioned the Kenoma in the Valentinian myth of creation.

Plastic embodies the ideological stranglehold that capitalism has over the habits of the sun-tanned masses, resulting in a way of life which is dictated by consumerism and dismissive of people’s individual needs. In *Valis*, Phil reveals that he is “struck dumb by the synthetic nature of my life” (129). He adds that this “plastic little apartment in southern California is not my home, but now I am awake, I guess, and here I live, with my TV (hello, Dick Clark), and my stereo (hello, Olivia Newton-John) and my books (hello nine million stuffy titles)” (131). Phil has a disdain for “wealth and property” which, he reveals, make him feel “uneasy” (130). He holds on to the opinion that matter is “plastic in the face of Mind” (46), believing that the cure for modern man’s existential crisis lies in the pursuits of the mind and spirit alone.

In Dick's depiction of plastic California, the conquest of capitalism goes hand in hand with the promotion of an irrationally rational world view.<sup>5</sup> Struggling with his own sanity, *Valis's* Fat tries to gain a grip on reality by adopting a — in his mind — rational view of the world. The Oxford English Dictionary defines rational as “having the faculty of reasoning; endowed with reason” (“Rational”). Dick's definition is slightly different: he uses the word rational as a descriptor of what is both kind and joyful. Unfortunately, Fat's attempts to narrow down such a view invariably lead to paradoxical conclusions. If Fat's visions of Valis are real — within the context of the novel there is objective evidence to substantiate this claim — the perceptual world around him must be irrational, since there is no room for Valis within the boundaries of its metaphysical laws. However, if Fat's visions are understood as hallucinations brought on by technologically or pharmaceutically induced psychosis — for which objective evidence is also put forward — the perceptual world must be rational. In short, Phil concludes that attempting to define rationality in black-and-white terms is itself an irrational act which is characteristic of the irrational society which is at least partly responsible for Fat's mental breakdown in the first place. While Fat attempts to detach himself from his capitalist milieu by applying all his cognitive powers to the search for spiritual enlightenment, the line of reasoning which he adopts is heavily influenced by the same capitalist mentality from whose bonds he wishes to rid himself. The word “rational” itself has been surreptitiously appropriated for the purposes of industrialist society, which has imbued the word with a new connotative meaning, namely: endowed with a certain colour of reason that serves the purposes of the consumerist collective, rather than the purposes of the individual.

Dick's countercultural views on the rationality of plastic California were heavily influenced by the ideas expressed in Jung's *The Undiscovered Self* (1957). Jung understood that the higher the value is placed on productivity within a culture, the lower the value will be placed on individual experience and expression. This productivity-oriented mindset is cultivated by “scientific

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<sup>5</sup> Dick echoes Herbert Marcuse here; this point will be further highlighted further down.



education,” which is “based in the main on statistical truths and abstract knowledge and therefore imparts an unrealistic, rational picture of the world, in which the individual, as a merely marginal phenomenon, plays no role” (*Undiscovered* 8). Jung admonishes modern society for the “rational character of its irrationality,” (9) since this prevailing ideology is only rational from the perspective of productivity but not from the perspective of man, since it deters the individual from pursuing individuation.

Dick’s presentation of plastic California in the *Valis* trilogy also echoes the ideas put forward in the writings of the members of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, a group of scholars known for interrogating the paradoxical aspects of capitalism (Marcuse xv), as well as other contemporary countercultural philosophers such as William Barrett, with whose works Dick was familiar and with whose themes he actively engaged. In his book *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), Herbert Marcuse offers an explanation for why the individual, though he does not benefit from the worship of consumerism promoted by the state, in most cases adheres meekly to the tenets of the state’s consumerist doctrine. In order to align the people’s attentions with the interests of the state, so-called “false needs” are created which are “superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression” (4-5). These false needs take the shape of material possessions such as the ones in Phil’s apartment in *Valis*: “my TV (hello, Dick Clark), and my stereo (hello, Olivia Newton-John)” (131). The more commercially successful Phil becomes, the more rational his life becomes from the perspective of the plastic culture. The conclusion can be drawn from the correlation between Phil’s material gains and his mental deterioration that, as Barrett puts it, “[t]o be rational is not the same as to be reasonable” (46). As his financial and material fortunes rise, so do his anxiety levels.

In both the *Exegesis* as well as the *Valis* novels, Dick uses the metaphor of the “Black Iron Prison” (*Invasion* 128) to depict on the one hand the Kenoma and on the other hand the individual’s unwitting metaphorical imprisonment by the demands of society. Dick also refers to the Kenoma as

the “Empire”, which is the “institution, the codification, of derangement; it is insane and imposes its insanity on us by violence, since its nature is a violent one” (*Exegesis* 151). In *The Divine Invasion*, Emmanuel, the reincarnation of God returned to Earth after many years of exile imposed upon him by the Demiurge, Belial, remarks: “[w]hat a tragic realm this is ... 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” (128). Dick in many instances likens the unconsciously ensnared individual to a machine. In *The Divine Invasion*, a police officer emphatically declares “I am not a machine” (236), before defying his professional duty to arrest Herb Asher, the novel’s soul-searching hero, after being moved by Herb’s plight. *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*’s narrator Angel reflects how she became “ill like a machine. I still moved but my soul died, my soul that, Tim had said, had never been fully born; that soul, not yet born, but born a little and wishing to be born more, born fully, that soul died and my body mechanically continues on” (204). For Angel, human relationships were the only thing keeping her afloat. After the deaths of all her close ones, her plastic Californian existence becomes a mechanical one, bereft of humanity, Gnosis, and awareness of her collective unconscious and thus her inner divinity.

During his ceaseless exegetical research, Dick found that the treacherous interpretation of rationality has been observed and consequently subjected to scrutiny by philosophers for thousands of years. Pondering the words of Heraclitus, *Valis*’s Phil writes: “[I]ntent form is the master of obvious form,’ and ‘[t]he nature of things is in the habit of concealing itself.’ So the rational, like a seed, lies concealed within the irrational bulk” (*Valis* 81). However, a decisive shift would take place in philosophers’ views on rationality which would contribute greatly to the misappropriation of irrational rationality as a guiding principle for the modern way of life. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, this shift occurred during the Age of Enlightenment. They argue that “Enlightenment’s program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with

knowledge” (Adorno 1). Influential Enlightenment figures such as Bacon and Luther fancied power and knowledge to be synonymous (12). The pursuit of knowledge for the sheer joy and personal development it might offer to its pursuer was regarded by Bacon, Luther, and many contemporary Enlightenment thinkers as a frivolous and useless activity. What human beings must seek to learn from nature, they argued, is “how to use it to dominate wholly both it and human beings” (2). This outlook would supposedly liberate human beings from fear and install them as masters over nature. Everything that does not “conform to the standard of calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion” (3). If something cannot be “resolved into numbers” (4), if it cannot be reduced to a single truth, it is discarded as mere fancy.

As Fat’s plight in *Valis* exemplifies, the “wholly enlightened earth is radiant with calamity” (Adorno 1) because despite the fact that the dominant culture, inspired by the tenets of the Enlightenment, preaches the existence of absolute truths, no one seems to be able to discern them with absolute certainty. It is telling that Fat limits his exegetical inquiries to mostly pre-enlightenment thinkers and ideas. Enlightened thinking is governed by the principle that “of two contradictory propositions, only one can be true and the other false” (23), which conflicts with the Gnostic dualistic perspective as well as Jung’s characterisation of individuation as the harmonious unification of opposites. In addition, if this principle were applied to Philip K. Dick’s literary alter ego in *Valis*, who is split into two personas, then Phil-Fat must be crazy. Nonetheless, the novel strongly suggests that it cannot be determined with absolute certainty that this is so, ergo plastic California, in Dick’s view, must be irrational.

The widespread adoption of the principles of the Enlightenment in the modern Western state has had a profound effect on the psychological well-being of its denizens. “The self,” Adorno writes, “entirely encompassed by civilization, is dissolved in an element composed of the very inhumanity which civilization has sought from the first to escape” (24). In addition, the eradication of myth and spiritual faith through the scientification of Enlightened societies’ perception has

deprived the individual of a deep-seated need for a spiritual connection to the outside world, as Freud points out: “[t]hrough scientific understanding, our world has become dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos. He is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional participation in natural events, which hitherto had a symbolic meaning for him” (135). This sentiment is advanced by Horkheimer & Adorno, who urge that the “disenchantment of the world means the extirpation of animism” (2). Furthermore, the onus that enlightenment puts on the domination of nature has led to the present environmental crisis which in turn could precipitate the potential extinction of the human race within a frighteningly short amount of time; a matter of years, even. However, the impact of human beings’ relentless salvaging of the earth’s resources and pollution of the environment is trivialised as long as a profit can be made; a profit which benefits only a very limited group of people, predominantly men. Ecofeminist scholars in the 1970s and 1980s proposed the view that the maltreatment of women and the scourging of the earth evolved from the same, male-dominated, so-called rational capitalist philosophy (Merchant 18). Gudmarsdottir writes:

For many ecothinkers, the body of the earth came to be seen as a sacred body, identified with a motherly or a goddess deity. Consequently, if nature was identified as a female body; the ecological crisis which the contemporary world faces was depicted as the abuse, rape or slaughter of the sacred mother. (206)

These views on rationalism inspired the works of several of Dick’s contemporaries, including fellow writers of speculative fiction such as Ursula K. Le Guin, Doris Lessing, and J. G. Ballard. Novels like Le Guin’s *The Word for World is Forest* (1976) caution against being deceived by “the big, the masculine, the rational” (Laurence 168), while Lessing’s *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) urges that as “humans killed and destroyed the organic life of which they were a part ... their

aggressiveness and irrationality increased steadily” (142). “Ballard’s oeuvre,” Cord writes, “embodies a very similar spirit, equally focused on the irrational, unlawful, counterintuitive and non-commonsensual” (9). The matrix of ideas on capitalist irrationality, stemming from Jung to the Frankfurt philosophers to countercultural novelists such as Le Guin, Ballard, and Lessing, provide crucial insights into the depiction of the psychological impact of modern society on Dick’s protagonists.

In the next section, Dick’s 2-3-74 visions will be detailed. This will shed light on Dick’s depiction of divine revelation in the *Valis* trilogy and the consequent impact that such visionary experiences have on the mental state of his protagonists.

### **2.3 An Overview of the 2-3-74 Visions**

In February and March of 1974 - referred to by Dick as 2-3-74 - Dick experienced a series of visions that would inspire the writing of his *Exegesis* and later the *Valis* trilogy. It began with the extraction of an impacted wisdom tooth and the consequent delivery of a prescription pain killer to his door by a dark-haired girl on February 20th. He describes the encounter as follows:

The doorbell rang and I went, and there stood this girl with black, black hair and large eyes very lovely and intense; I stood staring at her, amazed, also confused, thinking I’d never seen such a beautiful girl, and why was she standing there? She handed me the package of medication [Darvon], and I tried to think what to say to her; I noticed, then, a fascinating gold necklace around her neck and I said, “What is that? It certainly is beautiful,” just, you see, to find something to say to hold her there. The girl indicated the major figure in it, which was a fish. “This is a sign used by the early Christians,” she said, and then departed.  
(qtd. in Sutin 210)

After the girl left, Dick had the first of his visions, which triggered “what he experienced as past lives and genetic memories” (Sutin 210), giving him the impression of being an immortal spiritual being. Information was transferred to him either through a pink beam or by an AI voice, or both. To describe his experiences, Phil adopted a term introduced by Plato, namely “anamnesis,” to refer to the recollecting of “eternal truths, the World of Ideas, within ourselves” (Sutin 211). Anamnesis is a key concept in the *Valis* trilogy. On the one hand he uses the term to refer to Gnosis, while on the other hand he uses it to describe the individual’s discovery of his own collective unconscious during the third stage of his spiritual journey. In *The Divine Invasion*, Dick points out that the “universe exists because Yah remembers it” (57). This mirrors Jung’s notion that the individual experiences existence fully only once he is able to become re-acquainted with his collective unconscious.

In *Valis*, Dick describes his first vision thus:

First eight hours of graphic information is fired at you from sources unknown, taking the form of lurid phosphene activity in eighty colors arranged like modern abstract paintings; then you dream about three-eyed people in glass bubbles and electronic gear; then your apartment fills up with St. Elmo's Fire plasmatic energy which appears to be alive and to think; your Animals die; you are overcome by a different personality who thinks in Greek; you dream about Russians; and finally you get a couple of Soviet letters within a three-day period – which you were told were coming. But the total impression isn't bad because some of the information saves your son's life. Oh yes; one more thing: Fat found himself seeing ancient Rome superimposed over California 1974. Well, I'll say this: Fat's encounter may not have been with God, but it certainly was with something. (119–120)

Phil mused that God, or a god, had contacted him. This god was the same god whom the early Christians worshipped; the One who stands in opposition to the Demiurge worshipped by the

church. He imagined God to be a highly intelligent alien life-form called Valis, come to earth to enlighten humanity. Valis took the form of a plasmate, an imperceptibly small information-rich organism which, when bonded with man, would become a homoplasmate, or enlightened being, granting the evolved individual the knowledge that time was not linear. Reality, he supposed, consisted of layers of multiple realities. The plasmate had come to earth around the time of the Gnostics and therefore offered Dick visions of Rome around the time of the early Christians, where he was connected with either Simon Magus or an individual named Thomas. As a result, Dick was all of a sudden capable of speaking koine Greek, the lingua franca of that time period. Dick also received prophetic information on several different matters which were impossible to explain away as mere chance. Most notably, Dick was told by the plasmate that his son was ill with a rare disease, although this was impossible to observe without foresight. When Dick took his son to a doctor, the exact same disease which the plasmate had warned Dick about was diagnosed and his son's life was consequently saved (Sutin 211).

Dick would dedicate the remaining eight years of his life to deciphering the meaning behind his 2-3-74 experiences. In his characteristic manner, Dick “hovered in a binary flutter” when it came to his understanding and appreciation of his experiences, going back and forth between feelings of doubt and joy: “[d]oubt. That he might have deceived himself, or that It — whatever It was — had deceived him. Joy. That the universe might just contain a meaning that had eluded him all through his life and works” (Sutin 209). Some days Dick believed that he had gone insane, had suffered “total psychosis ... was taken over by one or more archetypes” (qtd. in Sutin), while other days Dick was convinced of a divine cosmic conspiracy being the source of his visions.

Although the details of Dick's interpretation of his visions differ from Valentinian doctrine, the essence is the same: God sends divine knowledge to the individual to aid him in the pursuit of enlightenment. Dick adopts the Valentinian notion that God's gift of Gnosis reminds the individual that the real world is an illusion created by the Demiurge — the traditional Christian god — who

wishes to expel humanity's memory of its former place in the Pleroma, the Kingdom of God. Dick also creates a connection between himself and the Gnostic theologian Simon Magus, who is commonly regarded as the founder of the Gnostic branch of theology (Irenaeus 43). Interestingly, Magus is known to have been baptised by Dick's namesake, Philip the Evangelist (43).

Dick's interpretation of 2-3-74 also shows clear signs of Jung's influence. *Valis*, a fairly autobiographical account of Dick's 2-3-74 experiences, warns readers that, as Jung puts it, "[a] million zeros joined together do not, unfortunately, add up to one ... our fatally short-sighted age thinks only in terms of large numbers and mass organizations" (*Undiscovered* 31). Anthony Peake argues that "*Valis* was warning us through Phil, using Phil as a medium by which we could be warned about the outcomes of what we are now doing, which is an interesting aside - which would make him a prophet, specifically a prophet downloading information from elsewhere to warn humanity of the way they should not go forward" (*Worlds* 47:21–47:41). Dick's insistence on the existence of a cross-temporal relationship between himself and Simon Magus and his resulting connection to Philip the Evangelist suggest that Dick also saw himself as a prophet, tasked with heralding Jung's exhortation that "the world exists for us only in so far as it is consciously reflected by a psyche" (*Undiscovered* 27) and that "the salvation of the world consists in the salvation of the individual soul" (32). In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, Angel offers an interpretation of Satan as someone who obtained knowledge of God's nature and was consequently condemned for keeping said knowledge "to himself; he did *not* share it with mankind" (66). This suggests that Dick felt that, in order to fulfil his duty to Valis, he must share his visions with the world. Besides Magus, Dick described a connection with an individual named Thomas. Interestingly, the name Thomas comes from the Aramaic word "T'ōmā," which means "twin" (Most 78). Furthermore, Thomas was the name of one of Jesus's twelve disciples who doubted the resurrection of Christ and would therefore come to be known as "Doubting Thomas" (Most 10). Dick relates this story in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*: "Jesus showed Thomas his wounds; he had Thomas thrust his



hand into his — Jesus' — side" (167). Dick's connection with his past self, his divine counterpart, also represents the third stage of his spiritual journey: his coming to terms with his twin, his Anima, which he regarded as a symbol of his collective unconscious.

In the following chapter, Dick's spiritual journey, as narrativised in his *Valis* trilogy, will be outlined. This will demonstrate Dick's intermingling of Valentinian Gnosticism and Jungian individuation theory in order to conceive of a spiritual remedy for mental breakdown in the modern age.

[T]he symbols of the divine show up in our world initially at the trash stratum.  
 Or so I told myself. Kevin had expressed this thought.  
 The divine intrudes where you least expect it.  
 ‘Look where you least expect to find it,’  
 Kevin had told Fat one time.  
 How do you do that?  
 It’s a contradiction.  
 (*Valis* 256)

### Chapter 3. Dick’s Spiritual Journey as Represented in the *Valis* Trilogy

Throughout the *Valis* trilogy, Dick depicts the three main stages of his personal interpretation of the individual’s spiritual journey toward enlightenment: mental breakdown, the pursuit of Gnosis through religious study, and the achievement of individuation through the discovery of man’s inner divinity. A closer look at the depiction of these three stages reveals the influence of his main sources of inspiration: Valentinian Gnosticism and Jungian individuation theory. This examination also showcases Dick’s discussion of contemporary countercultural views such as those expressed by Marcuse, Adorno & Horkheimer, Barrett, Laing, Le Guin, and Lessing, and the consequent incorporation of these ideas into his personal vision of a Gnostic-Jungian journey toward spiritual enlightenment.

#### 3.1 Dick’s Depiction of Mental Breakdown

In *Valis* Phil points out that there “wasn’t a sane person left in Northern California” (18), including the therapists and nurses charged with the psychological care of hospitalised psych ward patients. In the psych ward, a state run institution where treatment predominantly consists of a deck of playing cards and a generous bi-daily helping of drugs, the only book available to the ward’s thirty-five patients is a single Bible (60). In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, Angel laments the horrors of “electroshock” (85) inflicted on her friend Bill by therapists “full of recondite bullshit” (237). “The fucking sadists,” she muses, “in their sterile coats. What do they know about the human heart?” (86). The inadequacy of mental healthcare is demonstrated by the fact that “[t]housands of

young people kill themselves in America each year” (62). However, Angel notes that these deaths are invariably listed as accidental, on the pretext of sparing the victims’ families “the shame attached to suicide” (62). Dick suggests that the stigma surrounding mental health issues is part of the problem. Individuals in need of psychological support are either too embarrassed to seek help, or, if they do, are served playing cards and pharmaceuticals. Furthermore, plastic Californian culture prevents individuals from seeking help and support from others. The socially acceptable form of fighting loneliness, Fat notes, is leaving the television on constantly (*Valis* 252), while a slap on the shoulder is “the only avenue open to men to show love for each other” (108).

While locked up, *Valis*’s Fat learns a fundamental truth about “being crazy” in plastic California: “not only does it get you locked up, but it costs you a lot of money” (57); the bill for his stay “even included oxygen” (62). Despite the high cost, he does not receive any therapy (59) other than a single conversation with Dr Stone, who informs Fat that he should have beaten his wife “with a rolled-up newspaper or a phonebook” (65) to improve their relationship. This is an example of one of the central tenets of state-sponsored psychiatry in Dick’s plastic California: all people are believed to harbour hostile urges which cannot be prevented from forming in the mind but can only be redirected towards a suitable target. According to this principle, the distinction between a sane and an insane mind is made based on the ability to direct hostility outward rather than inward. Realising this, Fat tells the doctors what he thinks they will want to hear in order to get out sooner: “[s]uicide represents the introjection of hostility which should better be directed outward at the person who has frustrated you” (50). The doctors keep him locked up regardless.

This intermingling of violence and therapy is a recurrent theme in Dick’s novels (Sutin 134). In *Transmigration*, Bill, an impressionable young man whose opinions have been moulded by what therapists have told him during his many stays in the psych ward, offers his take on why Jeff Archer committed suicide: “[h]e seemed like a really nice person. Sometimes that’s a problem ... Much mental illness stems from people repressing their hostility and trying to be nice, too nice. The

hostility can't be repressed forever. Everybody has it; it has to come out" (92). In *The Divine Invasion*, Fulton Statler Harms, the Chief prelate of the all-powerful Christian-Islamic Church, the single remaining religious institution on earth, expresses his anger at the terminally ill Rybys Romney for attempting to smuggle Yah, or God, back to earth, proclaiming loudly that he "will chop her into little pieces, and her fetus along with her" (115). Although Harms is taken aback by the ferocity of his statement — "I really hate them ... I am furious" (115-6), he muses — he rationalises his anger and even continues to note who else he would enjoy chopping up. Dick's descriptions of the violent externalisation of anger echo R. D. Laing's ideas in *The Divided Self* (1960) surrounding the arbitrary definitions of insanity that spring from the demands of society upon the individual. Laing writes:

We are always, thanks to our human nature, potential criminals. In reality we merely lacked a suitable opportunity to be drawn into the infernal melee. None of us stands outside humanity's black collective shadow. Whether the crime lies many generations back or happens today, it remains the symptom of a disposition that is always and everywhere present — and one would therefore do well to possess some "imagination in evil," for only the fool can permanently neglect the conditions of his own nature. In fact, this negligence is the best means of making him an instrument of evil. Harmlessness and naïveté are as little helpful as it would be for a cholera patient and those in his vicinity to remain unconscious of the contagiousness of the disease. On the contrary, they lead to projection of the unrecognized evil into the "other." This strengthens the opponent's position in the most effective way, because the projection carries the fear which we involuntarily and secretly feel for our own evil over to the other side and considerably increases the formidableness of his threat. (53)

The black-and-white moralism of organised religion does not allow for the individual to pursue the contents of his collective unconscious. This, in turn, means that violent behaviour will result from the individual's obliviousness to the dark sides of his collective unconscious.

After his release from the psych ward, Fat is introduced to a state-appointed therapist named Maurice. A muscular embodiment of plastic California, Maurice is a "religious idiot" (*Valis* 98) as Fat puts it, referring thereby to a person who treats Scripture as nothing more than a set of unambiguous rules to live by. Dick shares Jung's view that religion "means dependance on and submission to the irrational facts of experience" (*Undiscovered* 12). Maurice is also a former drugs and arms dealer, and, in another past life, he used to be an "Israeli commando" (*Valis* 92) who "hadn't iced Syrian assassins by regarding the cosmos as a sentient entelechy with psyche and soma" (98). Therefore, needless to say, he does not have the patience to listen to Fat's ontological deliberations. Maurice recommends that Fat should "smoke dope" and "ball some broad that's got big tits" (93), echoing the ideas underpinning plastic California's consumerist approach to repressing rather than addressing trauma. Maurice also confesses that he would like to hold Fat's head "under water until you fought to live" (94), further confirming Laing's conclusions about violent behaviour.

In *Valis*, Phil's personality is split into two, although Dick does not make it clear exactly when this happens in the timeline of the story. At the start of the novel, Phil, the novel's narrator and Dick's fictional alter ego, states: "I am Horselover Fat, and I am writing this in the third person to gain much-needed objectivity" (11). Just as Phil is Dick's fictional alter ego, Horselover Fat is Phil's fictional alter ego. Phil himself, however, also acts as a character in the story alongside Fat, which makes it hard at times to distinguish exactly whose voice is being written down, Dick's or Phil's. At times Phil and Fat interact with one another physically, while other times they appear to be the same person, such as the two occasions when Phil misspeaks and refers to Fat as "I": "Bob and I - I mean, Bob and Horselover Fat" (13); "I have - I mean, Horselover Fat has" (43). In other

instances it almost appears as if Dick himself is speaking directly to the reader, as in the following passage: “I am, by profession, a science fiction writer. I deal in fantasies. My life is a fantasy. Nonetheless, Gloria Knudson lies in a box in Modesto, California” (12). This is both true and not true. The events described in *Valis* strongly mirror the events that took place in Dick’s life, and it is true that a close female friend of Dick’s passed away under similar circumstances and was buried in Modesto, but her name was Kathy Demuelle, as Dick admitted in his essay *The Evolution of a Vital Love* (*Dark Haired* 172). Kathy would also inspire the character of Donna Hawthorne in *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) plus the character of Angel in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, as Dick admitted in a letter to Claudia Bush in 1974 (*Collected Letters* 63). Dick frequently based his characters on personal acquaintances: “what I’m doing is just taking the people that I’ve worked with, that I’ve had as friends, had as fellow workers and I get a tremendous sense of satisfaction” (Sutin 54). Dick used his writing as a therapeutical means to understand his relationship with others by visualising their behaviour in different contexts.

At the same time, Dick used fictional alter-egos in order to improve his understanding of himself. In *Valis*, he quite literally enters into a dialogue with himself, balancing his various thoughts and emotions through the juxtaposition of Fat, who represents Noös, or understanding, with Phil, who represents faith. Dick spent a long time pondering how best to convey his 2-3-74 in fictional form. Unsatisfied with his first attempt, which would later be published as *Radio Free Albemuth* (1982), a more fictional adaptation of his post-2-3-74 exegetical pursuits, Dick decided to disregard the fact that his experiences sounded crazy and simply write down what actually happened, more or less. Dick was constantly torn between the idea that his visions were divine and the possibility that he might be crazy (Sutin 257). Dick invites the reader to share in this shaky perspective by having his narrator Phil inform the reader that Fat is insane while admitting that he, Phil, is Fat. He draws attention to this paradox, which metaphorically symbolises the 2-3-74 experiences as well as the duality of the individuated psyche, toward the end of the novel when Phil

explains the Epimenides paradox: “[a]ll Cretans are liars. I am a Cretan.’ ... The paradox is insoluble, an infinite regress” (257). He leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions from this insoluble question.

Dick’s self-reflexive inner dialogue recalls Hermans’s concept of the “dialogical self” (*Dialogical Self* 29). Hermans argues that “[i]n a world society that is increasingly interconnected and intensely involved in historical changes, dialogical relationships are required not only between individuals, groups and cultures, but also within the self of one and the same individual” (*Theory* 1). He imagines this dialogical self as follows:

The dialogical self, in contrast with the individualistic self, is based on the assumption that there are many *I* positions that can be occupied by the same person. The *I* in one position can agree, disagree, understand, misunderstand, oppose, contradict, question, and even ridicule the *I* in another position. The embodied self, in contrast with the rationalistic self, is always tied to a particular position in space and time (either physically or mentally).

(*Dialogical Self* 29)

Smythe points to the “dialogical currents in Jung’s analytical psychology” (643). Jung contends that the common practice of young children to give voice to various different personalities during play “has nothing to do with a ‘split’ or dissociation in the ordinary medical sense” (*Memories* 45); rather, such inner dialogue is common among all young children. Jung saw the process of individuation as an inner dialogue between different aspects of the psyche, referring to his Anima as “my devil ... the joy of the serious person” (*Red Book* 260) with whom he might converse, in an abstract sense. Such dialogues are not necessarily spoken aloud, as Smythe explains; these “dialogues within the self” can occur “wholly unconsciously and non-discursively through non-conceptual modes of expression that reflect the deep archetypal background of embodied life”

(643). Making the various inner voices heard is crucial not only to personal development but also to interpersonal relationships: “[a] person is a psychic system which, when it affects another person, enters into reciprocal reaction with another psychic system” (*Principles* 1). If the various aspects of an individual’s personality are not voiced, said individual will fail to communicate effectively with others.

Fat’s mental breakdown in *Valis* starts with the suicide of Gloria, a close friend of his; a dark-haired girl. The first line of the novel goes: “Horselover Fat’s nervous breakdown began the day he got the phonecall from Gloria asking if he had any Nembutals” (9), which she needs to kill herself. Immediately after this, Phil shares how his psychiatrist suggests that he might get better: “get off dope” and “stop trying to help people” (9). Fat soon gets off dope, and eventually stops trying to help people, but the same existential angst continues to torment Fat. Shortly after Gloria’s death, his wife leaves him, taking his son with her. This causes Fat to attempt suicide, in a tragically incompetent manner; despite combining three different tactics, namely “the pills, the razor blade, and the car engine” (48), he survives and is committed to a psych ward.

Throughout *Valis*, Fat is haunted by the the apparent arbitrariness of suffering; by the lack of a rational explanation for why Gloria and Sherri had to die. This unanswerable question is symbolised by his friend Kevin’s cat, as Phil explains: “the cat is a symbol of everything about the universe he doesn’t understand” (29). The cat ran in to the road and was killed by a car, which, according to Kevin, points to a Godless universe. Kevin obsesses over the question of the cat, just as Fat obsesses over the matter of God. He cannot let go of the idea that Gnosis was conferred to him during his 2-3-74 experiences by God. He refuses to accept the other, less appealing but more reasonable possibility: that his visions could be explained as “synchronicity, as Jung calls it ... Coincidence, without intent” (253). Fat’s obsession leads to irrational behaviour.

In all three *Valis* novels, the “*idée fixe*” or “*folie a deux*” (*Divine* 231) is presented as the most prominent symptom of the novels’ heroes’ repression. The concept of the “*idée fixe*” or “Over-



Valence” (*Transmigration* 97) is perfectly described by Angel in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, using the example of someone who, out of nowhere, gets the idea that he has left his car lights on:

What has happened is that you have gone crazy; you have become psychotic. Because you have discounted the testimony of your senses; you could see out the window that the car lights were not on, yet you went out to check anyhow. This is the cardinal factor: you saw but you did not believe. Or, conversely, you did not see something but you believed it anyhow. Theoretically, you could travel between your bedroom and the car forever, trapped in an eternal closed loop of unlocking the car, trying the light-switch, returning to the house — in this regard you herewith are a machine. You are no longer human. (98)

Dick derived this concept from Jung:

Jung ... speaks in one place of a person, a normal person, into whose mind one day a certain idea comes, and that idea never goes away. Moreover, Jung says, upon the entering of that idea into the person’s mind, nothing new ever happens to that mind or in that mind; time stops for that mind and it is dead. The mind, as a living, growing entity has died. And yet the person, in a sense, continues on. (*Transmigration* 98)

This is exactly what happens with Fat in *Valis*. He fails to believe in a divine plan which gives purpose to life despite having received Gnosis through visions and having met God’s prophet. Instead, he wanders the earth in search of what he has already found.

Dick’s descriptions of psychiatric care in plastic California strongly suggest complete and utter incompetence on the part of the psych ward staff. He cryptically alludes to the fact that

individuation is to be found only outside the confines of the psychiatric ward when he points out that it is constantly raining outside. Water has been used as a symbol of spiritual rebirth in many cultures and traditions across geographical and cultural boundaries for thousands of years, as Jung points out; he claims that the mandala symbol is often represented as “the water of life” (*Symbols* 170). In addition, Dick’s plastic California mirrors Eliot’s *The Wasteland* — which Fat’s friend David is reading later on in the novel after his faith in traditional Christian doctrine is shattered by observing the prophet of Valis (229) — where individuation through “death by water” (Eliot 55) cannot be found in the existential void of modern life.

In the absence of a capable therapist to assist Fat in addressing his trauma, Fat unwittingly adopts a masochistic coping mechanism, which Phil describes as follows:

Theodor Reik puts forth an interesting view. Masochism is more widespread than we realize because it takes an attenuated form. The basic dynamism is as follows: a human being sees something bad which is coming as inevitable. There is no way he can halt the process; he is helpless. This sense of helplessness generates a need to gain some control over the impending pain — any kind of control will do. This makes sense; the subjective feeling of helplessness is more painful than the impending misery. So the person seizes control over the situation in the only way open to him: he connives to bring on the impending misery; he hastens it. This activity on his part promotes the false impression that he enjoys pain. Not so. It is simply that he cannot any longer endure the helplessness or the supposed helplessness.

(88)

Once again, Dick blurs the line between fiction and reality by attributing this theory to the fictitious Theodor Reik, when it was actually Wilhelm Reich who developed the concept of character structures, one of which was the masochistic type (Lothane 106). Phil acknowledges on several

occasions that pain is the main source of Fat's anguish: it "made no sense to Fat;" he saw it as an example of "irrationality in the universe, an affront to reason" (142). Nonetheless, he keeps seeking it out in order to at least control it. The consequence of such masochistic behaviour over long stretches of time is that the masochistic person slowly becomes "anhedonic" (88) and therefore impervious to the charm of the usual repressive habits — substance abuse, material pursuits, carnal pleasures, slapping wives with rolled-up newspapers — which are so readily adopted in a society, Marcuse confirms, "whose dominant interest demands repression" (5). This is the reason why Maurice's distinctly plastic therapeutic strategy of "bullying Fat into enjoying life" does not work because Fat has "no concept of enjoyment; he understood only meaning" (92). The way in which Fat hastens impending pain is by seeking out tormented souls and trying to save them, knowing full well that his endeavour will prove futile and certainly lead to more grief. Fat, a "modern-day masochist" (89), does not enjoy the pain he seeks out, since to enjoy pain, from Phil's perspective, is "a semantic contradiction" (90). *The Divine Invasion's* Herb Asher similarly clings to his horrible wife because, as his coworker Elias — who is actually the prophet Elijah or, from the Jungian perspective, the archetype of the wise old man — observes: "it's a basic part of you, taking care of her" (213). Herb finally manages to find enlightenment, but only after he leaves his wife in order to court Linda Fox, a dark-haired woman who plays the role of Herb's anima. Dick based the character of Linda Fox on Linda Ronstadt, a contemporary singer with whom he was infatuated; *Valis's* Linda Lampton is also based on her (Sutin 189).

Throughout *Valis*, Phil periodically draws parallels between Fat's life and Wagner's opera *Parsifal* (1882), a tale of Parsifal's search for the holy grail. Wagner spelling of "Parsifal" instead of "Parzival" suggests that Wagner wanted to highlight the paradoxical, dualistic nature of his hero, since the Persian words "Parsi Fal" translate to either "pure fool" or "poor fool" (Unger 73). Dick obviously intended to equate Fat with Parsifal, depicting him as a fool for his destructive yearning for knowledge but also as a hero on a spiritual journey. Another parallel can be drawn between

between Fat, Parsifal, and Valentinus's Aeon Sophia, who foolishly pursues knowledge and must reconnect with her divine counterpart; a mythological example of the classic hero's journey. The comparison of Fat's story to Parsifal's quest as well as the Valentinian myth of creation suggests Dick's intention to underscore Jung's theories on the timelessness of myth and symbols. A final commonality can be found between *Parsifal* and the *Valis* novels. Parsifal's king, Amfortas, is heinously wounded by his own holy spear; the spear that pierced the side of Christ on the cross. The only thing which might heal Amfortas's wound turns out to be the same spear that caused the wound in the first place. Dick attributed his post-2-3-74 mental breakdown to being "taken over by one or more archetypes" (qtd. in Sutin 210). The archetypal confrontation that precedes Herb's spiritual enlightenment in *The Divine Invasion* mirrors Jung's description of individuation. Thus, the holy spear represents the archetypes, which both cause mental breakdown but also offer the possibility of enlightenment.

Dr. Stone is one of the few characters in *Valis* who manages to positively influence Fat's mental state. Phil indicates that "lesser therapists" only "note the person split into two pieces and begin the job of patching him back into a unity" (74). The split, caused by an imbalanced psyche, is supposedly rebalanced by finding new outlets for undesirable emotions, as mentioned above. However, the source of the emotions is left unaddressed because that would take "too long" (74) and therefore be irrational from a capitalist perspective; the individual must be healed just enough to rejoin the workforce as soon as possible. This idea pops up again in *The Divine Invasion*, when Angel deplores how psychiatrists commonly operate under the assumption that "[p]ain and illness are something to be eradicated, not understood" (29). This eradication is often enacted through drugs, because the production and consumption of drugs suits the purposes of industry. Lessing paints a disturbing picture of this kind of mental healthcare in the following passage from *Briefing of a Descent into Hell*:

PATIENT. You wake me and you sleep me. You wake me and then you push me under. I'll wake up now. I want to wake.

NURSE. Sit up, then.

PATIENT. But what is this stuff, what are these pills, how can I wake when you ... who is that man who pushes me under, who makes me sink as drowned man sinks and ... ?

NURSE. Doctor X. thinks this treatment will do you good. (38)

Dick frequently uses the same metaphor of sleep to indicate spiritual occlusion, induced by the repressive nature of society (*Divine* 178). Stone's method, although it does not fully heal Fat, has a positive impact because Stone adapts "his therapy to the individual, not the individual to the therapy" (74). Jung points out that the "psychic situation of the individual is so menaced nowadays by advertising, propaganda, and other more or less well-meant advice and suggestions that for once in his life the patient might be offered a relationship that does not repeat the nauseating "you should," "you must" and similar confessions of impotence" (*Undiscovered* 30), such as those uttered by Maurice. Stone follows Jung's prescription by refraining from offering such generalised prescriptions, entering instead into a dialogue with Fat on equal terms.

Dick's depiction of Fat's mental breakdown strongly suggests that he is not insane; traumatised, yes, but nevertheless in touch with reality. It further suggests that "it is sometimes an appropriate response to reality to go insane" (*Valis* 10). These suggestions mirror the central premise of Lessing's *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, whose protagonist is deemed to be "insane according to his doctors' definitions, but those definitions result from a scientific mentality which expresses its own limitations through its inability to see things except as facets and one at a time" (Kaplan 549). Lessing's novel engages "explicitly and critically with R. D. Laing's 1960s' antipsychiatry movement" (Myler 437). The "primary tenet of antipsychiatric thinking," according to Myler, was: "what seems like sanity is actually madness and what seems like madness is actually

a sane response to what has become an insane world — a world that requires one to accept that insanity as normal in order to survive” (442). Laing phrases this idea similarly: “[i]n the context of our present pervasive madness that we call normality, sanity, freedom, all our frames are ambiguous and equivocal” (11). Laing showed a keen interest in Jung’s idea of individuation and championed the growth, rather than repression, of the individual human psyche in a manner akin to Jung. Laing’s work was very popular among counter-cultural writers and artists in the time in which Dick wrote, so it is highly likely that Dick, who was incredibly well-read, must have come across Laing’s work. In *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, Lessing writes that humans have “not yet evolved into an understanding of their individual selves as merely parts of a whole, first of all humanity, their own species, let alone achieving a conscious knowledge of humanity as part of Nature; plants, animals, birds, insects, reptiles, and all these together making a small chord in the Cosmic Harmony” (140). Lessing’s “insistence on the importance of self-knowledge” (Marchino 252), which was inspired by Laing, mirrors Dick’s promotion of individuation in the third stage of his spiritual journey, which was inspired by Jung.

In *Transmigration*, Bishop Archer defends his belief that Jeff’s spirit is speaking to him from beyond the grave by comparing this belief to a belief in God. Both Jeff and God are invisible, which means that either belief is equally rational. What the masses believe is regarded as rational, while what the minority believes is considered irrational (106). When Fat confides to Kevin that he is “going crazy” from his grief over the death of Sherri and Gloria, Kevin consoles him by reminding him that that is “a normal reaction” (*Valis* 111) since, as Barrett indicates, “the anguish of loss may be redeemed, but can never be mediated” (138). Grief-induced insanity is deemed natural, while divine revelation-induced insanity is deemed to have been natural and even commendable in the past in the case of Christian Saints and Martyrs, but is now considered to be decidedly unnatural.

As a teenager, Dick asked his psychiatrist whether the American value system were true in an absolute sense of the word and not merely relative to its cultural context. Dick's psychiatrist responded by saying: “[t]hat’s a symptom of your neurosis, that you doubt the values of right and wrong” (qtd. in Sutin 112). In *The Divine Invasion*, Dick points out that “[w]hat you name you control” (75), and since, from Dick's Jungian perspective, the government wishes to exert control over the individual, it stands to reason that those in power are ultimately in control of the definition of insanity. The concept of insanity, then, merely serves to distinguish between those who can and those who cannot function at an adequate level according to plastic California's socio-cultural rules and conventions. Sanity, then, becomes the ability to conform to ideologically prescribed notions of identity and functionality in society, while insanity becomes any failure to conform to these prescribed standards of normality. In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, Dick contrasts chemical insanity with cultural insanity through his comparison of Jeff and Bill. “I don't think Jeff could be called — could have been called — mentally ill,” he writes; “he simply wasn't terribly happy” (62). Bill, on the other hand, due to the chemical composition of his brain, is “unable to desymbolize, to think abstractly” and therefore “his ratiocination was limited to the concrete” (95), which means that it is virtually impossible for such a person to acquaint himself with his collective unconscious without the ability to decode symbols.

In the following section, Dick's primary coping mechanism for dealing with mental breakdown will be explained: the study of religious and spiritual writings and the consequent creation of a personal cosmogony in order to impose meaning on his material reality. This acts as the second stage in Dick's depiction of the spiritual journey.

### **3.2 Dick's Cosmogony**

Dick believed that his 2-3-74 visions represented either a communication from God or a sign that he was becoming psychotic. Doubting Dick longed for the former option to be true and, as a

consequence, set out to create a cohesive cosmogony that might offer a convincing argument for a divine plan governing the universe and an explanation for all the pain and suffering to which he was so sensitive. This process is depicted in *Valis*, while in *The Divine Invasion* Dick's cosmogony itself is narrativised. *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* satirises his religious pursuits by offering a fictional account of the similar ontological pursuits of his close friend Bishop James Pike, who wound up dead in the Judean desert searching for Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls had been discovered several years earlier. Dick's desire to uncover a divine plan governing the universe, and as such all human lives, suggests a traditional aspect to Dick's thought. In a period of major secularisation in the United States and the prevalence of scientific rationalism in American culture, Dick appears to be looking for primordial ways of explaining the individual's relation to the cosmos and his place within it. Dick's rejection of Western cultures' "secularized esotericism" (Hanegraaf 521) is reminiscent of the New Age movement. Since the theological systems of the world's religions had, in Dick's eyes, failed so far to explain the spiritual connection between humanity and nature, Dick, like the New Age spiritualists (Hanegraaf 519), attempts to explain it himself.

In *Valis*, following the deaths of Gloria and Sherri, Fat sets out to create his own cosmogony in an attempt to find a meaningful explanation for his friends' seemingly meaningless suffering and untimely demise. He does so after examining all the religions known to him and their corresponding theological writings and finding them to be lacking in their ability to provide him with intellectually satisfying answers. The fundamental issue that Fat has with organised forms of religion is that religions impose rules on their followers with regard to how they are to experience divinity in order to control people through their faith. This is expanded on in *The Divine Invasion*, in which Dick depicts the union of Church and State, which transforms the "Communist Party and the Catholic Church into one mega-apparatus" (6). In addition, Dick describes the Church as a "reactionary institution devoted to the betterment of a few and the exploitation of the many, trading on human credulity" (209-10). The power of the Church, according to Dick, is centred on its ability to deter



individuals from entering “into a dialogue with Scripture” because if “Scripture escaped out from under the church its monopoly departed” (73). In addition, Dick believed that enlightenment can be found all over the earth and “isn’t limited to any one country or culture or religion” (*Valis* 194). For all that, Fat does believe that in each religion clues can be found in the form of universal symbols that point toward true enlightenment. In this regard, Dick’s view matches that of Jung, who argues that it is “time that the Christian mythology, instead of being wiped out, was understood symbolically for once” (*Undiscovered* 22). He also shares Jung’s view that Christ is an important mandala symbol: a symbol of the Self.

For Fat, religion ought to concern itself first and foremost with the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. Sherri is evidently not spiritually enlightened, however, nor is she on any discernible kind of spiritual journey. Sherri is the quintessential devout Christian, from Fat’s perspective at least. She has “official documents declaring her a Christian” and calls “her priest by his first name”. Phil mockingly concedes that “[y]ou cannot get any closer to piety than that” (84). Piety, from Fat’s perspective, equals blind obedience to a set of rules that guide a person’s faith. Sherri believes that “one encounters God only through channels” (84), and those channels for her are the Church, Scripture, and the instructions of her priest. Fat’s existential crisis and resulting need for some form of divine guidance stems in part from his sense of entrapment within the confines of plastic California’s socio-cultural matrix of unwritten rules of conduct. Freedom, therefore, should characterise the path to enlightenment, which is why Fat starts writing his exegesis; to uncover the true “Logos” or “God’s message” (26). This also dovetails to some extent with the New Age spirituality of the period in which Dick lived. According to Houtman, New Age spirituality describes a broad spectrum of spiritual views that are characterised by three fundamental ideas: the idea of one’s divine inner self, the idea of a new age of harmony being about to follow an age of power struggles, and, importantly, the idea of holism, an approach to finding truth not through

scientific probing but instead through the perception of fragmentary truths as parts of a larger, universal energy (Houtman 162). Partridge notes:

[J]ust because an alternative spirituality may not require its adherents to sit in pews and believe systematic theologies does not mean that it is, compared to mainstream religious belief, insignificant in the life of the believer; just because new ways of believing are not allied to the state or located in large buildings next to the village green does not mean that they are therefore socially insignificant; and just because beliefs are transmitted through popular culture does not mean that they are, therefore, trivialized. (1)

Partridge's claims reflect Fat's "own concept of God" (96). One of Dick's many names for God is "Zebra. Because it blended" (78). Like his equine namesake whose striped hide serves, according to popular belief, to camouflage itself, Zebra uses "mimesis" (79) to blend in the world surreptitiously (78). Fat maintains that "the true God mimics the universe, the very region he has invaded: he takes on the likeness of sticks and trees and beer cans in gutters — he presumes to be trash discarded, debris no longer noticed" (81). Dick's depiction of God hiding in trash mirrors Dick's belief that enlightenment must be disguised in order to be conveyed to the greater public, as he explains: "[t]hese reports must take trashy SF forms ... [because] the delusional world has no use for Gnosis (direct experience of divine wisdom), so camouflage is necessary" (qtd. in Sutin 154). Dick's infusion of the spiritual journey into quirky SF plot-lines featuring "tentacled aliens, alternate worlds, gee-whiz high-tech gimmickry" (Sutin 1) serves as a perfect example of his prophetic message.

Dick's definition of God is highly speculative. Frequently, Dick imagines God to be "living information" (*Divine* 60). He also envisions Zebra as an alien life form, while in other instances he refers to Zebra as a highly advanced form of technology which "would seem to us to be a form of

magic; Arthur C Clarke has pointed that out” (133). Dick is referring here to Clarke’s essay “The Hazards of Prophecy: The Failure of Imagination” (1962), in which Clarke postulates that scientific rationalism ceased to offer a meaningful understanding of the universe following the discovery of X-rays in 1895:

[H]ere was the first clear indication, in a form that everyone could appreciate, that the common-sense picture of the universe was not sensible after all. X-rays – the very name reflects the bafflement of scientist and layman alike – could travel through solid matter, like light through a sheet of glass. No one had ever imagined or predicted such a thing; that one would be able to peer into the interior of the human body – and thereby revolutionize medicine and surgery – was something that the most daring prophet had never suggested. The discovery of X-rays was the first great breakthrough into realms where no human mind had ever ventured before. Yet it gave scarcely a hint of still more astonishing developments to come – radioactivity, the internal structure of the atom, Relativity, the Quantum Theory, the Uncertainty Principle. (15)

Clarke’s claim that the “common-sense picture of the universe was not sensible after all” (15) bears resemblance to the ideas concerning society’s irrationality expressed by Jung, Horkheimer & Adorno, Barrett, Marcuse, Laing, as well as the ideas found in Valentinian Gnosticism and the various works of speculative fiction by countercultural authors such as Le Guin, Lessing, and Ballard which are either mentioned or alluded to in the *Valis* trilogy. Philip K Dick studied all these writers from very different fields studying very different different things and imagined a vast intertextual web surrounding the idea that man’s attitude toward his exterior reality is irrational. This, in turn, suggests that Dick perceived a transcendental element of truth in his depiction of man’s spiritual journey.

In *Valis*, a comprehensive cosmogony can be deduced from Fat's incessant theological ramblings. Fat describes his "two source cosmogony" (103) as "[b]asically ... Valentinian, second century C.E.' (97). According to Fat, one divine entity created from itself a divine pair of twins, the "syzygy" (103), consisting of Yin and Yang, from a Taoist perspective, or Form I and Form II, from the perspective of Parmenides, to distinguish between the was-not and the was. The concept of the divine syzygy is an integral part of Valentinian Gnosticism, which envisions the coming of the Kingdom of God as the reunion between the individual and his divine counterpart. Jung also saw the syzygy as an important symbol for the process of individuation, as Tepaske points out: "anima and animus are yoked together dynamically and sustain the endless dance of the syzygy" (319), signalling the composition of the Self through its conscious and unconscious halves.

Each of the aforementioned twins consisted of psyche and soma. Form I and Form II would become the Many, meaning all living creatures, which would inhabit two so-called "hyperuniverses" (103) projected from the twins' psyches. These two hyperuniverses closely mirror the Pleroma and Kenoma described by Valentinus. Form II, born prematurely, languished toward "illness, madness and disorder" (103), which caused entropy to invade hyperuniverse II. Form I sent a micro-form of itself, namely Jesus Christ, to hyperuniverse II to heal it since the madness that pervades hyperuniverse II has made the people living in it into "idiots living in private, unreal worlds" (104). Jesus's role here is similar to his role in the Valentinian myth of creation. Dick's Jesus fails to heal the world and is killed, forcing his spirit, the Holy Spirit, to kill the deranged twin and mourn her passing, who regardless remains in existence in the eternity of time, exerting her influence over hyperuniverse I. The One's sadness at the passing of Form II causes all living creatures to feel anguish until the One's plan comes full circle and the healthy twin undergoes mitosis and splits into two healthy hyperuniverses, which will be experienced by all living things as "the 'Kingdom of God'" (104). Again, Dick draws heavily here on the Valentinian myth of creation. However, while Valentinus's Kingdom of God is born out of the reduction of two universes — the

Kenoma and Pleroma — to one, single universe — the Pleroma — Dick's Kingdom of God springs forth from the mitosis of a single universe into two hyperuniverses. This suggests that in the final analysis, Dick's conception of individuation is more Jungian than Valentinian, representing the duality of the Self through the harmonious coexistence of the conscious and unconscious mind.

Fat envisages the Form I, the good twin, as an alien entity "from another star system" (69), which is either a highly developed life form called a plasmate or a futuristic artificial intelligence. This entity possesses the secret to immortality, which equates to the end of all suffering, by converting time into space (126). Immortality, which Fat views as a symbolic representation of spiritual enlightenment, is secretly represented throughout history as the "ajna eye," the third eye, which "gives inward discernment" (112). This idea is clearly borrowed from Jung, who stated that he "[w]ho looks outside, dreams; [he] who looks inside, awakes" (*Jung Letters* 33). Fat also refers to the plasmate as "living information" or the "Logos" (68). The plasmate, crucially, is rational, while the world is not. This, says Phil, is the "bottom line" of "Fat's world-view" (126). Fat suggests that within the popular culture, as it exists in the novel, the plasmate is symbolised as the "Grail" containing "the sacred blood of the crucified Christ" (140). The plasmate was banished from earth by Form II, the evil twin, whom Fat also refers to as "Yaldabaoth," "Samael," or simply the mad "creator deity" (97), akin to the Valentinian concept of the Demiurge. This occurred in 70 A.D. when the Temple of Jerusalem fell and the Romans "had found and murdered all the plasmates" (103) except for a small amount which managed to hide away in Nag Hammadi, where the persecuted Gnostics hid their precious theological writings. As a consequence of the plasmate's absence, real time ceases. When the scrolls are found, in 1945, the plasmate is once again released and real time starts again. This means that it is not 1978 when Fat's story takes place, but technically 103 A.D. The period from 70 A.D. until 1945 is called the "Age of Iron" (182), during which humans were secretly imprisoned in the "Black Iron Prison" (54): the world run by the manifestation of the evil twin as the eternal empire of evil. This is what Valentinus describes as the

Kenoma and its creator, the Demiurge. The Romans are an early manifestation of the Demiurge. Richard Nixon, the most recent incarnation of the Demiurge, is overthrown by Zebra, in August 1974 (114).

Fat's extensive studies of religious texts lead him to conclude that there have been three prophets, or manifestations of Zebra, the divine twin, before the coming of Christ: Ikhnaton, Moses, and Elijah (115), or possibly Buddha, Zoroaster, and Muhammed (138-9). Regardless, the next saviour would be the fifth and final prophet of Zebra (145) who would issue in the reign of "KING FELIX," or the "Happy (or Rightful) King" (182). This theory, Fat remarks, is contingent on the assumption that it was the plasmate which reached out to Fat during his 2-3-74 visions. The other option, Fat explains, would be that what he thought was the plasmate was in fact a powerful satellite from the Soviet Union manipulating Americans with their fascist schemes (116).

Fat's cosmogony in *Valis* clearly shows how strongly Dick was influenced by Valentinian Gnosticism and Jung's individuation theory. Furthermore, it highlights Dick's understanding of religious myth as a reflection of the human psyche and the depiction of the syzygies, the divine opposites, as mirroring the relationship of the conscious and unconscious mind throughout the process of individuation as described by Jung. The purpose of Dick's spiritual journey was the attainment of meaning. The Valentinian-Jungian cosmogony presented in *Valis* emphasised, in Dick's mind, the universality of meaning through the ages, and so played an important role in his spiritual journey.

In *The Divine Invasion*, Dick offers an alternative version of his cosmogony, but the essence remains the same. In this text, the god "Yah" (17) has been banished from earth (54) by the Demiurge, who in this novel is called "Belial" (80), at the time of the fall of Masada, in the year "[s]eventy-three C. E." (54). In the novel's present time, sometime in the near future, Yah attempts to return to earth in the form of a human child called Emmanuel, which means "God with us" (2), to usher in a "Messianic age" (103). During his passage to earth, Emmanuel suffers anamnesis. He is

aided in the recovery of his memories by Zina, a dark-haired girl who attends the same primary school as he. Emmanuel expects to rediscover the unwavering truths that define his divine rule of the universe through reading Scripture. Instead, “Scripture yielded up an infinitude of knowledge that ceaselessly changed” (71). Furthermore, Emmanuel learns that there are “two realities ... The Black Iron Prison .... and the Palm Tree Garden” (128). While the former is governed by him, the latter is governed by Zina, who represents his anima.<sup>6</sup> Both realms exist simultaneously, side by side; therefore, the Kingdom of God is already at hand, unbeknownst to those living in the Black Iron Prison. Zina shows Emmanuel how Herb travels from one realm to the other, guided by a “beam of pink light” (188), thus completing the spiritual journey.

Dick’s spiritual journey consists of three stages: mental breakdown, the pursuit of Gnosis through religious study, and the achievement of individuation through the discovery of the individual’s inner divinity. In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, Dick offers a satirical take on his religious pursuits, the second stage of this spiritual journey. He does so by presenting the increasingly bizarre theological theories of Bishop Archer. Archer argues that the “Qumran Scrolls” (72) reveal that “the early Christians were a secret mushroom cult” (83) who received Gnosis through visions induced by the mysterious “*anokhi*,” which means “‘I’ — as in ‘I am the lord thy God’” (57). The *anokhi*, Archer holds, was in fact a psilocybin mushroom from which the Gnostics made bread and broth (83): “[t]he *anokhi* ... the mushroom ... is Christ ... the real Christ, whom Jesus spoke for” (197). Jesus was supposedly a prophet of this mushroom cult, but any reminder of the fungal part of his teachings would soon be obliterated by “the repressive strictures of Christian canon law and morality” (188). Archer saw the mushroom-less era as the “Age of Iron” but imagined that the rediscovery of the *anokhi* would lead to the “Age of Gold” (132). Dick strongly suggests that this outrageous theory points to Archer’s losing touch with reality, as he struggles to deal with his son’s suicide.

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<sup>6</sup> This claim will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.

As mentioned above, *Valis's* Fat understands spiritual enlightenment to be immortality through the transformation of time into space. He claims to have experienced this himself, first-hand, after his encounter with Zebra in 2-3-74. A dark-haired woman delivering his medication appears at his door wearing a “golden fish necklace” (122). Upon touching this symbol of the early Christians, Fat starts experiencing visions of a man called Thomas. He interprets this as an experience of immortality, because if “time was abolished” then “the tyranny of death was abolished” (125). Since “[t]ime is a name for God” (132), Fat concludes that the plasmate must be made up of the descendants of the human race living in the far future, traveling through time to grant their ancestors the gift of immortality (133-4). He substantiates this claim by pointing to the ancient Christian rite of transubstantiation, a remnant of the plasmate’s influence on the early Christians. He reasons that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ through the abolition of time (*Valis* 233). In *The Divine Invasion*, Dick draws attention to the universality of this act of salvation: “[i]t is an archetypal timeless situation, God bringing men out of slavery and into freedom” (28), thereby linking his own spiritual journey to its alleged mythological roots.

The idea of God being a descendent of man is similarly expressed in Michael Moorcock’s *Behold the Man* (1969), in which Karl Glogauer, the protagonist, travels back in time to find empirical proof for Biblical teachings by witnessing Jesus’s crucifixion, only to discover that Jesus was, in fact, mentally disabled:

The madman, the prophet, Karl Glogauer, the time-traveller, the neurotic psychiatrist manqué, the searcher for meaning, the masochist, the man with a death-wish and the messiah complex, the anachronism, made his way through the market place gasping for breath. He had seen the man he had sought. He had seen Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph. He had seen a man he recognised without any doubt as a congenital imbecile. (100)



When Karl takes Jesus' place on the cross to safeguard the formation of Christianity, he realises that in his attempt to find God he found himself. Wymer points out that the narrative's "circular structure is itself expressive of the process of individuation which, according to Jung, is not linear but which circles round the Self which is its goal" (Wymer 104). This resembles the cyclical relationship between the individual's conscious self and the Anima, pictured by Dick in Figure 1.

Jung saw Christ as one of the most important symbols for psychology since "it is perhaps the most highly developed and differentiated symbol of the self, apart from the Buddha" (*Psychology* 19). He argued that the individual must not attempt to become like Christ, but rather interpret Christ symbolically as a symbol of individuation (*Modern* 71). In *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, Charles Watkins makes a similar discovery of the timelessness of existence which reveals the "interrelationships between all things" (Kaplan 549); Watkins notices how individual souls "lay side by side, fishes in a school, cells in honeycomb, flames in fire" and observes a "fusion with the people who were friends, companions, lovers and associates, a wholeness because I was stuck like a bit of coloured glass in a mosaic" (106). In other words, divinity through self-knowledge follows from the understanding of the individual's connection to time and space.

Similarly, Fat's deliberations on the inter-correlation between enlightenment and time lead him to conclude that Zebra must be the totality of a person's lives through time and space:

Zebra ... was in fact the laminated totality of all my selves along the linear time-axis; Zebra - or VALIS - was the supra-temporal expression of a given human being and not a god ... not unless the supra-temporal expression of a given human being is what we actually mean by the term 'god,' is what we worship, without realizing it, when we worship 'god.' (238)

Fat's grandiose cosmogony, therefore, eventually leads him to the same conclusion as Watkins, namely that God must be man or, at least, that "man is isomorphic with God" (76), which, in

essence, amounts to the same thing. This is revealed, Fat holds, in the “most important not-generally-known statement” (76) in the New Testament:

My dear people, we are already the children  
of God but what we are to be in the future  
has not yet been revealed; all we know is,  
that we shall be like him because we shall  
see him as he really is. (1 *John* 3:1-2)

It seems that Fat understood this idea, theoretically, well before coming to believe in it wholeheartedly through his exploration of time and enlightenment. When Maurice, Fat’s therapist, asks him: “Do you believe that man is created in God’s image?”, he simply and without hesitation responds “Yes” (96).

Fat’s spiritual quest comes to an end, briefly, when he locates the fifth saviour, a little girl who can speak telepathically. Fat temporarily disappears and becomes one with Phil. Eventually, though, the confirmation of Fat’s outrageous theories seems to highlight their outrageousness, and Phil starts to doubt the saviour and their companions. Faced with proof of his beliefs, Fat’s mind, as the saying goes, “Does Not Compute” (Veale 3); he becomes his historical twin, Doubting Thomas. He writes: “[i]t is amazing that when someone else spouts the nonsense you yourself believe you can readily perceive it as nonsense” (235). As it turns out, “intellectually thinking it is one thing ... and finding out it’s true is another” (179). He describes this as the “paradox of piety ... Faith shaken by the discovery that the entity believed in actually existed” (181). Soon after Phil’s visit, the saviour is killed and Phil once again splits into two beings, Phil and Fat. Fat is left to wander the earth in search of a new saviour while Phil remains pondering the question of why the cat died, or why Gloria died, for that matter, or Sherri. He realises, painfully, that “[s]ome questions are

meaningless” (214). Fat’s failure to become spiritually enlightened results from his inability to accept his own divinity.

In *The Divine Invasion*, Dick writes: “[p]ious people spoke to God, and crazy people imagined that God spoke back. His answers had to come from within himself” (12). Yah’s own moment of Gnostic revelation in *The Divine Invasion* comes when he gazes into Zina’s eyes and sees “spaces beyond her eyes,” realising that “it is a universe in there” (96). In an interview with Gregg Rickman, Dick admitted that what he “was trying to do — and that was Jung’s idea, not mine — I was showing each person with a different world and the contents of that world consisting to a large degree of material from his own mind, which he did not recognise as his own mind coming back in from outside” (*Worlds* 29:43-30:06). Dick wished to present the third stage of the spiritual journey, the attainment of individuation, as “a human being transformed into a deity which is ubiquitous” (qtd. in Sutin 154). In *Valis*, Phil tries to convince Fat of this: ““There is no “Zebra”,’ I said. ‘It’s yourself. Don’t you recognise your own self? It’s you and only you”” (245). This makes it abundantly clear that Dick understands God through a Jungian lens: as a symbol of man’s inner being, which is to say the source of spiritual enlightenment.

The final section will elaborate further on Dick’s equation of man and God. In addition, Dick’s depiction of the attainment of spiritual enlightenment will be discussed and compared to its Gnostic and Jungian sources of inspiration.

### **3.3 Dick’s Personal Philosophy of Individuation**

The first stage of the spiritual journey depicted in all three *Valis* trilogy novels always involves some kind of vision. This can either be interpreted in Valentinian terms, as Gnosis sent to the individual by God, or in Jungian terms, as the contents of the collective unconscious breaking through to the conscious mind. However, Dick adopted a more Jungian interpretation, viewing the Valentinian myth of creation as a symbolic representation of the individuation process: “Valis (the

other mind) which came at me from outside & which overpowered me from inside was indeed the contents of my collective unconscious” (qtd. in Sutin 230). He also claimed that the plots of his earlier novels came from his unconscious, transferred into his conscious mind in dreams and in hypnagogic states (Sutin 230). In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, Angel comes to the same realisation, stating that, because she has not got in touch with her collective unconscious, she is controlled by the “[i]nstantive ... lizard part of the brain” (151). Dick imagines the individual’s process of uncovering the contents of his collective unconscious as “[s]alvation through *Gnosis* - more properly anamnesis (the loss of amnesia)” (qtd. in *Shifting* 108). In *The Divine Invasion*, Yah, or God, who has been reincarnated as the human boy Emmanuel, has forgotten his true identity. Dick writes: “he knew that he had known, known and forgotten again almost at once. As if, he thought, I have two minds inside me, one on the surface and the other in the depths. The surface one has been injured but the deep one has not. And yet the deep one can’t speak; it is closed up. Forever? No; there would be the stimulus, one day. His own device” (49). Once Yah reconnects to his inner mind, he can “touch his own thoughts in their original nature, before they [become] thoughts” (60). This leads Yah to the realisation that “it is the perceptions that change, not the world. The change is in us” (192). Yah’s inner mind turns out to be Zina, the dark-haired girl who represents Dick’s Anima.

Dick believed that the AI voice that spoke to him in his 2-3-74 visions, conveying to him the contents of his collective unconscious, was the voice of his Anima (Sutin 214). The Valis mind is “female. It is on the other side - the post mortem world. It has been with me all my life. It is my twin sister Jane. ... The other psyche I carry inside me is that of my dead sister” (qtd. in Sutin 231). This idea is echoed by Bishop Archer, who notes that “the Hebrew *ruah*, the spirit of God ... is female” (19). In *The Divine Invasion*, the Anima is compared to the Torah (206), which Dick describes as “the totality of divine disclosure by God; it is alive; it existed before creation. It is a mystic, almost cosmic, entity” (101). Torah becomes a “life-giving medicine” (101) to those who

maintain a connection to it, while to those who ignore it, it becomes “a death-giving drug, purifying him to death” (101). So the theme of Amfortas’s spear from *Parsifal* returns: that which wounds, also heals.

The name Zina means fairy (133). Her mischievous, childlike nature causes the individual to awaken to the reality of the collective unconscious, as Zina explains to Emmanuel: “[Emmanuel:] I do not understand you. I cannot follow you. You dance toward me and then away.’ [Zina:] But as I do so, you awaken” (178). The Anima arouses in the individual a sense of playfulness which is natural to children but is often lost in adulthood. In *The Divine Invasion*, Herb finds out that in order to enter the Kingdom of God, “[y]ou must be like a little child” (250). Playfulness takes away the burden of seriousness, as Zina explains: “‘Through all your veils,’ Emmanuel said, ‘beneath all your forms, there lay this ... my own self. And I did not recognize you, until you reminded me.’ ‘How did I accomplish that?’ Zina said, and then she said, ‘But I know. My love of games. That is your love, your secret joy: to play like a child. To be not serious’” (215-6). In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, Jeff’s mental breakdown and resulting suicide are attributed to “a failure of a subtle kind, a failing of the sense of joy” (62). In *The Divine Invasion*, Emmanuel delivers Gnosis to Herb, the individual on a journey toward spiritual enlightenment. The knowledge which Asher receives constitutes a simple code to live by: “[a]lways be joyful” (259).

Time — one of the mandala symbols used by Dick — is “a child at play,” Dick writes, “playing draughts; a child’s is the kingdom” (147). Dick paraphrased the words inscribed by Jung in 1950 to celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday on a stone cube which he placed on the lakeshore beside the Bollingen Tower, one of his houses. The inscription reads: “[t]ime is a child — playing like a child — playing a board game — the kingdom of the child” (*Memories* 227). It is of symbolic importance that Jung placed this cube next to the water, a symbol of enlightenment which Jung used frequently. Interestingly, Jung himself was paraphrasing too; the phrase “[t]ime is a child at play, gambling; a child's is the kingship” (227) is commonly attributed to Heraclitus. Once again Dick

draws attention to the intertextual relationship between writings separated by time and space which use the same symbols to convey the same truths. He also reinforces the idea that Jung's principles may lead to enlightenment: *Valis* ends with the yet unenlightened Phil having a dream of living in a house "directly on the water" (256). Just like Jung's Bollingen tower, Phil's imaginary house is intentionally positioned beside water, a Jungian symbol of spiritual rebirth.

An understanding of the transcendence of spiritual enlightenment, Dick holds, can be gained through the acquisition of knowledge. In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, the Dead Sea Scrolls are shown to have included "many of the parables related in the Gospels now extant in scrolls predating Jesus by two hundred years" (73). Although such parables were not actually found, Dick suggests that they might as well have been. Although there is no documentary evidence to support this claim, Dick implies that it would not be surprising if the parables related in the Bible were based on earlier myths and legends, just as Dick's own cosmogony is based on that of Valentinus; "[i]t's roughly the same myth" (198), over and over again. The secrets of the past which reveal the secrets of the present are preserved in writing; history only exists insofar as it is written down, as the word *history* itself indicates. As Bishop Archer points out, "books and reality are fused" (140). He continues: "books are real to me ... they link me not just with other minds but with the vision of other minds, what those minds understand and see. I see their worlds as well as my own" (141). The intermingling of minds and worlds can be seen as one of the ways in which the individual can connect to his collective unconscious.

However, Bishop Archer's interest in books turns into an "idée fixe" (97) that "[e]verything worth knowing can be found in a book" (138). This leads Archer to the grandiose belief that "in a very real sense, I myself create the world that I experience, I both make that world and perceive it" (213) since he is a writer. Archer's obsession with books causes him to identify as a creator of worlds, which, according to Dick's Gnostic cosmogony, is reminiscent of the Demiurge. His desire for knowledge also mirrors the Aeon Sophia's longing to know the nature of God, which resulted in

her banishment from the Kingdom of God in Valentinus's myth of creation. Dick urges his readers that "you can't live on words; words do not feed" (211). Human beings need more than just knowledge; faith, too, is required, in order to perceive that "God is the book of the universe" (139). Dick writes: "[t]his shows the hauntingly eerie paradoxical (almost seemingly whimsical or playful) nature of enlightenment: it comes to you only when you cease to pursue it. When you totally and finally give up" (qtd. in Sutin 49). In this moment, the individual may realise that "only flux, which is to say change, is real" (*Transmigration* 64). The American existential philosopher Barrett said that "[f]aith can no more be described to a thoroughly rational mind than the idea of colors can be conveyed to a blind man" (*Irrational* 82). Archer's over-valent attitude is the product of a scientifically rationalist worldview, in which knowledge is regarded as something which can be reduced to ones and zeroes; absolute truths. Dick, however, teaches that "[i]t isn't possible right now to prove that external reality exists. Descartes discovered that; it's the basis of modern philosophy. All you can know for sure is that your own mind, your own consciousness, exists" (*Transmigration* 118). Therefore, "everything that you experience you know by faith" (119). In conclusion, he adds: "[f]aith is strange ... It has to do, by definition, with things you can't prove" (252). Dick's discussion of faith shows that acceptance of the unprovable is an important aspect of his depiction of the spiritual journey.

Another, similar principle of the spiritual journey presented in the *Valis* trilogy involves an understanding of the dual nature of all things. Individuation is represented in Dick's Valentinian-inspired cosmogony as a reunion of the individual with his divine counterpart, thus forming a syzygy; a pair of balanced opposites. Dick, like Jung, interprets the Valentinian concept of Gnosis as symbolically describing "the rational mind (*noös*)," represented by the Anima, persuading "the irrational (chance, blind determinism, *ananke*) into cosmos" (*Valis* 126). Fat notes that "the divine and the terrible are so close to each other. Nommo and Yurugu are partners; both are necessary. Osiris and Seth, too. In the *Book of Job*, Yahweh and Satan form a partnership. For us to live,

however, these partners must be split” (199). From a Valentinian perspective, human life is dependent on the split of the Aeon Sophia and the Aeon Theletos, which led to the Demiurge creating the false world and the human beings who reside in it. Amfortas’s spear, which both wounds and heals, is a frequently recurring symbol used by Dick throughout the *Valis* trilogy to signal life’s duality: “[p]oisons, in measured doses, are remedies ... medications can be poisonous, can kill” (*Valis* 198). This duality characterises the individual psyche as well as the universe at large, as Zina explains in *The Divine Invasion*: “[t]here are two distinct movements: the falling, and then, at the same time, the upward-rising work of repair. Antithetical movements, in the form of a dialectic of all creation and the powers contending behind it” (129). In addition, Zina explains: “had there been no fall perhaps there would have been no Incarnation” (55).

Dick’s mental breakdown was triggered, in part, by his inability to comprehend why those close to him die seemingly purposelessly, symbolised by Kevin’s cat in *Valis*, who, according to Phil, “is a symbol of everything about the universe he [Fat] doesn’t understand” (29). Angel explains that death is simply a part of life: “[d]eath in life ... and life in death; two modalities, like *yin* and *yang*, of one underlying continuum” (6). Jung declares symbols, like the yin and yang symbol, to be a fundamental part of the reconciliation of opposites: “[i]n this part of the individuation process the interpretation of symbols plays an important role; for the symbols are natural attempts to reconcile and reunite often widely separated opposites, as it is apparent from the contradictory nature of many symbols” (*Symbols* 139). In *Valis*, Phil points out that written koine Greek, the language in which Fat is spoken to during his visions, looks “funny” because the “scribes left no spaces between the words” (35). This leads to much speculation when deciphering koine Greek, which he exemplifies in the following juxtaposition of possible interpretations of the sequence of letters *godisnowhere*: “GOD IS NO WHERE / GOD IS NOW HERE” (35). Dick concludes that man has a choice: to either “ponder forever over these fluctuations in an effort to make them into a coherency,” or to accept that “the only sense they make is the sense you impose



on them” (26). Phil deduces from Wagner’s concept of the “Redeemer redeemed” (148) that Christ saved himself through “pity’s highest power” (148) and that therefore Fat, too, must save himself. This would mean that “Fat was searching for himself when he set out in search of the Savior” (148). Phil is upset by this revelation, and concludes, therefore, that:

*Parsifal* is one of those corkscrew artifacts [sic] of culture in which you get the subjective sense that you’ve learned something from it, something valuable or even priceless; but on closer inspection you suddenly begin to scratch your head and say, ‘Wait a minute. This makes no sense ... I can see Richard Wagner standing at the gates of heaven. You have to let me in,” he says. "I wrote Parsifal. It has to do with the Grail, Christ, suffering, pity and healing. Right?" And they answer, "Well, we read it and it makes no sense." SLAM.

(149-150)

Dick is of course poking fun at the nature of his own work, especially *Valis*, which matches Phil’s description of *Parsifal* perfectly. Dick’s sense of humour itself, which blurs “the funny/serious distinction that most people take too seriously” (Sutin 99), further affirms his insistence on the duality of all things. Phil later adds: “perhaps I am missing the point. What we have here is a Zen paradox. That which makes no sense makes the *most* sense. I am being caught in a sin of the highest magnitude: using Aristotelian two-value logic: ‘A thing is either A or not-A.’” (150). Jung believed that things could be both A and not-A. For example, the word “φάρμακον,” Jung writes, can mean “‘poison’ as well as ‘antidote,’ and poison can in fact be both” (*Archetypes* 105). The recurrence of *Parsifal*’s spear — that which wounds but also heals — throughout the *Valis* trilogy suggests that Dick did believe that *Parsifal* makes sense, which, in turn, suggests that he believed in the symbolic meaning of the Redeemer redeemed: that man is his own saviour, or his own God, even.

The final, essential characteristic of the third stage of Dick's spiritual journey concerns the adoption of an attitude of kindness with which to face the psychological adversity posed to the individual by modern life in plastic Californian reality. Dick described what he saw as the essence of the human condition as follows: "[i]t's not what you look like, or what planet you were born on. It's how kind you are. The quality of kindness, to me, distinguishes us from rocks and sticks and metal, and will forever, whatever shape we take, wherever we go, whatever we become. For me, "Human Is" is my credo. May it be yours" (qtd. in Sutin 76).

The question of the dead cat in *Valis*, which is repeated in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (83), is also addressed in *The Divine Invasion* when Emmanuel encounters a dog dying in a ditch and is overcome by grief, because he realises that there "is no difference between a dead dog in a ditch and the Spartans who died at Thermopylae" (77). Elias, whose character unequivocally represents Jung's archetype of the wise old, "the eternal, helping friend of man. Tattered and shabby, and very wise" (*Divine* 129), adds that "[i]f you can understand why the Spartans died you can understand it all" (77). To clarify this comparison, Dick presents the words of Simonides of Ceos (*Simonides* 37), adding a final couplet of his own to add emphasis to his intended message:

*Go, stranger, and to Lacedaemon tell*

*That here, obeying her behests, we fell*

...

*Go tell the Spartans, thou that passeth by,*

*That here, obedient to their laws, we lie.*

...

*You who pass by, a moment pause;*

*We, here, obey the Spartan laws.*

...

*Passer, this enter in your log:*

*As Spartan was, so, too, the dog. (77)*

The Spartans were essentially mass-murderers, but their passing is still mourned thousands of years later, because they were living beings simply performing the tasks which they were assigned to do and which they believed to be morally just. The dog admits to Emmanuel that he turned to killing not only for sustenance but also for joy, since that is the purpose assigned to him by the universe. The dog explains: “[m]y jaws are designed to kill. I was constructed to kill smaller things” (76). Zina explains that the Demiurge “did not bring death into the world because there has always been death ... that is the fate of every creature you have made. You cried over that dog ... that dog showed you the Way. It is the way of compassion” (161). Death is inevitable, Dick concludes, but experiencing joy and helping others to experience joy while alive is the message which the individual derives from the Anima, the Torah: “[w]hatever is hateful to you, do not do it to your neighbour. That is the entire Torah” (101). In *Valis*, the fifth saviour, who is named Sophia after Valentinus’s eponymous Aeon, commands Phil: “[y]ou are to follow one rule: you are to love one another as you love me and as I love you, for this love proceeds from the true god, which is yourselves” (221), adding: “[w]hat you teach is the word of Man. Man is holy, and the true god, the living god, is man himself” (221). Sophia, a black-haired child, represents Fat’s Anima, who is telling Dick to stop looking for a God but instead turn toward his own collective unconscious to find spiritual enlightenment.

Dick’s example of the dog, used to emphasise the importance of kindness, creates an intertextual link with another, older text, in order to once again draw attention to the universality of the symbolic representation of spiritual enlightenment throughout human history. Dick evidently adapted Emmanuel’s encounter with the dog from Buddha’s encounter with a dead jackal in

Herman Hesse's *Siddharta*; another text which appropriates a much older religious mythology to draw conclusions about the present. The passage from *Siddharta* (1922) reads as follows:

A dead jackal was lying on the sandy bank, and Siddhartha's soul slipped inside the body, was the dead jackal, lay on the banks, got bloated, stank, decayed, was dismembered by hyaenas, was skinned by vultures, turned into a skeleton, turned to dust, was blown across the fields. And Siddhartha's soul returned, had died, had decayed, was scattered as dust, had tasted the gloomy intoxication of the cycle, awaited in new thirst like a hunter in the gap, where he could escape from the cycle, where the end of the causes, where an eternity without suffering began. He killed his senses, he killed his memory, he slipped out of his self into thousands of other forms, was an animal, was carrion, was stone, was wood, was water, and awoke every time to find his old self again, sun shone or moon, was his self again, turned round in the cycle, felt thirst, overcame the thirst, felt new thirst. (Hesse 19)

By developing empathy for other beings, Siddharta becomes immortal by becoming all living things; connected to a sort of collective consciousness reminiscent of Jung's collective unconscious. Dick's appropriation of other stories suggests that "[s]omehow art ... has the ability to transform man from an irrational thing into some rational entity that is not driven by biological impulses, impulses that cannot by definition ever be satisfied" (*Transmigration* 128), but is rather driven by a conscious desire to find peace within oneself as well as with others. Dick's *Valis* trilogy shows that books, in particular, possess the unique quality of exposing the reader to the inner lives of other beings, which fosters empathy and therefore plays an important role in becoming a kinder and, as a result, more spiritually enlightened individual.

What if a symphony orchestra was intent only on reaching the final coda?  
 What would become of the music? One great crash of sound,  
 over as soon as possible. The music is in the process,  
 the unfolding; if you hasten it, you destroy it.  
 Then the music is over.  
 (*Transmigration* 206)

### Conclusion

This MA thesis analysed Philip K. Dick's depiction of the journey toward spiritual enlightenment as depicted in his *Valis* trilogy and scrutinised the influence of Valentinian Gnosticism as well as Jung's individuation theory on Dick's depiction of the spiritual journey. This analysis has shown how the Valentinian myth of creation shaped Dick's perception of visionary experiences as well as his personal cosmogony, while Jung's individuation theory was shown to have had the greatest impact overall on Dick's depiction of spiritual enlightenment.

Through a critical discussion of the three main stages of Dick's depiction of the spiritual journey, namely mental breakdown, the pursuit of Gnosis through religious study, and the culmination of the individuation process through the discovery of the individual's inner divinity, this study has drawn attention to the key features of the symbolical journey underlying the narrative of all three novels: the enlightened soul's need for playfulness, the value of knowledge, the transference of knowledge through books, the irrationality of scientific rationalism and its effect on society, the dualistic nature of all things, and the need for a kind attitude in order to become enlightened. Dick's synthesis of ideas from all manner of psychological, philosophical, literary, and musical documents has been shown to emphasise his belief in the transcendence of symbols and the clues which they contain to the nature of spiritual enlightenment. This synthesis also corroborates the idea that Dick saw spiritual enlightenment as something universal rather than specific to any given religion, and that divinity comes from the individual himself rather than God.

In *Valis*, Dick provides a somewhat autobiographical account of his religious pursuits in the wake of his 2-3-74 visions. His literary alter ego, Horselover Fat, discovers that his religious

theories, which are modelled after Valentinian Gnosticism, turn out to be more or less accurate. However, Fat's inability to interpret the symbolic aspect of his own cosmogony and embrace his inner divinity means that he does not succeed in completing his spiritual journey. In *The Divine Invasion*, Dick presents the juxtaposed spiritual journeys of God and man to highlight their essential sameness. God is reincarnated as a boy, Emmanuel, who must discover that the Kenoma and the Pleroma exist side-by-side, in the same way that the Anima exists side-by-side with the individual, together forming the Self. Herb Asher completes a similar journey which highlights the importance of kindness and joy in the final stage of Dick's spiritual journey, the process of individuation. In *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, Dick examines the limitations of religious study and the dangers of the *idée fixe* while highlighting the importance of human relationships to the spiritual journey and its successful completion.

The scope of this MA thesis meant that some features of Dick's literary and philosophical work had to be left unaddressed, including Dick's treatment of the feminine in the *Valis* trilogy; almost all of his protagonists and narrators are male and the Jungian theory which inspired the quest structure of his novels and the presentation of his characters was tailored specifically by Jung to the male psyche. Therefore, further research on this topic might focus on Dick's representation of female characters and their particular journey toward enlightenment. The character of Angel Archer, a rare female narrator in Dick's writing, could serve as the focal point of an interesting study of Dick's views of women and their role within his literary omnibus. In addition, further research might investigate the development of Dick's journey toward spiritual enlightenment in its earlier stages in his novels written in the sixties and early to mid-seventies.

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