

<https://www.awakeninthedream.com/articles/enlightened-madness-of-philip-k-dick>

There is something terribly wrong in our world. The Native American people have a term—wetiko—that can really help us to contextualize and get more of a handle on the ever-unfolding catastrophe playing out all over our planet. As my research deepens, I am continually amazed that so many different spiritual wisdom traditions, as well as creative artists, are each in their own unique ways, pointing out wetiko. Wetiko—which can be likened to a virus of the mind—works through our unconscious blind spots, which is to say that it depends upon our unawareness of its covert operations within our own minds to keep itself in business. There is no one definitive model that fully delineates the elusive workings of wetiko disease, but when all of these unique articulations are seen together, a deeper picture begins to get in focus that can help us to see it. Seeing how wetiko works—both out in the world and within our own minds—is *its* worst nightmare, for once we see how it is playing us, its gig is up. Recently, I have been delighted to learn that the science fiction author Philip K. Dick (henceforth PKD) was, in his own completely unique and “Philip K. Dickian” way describing wetiko—the psycho-spiritual disease that afflicts our species—to a T. Considered to be one of the pre-eminent sci-fi writers of his—or any—time, PKD had one of the most unique, creative, unusual and original minds I have ever come across. Way ahead of his time, he was a true visionary and seer, possibly even a prophet. To say that PKD had an unfettered imagination is an understatement of epic proportions—it is hard to imagine an imagination more unrestrained. Continually questioning everything, he was actually a very subtle thinker whose prime concern was the question “What is reality?”

Though mainly a writer of fiction, PKD didn’t consider himself a novelist, but rather, a “fictionalizing philosopher,” by which he meant that his stories—what have been called “his wacky cauldron of science fiction and metaphysics” [1]—were employed as the medium for him to formulate his perceptions. In other words, his fiction was the way he was trying to figure out what was going on in this crazy world of ours, as well as within his own mind. As the boundary dissolved between what was real and what wasn’t, he even wondered whether he had become a character in one of his own novels (in his own words, “I’m a protagonist from one of PKD’s books”). Through his writing, PKD tapped into the shamanic powers of language to shape, bend and alter consciousness, thereby changing our view and experience of reality itself.

From all accounts, it is clear that PKD’s life involved deep suffering; his process included bungled suicide attempts, self-described psychotic episodes, psychiatric hospitalizations and abuse of drugs (he was a “speed writer,” in that most of his writing was fueled by speed—amphetamines). We shouldn’t throw the baby out with the bathwater, however, and use these facts to invalidate his insights or dismiss the profundity of his work. Though much of what he wrote came out of whatever extreme state he was in at the moment, he was definitely (in my opinion) plugged into something profound. PKD was a true creative artist who, in wrestling with his demons, left us a testament that can help us illumine our own struggles.

In 1974 Dick had—at least from his point of view—an overwhelming mystical experience, which he spent the rest of his life trying to understand and integrate. He was thrown into a “crisis of revelation,” feeling an inner demand to understand what had been revealed to him. I love that he didn’t have a fixed point of view in his inquiry, but, depending on the day, wondered whether he had become, in his words, a saint or schizophrenic. He continually came up with new theories and viewpoints, depending upon who knows what. There is no psychiatric category yet devised that could do justice to the combination of genius and high weirdness that characterized PKD’s process. It is clear from his philosophical writings, letters and personal journal (his “Exegesis”) that whatever it was he experienced in 1974 radically changed his whole perception of the universe and his—and our—place in it.

PKD confesses in his letters that the world has always seemed “dreamlike” to him. To quote PKD, “The universe could turn into a dream because in point of fact our universe is a dream.” [2] We are asleep—in a dream state—and mistakenly think we are awake. PKD writes in his journal, “We are forgetful cosmocrats [i.e., rulers], trapped in a universe of our own making without our knowing it.” [3] It is as if we are living inside of a dreamlike universe, but in our state of amnesia we have forgotten that we are the dream’s creators—the dreamers of the dream—and hence, have become trapped inside of a world that is our own creation. As PKD points out, “one of the fundamental aspects of the ontological category of ignorance is ignorance of this very ignorance; he not only does not know, he does not know that he does not know.” [4] We ignore—and remain ignorant of—what PKD is pointing at to our own peril.

I imagine that if PKD were here today he would be most pleased to learn that his mind-blowing revelations were helping us to wrap our minds around the over-the-top craziness that is getting acted out in every corner of our world. Not only precisely mapping the covert operations of the destructive aspects of wetiko, PKD offers psycho-activating insights into how to deal with its insidious workings that are novel beyond belief, insights that can therefore add to the ever-growing corpus of studies on wetiko. Like a modern-day shaman, PKD descended into the darkness of the underworld of the unconscious and took on—and into himself—the

existential madness that afflicts humanity, and in his creative articulations of his experience, is offering gifts for all the rest of us. For this we should be most grateful.

## THE BLACK IRON PRISON

We are trapped in a dream of our own making. PKD writes, “We are in a kind of prison but do not know it.”[5] Becoming aware of our imprisonment, however, is the first, crucial step in becoming free of it. One of the main terms PKD coined to describe wetiko is the “Black Iron Prison” [henceforth BIP]. PKD writes, “The BIP is a vast complex life form (organism) which protects itself by inducing a negative hallucination of it.”[6] By negative hallucination, PKD means that instead of seeing what is *not* there, we cannot see what *is* there. In PKD’s words, “The criminal virus controls by occluding (putting us in a sort of half sleep)... The occlusion is self-perpetuating; it makes us unaware of it.”[7] Being self-perpetuating, this occlusion in our consciousness will not go away of its own accord; it acts as a feedback loop (in PKD’s words, “a positive feedback on itself”) that perpetually self-generates until we manage to break its spell. PKD writes, “the very occlusion itself prevents us from assessing, overcoming or ever being aware of the occlusion.”[8]

An intrinsic challenge to our investigation of wetiko/BIP is that it is incarnating in and through the very psyche which itself is the means of our inquiry. Speaking about the difficulty of seeing wetiko/BIP, PKD writes, “we alter it by perceiving it, since we are not outside it. As our views shift, it shifts. In a sense it is not there at all.”[9] Similar to how an image in a dream doesn’t exist separate from the mind of the dreamer, wetiko/BIP does not objectively exist, independent from the mind that is perceiving it. In our encounter with wetiko, we find ourselves in a situation where we are confronted—practically face-to-face—with the unconscious, both its light and darker halves.

There is another problem with seeing wetiko/BIP. Because it is invisible to most people, seeing it can be an isolating experience. When we see wetiko/BIP, we are, in PKD’s words, “seeing what *is* there—but no one else does, hence no semantic sign exists to depict the entity and therefore the organism cannot continue an empathic relationship with the members of his society. And this breakdown of empathy is double; they can’t empathize his ‘world,’ and he can’t theirs.”[10] This points to the important role language plays in human life—it is the cardinal instrument through which individual worldviews are linked so that a shared, agreed-upon, and for all intents and purposes common reality is constructed. Hence, creating language and finding the name—be it wetiko, the Black Iron Prison or whatever we call it—is crucial for getting a handle on this elusive mind-virus.

It is as if our species is suffering from a thought-disorder. PKD writes, “There is some kind of ubiquitous thinking dysfunction which goes unnoticed especially by the persons themselves, and this is the horrifying part of it: somehow the self-monitoring circuit in the person is fooled by the very dysfunction it is supposed to monitor.”[11] When we have fallen under the spell of the wetiko virus, we aren’t aware of our affliction; from our point of view we are normal, oftentimes never feeling more ourselves (while the exact opposite is actually true; i.e., we have been taken over by something alien to ourselves). Working through the projective tendencies of the mind, wetiko distracts us by exploiting our unconscious habitual tendency to see the source of our problems outside of ourselves.

Speaking of the BIP, PKD writes, “We are supposed to combat it phagocyte-wise, but the very valence of the (BIP) stasis warps us into micro-extensions of itself; this is precisely why it is so dangerous. This is the dread thing it does: extending its android thinking (uniformity) more and more extensively. It exerts a dreadful and subtle power, and more and more people fall into its field (power), by means of which it grows.”[12] “Android thinking,” i.e., robotic, machine-like group-thinking (with no creativity programmed in), is one of the qualities of a mind taken over by wetiko/BIP. Just as someone bit by a vampire becomes a vampire themselves, if we don’t see how wetiko/BIP works through our unconscious blind spots, it “warps us into micro-extensions of itself” such that we unwittingly become its purveyors, which is how it propagates itself in the field.

Masses are breeding grounds for this nefarious mind virus to flourish. Wetiko/BIP is not just something that afflicts individuals—it is a collective psychosis that can only work the full power of its black magic through groups of people. In his book *The Divine Invasion*, PKD has one of his characters say, “Sometimes I think this planet is under a spell.... We are asleep or in a trance.” Along similar lines, in his *Exegesis*, PKD writes, “We got entangled in enchantment, a gingerbread cottage that beguiled us into enslavement and ruin...we are not merely enslaved, we are trapped.”[13] As if living within a mythic or fairy tale-like reality, our species is under a bewitchment—a seeming curse—of massive proportions. Contemplating “the basic condition of life,” PKD writes that each one of us will “be required to violate your own identity...this is the curse at work, the curse that feeds on all life.”[14] This curse that feeds on life is another name for wetiko/BIP. Thankfully, in his writings PKD gives us clues regarding how to break out of this curse.

We can't break out of the curse, however, without first shedding light on the nature of the darkness we have fallen into that is informing the curse. Giving a precise description of how wetiko/BIP works, PKD writes, "This is a sinister life form indeed. First it takes power over us, reducing us to slaves, and then it causes us to forget our former state, and be unable to see or to think straight, and not to know we can't see or think straight, and finally it becomes invisible to us by reason of what it has done to us. We cannot even monitor our own deformity, our own impairment." [15] A complex and seemingly malevolent life form, wetiko/BIP works through the cover of the unconscious, rendering itself invisible to our conscious awareness. It feeds off of and into our unawareness of it.

Further elaborating the BIP, PKD writes, "It can not only affect our percept systems directly but can alter our memories." [16] We become convinced that our—i.e., "its"—memories are objectively real, therefore feeding into the self-limiting and self-defeating narrative the virus wants us to believe about ourselves. We then tell stories—both to others as well as ourselves—about who we are and what happened to us in the past to make us this way in a manner that reifies us into a solidified identity. In *The Divine Invasion*, PKD has a character say, "something causes us to see what it wants us to see and remember and think what it wants us to remember and think." Are these the ravings of a paranoid madman, or insights of someone who is seeing through the illusion, snapping out of the spell and waking up?

PKD writes, "It is as if the immune system has failed to detect an invader, a pathogen (shades of William Burroughs: a criminal virus!). Yes, the human brain has been invaded, and once invaded, is occluded to the invasion and the damage resulting from the invasion; it has now become an instrument for the pathogen: it winds up serving as its slave, and thus the 'heavy metal speck' [i.e., the BIP] is replicated (spread through linear and lateral time, and through space)." [17] The mind invaded becomes an unwitting channel for the pathogen to further propagate and spread itself in and through the field.

To quote PKD, "We may not be what we seem even to ourselves." [18] Wetiko/BIP is a shape-shifting bug; it cloaks itself in and assumes our form, impersonating us such that we then identify with its limited and impoverished version of who we are while we simultaneously dissociate from—and forget—who we actually are. Wetiko/BIP is in competition with us for a share of our own mind; it literally does everything it can to think in our place, sit in our seat and occupy—and possess—our very selves. Speaking of this very situation, PKD writes, "A usurper is on the throne." [19]

Having no creativity on its own, once wetiko "puts us on," i.e., fools us into buying into its version of who we are, it can then piggyback onto and plug into our intrinsic creativity, co-opting *our* creative imagination to serve *its* malevolent agenda. PKD writes, "Being without psyche of its own it slays the authentic psyches of those creatures locked into it, and replaces them with a spurious microform of its own dead psyche." [20] Sometimes using the phrase the "Black Iron Prison Police State" (which is mirrored externally in the ever-increasing "police state" of the world), PKD also describes this state as one where the person so afflicted becomes "frozen" (as in trauma), in a "corpse-state" (i.e., spiritually dead).

Wetiko/BIP can be conceived of as a cancer of the psyche that slowly metastasizes, gradually subsuming all of the healthy parts of the psyche into itself to serve its sinister agenda. Speaking of the part of the psyche that has been captured by the BIP, PKD comments, "This section died. It became fossilized, and merely repeats itself. This is scary; it is like mental illness: 'one day nothing new ever entered his mind—and the last thought just recirculated endlessly.' Thus death rules here...The BIP is the form of this death, its embodiment—of what is wrong, here." [21] Like a vampire, wetiko/BIP is—and turns us into—one of the undead; it is death taking on living human form so as to take life. Wetiko/BIP, like a virus, is "dead" matter, it is only in a living creature that viruses acquire a "quasi-life." When we fall under wetiko's spell, our life-force and God-given creativity become vampirically drained, as we are bled dry of what really counts.

Commenting on the BIP, PKD continues, "To see it is to see the ailment, the complex which warps all other thoughts to it." [22] To see the BIP is to begin to heal it; there is no healing it without first seeing it. Once wetiko/BIP entrenches itself within a psyche, however, the personality then becomes one-sided, self-organizing an outer display of coherence around this pathogenic core, which masks the inner dysfunction, making it hard to recognize. In a psychic coup d'état, the wetiko bug can usurp and displace a person—or a group of people—who become its puppet and marionette. To quote PKD, "We're a fucking goddam "Biosphere" ruled by an entity who—like a hypnotist—can make us not only quack like a duck on cue, but imagine, to boot, that we wanted (decided) to quack." [23]

PKD comments that when "we begin to see what formerly was concealed to us, or from us, and the shock is great, since we have, all our lives, been trading (doing business) with evil." [24] This is one of the reasons it is so hard to see wetiko/BIP—there is a counterincentive built into seeing it, as we have to be strong enough to bear the trauma of seeing our own collusion with darkness. If we choose to look away from how the BIP

occludes us and become resistant to bringing awareness to the nature of our situation, we are then being unconsciously complicit in our own imprisonment. To quote PKD, “So there was a base collusion between us *and* the BIP: it was a kind of pact!”[25] He conjectures, “we’re sources of psychic/psychological energy to it: we help power it.”[26]

As if we are in a double-bind with no exit, PKD points out that “the enslaved people cannot be rescued by departing the Empire [the BIP] because the Empire is worldwide.”[27] Existing within the collective unconscious itself, wetiko/BIP/Empire is ubiquitous; being nonlocal it can’t be located within the third-dimensional space-time matrix, and yet, there is no place where it is not. Its very root—as well as the medium through which it operates—is the psyche, which is somehow able to inform, extend itself and give shape to events in our world. To think that the ultimate source of the horrors that are playing out in our world is to be found somewhere other than within the human psyche is to be truly dis-oriented, i.e., looking in the wrong direction.

PKD writes, “The very doctrine of combating the ‘hostile world and its power’ has to a large extent been ossified *by* and put at the service *of* the Empire.”[28] In fighting the seeming demonic power of wetiko/BIP/Empire, we are playing its game and have already lost, as it feeds off of polarization. PKD warns that “the BIP warps every new effort at freedom into the mold of further tyranny.”[29] Even our thoughts regarding how to solve the BIP only “fuel” the seeming reality of the BIP. The Empire/BIP/wetiko will subvert every attempt at shedding light on its darkness in such a way as to feed the very darkness we are trying to illumine. And yet, if we don’t fight it, then we have no chance. What are we to do?

PKD opines, “The idea is to break the BIP’s power by revealing more and more about it.”[30] Just as a vampire loses its power in the light of day, wetiko/BIP has no power in the light of conscious awareness. To quote PKD, “The Empire is only a phantasm, lingering because we have gone to sleep.”[31] It is as if the Empire/BIP/wetiko is an after-image that we have mistaken for being real; PKD refers to it as a “deceitful corpse” that apes life. The idea is to shed light on darkness—what good is seeing the light if our vision doesn’t illumine the darkness? The Gnostic text *The Gospel of Philip* says, “So long as the root of wickedness is hidden, it is strong. But when it is recognized, it is dissolved. When it is revealed, it perishes.... It is powerful because we have not recognized it.” (II, 3, 83.5-30.)

## FAKE FAKES

Wetiko/BIP can be likened to an “anti-information” virus—not only does it block the reception of information, but it substitutes false information for the real thing. PKD writes, “the bombardment of pseudorealities begins to produce inauthentic humans very quickly [in his words ‘spurious humans’].”[32] PKD writes of the BIP, “it has grown vine-like into our information media; it is an information life form.”[33] It is an info life form (composed of and creating living dis-information) that lies to us—PKD compares this to the figure of *Satan*, who is “the liar.” Wetiko/BIP has co-opted the mainstream, corporatized media to be its propaganda organ, which becomes its instrument for creating—and delivering into our minds—fictitious realities. These institutions have, to quote PKD “an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I ought to know. I do the same thing. It is my job to create universes.”[34]

PKD was intensely interested in what makes an authentic human being. He continues, “Fake realities will produce fake humans. Or, fake humans will produce fake realities and then sell them to other humans, turning them, eventually, into forgeries of themselves.”[35] An authentic human being, on the other hand, to quote PKD, “cannot be compelled to be what they are not.”[36] He elaborates, “The power of spurious realities battering at us today—these deliberately manufactured fakes never penetrate to the heart of true human beings.”[37]

Wetiko/BIP has no creativity on its own, but is a master of imitation—it apes, mimes and impersonates both our world and ourselves, such that, if we identify with its version of the way things are, we have then given ourselves away. Succinctly stating the problem, PKD writes, “The problem is that a mock creation has filtered in, which must be transubstantiated into the real.”[38] Our universe is a collectively shared dream or hallucination that appears real; in PKD’s words, “our reality is a cunning counterfeit, mutually shared.”[39] To imbue our world with an intrinsic, objective reality that exists separate from the mind that is observing it would be, in PKD’s words, “a dreadful intellectual error.”

Pointing directly at wetiko/BIP, PKD writes that “there is a vast life form here, that has invaded this world and is camouflaged.”[40] He marvels at how it camouflages itself; in PKD’s words, it “simulated normal objects and their processes so as to copy them and in such an artful way as to make himself [the BIP] invisible within them.”[41] Through its mimicry of real phenomenal objects, the BIP, in PKD’s words, “steadily, stealthily replaces them and mimics—assumes their form.”[42] Though PKD’s writings appear “out there,” and can easily

sound crazy, paranoid and conspiratorial, it should be pointed out that what he is pointing at is exactly what an apocryphal text of the Bible is referring to when it speaks of a “counterfeiting spirit.”[43]

PKD has articulated wetiko’s/BIP’s counterfeiting ability—and how the universe responds—in a way that only he can. He has realized that the very ground of being itself—PKD refers to it by various names—Christ, God, the Savior, the Urgrund (a German term used by both Meister Eckhart and Jacob Boehme to describe ultimate reality)—is responding to wetiko/BIP in a very unique and revelatory way. As the BIP mimes reality so as to create a counterfeit of the real thing, the ground of reality, in PKD’s words, “counterfeits the counterfeit.” In PKD’s words, “So originally the bogus info mimicked the actual successfully enough to fool us, and now we have a situation in which the actual has returned in a form mimicking the bogus.”[44]

Wetiko/BIP has created an illusory, fake world, and the ground of being itself, in a radically new ontological category that PKD calls a “fake fake,” has imitated the imitation. Delighted by this new idea, PKD asks the question, “Is a fake fake more fake than just a fake, or null-fake?”[45] In other words, if a fake fake is not more fake than a fake, is it the real thing? PKD’s idea of a fake fake is cognate to the indeterminacy between originals and simulacra that is the hallmark of the world of virtual reality. To quote PKD, “A fake fake = something *real*. The demiurge [the false God in Gnosticism] unsuccessfully counterfeited the pleroma, and now God/the Savior is mimicking this counterfeit cosmos with a stealthily growing *real* one.”[46] In other words, God/the ground of being is assimilating our seemingly counterfeit universe into and as itself.

Writing about the Savior, PKD writes that “it doesn’t want its adversary to know it’s here, so it must disguise (randomize) its presence, including by giving out self discrediting information; as if mimicking a hoax.”[47] Just like the BIP tricks us into identifying with its world, the true ground of being tricks the BIP by surreptitiously imitating and becoming it; i.e., taking it on (and into itself). It doesn’t want to let the BIP know it is doing this, which would defeat the purpose of its counter-plot; the Savior does its mimicry on the sly. PKD comments, “The Urgrund does not advertise to the artifact [i.e., wetiko/BIP] that it is here.”[48] Just as the BIP works through our blind spots, the ground of being works through the BIP’s blind spots. PKD comments, “the artifact is as occluded as to the nature and existence of the Urgrund as we are to the artifact.”[49] Like an underground resistance movement, the Urgrund’s activities, in PKD’s words, “resemble the covert advance of a secret, determined revolution against a powerful tyranny.”[50]

Speaking of Christ as another reference for the ground of being, Dick writes, “Through him the *properly* functioning (living and growing) total brain replicated itself here in microform (seed-like) thereafter branching out farther and farther like a vine, a viable life form taking up residence within a dead, deranged and rigid one [BIP]. It is the nature of the rigid region to seek to detect and ensnare him, but his discorporate plasmatic nature ensures his escape from the intended imprisonment.”[51] In other words, the spirit can’t be pinned down; in PKD’s words, “He is everywhere and nowhere.”[52]

Describing this deeper process of how the ground of being potentially saves us—and itself—from wetiko/BIP, PKD comments, “a criminal entity [BIP] has been invaded by life giving cells [Christ, God, the Urgrund] which it can’t detect, and so it accepts them into itself, replacing the ‘iron’ ones.”[53] PKD is describing transubstantiation in the flesh. Speaking of the savior, PKD writes, “like a gas (plasma) he begins invisibly to expand and fill up the whole of BIP.”[54]

What I so appreciate about PKD’s vision is that he’s not just describing the life-destroying workings of wetiko/BIP, but he’s also articulating the other half of this process, which is the response from the living intelligence of the universe as a whole. To quote PKD, “The key to everything lies in understanding this mimicking living stuff.”[55] PKD equates this “form-mimicker” with the *Deus Absconditus*, the dark and hidden God. The idea is that God reveals Itself through its darker half.

This makes me think how the unconscious responds to a one-sided situation in our psychic lives by sending compensatory forms—like symbols in a dream—so as to bring us back into balance. To quote PKD, “If the universe is a brain the BIP is a rigid ossified complex, and Zebra [another of PKD’s names for the savior] is metabolic toxin (living info) designed to melt it out of existence by restoring elasticity to it, which means to cause it to cease recirculating the same thought over and over again.”[56] Seen psychologically, the BIP is a rigidified complex which has developed an autonomy and has gone rogue, seemingly having an independent life and a will of its own that is antithetical to and at odds with our own. In psychological-speak, until this “autonomous complex” (what indigenous people refer to as a “demon”) is dissolved and rejoins the wholeness of the psyche, “the organism,” to quote PKD, “is stuck in its cycle, in cybernetic terms; it won’t kick over—which fits with my idea that we are memory coils which won’t kick over and discharge their contents.”[57] We are like malfunctioning memory coils in a quasi-dream state; in PKD’s words, “we are an impaired section of the megamind.”[58]

These contemplations helped PKD to contextualize, and hopefully integrate his overwhelming spiritual experience of 1974. He writes that his experience is “an achievement by the Urgrund in reaching its objective of reflecting itself back to itself, using me as a point of reflection.”[59] In other words, PKD realized that we are all potentially reflecting mirrors for the divine ground of being to wake up to itself. This is to say that we play a crucial role in the deeper archetypal process of the Incarnation of the deity. PKD writes in his journal, “Perhaps the transformation of and in me in 3-74 [i.e., March, 1974] was when this mimicking ‘plasma’ reached me and replaced me—although I appeared outwardly the same (i.e., my essence changed—a new self replaced the old)...my ‘me’ was covertly replaced by a greater other ‘me’ I’d never seen or known before.”[60] This greater self that replaced PKD’s ego goes by many names: the greater personality, the Self, our true nature, Buddha nature and Christ, to name but a few.

PKD writes, “A human can evolve into Christ if Christ ignites his own self in the human and takes the human over[61]...it is at the moment of when the ultimate blow (of pain, murderous injury, humiliation and death) is struck, it is Christ who is there, replacing the victim and taking the blow himself. This is what happened to me in 3-74.”[62] He continues, “So flight from suffering inexorably involves a flight from life (reality)... But the secret, mysterious opposite from this is a full facing of suffering—a non-flinching—that can lead to a magic alchemy: suddenly it is you/suddenly it is Christ/so you must equal (be) Christ.”[63] In psychological speak, the “genuine suffering” (to use Jung’s words) that PKD went through enabled him to withdraw his unconscious projections from an outward historical or metaphysical figure and *wake up* the Christ within himself. In other words, he was able to introject this sacred figure, i.e., realize that Christ (i.e., the Self) lived in him and was not an external figure separate and different from himself.[64]

## DREAMLIKE COSMOLOGY

According to PKD’s cosmology, it is as if God the creator has allowed himself to become captured, enslaved by and hostage to his own creation. PKD writes, “He, the living, is at the mercy of the mechanical. The servant has become the master, and the master the servant.”[65] PKD’s words have a particular ring of truth in this technological age of ours, where many people think that one of the greatest dangers that faces humanity is that AI (artificial intelligence) can potentially enslave its human creators. PKD continues, “But the artifact is teaching him, painfully, by degrees, over thousands of years, to remember—who he is and what he is. The servant-become-master is attempting to restore the master’s lost memories and hence his true identity.”[66]

PKD’s contemplations shed light on what might be the hidden purpose of the emergence of wetiko/BIP in our world. PKD comments, “The artifact enslaves us, but on the other hand it is attempting to teach us to throw off its enslavement.”[67] Wetiko/BIP tests us so as to make sure that we will make optimal use of our divine endowment. As PKD points out, the fundamental dialectic at work is liberation vs. enslavement. Here’s what I wrote in *Dispelling Wetiko*, “Wetiko literally demands that we step into our power and become resistant to its oppression such that we discover how to step out of bondage and become free, or else!”[68] In a sense wetiko/BIP is the guardian of the threshold of our evolution.

PKD has created a parable in which a fallen and amnesiac God has fallen prey to Its own creation and is in need of redemption. Lest we think that PKD’s cosmological imaginings are the ravings of a madman, it should be pointed out that his theories are fully resonant with those found in the profound wisdom traditions of alchemy, Gnosticism, Kabbalah and Christianity. Evoking “Christ as the *salvator salvandus*,” PKD writes of “the savior who must be saved and who is in a certain real sense identical with those he saves.”[69]

In PKD’s words, “The creator can afford to descend into his own creation. He can afford to shed his memories (of his identity) and his supernatural powers.... The creator deliberately plants clues in his unreal creation—clues which he cunningly knows in time (eventually) will restore his memory (anamnesis) of who he is.... So he has a fail-safe system built in. No chance he won’t eventually remember. Makes himself subject to spurious space, time and world (and death, pain, loss, decay, etc.), but has these disinhibiting clues or stimuli distributed deliberately strategically in time and space. So it is he himself who sends himself the letter which restores his memory (Legend of the Pearl). No fool he!”[70]

It is as if we, or more accurately, our true identity as the Self (which is whole and connected with the whole) plants alarm clocks in the waking dream—what PKD calls “a perturbation in the reality field”—that are set to go off at just the right time, acting as a catalyst to wake us up. In PKD’s words, “The megamind is attempting to stimulate us back to being in touch with itself.”[71] Once these clues—which can be conceived of as a higher dimension of our being signaling to us—are deciphered, we can discover, as PKD suggests, that we’ve composed them ourselves. What PKD calls “disinhibiting clues” (what he also calls “Logos triggering agents,” and what I call “lucidity stimulators”) are like keys that open up the lock encasing our minds so that we can remember who we are and our life’s mission, i.e., what we are here to do. PKD writes, “Zebra is trying to

find—reach—us and make us aware of it—more primarily, it seeks to free us from the BIP, to break the BIP's power over us.”[72]

Our classical, materialist mechanistic worldview is, as PKD rightfully points out, “shabby and cracking apart and fading away.”[73] PKD writes that there is a “universe lying behind ours, concealed within—yes, actually concealed within ours!”[74] The universe we see simultaneously conceals and reveals the universe lying behind ours. It is PKD's opinion that in order to construct a new worldview to replace the one that is cracking apart, we need to see—to re-cognize—the universe concealed within ours. “The world is not merely counterfeit,” PKD writes, “there is more: it is counterfeit, but under it lies another world, and it is this other world, this Logos world, which filters or breaks through.”[75] He continues, “But in truth, in very truth, this is a shadow universe we see, a reflection in the mirror of another universe behind it, and that other universe can be reached by an individual directly, without the help of any priest.”[76] This other universe—a universe that we are not separate from and is not separate from our consciousness—doesn't need an external mediator to be accessed, but can be reached through direct experience.

I call this other, higher-dimensional world that underlies and is concealed within ours (borrowing a term from physics) the “nonlocal field,” which is a field that contains, pervades and expresses itself through our third-dimensional world (while at the same time not being constrained by the third-dimensional laws of space and time). The nonlocal field connects us with everything. When the nonlocal field, or in PKD's words, the “Logos world” breaks through consensus reality and reveals itself are when we experience synchronicities—what physicist F. David Peat calls “‘flaws’ in the fabric of reality.” Synchronistic phenomena are, in Peat's words “momentary fissures that allow us a brief glimpse of the immense and unitary order underlying all of nature.”

Just like the BIP/artifact/Empire/wetiko will co-opt and subvert any of our attempts at illumining it to feed into and serve its nefarious agenda, God/Christ/Zebra/Urgrund/Savior will use the BIP/artifact/Empire/wetiko's attempts at imprisonment to ultimately serve our freedom. Speaking of the artifact's agenda of “enslavement, deception and spiritual death” PKD writes, “even this is utilized by the Urgrund, which utilizes everything, [this] is a sacred secret.”[77] PKD points out that one way of expressing the fundamental dialectic is information vs. anti-information (remember: wetiko is an anti-information virus). To quote PKD, “The Empire, which by suppressing information is therefore in a sense the anti-Christ, is put to work as half of the dialectic; Christ uses everything (as was revealed to me): in its very act of suppressing information, the Empire aids in the building of the soma of the Cosmic Christ (which the Empire does not realize).”[78] This is to say that the Cosmic Christ is, in essence, generated by its antithesis (the anti-Christ).

This brings to mind Goethe's masterpiece *Faust*, in which Faust asks Mephistopheles (who represents the devil) who he is, and Mephistopheles replies that he is the “part of that force which would do evil, yet forever works the good.” It is a Kabbalistic idea that, though at cross purposes to the good at its core, evil is the very condition and foundation of the highest good's very realization.

## **BODHI SATTVIC MADNESS**

A collective psychosis, wetiko is a psycho-spiritual disease of the soul that pervades the collective unconscious of humanity. To quote PKD, “The only question is, which kind of madness will we choose?... We are, then, *all* mad, but I, uniquely, choose to go mad while facing pain, not mad while denying pain.”[79] PKD is delineating two different ways of facing the pain of reality; in his writings he makes it clear that his (“non-flinching”) way of facing pain isn't necessarily better, it just “hurts more.” PKD writes, “In a very real sense the pain we feel as living creatures is the pain of waking up...the pressure of this pain motivates us to seek an answer; which is to say, motivates us toward greater and greater consciousness.”[80] PKD is professing a point of view that can help us to recontextualize what seems to be meaningless suffering; one of the things that's hardest for human beings to bear are experiences bereft of meaning. “The artifact,” PKD explains, speaking of and from his own experience, “by inflicting too much pain on me it had, in a certain real sense, awakened me.”[81]

In his novel *Valis*, PKD writes, “It is sometimes an appropriate response to reality to go insane.” PKD writes, “My insanity, facing an insane world, is, paradoxically, a facing of reality, and this is sane; I refuse to close my eyes and ears.”[82] Paradoxically, PKD's form of insanity is the most sane response of all. PKD wonders, “Perhaps if you know you are insane you are not insane.”[83] He elaborates, “The distinction between sanity and insanity is narrower than a razor's edge, sharper than a hound's tooth, more agile than a mule deer. It is more elusive than the merest phantom. Perhaps it does not even exist; perhaps it is a phantom.”[84]

Never one to shy away from the tough questions, PKD asks, “So, then, in what sense am I insane? I am insane in that I continue to face the truth without the ability to come up with a workable answer.... I really do not know anything in terms of the solution; I can only state the problem. No other thinker has ever stated a

problem and so miserably failed to solve it in human histories; human thought is, basically, problem-solving, not problem stating.”[85]

I personally don't think PKD is giving himself enough credit. For in fact, it is clear in his writings that he did come up with a “workable answer,” one that is universal and is common to all wisdom traditions. PKD likened our existential situation to being in a maze, what he refers to as “one colossal and absolute Chinese finger trap.” The harder we try to get out, the more trapped we become; this is to say that we are not able to find our way out through ordinary means. Seemingly alive and sentient, the maze has a peculiar nature of shifting as we become aware of it. It is *as if* it is aware of—and responds to—our awareness of it.

One only escapes from the maze, to quote PKD, “when he decides voluntarily to return (to resubject himself to the power of the maze) for the sake of these others, still in it. That is, you can never leave alone, to leave you must elect to take the others out...the ultimate paradox of the maze, its quintessential ingenuity of construction, is that the only real way out is a voluntary way back in (into it and its power), which is the path of the bodhisattva.”[86] We would only voluntarily return to help others if we recognized that they are not separate from ourselves, which is to realize that we are all interdependent and interconnected—which is the very realization that simultaneously enlivens compassion and dissolves wetiko.

PKD writes, “when you think you are out of the maze—i.e., saved—*you are in fact still in it.*”[87] This brings to mind the insight that if we think we are free of wetiko and it is only “others” that are afflicted with it, this very perspective is, paradoxically, a symptom of having fallen under the spell of wetiko. To quote PKD, “If there is to be happiness it must come in a voluntary relinquishing of self in exchange for aware participation in the destiny of the total one.”[88]

In a very real sense, PKD did find the solution to humanity's existential dilemma. He writes, “compassion's highest power is the only power capable of solving the maze.”[89] As PKD points out, “The true measure of a man is not his intelligence or how high he rises in this freak establishment. No, the true measure of a man is this: how quickly can he respond to the needs of others and how much of himself he can give.”[90] In other words, the true measure of who we are is how much we are able to love.

PKD concludes, “If the final paradox of the maze is that the only way you can escape it is voluntarily to go back in (into it), then maybe we are here voluntarily; we came back in.”[91] In other words, perhaps we have chosen to incarnate at this very moment in time, i.e., our voluntary return to the maze has already happened (evidenced by the simple fact of our incarnation), which is to say that we have already solved the maze and simply have to recognize this fact. This is true anamnesis—a loss of forgetfulness—which is a remembering, a recollection of our dissociated members, as we re-member our rightful place as part of a greater whole, connected with all that is. “Anamnesis,” to quote PKD from a 1976 interview, “was the loss of amnesia. You remembered your origins, and they were from beyond the stars.”[92]

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