

Revelations of Spirit: Synchronicity as a Spiritual Path in a Secular Age

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James Edgar Allison

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accepted for the faculty of  
Pacifica Graduate Institute by:

Dr. Keiron Le Grice, Chair

Dr. Joseph Cambray, Reader

Dr. Lisa Christie, External Reader

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## Abstract

## Revelations of Spirit: Synchronicity as a Spiritual Path in a Secular Age

by

James Edgar Allison

Restricted by the dogma of many forms of Western religion and plagued by the spiritual emptiness of materialism pervading the current age, many seek direct, personal experience of the sacred. Following a hermeneutic methodology, this dissertation explores the relevance of the writings of Jung and others on synchronicity, as both phenomenon and principle, as a foundation for an alternative path promising an authentic spiritual life. Through an exploration of the principle of synchronicity, the study reveals the possibility of a cosmos permeated with meaning, of a path to the spiritualization of matter, and of a bridge between the disparate realms of the sacred and profane. The study finds that synchronicity as a spiritual path naturally leads to direct, authentic experience of the divine, supports the major tenets of the progressive spirituality movement, and reflects the synchronistic principles undergirding the Chinese tradition of Taoism. The principle of synchronicity is found to be a possible psychophysical law supporting the experience of consciousness as well as the process of individuation. The study concludes that Jung's synchronistic model of his psychology of religion dispels the charge of psychologism levied against analytical psychology. In the theory of synchronicity Jung has given depth psychology the means to potentially unite all of humanity in a common purpose: the creation of consciousness. In particular, synchronicity as a spiritual path can draw attention to the value of depth psychology for offering a resolution to the spiritual vacuum in the West.

*Keywords:* synchronicity, spirituality, individuation, time, unconscious, consciousness, myth, Taoism

### Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear soul-companion and life-partner, Karen Faye Stephens. No one could have been gifted with a more enlightened, compassionate, and nurturing spiritual guide than Karen, with whom I have had the deepest honor and privilege to share this odyssey of discovery called a dissertation. Throughout this long journey, she has embodied and visualized many of the principles and ideas I had, at times, been struggling for days or weeks to express in words, but could finally write down because of her inspiration. This dissertation has revolved around the yet-to-be-explored parts of myself waiting in the shadows of my life. Karen is a spiritual pioneer. Time and again she has demonstrated the courage and tenacity necessary to face the unknown realms of the unconscious. In doing so, she has provided me with an example of the qualities of character needed to descend to the deepest levels of the unconscious to retrieve treasures waiting to be brought to the light of consciousness. Her selfless acts of kindness for others demonstrate the spiritual riches to be gained through living the symbolic life, a life I have endeavored to illustrate in this dissertation. She embodies the core theme of this work by embracing the reality and vitality of what it means to practice synchronicity as a spiritual path in a secular age. Daily she consults the I Ching for spiritual wisdom and practical guidance, thus underscoring the influence which Eastern philosophy can have on Western lives and culture, again, a major theme of this work. The well-spring of creativity evident in Karen's many forms of artistic expression obviously derives from her intimate relationship with the unconscious. Her embodiment of the reality of this relationship is her gift to me and so many others. Thank you for these gifts made possible by great painful sacrifice of your own personal aspirations and dreams.

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the steadfast resolve, constant inspiration, and endless patience of my companion in life, Karen Faye Stephens, to whom I offer my deepest heartfelt appreciation and gratitude. She has made this arduous journey with me every step of the way and has made it possible for me to see my writing through the soulful, compassionate, wise, and penetrating eyes of the feminine. Not only did she help me clarify and challenge my own thinking, but she also offered invaluable insights from her deep well-spring of creativity, that found their way into my writing throughout the dissertation, especially regarding the unruly but life-sustaining creativity of the unconscious. I also wish to thank the members of my committee who have helped me, each in their own way, in writing this dissertation. They include my committee chairman Dr. Keiron Le Grice, whose deep insights into the mysteries of depth psychology, especially synchronicity, valuable contributions to the literature, and conscientious efforts to keep me on track right from the start contributed greatly to shaping this document. Dr. Joseph Cambray's faithful encouragement, support, and guidance in the completion of this dissertation are gratefully acknowledged. As internal reader, his insights into the subtleties of synchronicity, the depth and breadth of his experience in the field of depth psychology, and his probing questions and comments that forced me to go deeper, provided a solid foundation upon which I could build the major theme of this dissertation. I am thankful for Dr. Lisa Christie's clear insights regarding cultural themes and the feminine perspective, which opened up new dimensions of exploration that would have otherwise remained unseen. Not least, I am deeply grateful for the patience, wisdom, and inspiration offered so freely by all my Pacifica instructors and fellow students.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Imagining Synchronicity.....	1
Introduction to the Research Topic.....	1
Purpose Statement.....	12
Autobiographical Origins of the Researcher's Interest in the Topic.....	13
The Researcher's Predisposition to the Topic.....	22
Relevance of the Topic for Depth Psychology.....	23
Literature Review.....	26
Jung's Writings on Synchronicity.....	29
Synchronicity, Mind-Matter, and the Psychoid Nature of the Archetypes.....	43
Secondary Jungian Sources on Synchronicity.....	50
The Influence of the East on Jung's Psychology.....	62
Individuation as a Spiritual Journey.....	69
Synchronicity and Contemporary Spirituality.....	73
Statement of the Research Problem and Question.....	80
The Research Problem.....	80
The Research Question.....	81
Chapter 2. Methodology and Procedures.....	83
Research Approach.....	83
Research Methodology.....	83
Hermeneutics.....	83
Dialectical Hermeneutics.....	84

Research Procedures.....	87
Procedures for Gathering and Analyzing Data.....	87
Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions.....	87
Methodological Assumptions.....	91
Rhetorical Assumptions.....	92
Procedures for Analyzing Data.....	93
Limitations and Delimitations.....	94
Procedures for Dealing with Ethical Concerns.....	96
Axiological Assumptions.....	96
Axiological Assumptions and the Purpose of Research.....	97
Dissertation Summary.....	97
Chapter 3. Dimensions of Synchronicity and Spirituality.....	99
The Implications of Expansion of the Psyche in Jung's Psychology.....	100
The Creation of a Modern Myth.....	102
Romantic Philosophy's Influence on Jung's Psychology.....	103
Psychologism and Jung's Psychology. ....	108
The Collective Unconscious.....	109
Jung and the Unconscious.....	109
The Seven Sermons to the Dead.....	113
The Seven Sermons to the Dead and the Collective Unconscious.....	114
Jung and the Self.....	115
Synchronicity and the Self.....	116



The Self and Mandalas.....	117
The Self and Individuation.....	120
Materialism as the Spirit of the Age.....	122
Materialism as a Religion.....	123
Materialism and Animistic Consciousness.....	124
Materialism and Contemporaries.....	127
Jung's Psychology of Religion.....	129
Projection and Jung's Psychology of Religion.....	130
Projection and the Collective Unconscious.....	131
Projection and Psychologism.....	132
Jung's Epistemology.....	137
Jung's Methodology.....	142
Jung and Existential Phenomenology.....	146
Jung's Psychological Type.....	152
Psyche and Cosmos.....	154
The Psychoid Nature of the Archetypes.....	159
Mind-Matter Split.....	161
Synchronicity and Time.....	166
Chapter 4. On Synchronicity and the Psyche.....	175
Synchronicity and the Duality of Mind and Matter.....	176
Existential and Ontological Views of the Duality of Mind and Matter...	176
Secular and Sacred Experience of the Psyche.....	177
Secular and Sacred Experience of the Self.....	178

The Relationship of Consciousness to Ego and Self.....	179
Consciousness, Matter, and Synchronicity.....	181
Panpsychism.....	182
Synchronicity and Time.....	182
Synchronicity and Time in Chinese Philosophy.....	183
Synchronicity and the Concept of Kairos: The Right Time.....	184
Synchronicity as Empirical Phenomenon and Ontological Principle.....	185
The Development of a Global Acausal Conception of Reality.....	186
Synchronicity and Continuous Creation.....	187
Time and the Unus Mundus.....	188
Synchronicity and Spiritual Growth.....	189
Synchronicity and the Spiritualization of Matter.....	190
Synchronicity as a Bridge Between Religion and Science.....	192
Synchronicity and Quantum Physics.....	194
Taoist Philosophy and the Psychoid Archetype.....	195
Soul in Jung's Psychology.....	195
The Principle of Synchronicity and Taoism.....	196
The Spectrum of Synchronicity.....	198
The Challenge of Defining Synchronicity.....	200
A Proposed Definition of Synchronicity.....	204
A Comparison of Definitions of Synchronicity.....	205
One Interpretation of Meaning in a Synchronicity.....	206
Jung's Psychological Agenda.....	208

A Study of Exceptional Experiences.....	208
The Role of the Unus Mundus and Collective Unconscious in Synchronicity....	213
The Unus Mundus.....	214
The Collective Unconscious.....	217
The Effect of Consciousness on the Unus Mundus.....	219
Chapter 5. Taoism, Kairos, and Jung's Near-Death Experience.....	221
The Influence of Eastern Philosophy on Jung's Theory of Synchronicity.....	222
Taoist Philosophy and Jung's Theory of Synchronicity.....	223
The Tao as the Middle Way.....	226
Equivalence of Meaning as the Taoist Connection Between Events.....	229
The Role of the Psychoid Archetype in Taoism.....	231
The Tao as a Synthesis of Opposites.....	231
The Rainmaker Story.....	232
The Rainmaker Story and Resonance with the Tao.....	233
Jung's Personal Commitment to Understanding Chinese Doctrine.....	234
Jung's Collaboration with Wilhelm.....	235
Analogies Between the Science of the I Ching and Jung's Psychology..	236
Taoism and the Cosmological Function of Myth.....	237
The Birth of a New Cosmology in the West.....	238
Taoist Philosophy and the New Paradigm Sciences.....	239
Kairos, Synchronicity, and Jung's Near-Death Experience.....	240
Kairos and the Appearance of a Divine Guest.....	241
Jung's Near-Death Experience as Myth.....	242

The Self as the Christ Figure.....	243
Jung's Doctor as the Christ Figure.....	245
The Purpose of the Sacrifice of the Self/Doctor.....	245
Jung's Synchronistic Vision as Confirmation of Absolute Knowledge..	246
Kairos and Jung's Encounter with Pauli.....	247
Pauli's Dreams.....	247
Kairos, Pauli's Dreams, and the Self.....	248
Chapter 6. The Self and Individuation.....	249
The Self in World Religions.....	249
The Self, Individuation, and the Philosophers' Stone.....	251
The Self as the Philosophers' Stone.....	252
A Personal Phenomenological Experience of the Self.....	257
Individuation as an Alchemical Process.....	258
The Challenge of Individuation.....	259
Individuation Experienced as a Conflict of Opposites.....	260
Regression of the Libido During Individuation.....	260
The Self as Restorer of Psychic Wholeness.....	263
The Numinous Self and the Archetypes.....	263
Possible Origins of Duality in Jung's Psychology.....	266
Chapter 7. Symbolism and the Transcendent Function.....	268
On the Loss of Nature's Aura in the West.....	269
The Meaning of a Symbol.....	269
Symbol as Symptom.....	270

Causalist and Finalist Perspectives of Symbols.....	271
Symbols as Transformers from the Finalist Perspective.....	272
Regression of Libido from Causalist and Finalist Perspectives...	273
A Causalist Perspective Dominates the Current Worldview.....	275
The Symbolic Life.....	276
Religious Rituals as a Shield to Direct Religious Experience.....	277
Encounters with the Unconscious as the Center of Religious Ritual.....	278
Synchronicity and the Jungian Ritual Enacted in All of Nature.....	279
The Symbolic Life as Ritual.....	280
The Transcendent Function.....	282
The Effects of Confrontation with the Unconscious.....	284
The Dynamics of the Transcendent Function.....	287
The Symbolic Process.....	289
Chapter 8. On Consciousness.....	291
Jung's Stages of Consciousness.....	292
Animistic Consciousness.....	294
Ancient Consciousness.....	296
Modern Consciousness.....	297
Astrology and Modern Consciousness.....	298
The Copernican Revolution as a Spiritual Revelation.....	299
Contemporary Consciousness.....	301
Consciousness and Myth in Jung's Psychology.....	303
Jung's Mythological Perspective and Synchronicity.....	305

Jung's Shift from a Biographical to a Mythological Approach to Symbolism.....	305
Synchronicity and the Myth of Consciousness.....	307
The Hard Problem of Consciousness.....	308
Consciousness Understood as What It Is Like to Be Something.....	309
Theories of Consciousness.....	310
Consciousness and Philosophies of Form.....	311
Plato's Theory of Form.....	311
Jung's Theory of Form.....	312
Aristotle's Theory of Form.....	313
Pauli's Postulate of a Cosmic Order.....	314
The Nominalist-Materialist Theory of Form.....	314
The Influence of Dualism on Theories of Consciousness.....	315
Interactionist Dualism.....	316
Consciousness and Complex Adaptive Systems.....	316
Reductive Explanations of Consciousness.....	317
Consciousness as a Fundamental Feature of the World.....	319
Consciousness in Velmans's Reflexive Model.....	320
Reflexive Monism.....	323
Reflexive Monism and the Explanatory Gap.....	324
Consciousness and Synchronicity.....	325
Synchronicity and the Explanatory Gap.....	327
The Unconscious Basis of Consciousness.....	331

Chapter 9. Synchronicity, Individuation, and Myth.....	337
Narcissism as the Spirit of the Age.....	337
Synchronicity, Myth and the Tao.....	338
Synchronicity and Meaning.....	340
Consciousness and Meaning in a Synchronicity.....	342
Synchronicity and the Scarab Beetle.....	343
Stages of Spiritual Consciousness.....	353
Six Stages of Spiritual Consciousness.....	354
Stage 1: Animistic Consciousness.....	355
Stage 2: Ancient Consciousness.....	355
Stage 3: Fundamentalist consciousness.....	356
Stage 4: Modern/Narcissistic Consciousness.....	356
Stage 5: Contemporary Consciousness.....	357
Stage 6: Mystical Consciousness.....	357
The Relationship Between Meaning and Stages of Spiritual Consciousness.....	359
Synchronicity and the Archetype of Meaning.....	361
Accessing the Unconscious.....	364
Synchronicity and Objective Meaning.....	366
Synchronicity and the Functions of Myth.....	368
Ancient Myths Illustrating the Cosmological Function of Myth.....	369
The Modern View of the Universe as an Organism.....	370
A Modern Cosmology Shaped by New Paradigm Scientists.....	371

Consciousness as a Unified Energy Field in a Modern Cosmology.....	373
Predetermined Order, Meaning and Consciousness in a Modern Cosmology.....	374
Pattern as a Fundamental Attribute of Nature in a Modern Cosmology..	375
The Role of Jung's Synchronistic Model in a Modern Cosmology.....	376
The Cosmos as a Foundation for a Galaxy of Mythologies.....	376
The Individual as a Center for the Origin of Myth.....	377
The Challenge of Jungian Depth Psychology to the Modern Western Self.....	378
Synchronicity and the Hero's Journey.....	379
Synchronicity and the Modern Myth for Humanity.....	379
The Initial Stage of the Hero's Journey: The Call to Adventure.....	380
The First Threshold of the Adventure.....	383
The Emergence of the Self.....	387
The Second Stage: Initiation and Transformation.....	390
The Road of Trials.....	392
The Heiros Gamos.....	392
The Third Stage: Crossing the Return Threshold and Disclosing of Spiritual Knowledge.....	393
Synchronicity and Contemporary Spirituality.....	395
The Role of Synchronicity as a Spiritual Path in Contemporary Spirituality.....	399
Jung's Psychology of the Sacred.....	402



Achieving a Synthesis of Eastern and Western Thought.....	403
Synchronicity as a Spiritual Path and Progressive Spirituality.....	404
Chapter 10. Conclusion.....	407
References.....	412

The style used throughout this dissertation is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition, 2009), and *Pacifica Graduate Institute's Dissertation Handbook* (2018-2019).

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Pauli/Jung Psychophysical schema.....	33
Figure 2. Fundamental types of exceptional experiences resulting from the conceptual framework of dual-aspect monism.....	60
Figure 3. Empirically obtained patterns (factors) of EE, embedded within the scheme shown in Figure 4.....	210
Figure 4. Fundamental types of exceptional experiences resulting from the conceptual framework of dual-aspect monism.....	211

## Chapter 1

### Imagining Synchronicity

#### Introduction to the Research Topic

The psyche is the greatest of all cosmic wonders and the ‘sine qua non’ of the world as an object. It is in the highest degree odd that Western man, with but very few—and ever fewer—exceptions, apparently pays so little regard to this fact.

Swamped by the knowledge of external objects, the subject of all knowledge has been temporarily eclipsed to the point of seeming nonexistence.

Jung, 1954/1969b, p. 169 [CW 8, para. 357]

The central issue I wish to address is the potential for increased understanding of the spiritual realm of the psyche through a closer examination of the phenomenon of synchronicity as proposed by Jung and further developed by other authors. Jung hypothesized an intrapsychic model of the psyche that is limited to the totality of all conscious and unconscious processes. Because psychic totality is a postulate Jung (1921/1976f) stated that “it is a transcendental concept, for it presupposes the existence of unconscious factors on empirical grounds and thus characterizes an entity that can be described only in part but, for the other part, remains at present unknowable and illimitable” (p. 460 [CW 6, para. 789]). At this point the spiritual realm of the psyche will be identified with the transpersonal level of the psyche that is transcendent to or beyond the limits of knowledge gained by consciousness. Manifestations of the transpersonal level form the fundamental foundation of all personal spiritual paths. However, as the definition of the psyche changes, so also will the realm of the spiritual.

Through a synchronicity, Jung suggested that a dream, fantasy, feeling, or other psychological state of an individual may be experienced by the individual as personally and meaningfully related to a verifiable objective event not connected to the individual's subjective inner state by any *efficient* cause in the sense of an identifiable agent being responsible for initiating change. In this case the connection between inner and outer events is termed *acausal*. It was while lecturing on dream analysis in November of 1928 that Jung (1984) first described the "peculiar" and "irrational regularity" of the apparently acausal connection between dreams that have "moved" the dreamer and oddly coincidental parallel external events in the individual's life. The coincidence of corresponding psychic and physical events of comparable significance to the individual in this essay Jung called the principle of "synchronism." In 1930 Jung (1930/1966) tentatively renamed synchronism the "*synchronistic* principle" (p. 56 [CW 15, para. 81]) in his memorial to Sinologist Richard Wilhelm.

As an example of a synchronicity, Jung (1951/1969b) cited the case of a young, intelligent, well-educated female client who distanced herself from her feelings through rationalization and intellectualization. She described to Jung a dream in which she was given an expensive piece of jewelry in the form of a golden scarab beetle. Just then Jung heard a gentle tapping sound behind him apparently resulting from a large insect flying against his window trying to enter the darkened consultation room. As he opened the window a gold-green colored scarabaeid beetle flew in, similar to the golden scarab beetle in her dream. Jung caught and handed the insect to the astonished woman saying, "Here is your scarab" (p. 526 [CW 8, para. 982]). The shock of this extraordinary coincidence broke through the young woman's intellectual resistance and rendered her

open to accepting the possibility of a mystery incomprehensible to her exclusively rational mind.

The scarab is a characteristic symbol of rebirth in Egyptian mythology and Jung (1952/1969b) knew that symbols of rebirth usually appeared in dreams or fantasies at times of psychic transformation (p. 439 [CW 8, para. 845]). Jung was open to the potential mirroring of a psychic and physical event linked in meaning by a symbol, in this case the scarab beetle. Thus, although Jung realized this was a synchronicity, for someone unacquainted with Egyptian mythology or not open to the potential for symbolic meaning in the events of the flow of life, it would likely have been passed over as mere coincidence. The issue of meaning thus initially appeared to Jung to be paramount in characterizing a synchronicity. Although an individual may create personal meaning from parallel events, Jung also considered the possibility of an independent, a priori or preexistent meaning. From the weight of accumulated evidence he felt compelled to assume the existence of a source of knowledge of events before they happened, a source he termed the *collective unconscious*.

Jung (1954/1969a) divided unconscious contents into two categories distinct from the everyday conscious psyche. The first category is the personal unconscious consisting of personal experiences that have been forgotten or repressed from consciousness which Jung termed “feeling-toned complexes” (p. 4 [CW 9i, para. 4]) and which can lead to emotional instability or neurosis. The second category consists of impersonal and collective contents that have never been conscious and are not gained through personal or biographical experience. These contents can rise to conscious awareness under certain conditions such as a synchronicity. Jung (1951/1969d) termed the second category the

collective unconscious because it formed “an omnipresent, unchanging, and everywhere identical *quality or substrate of the psyche per se*” (p. 7 [CW 9ii, para. 12]).

Key to understanding Jung’s psychology, and in particular the phenomenon Jung called synchronicity, is his theory of *archetypes* of the collective unconscious. Jung (1929/1969) described the archetypes as “primordial images” (p. 112 [CW 8, para. 229]) or pre-existing psychic patterns (Jung, 1937/1969, p. 115 [CW 8, para. 234]), not acquired through personal experience, and constituting the layer of the psyche he termed the *collective unconscious*. Jung (1937/1969) postulated that archetypes “are psychic forms which, like the instincts, are common to all mankind” (p. 122 [CW 8, para. 254]). He explained that the archetypes share “the characteristic compulsiveness of instinct” (Jung, 1937/1969, p. 115 [CW 8, para. 234]), a quality he termed *autochthonous*. In the psychological sense, the images and ideas arising impulsively and independently of someone’s thought processes that seem to result from the activity of an outside agent may be termed autochthonous. It is important to note, however, that while archetypes provide the form or pattern of images, and are in a certain sense autonomous, they do not initiate archetypal images.

Stevens (2006) describes Jung’s (1919/1969) first use of the term *archetype* in his essay “Instinct and the Unconscious” (p. 133 [CW 8, para. 270]). Jung (1954/1969a) explained that Plato’s *εἶδος*, or idea, refers to the eternal ideas which are “primordial images stored up *ἐν ὑπερουρανίῳ τόπῳ* (in a supracelestial place) as eternal, transcendent forms” (p. 33 [CW 9i, para. 68]). Jung (1954/1969c) described archetypes as “active living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense that pre-form and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions” (p. 79 [CW 9i, para. 154]). Archetypes serve as

organizing principles originating in the unconscious realm of the psyche beyond the level of the empirical personality.

Edinger (1972) explains that the collective unconscious has a transpersonal dimension manifesting in motifs and images found universally in religions and mythologies as well as psychic experiences and dreams. Jung (1952/1969b) postulated that patterns of behavior as well as patterns of understanding and perception are the result of archetypes that organize processes in the unconscious realm of the psyche common to all people (p. 436 [CW 8, para. 841]). Jung (1929/1967) drew a parallel between the commonality, regardless of race, of the anatomy of the human body and the “common substratum” (p. 11 [CW 13, para. 11]) of the human psyche he termed the collective unconscious. Jung (1919/1969) explained that the archetypes are thus the psychic counterparts to the physical instincts shared by all humans, imparting common modes of ideation and behavior so that “the instincts and the archetypes together form the ‘collective unconscious’” (pp. 133-134 [CW 8, para. 270]).

A synchronicity occurs, in Jung’s view, when archetypal structures manifest or constellate not only psychically but also to a certain extent physically in the environment. To explain this phenomenon Jung (1955-56/1970c) introduced a unitary psychophysical reality called the *unus mundus*, meaning “one world,” an undifferentiated “potential world, the eternal Ground of all empirical being” (p. 534 [CW 14, para. 760]). Jung explained that “this principle [synchronicity] suggests that there is an interconnection or unity of causally unrelated events, and thus postulates a unitary aspect of being which can very well be described as the Unus Mundus” (pp. 464-465 [CW 14, para. 662]). Jung (1954/1969b) further explained:

Since psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world, and moreover are in continuous contact with one another and ultimately rest on irrepresentable, transcendental factors [i.e. archetypes], it is not only possible but fairly probable, even, that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing. (p. 215 [CW 8, para. 418])

Jung hypothesized that in a synchronicity the seemingly incongruent worlds of the psyche and the physical world are fused in the *unus mundus*, so that they become one for an instant. The outer event becomes metaphor to the inner world of the psyche. Combs and Holland (1996) have characterized synchronistic coincidences as “objective events that symbolically seem to mirror personal, subjective realities” (pp. 103). The deep significance connecting the outer event and the psychological state is a very personal, yet archetypally structured expression of the Self<sup>1</sup> in an unconscious compensation.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in

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<sup>1</sup> The transpersonal Self functions as the organizing center of the psyche orchestrating order, unity, and wholeness. As the totality of the psyche, some aspect of the Self is represented by each archetype. As an empirically derived idea, Jung (1921/1976a) explained, “the self designates the whole range of psychic phenomena in man. It expresses the unity of the personality as a whole.” However, “the self is, in part, only *potentially* empirical and is to that extent a *postulate*.” Since the Self includes both “the experienceable and the inexperienceable (or the not yet experienced).... it is a *transcendental* concept, for it presupposes the existence of unconscious factors on empirical grounds” (p. 460 [CW 6, para. 789]).

<sup>2</sup> Jung notes that it is characteristic of the conscious mind to exclude certain conscious contents while concentrating on a limited few. In Jungian psychology, the unconscious



a synchronicity, transpersonal contents can rise to conscious awareness. Jaffé (1984), Aziz (1990), Tarnas (2006), and Le Grice (2010) have noted that synchronicities are often constellated when an individual is caught in an apparently intractable situation.

It is important in this work to distinguish formal religious observance from spiritual practice. Corbett (1996) cites the experiences of his own spiritual life and the lives of those he has counseled in psychotherapy in reaching the conclusion that many experience the sacred in ways unrelated to established religious traditions. He claims that there is “widespread disenchantment” (p. 1) with both traditional characterizations of God and also with the theological systems espousing these descriptions. Many individuals experience frustration and disillusion stemming from a lack of relevance of their religious teachings to their personal life. As a result those persons seeking a deeper and more intimate experience of the sacred turn to spiritual practices that emphasize manifestations of the sacred appearing directly within the life of the individual.

I have personally experienced frustration stemming from a lack of relevance of the Biblical teachings of my former church to my personal life and have consequently felt disenchanting with traditional ideas about God. This lack of relevance became quite apparent during Christian marriage counseling sessions which I and my former wife attended with a notable lack of success. Following this experience I was motivated to seek a knowledge of the sacred that resonated with my personal experience.

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compensates in a meaningful way for this one-sided attitude of consciousness through the activation of an archetype or archetypes in order to restore equilibrium. On compensation see Jung (1940/1969a) “Psychology of the Child Archetype” (pp. 162-164 [CW 9i, paras. 276-277]).

In the process I encountered many spiritual seekers who appeared to have intuitive access to spiritual knowledge. While studying for my Spiritual Psychology degree I learned firsthand that an Inner Counselor was available to guide me intuitively in a way that was not amenable to scientific proof but that nonetheless proved an invaluable aid in helping me through some very difficult circumstances.

It is the premise of this work that personal experience of the divine, as opposed to the authority of sacred texts and institutions which inform religious traditions, ultimately informs spiritual practice. Personal experiences of the divine must be given highest priority in an individual's spiritual life in order for an approach to the sacred to have life-altering meaning. As Corbett (1996) has stated, "no concept of divinity that is not the result of personal experience will ultimately hold sway" (p. 2). These experiences may arise in the psyche, in the body, in relationships, in synchronicities, or in any other way that is meaningful to an individual. Importantly, these experiences shift the focus of attention of the individual from the concerns of the ego<sup>3</sup> to the divine "Other" in the individual's life.

Archetypes also carry an emotional charge that can be activated or constellated by some triggering event. An example of such a triggering event was Jung's sudden and unexpected presentation of a scarab beetle to his female client in the synchronicity presented previously. She felt the shock of the archetypal emotional charge resulting from this synchronicity as an affect in her body. To describe the emotional effect of a

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<sup>3</sup> Within the psyche the ego is the center of personal identity. See Edinger (1972) *Ego and Archetype*. The ego, as the center of subjective identity, is subordinate to the Self, the site of objective identity, which is experienced by the ego as an inner divinity.

constellated archetype on an individual Jung (1954/1969a) borrowed the word *numinous* (p. 39 [CW 9i, para. 82]) introduced by Otto (1923/1958) in *The Idea of the Holy*. As Jung (1954/1969b) explained that “the archetypes have...a distinctly numinous character which can only be described as ‘spiritual,’ if ‘magical’ is too strong a word. .... There is a mystical aura about its numinosity, and it has a corresponding effect upon the emotions” (p. 205 [CW 8, para. 405]). Jung considered this effect to be “of the utmost significance for the psychology of religion” (p. 205 [CW 8, para. 405]). Corbett (1996) explains that the numinosum produces a sort of “holy terror, awe or dread” (p. 12) as if paralyzed by the fear of almighty God. Thus, in a synchronicity one may experience “a feeling of the ‘*mysterium tremendum*’” (p. 11), which one might characterize as the feeling of an absolutely unapproachable, dreadful mystery (p. 19). Lindorff (2004) records that Jung, using dream material, showed that the unconscious is naturally inclined “to produce numinous, awe-inspiring dreams that can have a transformative effect on the dreamer” (p. 56). Thus, Jungian theory emphasized the search for spiritual meaning, prompting the assignment of transpersonal and archetypal meanings to religious symbols and rituals. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, there is a broad spectrum of events that could potentially be considered examples of synchronicity but that do not necessarily exhibit the characteristics described here.

Jung (1954/1969b) stated that the fundamental nature of an archetype is unknowable and irrepresentable (p. 215 [CW 8, para. 418]). However, the archetype’s impulse to create patterns can manifest in “certain typical images and motifs” (Jung, 1919/1969, p. 137 [CW 8, para. 278]) found in mythology, religion, science, and philosophy. As well, Stevens (2006) states that archetypes “are manifest in the spiritual

achievements of art, science, and religion” (p. 90) because they provide the patterns for all of existence. According to Corbett (1996) depth psychology holds that dreams, fantasies, visions, imaginative constructs, personal reflections, and contents obtained by introspection derive from the psyche’s transpersonal or archetypal realm. He maintains that numinous experiences are manifestations of the transpersonal domain of the psyche and are therefore considered the subject of a “valid spiritual pursuit” (p. 5). Depth psychology is about building a bridge between the unconscious and consciousness by paying attention to the unconscious in dreams, fantasies, symptoms, images, feelings, and synchronicities. Stressing the importance of the feeling function in Jung’s psychology, von Franz and Hillman (1986) explained that “we cannot read Jung by intellect alone. Conscious comprehension in Jungian psychology means as well feeling comprehension. All the principal conceptual symbols (e.g., introversion, shadow, archetype, self, synchronicity) are as well experiences of feeling” (p. 83). Anything written from mere rationality risks being inauthentic because of the influence of the unconscious.

Jung (1954/1969b) viewed the psyche as “the greatest of all cosmic wonders and...the subject of all knowledge” (p. 169 [CW 8, para. 357]). Corbett (1996) adds that “only the psyche itself is universal, and the psyche has an infinite capacity to produce sacred imagery” (p. 3). In a spiritual approach to the psyche the products of the transpersonal domain of the psyche are assumed to serve as the essential and primary ground of a personal spirituality unrelated to any religious tradition. In this way depth psychology offers a religious approach to the psyche that is ideally suited to informing an individual’s spiritual path since direct spiritual experiences play a central role as they do in the mystical traditions.

The language of the unconscious can be learned if one is willing to learn to think symbolically and pay close and careful attention to the surrounding world. In a 12 February 1959 letter to Pastor Tanner, Jung (1975b) maintained that the proper attitude to adopt toward the unconscious is the same as towards religion. He explained that “religion means a watchful, wary, thoughtful, careful, prudent, expedient and calculated attitude towards the powers-that-be” (p. 483). The religious function of the psyche requires the proper attitude; it is not just a matter of faith. The collective unconscious is autonomous, the landscape of soul, the domain between mind and nature. Depth psychology is unique among the sciences in that it grapples with the complex notion of ego consciousness in relation to the psyche through which the ego is humbled by recognizing its subservient relation to the psyche which creates reality every day.

Thus, it is the premise of this research that a deep stream of sacred images mediating religious experience flow from the psyche. Jung (1948/1969a) maintained that from the human point of view it is not possible to discern the difference between God and the psyche’s images of the divine—the “God-image” (p. 278 [CW 8, para. 528]). However, he drew attention to the common mistake of making “no conceptual distinction between ‘God’ and the ‘God-image’” (p. 278 [CW 8, para. 528]). He explained: “the God-image corresponds to a definite complex of psychological facts...; but what God is in himself remains a question outside the competence of all psychology” (p. 279 [CW 8, para. 528]). Jung (1950/1969) also referred to the God-image as the *imago Dei*: “But the One is God, and that which corresponds to him in us is the *imago Dei*, the God-image” (p. 354 [CW 9i, para. 626]).

In comparing the God-image to the Self, Jung (1951/1969h) said “the self, on the other hand, is a God-image, or at least cannot be distinguished from one” (p. 22 [CW 9ii, para. 42]). Edinger (1972) elucidated: “the Self is most simply described as the inner empirical deity and is identical with the *imago Dei*” (p. 3). The experience of the Self, according to Jung, is phenomenologically equivalent to the experience of God. As a result, Corbett (1996) believes, “at the subjective level...the divine is indistinguishable from Mind or Consciousness itself,” a postulate that will be examined more critically in this work. In Corbett’s view depth psychology assumes that the psyche’s transpersonal realm serves as the ground of all personal religious experience, and provides the essential material for a religious approach to the psyche.

**Purpose statement.** The purpose of this dialectical hermeneutic study is to determine what, if anything, may be learned about the spiritual dimension of the psyche through the phenomenon of synchronicity as conceptualized by Jung and further explored by other depth psychologists. Through the lens of Jungian depth psychology, the study will endeavor to bring together the evolving concept of synchronicity with the understanding of spirituality emerging in the West, promising a fresh approach to the individual’s relationship with the sacred. The role of consciousness in this relationship will prove crucial to illuminating how synchronicity may facilitate the processes of individuation and meaning-making.

At this stage in the research, meaning-making will be operationally defined from the depth psychological perspective of individuation, as the actualization of the potential within the person to become a unified, whole personality. Defined as such, individuation becomes a lifelong, unfolding spiritual journey through which the ego integrates contents

of the unconscious, understood as the container of a person's unlived life and unrealized potential. Individuation is driven by the primary motive source—the Self—the central archetype of wholeness and totality.

**Autobiographical origins of the researcher's interest in the topic.** The life experiences that have led me to consider a dissertation on synchronicity and spirituality have very deep roots reaching back into early childhood and probably beyond. I was born and raised in Toronto, Canada in a blue-collar family disciplined in the old school ways of pragmatism, frugality, and hard work. It was the ideal ground from which to aspire to something greater. My father learned from his father to be the autocratic patriarch of the family. My mother's mother was similarly trained to be an old-school disciplinarian, a trait absorbed by my mother. These models were to have a pronounced effect on my image of authority including divine authority.

Edinger (1972) describes this situation in terms of the relationship between the emerging ego of a child and the Self. He explains that “the Self is inevitably experienced initially in projection<sup>4</sup> on to the parents. Thus the early phase of the developing ego-Self axis may be identical with the relationship between parents and child” (p. 39). In my early childhood my sense of lack of acceptance by my parents or emotional connection to them was “felt to be identical with loss of acceptance by the Self” (p. 39) resulting in ego-Self alienation, a pattern repeated in my relationship with the God of Christianity.

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<sup>4</sup> Projection is a psychological process involving the projection of an unconscious psychic content onto a receiving object that carries the projection. For example, through projection a characteristic that remains unconscious in the psyche of one person may be attributed to another person.

My parents separated when I was 16, and at 19 I began living on my own, eventually putting myself through university to become an electrical engineer. Shortly after graduation at age 23 I married and started a family but entertained no interest in religion. At age 25, however, I read Jung's (1961/1989) *Memories Dreams Reflections*, planting a seed that was to germinate later in life, and marking the start of a long journey through psychology, philosophy, and religion, alongside my engineering career. Becoming a born-again Christian at 32 came as a total surprise to me, as was my new-found interest in the work of Carl Jung. My Christian experience left me both elated and mystified, prompting me to enter a master's in divinity program at age 34. Although I was not able to complete the divinity program, I did continue to be an active member of various churches for almost twenty years, participating in many educational roles that deepened my spiritual life but that also kindled a curiosity about spiritual questions that Christian theology or the church were unable to answer to my satisfaction. Deep within my unconscious, another life pushed inexorably towards the light. It seemed to me that my soul was giving birth to a wisdom body, an ancient, hidden Self, which has continued to inform me even to this day. The process Jung called individuation, or transformation into the person I was destined to be, was hard at work. My growing unrest with Christianity led me on a spiritual journey that eventually resulted in my departure from the Christian Church and also the ending of my marriage of 30 years.

Divorced at 54, I wandered in and out of many personal growth workshops and found myself at 56 earning a master's degree in spiritual psychology. The master's program required me to complete a year-long project of my own choosing that held personal interest and would engage my creativity. As a final project I chose to sculpt in



clay my astrological chart, to which I added meaningful symbolic figures. I knew nothing about sculpting or astrology but felt a strong urge to learn about both. Reading about Jung's use of astrological charts in his practice encouraged me to understand more about this esoteric subject, in which I had no previous interest.

My astrological sun sign<sup>5</sup> is Capricorn.<sup>6</sup> On the morning of November 8, 2001, now 3 months into my sculpting project, I was reading Greene's (1989) *Astrology for Lovers*, in which she describes how Capricorn lives life in two very different phases represented by the astrological figure of Capricorn as half goat and half fish or serpent. Greene explains that in the first phase of Capricorn's life the goat climbs a secular mountain, methodically building a career and material possessions. Capricorn is disciplined, intelligent, determined and above all, highly practical. Capricorn's strength is mastery. Greene observes that hardship and frustration seem "to be part of Capricorn's training in the school of life" (p. 200), including a sort of self-imposed bondage or imprisonment to which I can strongly relate.

I believe the characteristics just described are expressed in astrology both symbolically and metaphorically. These linguistic expressions are not the usual Western rational means of communication. As Arroyo (1992) has explained "astrology works with

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<sup>5</sup> In astrology there are twelve signs of the zodiac each bearing the name of a constellation. A person's sun sign is the sign through which the sun was passing on his or her birthday. A person's sun sign describes the person one is trying to become. See Greene (1989) *Astrology for Lovers* pp. 23-28.

<sup>6</sup> For further reading on the nature of Capricorn, see Greene (1989) *Astrology for Lovers* pp. 197-214.

levels of consciousness and dimensions of experience that are far beyond the understanding of the earth conditioned logical mind” (p. ix). A metaphor may be said to be an idea or concept wrapped in language in which the qualities of one thing are ascribed to another thing in a nonliteral sense. For example, the metaphor in which Capricorn as a goat climbs a secular mountain is not describing a goat climbing a literal mountain, but rather is describing the strength and determination ascribed to the Capricorn personality to achieve worldly success. In a metaphor, Innis (2009) explains that “the context must be literal...since it is the literal that functions as the background to the metaphor’s figure” (p. 59). A symbol, such as a goat, can convey a virtually unlimited array of meanings, which must be interpreted by the reader from the context of the symbol. The goat, in the context of astrology, is a symbol of one aspect of Capricorn, embodying the qualities described previously.

But according to Greene (1989) Capricorn “has another entirely different and usually hidden side to his nature....Our mountain goat...is also, in his secret heart, a kind of magician, a seeker after mysteries” (p. 197). As Greene explains, “Capricorn, once he’s...accomplished something in the way of success or skill, will...begin to develop the deeper, more profound side of his nature. Capricorn... is a reflective and often deeply introverted soul....often drawn to the occult” (pp. 199-200). But as Greene explains, “the pattern of Capricorn’s journey usually divides his life into two distinct halves” (p. 200). The second phase of Capricorn’s earthly existence is marked by a transformation into a seeker after mysteries symbolized by the serpent diving deep into the dark waters of the collective unconscious exploring the mysteries of life. It is interesting to note that the serpent is one of the oldest representations of instinctual wisdom.

The same morning I read Greene's (1989) description of Capricorn's dual life, I walked into work as usual and was laid off at age 58 after almost 35 years of continuous employment, never to work again as an engineer. I had worked 58 years assiduously building a career, a family, and financial security, achievements that might be termed a sort of self-imposed prison. Greene very aptly describes my life during this phase: "All the while a powerful determination and ambition have been breeding in him, and an immense strength of will" (p. 201). I did not realize until later that this apparent disaster was a life-changing synchronicity propelling me from hard-headed goat climbing an intellectual mountain, to a seeker after mysteries of the unconscious, as revealed in my astrological chart, which shows what my soul desires to learn and experience in this lifetime. To fulfill my destiny I had to submit to a total personal transformation from rationalist to a seeker after mysteries. Greene describes my journey very well: "Capricorn is very tenacious....the Capricorn who's really expressing his basic nature is a sure winner. It may take him seventy years, so don't expect it in a hurry. But he'll get there" (p. 201).

The astrological sign of Capricorn is ruled over by the planet Saturn which takes a period of 29.5 years to orbit the sun and thus "return" to its original position. This momentous synchronicity in my life occurred at age 58, coincident with my second "Saturn return"<sup>7</sup> occurring at multiples of 29.5 years. Greene (1978) clarifies that the planet "Saturn is connected with the primitive, 'inferior' side of human nature which Jung calls the shadow. It may be regarded as a symbol for all that is base, crude, undifferentiated, inchoate and unconscious within the individual" (p. 241). As Greene

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<sup>7</sup> Greene (1978) describes the Saturn return in *Relating* pp. 241-245.

(1978) notes, “the completion of every such cyclical [Saturn] return indicates that the dark, undifferentiated and unconscious side of the personality is activated and accorded an opportunity to grow through the medium of some situation requiring struggle or pain” (p. 241). Greene continues, “the year immediately prior to this crucial moment is often one of gradual breaking down, disintegration, disillusionment, as well as recognition of all that is false, one-sided, dependent, and unrealised within the personality” (p. 242). Spring<sup>8</sup> (2011) adds that “the Saturn return marks a time when we have the opportunity for deep change and life-renewing rewards” (p. 221). In my case the unrealized potential of my personality was the seeker after mysteries described previously as the second phase of Capricorn’s life that did indeed lead to life-renewing rewards.

Arroyo<sup>9</sup> (1992) moderates Greene’s rather negative view of the Saturn return with the observation that “the quality of the entire experience and the extent to which it is felt to be a ‘difficult’ time depends entirely on how one has lived during the previous 29 years” (p. 82). He adds a number of modifying conditions which affect the experience of a Saturn return including “to what extent the individual has expressed or suppressed his or her ‘fundamental nature’” (p. 82). My fundamental nature which synchronistically surfaced during my Saturn return is the seeker after mysteries side of Capricorn, suppressed by years of practicing as an engineer. Arroyo adds that probably the most significant general meaning of Saturn is “concentrated experience and learning” (p. 72). I

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<sup>8</sup> For further reading on the Saturn return see Spring (2011) *Saturn Returns* pp. 219-235 as well as Spring (2009) *North Node Astrology* pp. 85-108.

<sup>9</sup> Arroyo (1992) offers more of his perspective on the Saturn return in *Astrology Karma and Transformation* pp. 82-85.

see my transformation as an example of a synchronistic event *par excellence*, and an example of the wisdom, experience, and learning Saturn brings when it returns. As I learned later, the powerful, personal message in this synchronicity was very clear and vividly revealed on my astrological chart. I also learned that astrology itself may be viewed as being founded on a type of “enduring synchronicity” (Le Grice, 2010, p. 129) because of the extraordinarily consistent correlations between the alignments of the planets at a given point in time and powerful, and highly meaningful events coincidentally occurring not only in the lives of individuals, but also around the world.

On my birth chart the North node<sup>10</sup> is located in the twelfth house<sup>11</sup> that Howell (1990) describes as the house of “gifts from the unconscious, the house of dreams, also of inspiration...and one’s sense of individuality” (p. 117). Spring (2009) describes the meaning of the North node on the astrological chart as an indication of what the soul desires to learn and experience in this lifetime. She describes the meaning of the North node in the twelfth house as “a summons to explore all that is beyond the purely rational and to seek the spiritual call towards Self awareness....to nourish yourself on the deep pleasures of the unconscious: gifts of magic, insight, and deep peace” (pp. 264-265). Greene (1978) states: “The birth chart is a seed or blueprint of all that potentially belongs to a man’s personality—if it were in full flower, and fully conscious” (p. 26). I believe this statement reflects Jung’s (1961/1989) declaration that “man’s task is...to become conscious of the contents that press upward from the unconscious” (p. 326) and accords

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<sup>10</sup> For further description of the North node see Spring (2009) *North Node Astrology*.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of astrological houses see Howell (1990) *Jungian Synchronicity in the Astrological Signs and Ages*, pp. 107-118.

with Edinger's (1984) interpretation of the essence of Jung's work: "*The purpose of human life is the creation of consciousness*" (p. 57).

In the end, the ruling archetype of the Self infers intelligent, purposeful development, not the ego. Through a synchronicity I was led to sculpt my astrological chart, which is really a mandala, before I understood the significance of a mandala as a symbol of the Self archetype. Later I learned that Jung had said that the strict pattern imposed by a circular image of this kind can compensate for the disorder and confusion of a psychic state through the construction of a central point to which everything is related. I believe that my construction of a mandala was an attempt to prepare me for my impending transformation, directed by an unknown source, occurring almost a year in advance of the time when I faced the crisis of being laid off from my engineering job. It was as if there existed a source of knowledge of events before they happened, preparing me for a psychically shocking future.

However, at the time, I was unaware of the implications of a Saturn return or the synchronicity playing out in my life. Only later, when I had read more on synchronicity and astrology, did I realize I had been caught up in a personal drama of cosmic proportions. Within all these events I was aware at the time of being swept up in a current of energy that was out of my control and appeared to be destroying my life. Looking back, I now believe there was an unseen hand guiding me steadily towards a new identity, one in which I would be once more, born-again. This time, however, instead of looking outwardly for salvation through faith in Christ. I had a direct, inner experience of salvation through my creation of a mandala which symbolizes the Self. Through the

reconciling symbol of the Self the opposites I was experiencing were overcome and internal splits were healed.

The Self, composite of the entire chart, is neither good nor evil, but a healer of opposites restoring psychic balance. However, Jung (1951/1969c) recognized that the traditional depiction of Christ as a figure of pure light represented only one half of the Self. A representation of the total Self required the addition of the shadow of the Self corresponding to the Antichrist to provide psychic balance. He emphasized the reality of “the shadow of the self, namely the dark half of the human totality, which ought not to be judged too optimistically” (p. 42 [CW 9ii, para. 76]). This was an image of God in which I could believe.

Since then, my life has taken a different turn. I have shed most of the material possessions I once thought constituted my identity. I am no longer encumbered by the burden of materialism, the epidemic addiction of our culture. As Nietzsche (1995) cautioned in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “you must wish to consume yourself in your own flame: how could you wish to become new unless you had first become ashes!” (p. 64). That experience has only served to lighten my load and remove distractions as I navigate the depths of the human psyche, like the serpent form of Capricorn. The road from engineering to psychology over the last 15 years has not been easy, but it has been full of incredibly fruitful transformational life experiences. These synchronicities inspired me to complete my degree in spiritual psychology at age 58 and begin to build a life filled with synchronistic experiences that would enable me to enter Pacifica’s Clinical Psychology program at 63, and eventually lead me to Jungian and archetypal studies.

**The researcher's predisposition to the topic.** The first predisposition I want to acknowledge revolves around authority figures. After becoming a born-again Christian at age 32, I was very active in the church but slowly and unconsciously certain figures around me began to transform. Unknown to me, my unconscious projections of autocratic parents and grandparents experienced in childhood began to play out in all my relations with authority figures including pastors, God, and Christ, who began to look strangely like my father. The loving God who gave us Christ could also be a judgmental demiurge prompting me to flee the God of Christianity. However, pulling me in the opposite direction were the voices of my father and grandfathers ordering me to obey the authority of the church. Part of this work is about moving past my mother and father complexes and authority issues, and healing the split within myself between the masculine and the feminine. For the collective, this work is also about providing a foundation for a new myth in which synchronicity is viewed as a spiritual path able to reawaken humanity to the archetypal order and meaning apparent in the universe.

My astrological birth chart reveals many of my personal strengths and weaknesses particularly around the spiritual. Most important are the positions of the sun, moon and ascendant, which is the sign that was emerging on the eastern horizon at the moment of my birth. The sun sign is the symbol of the person I am striving to become, the kind of attributes which I need to acquire and the special myth I am living out. My sun sign, Capricorn, is in the fifth house, the house of all creative expression, and the most powerful position possible. It indicates that I am potentially bold, creative and success driven, and that I need to display my creativity physically.



But I have an original wound, as shown by the moon and Chiron<sup>12</sup> conjunct, or occupying the same location in the first house, which on my birth chart is ruled by Virgo. Chiron is my place of original wounding through my mother. I have lived with the belief that I do not have the right to exist on the physical plane, that my existence here is a cosmic mistake. This lacking of ‘I am-ness’ is the mark of the archetype of “The Wounded Healer.” I have spent my life either running towards or away from the Great Mother. Hence the importance of the Great Mother in my work.

**Relevance of the topic for depth psychology.** Aziz (1990) claims, “the synchronicity concept is, arguably, the single theory with the most far-reaching implications for Jung's psychology as a whole, particularly for his psychology of religion” (p. 1) yet of all Jung’s theories it remains, perhaps, the least understood. Main (2007) notes that although there has been much written about synchronicity, relatively little serious research has been concerned with exploring its possible psychospiritual aspects. As previously explained, Jung considered the essential nature of the human psyche to be religious. Jung’s (1954/1969b) emphasis on the numinous or spiritual nature of the archetypes led him to conclude that “this phenomenon is of the utmost significance for the psychology of religion” (p. 205 [CW 8, para. 405]). Thus, a clearer understanding of the spiritual dimension of the psyche as revealed in synchronicity must be considered

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<sup>12</sup> Stein (2012), in *Essence and Application*, explains that Chiron indicates what we need to heal and make whole. The wholemaking process “can bring experiences and trials which enable us to counsel others when we have been through them” (pp. 23-24). For further reading on Chiron see Stein (2012) *Essence and Application: A View from Chiron*.

to be of great importance to depth psychology as well as the psychology of religion.

Indeed, the numinous manifestation of the divine as experienced in synchronicity was of paramount importance to Jung (1973) himself in healing “from the curse of pathology” (p. 377).

As will be discussed further in this work, interpreting the meaning encapsulated in a synchronicity can be of significant value in furthering the individuation process of those seeking or undergoing psychospiritual transformation and demonstrating that humanity lives in an interconnected universe. A clearer understanding of synchronicity could also be helpful in bringing deeper meaning to global events related to trauma or heightened emotion, which appear to provide a portal for numinous experiences of the archetypes. These experiences can be deeply spiritual and life-transforming. This hypothesis raises the possibility that synchronicity and spirituality may be related in ways yet unexplored.

As stated previously, although the fundamental nature of an archetype is unknowable, an archetype can create patterns that manifest in characteristic images and themes in the conscious mind but that differ “to an indeterminable extent from that which caused the representation [i.e. an archetype]” (Jung, 1954/1969b, p. 213 [CW 8, para. 417]). Corbett (1996) explains that an experience of the images and themes arising in consciousness from the constellation of the archetypes, as occurs in a synchronicity, can turn any experience into a religious one if it alters an individual’s conscious attitude.

Corbett (1996) offers an example from his practice of a young man experiencing much emotional distress and feeling quite alone and unable to cope. In therapy the young man related seeing a vision in the sky of a gigantic face peering down at him. Although perplexed by the event, he felt certain it held great meaning for him. Following this he

dreamed of a massive UFO hovering over his head and equipped on its underside with many brilliant searchlights beaming down that turned out to be multiple eyes peering at him. In both instances he felt the kind of awe and fear elicited by an uncanny encounter with a mysterious and tremendous unknown entity defying understanding and making him feel quite small in comparison. The connecting theme of these experiences was being seen by a superior being from beyond normal ego consciousness to which the young man was required to relate. As a result of the profound experiences of being seen by a totally mysterious and enormous Other, the young man realized he was no longer alone. As Corbett explains, in his dream the young man had been “seen by the eye of God” (p. 6).

Mansfield (1995) explains that because synchronistic experiences suggest a unity between psyche and matter, the Jungian depth psychologist can help transform the contemporary belief in the fundamental separation between nature and psyche into a realization of the holistic nature of the cosmos. Jaffé (1984) remarks that Jung’s psychology “encourages man to make himself conscious of the opposites within him, and to surmount and unite them in a synthesis; in the individuation process it fosters the development of an inner unity” (p. 133). Jaffé maintains that it is the psychic disorientation resulting from a world divided that Jungian psychology “seeks to heal or at least to palliate” (p. 132). Beyond a unified vision of the world, Jaffé makes clear that Jung emphasized the religious nature of the underlying unity that forms a clandestine, creative background influencing human and world events. Paramount to this underlying unity, which potentially bridges the disparate communities of science and religion, was Jung’s declaration that “all religious assertions, revelations and dogmas had to be

understood as ordered patternings of that boundless paradoxical background which he called the collective unconscious” (p. 132).

### **Literature Review**

The areas of literature reviewed are bound together by a common quest to shed light on perhaps the oldest question facing humanity: Are we alone in the Universe or is there some intelligence guiding our destiny? As Jung (1961/1989) said, “the decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not?” (p. 325). Jung’s writings on synchronicity spurred much interest in the perennial question regarding the relationship of mind and matter, while leaving the decisive question of whether or not we are related to something infinite still shrouded in mystery. The unfolding of the personality as a spiritual journey, which Jung termed *individuation*, continues to confront and confound the wisest of Western minds. It is the contention of this work that synchronistic experiences can illuminate the path of the individual’s spiritual journey and catalyze the process of individuation. At some point in his or her spiritual journey, the individual may encounter synchronistic experiences which stand at the center of the decisive question, beckoning the inquiring mind to follow the trail of uncanny events we call synchronicities to discover where it might lead.

Jung’s writings on synchronicity must be the starting point for any discussion of synchronicity. Spurred by his clinical observations and his own personal experience, it is the premise of this work that Jung recovered the principle of synchronicity from ancient Chinese philosophy and from more recent Western philosophers. In collaboration with physicist Pauli, Jung proposed a fourth principle of physics and laid the groundwork for a radically new vision of spirituality in a secular age. Key to Jung and Pauli’s principle of

synchronicity was their formulation of the psychoid nature of the archetypes that was neither psychic nor physical but capable of manifesting in both realms as might occur in a synchronicity. Hence, the need to explore the literature on the mind-matter connection, and the psychoid nature of the archetypes, as cited in Meier (2001), for example, in *Atom and Archetype*. As well, Donati (2004), in “Beyond Synchronicity: The Worldview of Carl Gustav Jung and Wolfgang Pauli,” explores some of the implications and findings resulting from the collaboration between Jung and Pauli as they relate to synchronicity. Through a close examination of Pauli’s letters, Geiser (2005) in *The Innermost Kernel*, discusses Pauli’s evolving understanding of and attitude towards Jung’s psychology. The background of the developing relationship between Jung and Pauli is vital to understanding their eventual collaboration in formulating the principle of synchronicity as the fourth law of nature. The fact that Jung’s thoughts on synchronicity and the nature of the archetypes matured throughout his life is an indication that he did not believe he had exhausted all possible research opportunities, and that in the words of de Quincey (2005), “he consciously left the way open for further exploration” (p. 273). Accordingly, I have selected a limited sample of authors representing a cross-section of contemporary thought on synchronicity and other depth psychological issues.

Authors such as Coward (1985, 1996) and Clarke (1994) have been selected to show how Eastern philosophy influenced Jung’s psychology, especially his formulation of synchronicity. Eastern philosophy is conjectured to have been one possible philosophical ground for Jung’s concepts of the Self, a self-regulating psyche, individuation, balancing pairs of opposites, circumambulation, and other themes. Jung’s psychology was also significantly influenced by the ideals of the 19th century German

Romantic movement. In Ellenberger's (1970) view, virtually all of the concepts of Freud and Jung were drawn from the natural philosophy of German Romanticists (p. 205).

Edinger (1996) cites four major Romantic figures after Kant who influenced Jung's psychology, including Schopenhauer, von Hartmann, Nietzsche, and Carus (p. 12). In addition to Jung (1961/1989), who attested to the influence of these figures on his work, authors such as Cambray (2014), Ellenberger (1970), and Douglas (2008) describe the influence of German Romantic philosophy on Jung's concepts of the collective unconscious, the compensatory function of the unconscious, the *anima mundi*, the *unus mundus*, the Self, synchronicity, the archetypes, individuation, the symbolic interpretation of dreams, and the balancing of opposites.

The idea of individuation as a spiritual journey began with Jung's discovery of the psyche. His discovery heralded the current stage of development of the God-image in the West which Edinger (1996) termed the psychological stage. An understanding of the relationship between the evolution of the God-image and the process of individuation is key to revealing the role of synchronicity in individuation. Central to understanding individuation is Jung's concept of the transcendent function, which Miller (2004) describes in detail in *The Transcendent Function: Jung's Model of Psychological Growth Through Dialogue with the Unconscious*. As well, Homans (1995), in *Jung in Context: Modernity and the Making of a Psychology*, provides important historical and psychological developments regarding Jung's evolving thoughts on individuation, which Homans describes as Jung's core process. Finally, an examination of Western contemporary spirituality in a secular age is required to understand the needs and motivations of those seeking a spiritual life beyond the domain of mainstream religions.

The literature reviewed will seek to argue that synchronicity can reveal spiritual truths through mythic themes that can shape a new cosmology, a meta-mythology, capable of reawakening the collective consciousness of humanity to the “metaphysical order and pattern of archetypal meanings pervading the whole of existence” (Le Grice, 2010, p. 106).

**Jung’s writings on synchronicity.** In *Dream Analysis I: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1928-30*, Jung (1984) first described the apparently acausal connection between dreams and events. However, as Le Grice (2010) points out, there are actually four types of causes originally described by Aristotle: the *material* cause is the material of which something is made; the *formal* cause is the form or pattern that directs the development of an organism or the course of events; the *efficient* cause is the agent responsible for initiating change; and the *final* cause, which is “the telos, aim, and purpose of an entity, event, or process” (p. 114). In the appendix to *The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life*, Jung (1931/1962a) described the “synchronistic principle” (p. 141) of parallel psychic experiences whose connection seemed to be based “mainly in the relative simultaneity of the events” (p. 141). Twenty years later Jung (1952/1969b) maintained that events are synchronistic “whether their objectivity appears separated from my consciousness in space or in time” (p. 444 [CW 8, para. 855]), a concept that will be addressed later in this essay.

In *Explorations into the Self*, Fordham (1985) records that Jung remained essentially silent on the subject of synchronicity from 1930 until the publication of his Foreword to the *I Ching* (Jung, 1950/1967) in 1950. There Jung contrasted the Chinese approach of attributing meaningful chance to events which appear coincidental, with the

Western penchant of attributing the cause of events to an observable chain of processes.

The Chinese believe that each moment in time possesses a unique quality, so that the time a divination of the I Ching is cast reflects the specific situation of the diviner at that moment and the specific quality of time at that moment. To describe the principle involved in the reading of the I Ching Jung proposed the term *synchronicity*. In a synchronicity there is an unusual interdependence of events for which there is no apparent connection through efficient cause as well as an interdependence with the personal psychic state of an observer.

At Eranos in 1951, Jung (1951/1969b) presented “On Synchronicity,” an abbreviated version of “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle,” his major essay on synchronicity, which he published in 1952 jointly with physicist Pauli in *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955). Jung (1952/1969b) argued in “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle” that the principle of causality is only statistically valid and that physics has demonstrated that acausal events, that is, events with no apparent efficient causal connection can occur at the subatomic level. Main (2004) in *The Rupture of Time*, explained that Jung’s confidence in his theory of synchronicity derived from scientific experiments in parapsychology such as those performed by Rhine<sup>13</sup> which compelled Jung to postulate the principle of acausality he termed synchronicity as contrasted to the efficient causality acknowledged by science. Jung (1952/1969b) explained that synchronicity is “an empirical concept which postulates an intellectually necessary principle” (p. 512 [CW 8, para. 960]) to account for

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<sup>13</sup> For further reading on Rhine’s experiments with ESP see Rhine (2011), *Extra-Sensory Perception*.



psychic processes in the unconscious and to bring balance and wholeness to the three existing principles in physics of space, time, and causality. In the case of clairvoyance, Rhine (2011) recorded a statistically significant number of cases of the correct identification of a distant object by an observer who otherwise had no means of knowing the identity of the object.

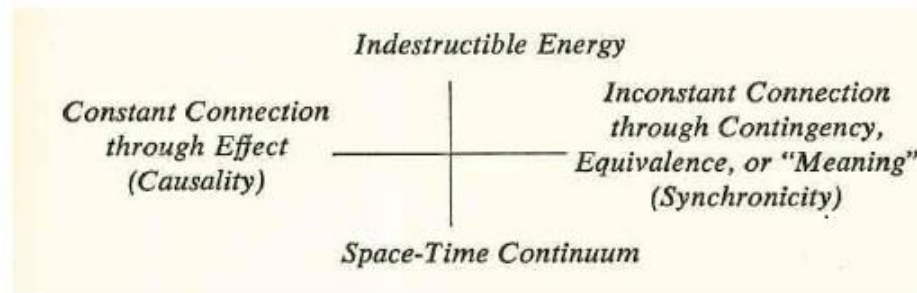
In a letter written 11 June 1958 to Professor Schmid, Jung (1975b) described a synchronicity as the acausal connection of a psychic and physical event consisting of both coincidence and parallel meaning, a description which includes the phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, and precognition. However, these phenomena will not be the major interests of this study. Main (2004) in *The Rupture of Time* reported that the acausal relationship between events in Rhine's and others' experiments led Jung to conclude that time and space are not only relativized, in keeping with Einstein's theory of the relativity of space and time, but also in some cases can appear to be transcended completely under specific psychic circumstances. In "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," Jung (1952/1969b) postulated that time and space were concepts created out of intellectual necessity to meet the needs of a discriminating observer attempting to characterize, for example, the motion of objects. Jung argued that while the dominance of the principle of efficient causality had made acausal events unimaginable in most domains of science, quantum physics routinely validated the occurrence of an acausal event such as a discontinuity, which Jung compared to a synchronicity.

Nichol (2003, pp. 3-4) explains that quantum mechanics holds that quantum entities such as photons and electrons do not transition in a smooth, continuous fashion from one energy state to another. Rather, quantum entities appear to "jump"

instantaneously between quantized energy levels defined by the laws of quantum mechanics. That is, the energy levels permitted to quantum entities are discrete and discontinuous, so that movement between energy levels represents a discontinuity. In another example of a discontinuity, quantum physics has confirmed non-local connection, or “entanglement” between two quantum entities. If two electrons, for example, are combined under certain conditions to form a coupled pair, and are then separated by a large distance, they have been discovered to communicate instantaneously by no usual cause-and effect mechanism.

To account for a priori phenomena such as discontinuities in quantum physics, Jung (1952/1969b) proposed a more comprehensive theory of synchronicity active in the whole of nature, which he termed *general acausal orderedness* and described “as the continuous creation of a pattern that exists from all eternity” (p. 518 [CW 8, para. 967]). Jung distinguished synchronistic events as “acts of creation in time” (p. 517 (CW 8, para. 965]) as distinct from the acts of creation belonging to the category of general acausal orderedness represented by phenomena that have always existed such as the natural numbers. He explained that synchronicities demonstrate a correlation of psychic and physical phenomena for which there fortuitously exists an observer capable of distinguishing the common meaning. For Jung, meaning was an essential criterion of synchronicity, even though the shared meaning must be interpreted by a person. Jung cautioned that an observer may perceive the archetypal theme and mistakenly attribute the cause to an archetype, rather than noticing that the events are simply dependent on something not yet known.

In collaboration with Pauli, Jung (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955, p. 137) in *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* presented a psychophysical schema supporting the findings of both physics and psychology as depicted in Figure 1. The schema consists of two pairs of opposites visualized as located on intersecting vertical and horizontal axes.



*Figure 1.* Pauli/Jung Psychophysical schema. Reprinted from *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (p. 514), by C. G. Jung, 1969, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Copyright 1969 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted with permission.

The psychophysical schema of Figure 1 depicts causality as constant connection through effect on the left side of the quaternio, whereas the balancing principle of

synchronicity on the right is described as inconstant connection through contingency, equivalence, or meaning. The other two principles of physics are represented by Pauli as conservation of energy at the top of the quaternity balanced by the conjunction of space and time at the bottom. Von Franz (1988/1992) has noted that the addition of synchronicity as the fourth principle of physics “is so mind-blowing that it has mostly provoked consternation” (p. 185). Pauli and Jung (1952/1955) agreed that the number four symbolized wholeness, as cited by Greenberg in the foreword to *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* (1952/1955). Jung (1952/1969b) maintained:

Just as the introduction of time as the fourth dimension in modern physics postulates an irrepresentable space-time continuum, so the idea of synchronicity with its inherent quality of meaning produces a picture of the world so irrepresentable as to be completely baffling. (p. 513 [CW 8, para. 962])

Giegerich (2012) supports Jung’s claim that his purpose in proposing the principle of synchronicity was purely intellectual, motivated solely by the need to explain the observable data of synchronistic experiences. However, Giegerich maintains that in doing so, Jung left the realm of psychology and entered the domain of physics.

In response I would offer the following argument. I agree with Jung’s claim that in his principle essay “Synchronicity” he proposed the principle of synchronicity purely on intellectual grounds motivated solely by the need to explain the observable data of synchronistic experiences. From this point of view one might say Jung thought as a scientist. However, I maintain that Jung not only thought as a scientist/scholar but also as a mystic/Romanticist. Giegerich (2012), as so many others, has simply ignored or downplayed this aspect of Jung’s personality, as demonstrated in Giegerich’s comment

that “the whole mystifying and sentimental waffle by so many Jungians today about the *unus mundus*, about an opening to the sacred and to transcendence...totally miss[es] the point of Jung’s theory of synchronicity and its spirit” (p. 505).

Giegerich (2012) argues that “the issue that Jung tackled with his synchronicity theory was not one of the experiencing minds, man’s subjective interpretation, but an extremely puzzling, intellectually challenging *objective* problem: the problem given with the *events* themselves” (p. 505). Giegerich claims that “all this ‘higher Meaning’ or sense of ‘meaning’ has to be kept out of one’s discourse if one wants to understand Jung’s concept of synchronicity.” Regarding the issue of meaning from the human perspective, Giegerich maintains that “Jung was not at all concerned with the human person and what such events or experiences may mean in and for them” (p. 503). If this were all that one concluded from Jung’s writings and the way he lived his life, then Giegerich and others holding this view would be entirely correct. What Giegerich and others do not accept are Jung’s views on the *unus mundus* and the psychoid nature of the archetypes, which I emphasize in Chapter 4 in the section “The Role of the Unus Mundus and Collective Unconscious in Synchronicity.” For Giegerich and others, there is a divide between the realms of psychology and physics. I believe the principle of synchronicity bridges these realms.

In “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle,” Jung (1952/1969b) offers five definitions of synchronicity, three of which refer to meaningful parallels or similar meaning together with simultaneity or coincidence in time. The fourth cites only simultaneous occurrence of two psychic states with no reference to meaning, whereas the fifth omits specific reference to time but includes coincidence in content of an

unconscious image and an objective event. For all definitions Jung asserted that “however incomprehensible it may appear, we are finally compelled to assume that there is in the unconscious something like an *a priori* knowledge or an ‘immediacy’ of events which lacks any causal basis” (p. 447 [CW 8, para. 856]). He concluded that the principle operating in the case of “cross-connection” or meaningful coincidence of events must derive from the “*equal significance* of parallel events” (p. 482 (CW 8, para. 915)) whose shared quality is meaning.

Jung’s reference to simultaneity in time of events in a synchronicity, has been a source of continuing confusion. Yiassemides (2011), in “Chronos in Synchronicity,” believes that Jung’s (1952/1969b) use of the phrase “momentary subjective state” (p. 441 [CW 8, para. 850]) is the key to understanding the meaning he attaches to time in a synchronicity. In a linear time system, simultaneity refers to co-occurrence in terms of clock-time. However, Jung distinguished two kinds of simultaneity in synchronistic experiences. Jung explained that these two types of simultaneity arise because “the unconscious...often knows more than the conscious” (p. 442 [CW 8, para. 850]).

Events perceived as simultaneous in clock time occur when consciousness becomes aware of unconscious knowledge. However, Jung (1952/1969b) maintained that simultaneity still exists in a synchronicity between the outer event and the unconscious even though unconscious contents have not reached consciousness. Jung explained that although psychic and physical events that are meaningfully related may not happen at the same objective clock-time, they are in fact experienced as occurring in a specific “momentary subjective state” (p. 441 [CW 8, para. 850]). This momentary subjective state might be an activated memory of an event, theme, situation, problem, or other

subjective content that an individual perceives as corresponding to particular external events. Yiassemides (2011) believes this interpretation of time is expressed in Jung's (1984) description of events in a synchronicity as belonging to "the same time content" (p. 103) of an individual's life because they have the same meaning.

Main (2004) has suggested that Jung's emphasis on time changed when he considered the relativity of time introduced by Einstein's theory of relativity. Although Jung did not explicitly state that time became relative in the psyche, Main believes that this hypothesis "accounts for coincidences in which the component events are simultaneously present in the observer's field of perceptions as well as for coincidences involving events that are widely separated in time or space" (p. 52). Thus, events that are widely separated in linear time are not necessarily separated in the relative time of the psyche. Yiassemides (2011) proposes that events could be connected in the "broader temporality" (p. 458) of the psyche. Thus, while consciousness has not become aware of this connection, they are still linked in the unconscious. She states that Jung never did provide a clear description of the time basis upon which the psyche operates although he appeared to view time in a synchronicity as fundamentally different from objective clock time. However, Schweizer (2009) in "Observe Nature and You Will Find the Stone," examines the relationship of time and synchronicity emphasizing the idea of the right time or *kairos*. Aziz (1990) agrees that in a synchronicity, meaning is the uniting element. However, as Yiassemides (2011) points out, the meaning decided upon by an individual must be meaning determined by conscious reflection. This interpretation of the meaning of time in a synchronicity has not received much attention in the literature and is one that I would like to pursue further in my research.

In *C. G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, Aziz (1990)

categorizes what he understands to be the four interrelated levels of meaning inferred by Jung. Main (2014), in *The Pauli-Jung Conjecture and its Impact Today*, describes these four levels. The first level is the shared content or meaning of parallel events. The second is the nonrational or prepsychological meaning arising from the emotional effect of numinosity resulting from an activated archetype in some synchronicities. The third level of meaning results from the awareness of the personal significance of a subjective interpretation of a synchronicity from the perspective of an individual's conscious as well as unconscious developmental requirements and objectives, that is, their individuation. The fourth and final meaning is the objective significance of a synchronicity resulting from what Aziz called archetypal meaning transcendent to individual consciousness. Aziz (1990) asserts that the degree of understanding of the spiritual significance of a synchronistic experience at each of these levels requires an increasing degree of consciousness (p. 64). Aziz's hypothesis is reflected, for example, in Jung's (1931/1970b) description in "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," of the difference in interpretation of chance events by "primitives"<sup>14</sup> and individuals in the modern West (p. 75) It is proposed here that the term *animist* be used in place of the controversial term

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<sup>14</sup> Jung wrote during a colonial period, and so it is natural that some of the scholarship of the time reflects colonialist attitudes, especially regarding so-called "primitives." Even in a civilized community the people who form, psychologically speaking, the lowest stratum live in a state of unconsciousness little different from that of primitives. For further reading on primitives see Jung, (1931/1970a), "Archaic Man," in *Civilization in Transition* pp. 50-73.



*primitive* often employed by Jung. However, Jung (1931/1970b) did identify as so-called primitives some people living in civilized communities: “even in a civilized community the people who form, psychologically speaking, the lowest stratum live in a state of unconsciousness little different from that of primitives” (p. 75 [CW 10, para. 150]).

In *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal*, Main (1997) notes that Jung nowhere methodically describes what makes a synchronicity meaningful, and like Aziz (1990) in *C. G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, comments on the inconsistency of the definitions Jung provides for synchronicity and the intellectual challenges raised by his explanations. Main (2014), in *The Pauli-Jung Conjecture and its Impact Today*, agrees and adds that there is no apparent consensus in the literature on the interpretation of meaning of a synchronicity. As part of my research, I would like to examine the possible reasons for this lack of consensus, and to explore the variety of spiritual meanings which may result from a synchronicity. However, Main (1997) asserts that all four levels of meaning described by Aziz (1990) derive from the presence of an archetype, the formal cause implicated in most synchronicities, a view suggested by Jung's own observations that most synchronicities have some relationship to an archetype, because it is an archetype that imparts the common meaning shared by two events in a synchronicity. However, Jung (1952/1969b) recognized the difficulty of scientifically proving the existence or validity of transcendent or objective meaning given that it cannot be distinguished from a psychic image.

Alluding to the neovitalist Driesch, Jung (1952/1969b) asserted that it is the archetype as the formal cause which carries the sense of an internal, dynamic energy providing the pattern for the unique development of living bodies or other systems into a

distinctive form, thus conveying the implicit notion of Aristotle's final cause or teleological goal which is always embedded within the formal or formative cause of an archetype. Jung (1952/1969b) argued that a final cause always presumes some sort of foreknowledge: "final causes, twist them how we will, postulate a fore-knowledge of some kind" (p. 493 [CW 8, para. 931]). This foreknowledge is a priori knowledge not derived from the ego, but an autonomous, self-sustaining, and unconscious knowledge he called "absolute knowledge" (p. 493 [CW 8, para. 931]), as if the unconscious appears to know what is going to happen beforehand. As Jung (1952/1969b) postulated in 1952: "the 'absolute knowledge' which is characteristic of synchronistic phenomena, a knowledge not mediated by the sense organs, supports the hypothesis of a self-subsistent meaning, or even expresses its existence. Such a form of existence can only be transcendental" (p. 506 [CW 8, para. 948]). The principle of synchronicity seems to be pointing to a purpose or purposes such as the psychological growth Jung termed individuation. What the purpose or purposes may be, a subject not extensively dealt with in the literature, will be explored further in my research.

In his 10 March 1959 letter to Neumann, Jung (1975b) emphasized the critical importance of a reflecting consciousness in discovering meaning, without which the world would be as meaningless as an enormous machine. Edinger (1984) highlights Jung's belief that the creation of consciousness is the ultimate reason for human existence in *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man*. As Jung (1961/1989) said, "as far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being" (p. 329). Regarding the evolution of human consciousness, Jung (1975b) postulated that synchronistic phenomena may have occurred at those

moments in time when constellated archetypes prompted “syntheses which appear to us miraculous” (pp. 494-495). Such synchronistic events cannot be attributed to any of the known types of causality or to a teleological process “because synchronistic phenomena manifest themselves as pure chance” (p. 495). Because chance alone cannot account for the synthesis of more highly developed forms of consciousness, Jung reasoned that the common meaning in a synchronicity shared between an objective physical event and an intrapsychic representation, presumes an omnipresent, universal, “latent meaning” not dependent on consciousness but “which can be recognized by consciousness” (p. 495). Jung maintained that “unconscious synchronicities are...altogether possible, since in many cases we are unconscious of their happening, or have to have our attention drawn to the coincidence by an outsider” (p. 495). As von Franz (1988/1992) points out in *Psyche and Matter*, “synchronistic events are ‘acts of creation in time,’ but they are not caused by any archetype, they merely let its latent meaning become visible” (p. 271).

Extending the hypothesis of latent meaning, Jung (1952/1969b) stated that “synchronicity postulates a meaning which is a priori in relation to human consciousness and apparently exists outside man” (pp. 501-502 [CW 8, para. 942]). As revealed in *Memories Dreams Reflections*, Jung (1961/1989) believed that the theory of latent meaning, which can be discerned through consciousness, attributed to humanity a pivotal role in the ongoing evolution of the universe, and consequently, a true reason for existence. He maintained that through consciousness the “Creator may become conscious of His creation, and man conscious of himself....That is the goal, or one goal, which fits man meaningfully into the scheme of creation, and at the same time confers meaning upon it” (p. 338). Jung described reflecting consciousness as a miracle of evolution, as if

consciousness were the culmination of nature's quest for meaning found by chance through some "dark urge" (p. 339). He believed that through consciousness humanity completes creation, bestowing upon it a meaning and objective reality. As well, Jaffé (1984) explains that cognition and reflection are creative and therefore spiritual activities of consciousness. Whereas interior and exterior worlds may be perceived, it is the spiritual activity of consciousness performing the acts of cognition and reflection that transforms them from perceptions into realities that can be recognized and known. As the relationship of consciousness to synchronicity remains relatively unexamined, my work will focus more closely on the role of consciousness in distinguishing the several levels of meaning possible in synchronicities.

In *The Myth of Meaning in the Work of C. G. Jung*, Jaffé (1984) states that Jung (1952/1969b) originally proposed the existence of a transcendental or "self-subsistent meaning" (p. 506 [CW 8, para. 948]) not dependent on human consciousness. This supposition was based mainly on studies of synchronistic experiences and experiments of extrasensory perception in which there was no apparent cause. However, she argues that it is extremely important to understand that Jung replaced his early concept of pre-existent meaning in synchronicities, with the objective concept of acausal orderedness structured by archetypes. She notes that whereas Jung maintained that meaning is a criterion essential to synchronicity, the subjective meaning of a synchronicity became something created by individuals. In this case, Jaffé (1984) explained, "the orderedness that comes to light in acausal events can be experienced as meaningful, or else dismissed as pure chance and therefore meaningless" (p. 152). Stevens (2006), in *The Handbook of Jungian Psychology*, also interprets Jung as saying that the inherent sense of meaning

ascribed to a synchronicity derives from the archetypal basis of acausal orderedness.

Main (1997) on the other hand, offers two possible interpretations resulting from Jung's ambiguous use of the phrase "meaningful coincidence" (p. 28). Meaning may be the personal significance the synchronistic event carries for the individual, or it may refer to the fact that the synchronistic events share contents with comparable meanings.

Freudian psychologist Faber (1998) holds an altogether different view from the symbolic interpretation of events, which he explains immediately in his preface: "I regard Jungian synchronicity, indeed Jungian thought in general, as part of this retreat into magic" (p. xi). He accuses Jung of a "hidden agenda" (p. 136), using his position of authority to exploit his patients' vulnerabilities and coerce them into religious and spiritual thinking. The problem is clearly and concisely posed. What does it mean to be open to a world conveying meaning and to interpreting events symbolically? What are the criteria to obtain the "correct" interpretation? Addressing these questions in my research requires assessing the difference between archaic and modern thinking processes and focusing on the central issue of consciousness. What are the factors that inform symbolic wisdom?

**Synchronicity, mind-matter, and the psychoid nature of the archetypes.** In 1947, after his heart attack in 1944, Jung (1954/1969b) wrote his first version of "On the Nature of the Psyche," in which he reformulated his concept of the archetype, stating that the archetypes could no longer with certainty be described as wholly psychic. Jung (1961/1989) had his supreme revelation of the unconscious, his visions of the *coniunctio*, at the time of a grave illness in 1944 (pp. 289-298). The psychic and physical manifestation of archetypal structures with a similar meaning as occurs in a synchronicity

suggested to Jung a unitary reality underlying all apparent phenomena he called the *unus mundus*, in which psyche and matter were not yet differentiated. To describe this unitary reality Jung borrowed the term *psychoid*, described by vitalist Driesch.<sup>15</sup> Jung proposed that the archetypes, which are the fundamental constituents of the collective unconscious, were the “mediators of the *unus mundus*” (Stevens, 2006, p. 88), organizing images and thoughts in the psyche and providing the basic principles of physical laws.

Jung (1952/1969b) explained: “It [the collective unconscious] cannot be directly perceived or ‘represented,’ in contrast to the perceptible psychic phenomena, and on account of its ‘irrepresentable’ nature I have called it ‘psychoid’” (p. 436 [CW 8, para. 840]). In *The Handbook of Jungian Psychology*, Stevens (2006) states that the psychoid nature of the archetypes refers to its “fundamental duality: it is both psychic and nonpsychic, both ‘spirit’ and ‘body’, for the archetype is the essential precondition of all psychophysical events” (p. 87). Thus, whereas Jung’s (1954/1969b) early writings distinguished between instinctual behavior patterns and archetypal patterns of perception and comprehension, he combined these complementary functions in the psychoid archetype to emphasize its dual influence in the realms of both matter and psyche. In doing so, Aziz (1990) remarks “the archetype was lifted out of the strictly intrapsychic realm and,...came to be regarded by Jung as a psychophysical continuum of meaning present in nature as a whole” (p. 174). Jung (1954/1969b) clarified that the term *psychoid*

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<sup>15</sup> Cambray (2009) notes that the term *psychoid* was conceived about 1907-1908 “by the biologist and neovitalist Hans Driesch as the basis of instinctive phenomena in a vitalistic sense...a nonphysical entity with intensive, qualitative properties but without extension” (p. 15).

was an adjective, not a noun; that it had “no psychic quality...but only a ‘quasi-psychic’ one” (p. 177 [CW 8, para. 368]); and that it differentiated a class of events distinctive from psychic and physical processes. Cambray (2009), in *Synchronicity*, describes Jung’s use of psychoid “as ‘quasi-psychic’ at the interface where the psychological and material are undifferentiated and incapable of reaching consciousness as such” (p. 15).

Jung (1954/1969b) described the archetypes as “a dynamism which makes itself felt in the numinosity and fascinating power of the archetypal image” (p. 211 [CW 8, para. 414]). Because an individual experiences archetypes as if they were spontaneous entities, Jung decided to reformulate “their nature, in accordance with their chiefest effect, as ‘spirit’” (p. 216 [CW 8, para. 420]) to reflect their major personal influence. To clarify what he meant by the psychoid aspect of the archetype, Jung compared the psyche to the continuum of the electromagnetic spectrum: “The dynamism of instinct is lodged as it were in the infra-red part of the spectrum, whereas the instinctual image lies in the ultra-violet part” (p. 211 [CW 8, para. 414]). The ultra-violet part of the spectrum represented those archetypal, psychic processes he now distinguished as spirit, or the inherent pattern of meaning, whereas the infra-red end of the spectrum corresponded to the unconscious biological aspect of the archetype, or the inborn pattern of behavior. Mansfield (1995) has pointed out that it is the transcendental, irrepresentable archetype, with its psychoid nature rooted in both psyche and matter, that forms the foundation of the psyche in Jungian psychology. In *Jung and Pauli: The Meeting of Two Great Minds*, Lindorff (2004) records physicist Pauli’s belief that the psychoid aspect of the archetype made a major contribution to our ability to comprehend the principles on which the universe had been created. Pauli (Jung & Pauli, /1952/1955) commented: “It would be

most satisfactory if physis [matter] and psyche could be seen as complementary aspects of the same reality” (p. 210).

In his 21 October 1957 letter to Abrams, Jung (1975b) disclosed that there are two possible ways to experience the psyche. In our ordinary world of measurable space and time we experience ourselves as contained within the boundary of our own individual psyche. However, Jung relates that spacetime, either relatively or totally, vanishes in the “world-system of the collective psyche” (p. 399), the *unus mundus* in which every apparently separate psyche is actually identical to all others. Together they function as a unified whole Psyche known as the *anima mundi* (world-soul) or the *psyche tou kosmou* (cosmic psyche). As Jung said “in the *Unus Mundus*,...there is no incommensurability between so-called matter and so-called psyche” (p. 400).

In a letter to Dr. H. dated 30 August 1951, Jung (1975b) explained that the archetype’s psychoid nature is fundamentally transcendental, allowing it to act as if it were an “arranger of psychic forms” (pp. 21-23) both physical and psychic. In a 10 March 1959 letter to Neumann, Jung (1975b) hypothesized that, because of the psychoid nature of the archetype, in a synchronicity, the archetype, as potential energy, expanded and materialized in the physical realm even as the archetype, as potential energy, also appeared as an image in the psyche, each manifestation sharing a common meaning. Jung (1955/1976) explained in a 1 July 1955 letter to Fordham that although the archetype is unknowable directly because it is beyond consciousness, nevertheless, in a synchronicity supporting and coincidental data arise revealing characteristics of the activated archetype underlying the synchronicity (pp. 508-509 [CW 18, paras. 1208-1212]). As Jung (1954/1969b) said the “‘archetype’ is in itself irrepresentable, but has effects which make



visualizations of it possible, namely, the archetypal images and ideas” (p. 214 [CW 8, para. 417]). Pietikainen (1998a) drew attention to the fact that although Jung advocated the philosophy of Kant (1998), in which *phenomena* are the only realities that can be rationally discussed, Jung also assigned phenomenal reality to unconscious *noumena* such as the archetypes. Thus, according to Pietikainen, Jung’s inference that essentially unknowable noumenal forms such as the archetypes can become known as phenomenal forms through archetypal “pathways” (p. 382) was a logical contradiction in terms. In “Archetypes as Symbolic Forms,” Pietikainen (1998b) hypothesized that “with the help of the Cassirerian approach, archetypes can be understood as culturally determined functionary forms organizing and structuring certain aspects of man’s cultural activity” (p. 325). After examining the responses of Stevens (1998), Hogenson (1998), and McFarland Solomon (1998) to Pietikainen’s (1998b) premise regarding the purely cultural origins of archetypes, Mogenson (1999) found no support for Pietikainen’s claim. Similarly, this work does not subscribe to Pietikainen’s hypothesis. Pietikainen’s argument for the entirely cultural origins of the archetypes removes the biological or infra-red aspect of the psychoid nature of the archetype, thus leaving only the ultra-violet aspect Jung identified as spirit. Pietikainen’s hypothesis remains a point of conjecture in some Jungian circles.

Pauli (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955) argued that the psychoid nature of the archetype could provide the missing connection between the physical events which are the legitimate study of science on the one hand and the mind of the scientist who studies them on the other. In *The Myth of Meaning in the Work of C. G. Jung*, Jaffé (1984) speculates that it is possible in a synchronicity for the archetypes, because of their

psychoid nature, to appear to an individual as a psychic image, while also manifesting as a physical event. She elucidated that the psychoid nature of the archetype means that part of it remains in the unconscious where space and time are relativized, while the other part breaks through into consciousness. Jaffé maintained that the result is that the original unity of the unknowable archetype divides into opposites that can be distinguished in psychic and physical parallel events. Once again this result is a logical inconsistency, according to Pietikainen (1998b).

Cambray (2009) describes Jung's theory of the psychoid archetype as his attempt to create a source ground giving birth to the subjective and objective domains of the world. As Cambray points out, the mind-matter relationship may have a synchronistic aspect (p. 72), a conjecture which will be more closely examined in this work. Addison (2009), in "Jung, Vitalism and 'the Psychoid'" outlines the history of Jung's interest in and exploration of the psychoid realm, where the physical world touches and does not touch the spiritual world of the divine. She describes Jung's struggle with this mystery from his earliest student days when he displayed a propensity to advocate a teleological approach to life aimed at achieving future goals of fullness and completion. Addison explains that vitalist Driesch and Jung's mentor Professor Bleuler at the Burghölzli Mental Hospital both contributed to Jung's understanding of the psychoid.

Vitalist Driesch postulated that a life energy or structuring principle inherent in living entities directed their development towards wholeness through intentional adjustment to their environment, a type of teleology he called "vitalism" (Addison, 2009, p. 126). Important to Jung's psychology, Driesch viewed the psychoid as a third domain between mind and body relating to each but constituted by neither. In contrast to Driesch,

Bleuler employed “psychophysical parallelism” (Addison, 2009, p. 133) to describe the psychoid, arguing that the psyche and the physical body operate according to comparable principles. Thus, the instincts of the body and the intelligence of the psyche are both structured to sustain life, so that adaptation to experience will ensure a greater chance of survival. However, this scheme produces a psyche-body split, as opposed to Driesch’s unifying position of the psychoid as a third realm between psyche and body. Bleuler described the psychoid as the ability to react and adapt to stimuli, resulting in permanent alterations of the brain. By splitting psyche and soma, Bleuler had no choice but to place the psychoid in one or the other. By choosing to place the psychoid in the body, Bleuler’s model resulted in a somatic psychoid fostering the development of the psyche out of the body. As Addison noted, this model of the psychoid contrasted with “the very deeply unconscious and life enhancing process envisaged by Driesch” (p. 134).

In Jung’s proposal of the psychoid nature of the archetype, Addison points out that the psyche now extended “along a continuum from instinct in its lower reaches in the organic-material substrate to spirit in its upper reaches” (p. 135). Jung (1954/1969b) explained that psychoid processes that are beyond consciousness exist at both ends of the psychic and the physical domains of the psyche. He speculated that the spiritual realm begins where the psyche has developed sufficient consciousness and will to free itself from the compelling power of instinct.

Jung (1937/1969) warned that “the most crucial problems of the individual and of society” (p. 120 [CW 8, para. 251]) rest upon the psyche’s resolution of the contemporary view of the split between spirit and matter which Jung (1950/1969) saw as an illusion because he knew that the unconscious deemed spirit and matter as one and the same (p.

313 [CW 9i, para. 555]). Jung placed great importance on the psyche's resolution of the split between spirit and matter, in part because his three-part psychology revolved around the center point between spirit and matter—soul. As Hillman (2013) declared, “Jung’s psychology is based on soul” (p. 74). Jung’s (1921/1976c) foundation is neither spirit nor matter but a third place between the two he called *esse in anima*—soul, between *esse in intellectus*—intellect, mind, or spirit and *esse in res*—matter or nature. Soul is a third domain that holds together the tension of the opposites of mind and matter, and spirit and nature (p. 45 [CW 6, para. 66]). Jung (1961/1989) came upon this third domain through the images of his patients and especially through his own visions during a “period of disorientation” (p. 170) early in his career. Jung’s (1926/1969) experiences during this time convinced him that “the psyche consists essentially of images” (p. 325 [CW 8, para. 618]). However, Brooke (2011), in “Un-thought Out Metaphysics in Analytical Psychology,” challenges Jung’s epistemological underpinnings of the psyche especially the concept of *esse in anima* and the psychoid nature of the archetypes.

**Secondary Jungian sources on synchronicity.** In *On Divination and Synchronicity* (1980a), *Psyche and Matter* (1988/1992), *Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche* (1994/1999), and *Number and Time* (1970/1974), von Franz amplified and extended Jung’s principle of synchronicity, which offered a metaphysical basis for understanding the relationship of psyche and matter mediated by archetypes that inhabit a third, intermediate realm Jung described as psychoid, between the material world and the realm of Plato’s ideal forms. Generally, von Franz assumed the validity of many of Jung’s epistemological premises underlying the terms *psyche*, *spirit*, and *matter*, which are key to synchronicity. Like Jung, von Franz upheld the essential unity of the apparent

opposites of psyche and matter which, as Main (2007) points out, Jung had endeavored to unite through the psychological premise that immediate reality is known only through the psychic phenomena of images constituting conscious contents. In this regard, Jung and von Franz both believed that the coincidence of events in the physical world with the production by archetypes of the unconscious of symbols meaningfully related to these events, provided empirical proof of a cosmic principle, the *unus mundus*, conveying order to psychic and material events.

In *Revelations of Chance* (2007), Main challenges Jung's and von Franz's view that immediate reality is known only through the psychic phenomena of images because it limits human consciousness to psychic reality exclusively. This has the effect of transforming an experience of spiritual or religious reality, such as may be experienced in a synchronicity, to a psychic effect so that the nature of the spiritual source of the experience can only be inferred indirectly. Main explains that this premise is actually Kant's distinction between phenomena, our experience of things filtered through preexisting structures of perception, and noumena, what things actually are in themselves. Main contends that Jung's empiricist epistemology based on Kant implies that it is not possible to have direct knowledge of the spiritual. Main further argues that the ground of synchronicity, the psychoid level of the archetypes, is actually a metaphysical postulate not based on empirical evidence, in direct contradiction to the claims of Jung and von Franz.

Main claimed that Jung's empiricist epistemology based on Kant's philosophy implies that it is not possible to have direct knowledge of the spiritual. Main further argued, however, that the ground of synchronicity, the psychoid level of the archetypes,

is actually a metaphysical postulate not based on empirical evidence in direct contradiction to the claims of Jung and von Franz.

On the personal level von Franz has depicted synchronicity as the activity of objects behaving as if they were an integral part of an individual's psychic life, conveying meaning uniquely suited to their current psychic situation with the potential to promote individuation. In particular, the role of the Self in regulating conscious attitudes held by the ego parallels the compensation both Jung and von Franz believed was essential to restore balance to the one-sided nature of contemporary Christianity evident in both the depiction of an all-good Christ and an exclusively masculine God. The need to restore balance in Christianity is a theme that runs through many of Jung's and von Franz's works. With the exception of significant works by Dourley (1984, 2010), Stein (1985, 1999), and Edinger (1972, 1984, 1986, 1995, 1996, 1999a, 1999b, Edinger & Jaffe, 1992; Edinger & Wesley, 1996), this theme has not been appreciably explored by most other Jungian authors.

Von Franz (1970/1974) is one of few authors to highlight the historical importance of the relationship of synchronicity to number in divination practices such as the I Ching, and to describe such divination practices as evidence of synchronicity. Main (2007) considers the I Ching in more detail noting that the relationship of synchronicity to the I Ching has received little attention. Paranormal events such as telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, and precognition were included by both Main (2007) and von Franz (1994/1999) as examples of phenomena dependent on synchronicity. Von Franz described synchronicity manifesting in the collective, for example, as a coincidence between a transformation in the predominant attitude in the collective

unconscious and the transition of astrological ages.<sup>16</sup> In *Jungian Synchronicity in the Astrological Signs and Ages*, Howell (1990) describes the astrological ages as “an observable evolution of the collective unconscious which synchronizes with the sequence of Ages named for the constellations” (p. 129) and offers a description of the synchronicities arising between the astrological ages and the evolution of human consciousness.

However, a much more elaborate and detailed analysis was presented by Tarnas (2006) in *Cosmos and Psyche*, which provides an exhaustive investigation of the synchronistic correlations between world transits and major events in human history. Extending the astrological dimension of synchronicity and building on Tarnas’s work, Le Grice (2010) in *The Archetypal Cosmos* describes the synchronistic nature of patterns in the planetary order pointing to a deeper underlying order. Le Grice describes the findings of modern physics that point to a foundational level of reality and order “permeated by patterns of interconnection” (p. 102). As well, the recently established field of systems theory regards pattern as a basic component of all systems and defines pattern as the “system’s capacity for dynamic self-organization” (p. 102). By exploring the pattern,

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<sup>16</sup> In astrology there are 12 signs of the zodiac each bearing the name of a constellation such as Pisces, Aquarius, and Capricorn. Because of the earth’s precession, or “wobble” on its axis, there is a transition in the constellation hosting the spring equinox about every 2150 years—a period of time called an astrological age, named after the constellation in which the spring equinox appears. Howell (1990) explains that there is an “objectively observable coincidence between the nature of the symbols for the constellations ...and the religious, mythic, and psychological development of humanity” (p. 129).

structure, and process evident in the solar system, Le Grice establishes the foundation for “a cosmological image in keeping with the science of our time” (Campbell, 2007, p. 220) named archetypal astrology in which the planetary order “is actually the external structural form of a meaningful underlying pattern of self organization that shapes not only the visible planetary order of the solar system but also the deeper dynamics of human experience” (p. 112).

In *C. G. Jung’s Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, psychotherapist Aziz (1990) presents a detailed, theoretical, and systematic study of Jung’s theory of synchronicity based on an intrapsychic model of the psyche, a model that Jung portrayed in his early writings. Aziz created a thoroughly researched reference on the relationship of Jung’s theory of synchronicity to the process of individuation, a topic that will be explored further in this essay. Aziz makes clear that the expansion of the range of influence of the archetypes, from the strictly intrapsychic to the whole of nature (p. 174), means that the process of individuation must now include not only the unconscious, but the whole of nature working “through the compensatory patterning of events, to further the movement of the individual toward wholeness” (p. 165). However, as Tarnas (2006) points out, “Jung himself did not explicitly describe this later stage in his” major essay “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle.” However, Tarnas believes it is evident that “Jung saw nature and one’s surrounding environment as a living matrix of potential synchronistic meaning that could illuminate the human sphere” (p. 56).

In the *Syndetic Paradigm* Aziz (2007) claims that “given the all-encompassing nature of the self-regulatory model of the psyche, Jung and Jungians, somewhat understandably, yet wrongly and to their great theoretical detriment, came to regard the



psyche as a world unto itself,” resulting in “a disconnection from the outer world” (pp. 11-12). Aziz holds that all of nature “is bound together in a highly complex whole through an ongoing process of spontaneous self-organization” (p. 19). He proposes a shift from the Jungian paradigm of a “closed system model of a self-regulatory psyche” (p. 19) to the *syndetic paradigm* of an “open-system model of a psyche in a self-organizing totality” (p. 19). Aziz stresses that this paradigm shift would entail significant changes in Jungian psychology that have yet to be adequately addressed, such as a new understanding of the Self and a reassessment of the importance of the role of synchronicity. However, Hogenson (2007) believes Aziz makes an exaggerated claim for the significance of the syndetic paradigm as a paradigm shift akin to a scientific revolution “with the result that an artificial air of radical change is generated without an attendant depth of argument or insight” (p. 680).

Like Corbett (1996, 2007) and von Franz (1994/1999), Aziz (1990) emphasizes the importance of Jung’s challenge to individuate, to move beyond the confines of established religions and engage the unconscious in direct spiritual experiences which hold the potential to lead to spiritual wholeness. Augmenting Aziz and speaking as a Jungian therapist and medical doctor who understands the need for a contemporary spirituality beyond religion, Corbett, in *The Religious Function of the Psyche* (1996) and *Psyche and the Sacred* (2007), focuses on how synchronicity may lead to increased spiritual awareness, for example, by prompting experiences of the numinosum. Providing practical examples from a therapist’s viewpoint, Corbett (1996) demonstrates how the archetypal material constellated during an emotionally intense interchange is

synchronistically relevant and healing to the unique psychology of each individual because the Self acts as *spiritus rector* or spiritual guide to achieve psychic wholeness.

Unlike all other authors reviewed, in *Synchronicity, Science, and Soul-Making*, physicist Mansfield (1995) offered a unique blend of the discoveries of quantum physics, Jungian psychology, and Buddhist philosophy with stories of synchronicities, thus bringing together disciplines not yet treated in such a personal way. Focusing on the personal experience and meaning of a synchronicity, he developed a unique philosophy influenced by the Buddhist tradition embracing both physics and psychology, with the potential to heal the classic split between mind and matter noted throughout the work of most Jungian authors, by bringing together the participatory nature of the quantum universe, the elasticity of spacetime, and the phenomenon of nonlocality of quantum physics. As in Main's (2007) and Corbett's (1996) description of the effects of numinous spiritual experiences, in *Head and Heart* Mansfield (2002) strongly underscored the sense of an ineffable, transcendent presence felt in an experience of a synchronicity. In coining the terms *horizontal* and *vertical acausality* he eliminated any worldly or transcendent principles as causal agents of synchronicity. Rather, in a manner similar to von Franz (1988/1992) in *Psyche and Matter* and Jung (1952/1969b) in "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," he complemented causality in the scientific sense of efficient cause, with the principle of synchronicity. For Mansfield (2002), the meaning or purpose in a synchronicity incarnates through an unconscious compensation not created by the ego. It is the meaning that carries the transformative power of the Self, manifesting through both the person and events in the world, and conveying an undeniable sense of absolute knowledge of final purpose of an individual life guided to greater wholeness by

a transcendent intelligence, and that manifests in both the person and events in the world. A numinous synchronicity can convey to an individual an undeniable sense of absolute knowledge, of final purpose, and of a life guided to greater wholeness by a transcendent intelligence. Addressing a lack of information in the literature on the psychological effect of such experiences, Mansfield (2002) also described the qualities which an experience, such as a synchronicity, must have to be considered transformative self-knowledge, a concept that has received little attention but that I will address in my research.

In “A Structural-Phenomenological Typology of Mind-Matter Correlations” Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) present what Tresan (2013) called “the first rigorous and comprehensive scientific update of Jung and Pauli’s investigations into synchronicity since their deaths over 50 years ago” (p. 247). Whereas Jung (1955-56/1970c) had expressed some difficulty in constructing an intellectual model adequate to vividly describe “the reality we have perceived” (p. 551 [CW 14, para. 787]), Tresan (2013) believes that Atmanspacher and Fach have conceived “a universe in which synchronicity and related phenomena are normative and frequent, and it is our universe” (p. 251). The perennial question of the relationship of mind and matter has spurred Atmanspacher and Fach to reexamine Jung and Pauli’s model of a unitary domain, the *unus mundus*, consisting of neither mind nor matter but underlying the dual aspects of mind and matter emerging in a synchronicity. Atmanspacher (2012) notes that this formulation resembles Spinoza’s monism, “in which mind and matter are related to a ‘unity of essence’” (p. 97). Importantly, Jung and Pauli modified Spinoza’s model by introducing complementarity between the mind and matter aspects of the *unus mundus*. As Pauli said, “it would be

most satisfactory if physis [matter] and psyche could be seen as complementary aspects of the same reality” (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955, p. 210).

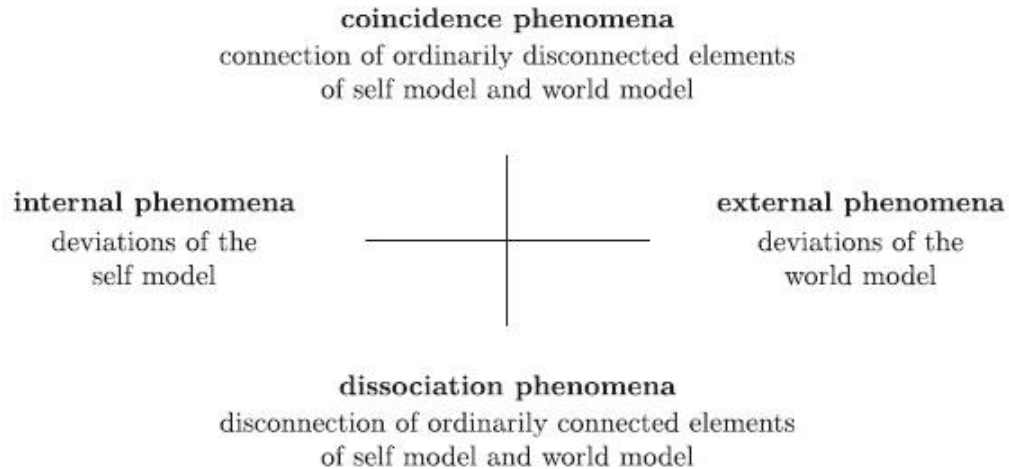
Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) describe the holistic state of the *unus mundus* as an ontic state inaccessible to direct observation or measurement, whereas mind and matter represent empirically measurable or epistemic states comprising local realities such as those measured in classical physics. As they point out, it is recognized today that both concepts are required to fully describe reality. However, attempts to make measurements of the ontic state link it to local reality because measurement “suppresses the connectedness constituting a holistic reality and generates (approximately) separate local objects constituting a local reality” (p. 223). As well, the act of measurement unpredictably changes the state of the observed system. However, through the process of measurement the laws and principles constituting the ontic state may become evident in part through epistemic descriptions of local realities provided enough particulars are available surrounding the empirical situations. More precisely, the decomposition of a system resulting from measurement results in *non-local correlations*, which can be assessed after the measurement to determine if the system was in a holistic state before the measurement. Of relevance to synchronicity, splitting of the holistic domain of the *unus mundus* results in multiple correlations between the local realities of mind and matter similar to remnants resulting from the act of splitting (p. 228). Importantly, these correlations are not the result of any interaction due to an efficient cause.

Jung and Pauli compared the linking effect of measurement in psychology, in which consciousness is the measurement instrument, to the local or conscious awareness of images emerging from the holistic unconscious. However, as Atmanspacher and Fach

(2013) state, “unconscious contents can become conscious, and simultaneously this very transition changes the unconscious left behind” (p. 225). This interaction underscores the bi-directional nature of the relationship between ontic and epistemic domains.

Atmanspacher and Fach propose a distinction between two types of mind-matter correlations they term *structural* and *induced* correlations. Structural correlations are enduring and reproducible and result from the strictly unidirectional ordering function of archetypes on mind and matter. Induced correlations “refer to the back-reaction that changes of consciousness induce in the unconscious and, consequently, in the physical world as well” (p. 231). That is, back-reactions emanating from the *unus mundus* due to changes in consciousness must manifest in the complementary domain of matter. Induced correlations include synchronicities which occur in a wide range of contexts and so are unpredictable and generally irreproducible.

In organizing their structural-phenomenological typology, Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) delineate a self model consisting of all the representations or images of an individual’s internal states built up over a lifetime, and a world model consisting of all the images that an individual has created about the states of the physical world. Using structural correlations to establish a baseline of commonplace mind-matter correlations they define exceptional experiences (EE) as deviations in the self and/or world models resulting in four possible categories as shown in Figure 2 (p. 236).



*Figure 2.* Fundamental types of exceptional experiences resulting from the conceptual framework of dual-aspect monism. Reprinted from “A Structural-Phenomenological Typology of Mind-Matter Correlations” by H. Atmanspacher and W. Fach, 2013, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 58(2), p. 236. Copyright 2013 by The Society of Analytical Psychology. Reprinted with permission.

The first pair of categories on the horizontal axis refer to deviations of experience of the self or world model of an individual whereas the second pair of categories on the vertical axis refer to induced mind-matter correlations experienced by an individual including coincidence and dissociation phenomena. Coincidence phenomena, such as synchronicities, “refer to induced positive mind-matter correlations above the persistent ordinary baseline” (p. 236). They include experiences of the relationship between self and

world models describing connections between the self and world which are normally disconnected. Conversely, dissociation phenomena are characterized by disconnections between self and world models that are normally connected. Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) report that “a statistical analysis of extensive empirical material...is in perfect agreement with this typology” (p. 239).

In “Synchronicity and Emergence” (2002), “Towards the Feeling of Emergence” (2006), and *Synchronicity: Nature and Psyche in an Interconnected Universe* (2009), Cambray diverges from established Jungian literature to create a new dialogue between depth psychology and the burgeoning science of complexity resulting from a recognition of the far-reaching ramifications of scientific holism and field theory growing out of the discovery of fields. Cambray explains that a particular branch of complexity, termed complex adaptive systems (CAS), describes emergent properties giving rise to spontaneous, adaptive responses that result in complex systems with increasingly higher levels of functioning. To illustrate this phenomenon, Cambray (2002) cites Kauffman’s *The Origins of Order* (1993) and *At Home in the Universe* (1995), as examples of research supporting the postulate that the self-organizing characteristics of CAS are “a factor of equal significance to natural selection in evolution” (p. 418). Synchronicity and the emergent properties of complex adaptive systems both reflect the dynamic of developmental adaptation, synchronicity in the psychic domain and emergence in the physical. The relationship between synchronicity as the revelation of a pre-existent meaning conveyed by the Self and the emergent properties of complex adaptive systems is addressed by Hogenson (2005), in “The Self, the Symbolic and Synchronicity.” The emergent view is reflected in his description of synchronicity as the concurrence of a

physical and psychic state resulting in the emergence of a sense of meaning leading to a significant shift in an individual's comprehension of the world.<sup>17</sup> In a radically interconnected and reflective universe with emergent properties, synchronicity becomes an especially powerful and meaningful expression of the field, and archetypes can be viewed as interconnected centers of psychic energy embedded within a unified field network known in depth psychology as the Self. Cambray (2009) points out that “the unus mundus of alchemy is one example of a unified field” (p. 44). The self-regulating capability of the psyche discovered by Jung and adopted by most Jungian authors, is apparent in the growth of consciousness called individuation, where order grows at the edge of chaos as it does in emergent processes.

**The influence of the East on Jung's psychology.** Jung wrote extensively on Eastern themes in the foreword to *The I Ching* (1950/1967), the “Commentary: The Tibetan Book of the Dead” (1975a), the “Commentary by C. G. Jung” (1931/1962b), and in his memorial to Richard Wilhelm in “Appendix: In memory of Richard Wilhelm” (1931/1962a). His essays on the East are included in *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga* (1933/1996), the “Foreword to Suzuki's ‘Introduction to Zen Buddhism’” (1939/1969b), and “Concerning Mandala Symbolism” (1955/1969b). In *Jung and Eastern Thought*, Clarke (1994) views Jung's essays on the East as an endeavor to bridge the gulf between

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<sup>17</sup> Hogenson (2005) proposes that the distribution of the intensity or meaningfulness of synchronicities versus frequency of occurrence conforms to a mathematical power law called Zipf's Law. This law predicts that there are many occurrences of unnoticed or barely noticeable synchronicities, but relatively few occurrences of extraordinarily meaningful synchronicities.



the psychology of the West and the religious life and practices of the East and to demonstrate the relevance of Eastern wisdom to Western problems. Coward (1985) in *Jung and Eastern Thought*, underscores the point that key to understanding Jung's relationship to the East is his use of *yoga* as a term encompassing all Eastern philosophy and psychology including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism (p. 3). As Coward describes, for Jung, yoga was the spiritual ground of Eastern religions providing the methods for attaining the goal of all yoga, spiritual growth leading to release from suffering and ultimately self-realization of oneness in "Cosmic Consciousness" (Hindu - *mokṣa*), a state of "enlightenment." Grof and Bennett (1992) in *The Holotropic Mind* maintain that the concept of a Cosmic Consciousness encompasses "consciousness and the human psyche as expressions and reflections of a cosmic intelligence that permeates the entire universe and all of existence" (p. 18). In their view each person is a source of consciousness radiating infinitely beyond all bounds of causality, space, time, and matter.

Coward (1985) claims that Jung received his greatest substantiation of the collective unconscious from correspondences in many Yogic teachings, especially the Sanskrit idea of *buddhitattva*, which connotes "a pure collective or universal consciousness" (p. 40) where all individual minds are contained. In *The Tao of Jung* Rosen (1996) argues that Jung was essentially a Taoist, judging from the many similarities he observed between Taoist philosophy and Jung's psychology. Clarke (1994) also agrees that Taoist philosophy significantly influenced Jung's psychology including his concept of the psyche as a self-regulating system operating on the principle of compensation to bring balance between opposites.

Coward (1985) affirms that all forms of yoga recognize that the extremes represented by pairs of opposites (*dvandva*) must be either transcended or maintained in a “creative tension” (p. 8) which does not reject or detract from either position. He explains that in the East, the yogic principle of *ṛta*, which Jung (1921/1976e) likened to the Tao, operates as a cosmic dynamic regulator to bring balance between pairs of opposites or seeks to provide a middle way between them (p. 214 [CW 6, para. 358]). As well, the law of *dharma* informs an individual as to how to maintain a harmonious and dynamic interdependence between nature and self. Coward maintains that the yogic principles of *ṛta* and *dharma* operating as cosmic dynamic regulators to bring balance between pairs of opposites, parallels the model described by Jung (1943/1966) of a self-regulating psyche operating to bring balance between conscious and unconscious by regulatory processes originating in the unconscious (p. 61 [CW 7, para. 92]). In “Schiller’s Ideas on the Type Problem,” Jung (1921/1976d) explains that the methods of yoga, described as “redemptory exercises” (p. 119 [CW 6, para. 190]), lead to liberation from the “bondage of opposites” resulting in “the attainment of *brahman*, the ‘supreme light,’ or *ananda* (bliss).” (p. 119 [CW 6, para. 190]). Clarke (1994) describes major Taoist themes surfacing in Jung’s psychology including the integration of opposites; the Great Mother Goddess as the womb of all life; synchronicity as described in the I Ching; and individuation as the conscious choice to follow the middle Way between the opposites of the Tao, or Self, instead of the dictates of the ego.

Karcher (2009) describes the *Tao Teh Ching* as the guiding text of mystical Taoism traditionally authored by Lao-Tzu. In “The Type Problem in Poetry,” Jung (1921/1976e) described the concept in Taoist philosophy of the balancing of opposites.

Thus, in Taoist philosophy, the Tao is divided into pairs of opposites that balance each other such as *yang* and *yin*, symbolizing, for example, heaven and earth. Clarke (1994) describes how Jung (1929/1967), in his “Commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower,” believed that psychic turmoil arises from too great an imbalance between opposites, a condition Jung described as typical of the current Western psyche. Jung (1921/1976e) explained that humanity’s task is to reconcile the opposites, and the goal of the Taoist is “to find deliverance from the cosmic tension of opposites by a return to *tao*” (p. 217 [CW 6, para. 370]). Clarke (1994) explained that for Jung this meant the West must tap into and liberate the “power of fantasy and imagination” (p. 84), for example, by using active imagination<sup>18</sup> as suggested by Coward (1996).

Coward (1996) in *Taoism and Jung*, relates that both the *I Ching* and *The Secret of the Golden Flower* supported Jung’s nascent theory of a more than coincidental correspondence between inner psychic and outer material events. He explains that Taoist thought assumes synchronicity is a natural reflection of the correlation or coincidence occurring between the Western view of the opposites of an objective material event and a subjective psychic experience. Taoism is founded on “correlative thinking” (p. xv), described by Henderson (1984) as a philosophy pervading Chinese thought and directly related to Jung’s ideas about synchronicity. Coward (1996) explains that sustaining the principle of correlative thinking is the belief that the Universe is not separated into

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<sup>18</sup> Active imagination is a process used by Jung to stimulate contents of the unconscious. Those contents which are close to consciousness, are most likely to rise into consciousness, as if they were dreams, when extraneous stimulations are quieted and the subject is allowed to enter a near-dream state.

categories of reality such as the divine, man, and nature, but is actually a harmonized whole whose parts are connected through *kan-ying* a “mutual sympathy” or resonance between the various systems of the cosmos. Through *kan-ying* cosmic principles resonate with psychic principles as occurs in a synchronicity. Coward (1996) claims that under the influence of Taoist thought, Jung came to understand that the patterning activity of the archetype extended beyond the collective unconscious into a “psychophysical continuum” (Jung as cited in Aziz, 1990, p. 174) encompassing the entire cosmos.

In his introduction to Jung’s (2009) *The Red Book*, Shamdasani (2009) cites the Hindu concept of the Atman-Brahman as the “immediate source” (p. 206 note 140) from which Jung formulated the concept of the Self which he first described in 1921 in *Psychological Types*. Jung (1951/1969a) refers to the Self as “the essence of individuation” and “the secret *spiritus rector*” (p. 167, [CW 9ii, para. 257]) or guiding spirit of our destiny, as taught, for example, in the Purusha/Atman teachings. In *Jung and Eastern Thought*, Coward (1985) initially postulated the origin of Jung’s thinking about the Self in Atman-Brahman teachings in the Upanishads. Shamdasani (2009) also referenced Jung’s (1921/1976e) writings in *Psychological Types*, where he states, “Brahman is the union and dissolution of all opposites....a divine entity...the self” (p. 198 [CW 6, para. 330]). However, in reassessing his research Coward (1996) in “Taoism and Jung,” realized it was not Hindu philosophy but rather Taoism from which Jung formulated the idea of the Self as the objective of psychic growth. In Coward’s (1996) opinion, Jung’s realization “of the self as the goal of psychic development occurred as a result of his study of Taoism in 1918 while writing *Psychological Types* and in 1929 while writing a commentary for Wilhelm’s translation of *The Secret of the Golden*

*Flower*” (p. 484). Of particular significance to Jung’s theory of the Self are two principles which Coward claimed that Jung discovered in his reading of Taoist philosophy.

The first claim by Coward (1996) is that the evolution of the Self proceeds in a circular motion or circumambulation around a center point. Referring to Jung’s study of Taoist philosophy, Coward (1996) claims that “these Chinese texts taught Jung that in the development of the self [i.e. the Self] there is no linear evolution; there is only a circumambulation in which everything is related to the center” (p. 484). Clarke (1994) elaborates on Jung’s derivation of the principle of circumambulation from the text of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, which “suggests the idea of transformation, not as a linear, but as a circular process,... in which a rotation from one pole to another, from light to darkness, brings about a progressive sense of integration and completeness” (p. 85). The second claim is that as circumambulation proceeds, the development of the Self is fed by both inner psychic experiences and outer physical events within an ever-increasing field of influence. Jung (1951/1969e) in “Gnostic Symbols of the Self,” asserted that psychologically the process of circumambulation in ever-increasing circles around a center, which is actually the “‘centre of all things,’ a God-image” (p. 219 [CW 9ii, para. 343]), ensured the inclusion of all parts of the personality including the shadow. Coward concluded that the dictate of the Taoist principle of balancing the opposites of internal contents and external world convinced Jung of the necessity of inclusion of internal and external phenomena in the evolution of the Self, which he equated with the Tao. Jung theorized that parts of the Self residing in the unconscious are presented to ego-consciousness as an individual withdraws impersonal projections from objects in the external world. In my research I will investigate how the phenomenon of synchronicity

can facilitate the withdrawal of projections and thereby enables the ego to integrate parts of the Self.

In the foreword to *The I Ching*, Jung (1950/1967) noted that the “chance aspect of events” (p. xxii) or “coincidence” was of primary importance to Chinese thought, a concept he termed *synchronicity*. He described the goal of the Taoist as the harmonious and balanced participation with the comprehensive plan or blueprint, the Tao, which is manifest in the whole of nature. Coward (1996) notes that the Western principle of a cause-and-effect sequence relating the interaction of independent objects is thus transcended by the Eastern principle of a resonance, an interdependence between all things. Jung (1950/1967) noted that a fusion of the concepts of coincidence and balancing of opposites points to the divination of the I Ching as an “understandable picture” (xxv) of a correlation or coincidence of opposites, such as spirit and matter, which holds the potential to unite in such a way as to result in a meaningful synchronicity thus helping to restore a balance of opposites. Progoff (1973) echoes this formulation of the principle of synchronicity whose essential purpose he believes is to unite inner and outer opposites “in a meaningful formulation” (p. 154).

In “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle,” Jung (1952/1969b) postulated that synchronicity was a parapsychological phenomenon operative in the I Ching, a possibility suggested by Main (2007) in *Revelations of Chance*, based on results from parapsychological experiments (p. 180). Zabriskie (2005) explains that in consulting the I Ching, a number is chosen randomly by the questioner and then linked to one of 64 hexagrams, or divinations, assigned by the number chosen. The importance of number in this system of divination resonates with Jung’s belief that the most primal manifestation

of the spirit is through number as discussed by von Franz (1980a). However, as Zabriskie (2005) notes in “Synchronicity and the I Ching,” whereas synchronicities are spontaneous and unexpected, the petitioner of the I Ching actively solicits symbols presented by the I Ching in anticipation of drawing a meaningful equivalence between an inner state and an external situation. Zabriskie holds that whereas synchronicity as envisaged by Jung is an emergent phenomenon that only acquires meaning when interpreted symbolically by the experiencer, mantic procedures that anticipate an emergent event are actually correspondences, and not completely synchronistic in Jung’s sense.

Jung (1951/1969b) explained that Chinese philosophy assumes correlative thinking ties the meaningful correspondence of the psychological mindset of the questioner to the response of the divination. But given that each moment in time is considered to have a unique quality in Chinese thought, the reading of the divination is considered to coincide with the “quality” of that particular moment in time. Lindorff (2004, p. 99) describes how Jung (1952/1969b) incorporated this Taoist concept into his major essay “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle.”

**Individuation as a spiritual journey.** In *The New God-Image*, Edinger (1996) gives credit to Jung for discovering that the history of the spiritual evolution of the West may be viewed as a succession of transformations in the prevailing God-image reflecting the approach taken to answer the ever-present questions surrounding the mystery of life. As Jung (1948/1969c) explained in “A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity,” symbols of the Self, such as Christ, are indistinguishable from a God-image. However, in his letter dated 2 January 1957, Jung (1975b) cautioned that knowledge of a God-image is not to be conflated with knowledge of God, for no one can actually know

God, as previously discussed (p. 342). In “Answer to Job,” Jung (1952/1969a) referred to the evolution of the God-image as a “divine drama” (p. 365 [CW 11, para. 560]), an image reflected in *Aion* in which the Self is not a static but a “dynamic process” (Jung, 1951/1969g, p. 260 [CW 9ii, para. 411]) whose essential nature, or form of manifestation, is constantly changing with the historical and cultural evolution of humanity.

Accordingly, as Edinger (1996) notes, every God-image is a manifestation of humanity’s conception of the collective Self at a particular point in time. As well, at any particular moment in time different peoples hold different God-images. However, because the archetype of the Self is unknowable, it is not possible to know if the archetype itself changes.

Edinger (1996) cites six main stages in the development of the God-image in the West, which he claims are also present in the collective unconscious of the individual psyche. In the animistic stage, the psyche experiences an animation of everything in the environment; the second matriarchal stage is marked by the central theme of the Earth Mother as nourisher of all life; in the third stage of hierarchical polytheism the masculine gains supremacy over the feminine and a patriarchal sky-god emerges as father-king reigning in hierarchal fashion over deities of various powers; in the fourth stage of tribal monotheism, Yahweh emerged as the solitary God reigning supremely over only the Hebrews as a Father-God image; in the fifth stage Hebrew tribal monotheism transformed into the universal monotheism of Christianity marked by a Son-God image; and finally, with Jung’s discovery of the psyche, the current stage of individuation began. Edinger (1996) refers to individuation as the psychological stage of the evolution of the God-image because religious images are comprehended by consciousness as phenomena of the



collective unconscious. My research will examine the changing relationship between the prevailing God-image or image of the Self, and the role of synchronicity in the process of individuation, an area receiving little attention.

Jaffé (1984) in *The Myth of Meaning in the Work of C. G. Jung*, has noted that the creative faculty of human consciousness, through some mysterious process, participates in the birth and evolution of a wide diversity of God-images with archetypal resonances. She explained that the more Jung explored the archetypal basis of the unconscious the more he understood the indispensable function of consciousness, for he realized that human consciousness also serves a spiritual function. In “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness,” Chalmers (1995) asserts that no theory of consciousness has adequately explained the existential experience of consciousness. In several works, Velmans (2002; 2008; 2009; 2012) has described his theory of reflexive monism, which will be used as a starting point to present an explanation of consciousness based on the principle of synchronicity. A short introduction to theories of consciousness will include authors such as Crick (1994), Dennett (1991), Sperry (1984), and Libet (1994; 2003). As well, the work of Beebe (2004), Giannini, Beebe, and McCaulley (2004), Osmond, Siegler, and Smoke (2008), and Meier (1975/1995) highlight the importance of psychological type in modifying the experience of consciousness. Chalmers (2010), in *The Character of Consciousness*, has said that the leading theory of consciousness suggests that consciousness is present wherever information is processed and integrated. In alignment with this appraisal, Pribram (2004), in *Consciousness Reassessed*, has suggested that spiritual means that our “conscious experience is attracted to patterns or ‘informational structures’ that extend beyond immediate daily concerns” (p. 29). Certainly this brief

description can only represent one facet of the spiritual, prompting the need for a deeper discussion in the work I would like to pursue here. In Pribram's view of spirituality, consciousness is necessary to notice patterns beyond the ordinary that attract the attention of a conscious mind and to respond with fascination and curiosity to understand unusual patterns in the environment. Pribram notes that although this could be the physical environment, it could also be structures in areas as diverse as quantum physics or religion. The role of pattern recognition in a synchronicity as a spiritual exercise has received little attention in the literature, but will be examined in my work.

Also emphasizing the importance of pattern, Corbett (1996), in *The Religious Function of the Psyche*, emphasized the inherent order within the collective psyche, which in turn serves as the ultimate origin of order, inspiration, meaning, and value shaping the personality. Corbett explains that phenomena such as dreams and synchronicities may appear at the human level to be patterns of order derived from a transcendent source outside normal ego-oriented consciousness. He concluded that the principle of design intrinsic to the psyche appears to us to be a manifestation of spirit. However, he noted that this order may not be immediately apparent and require a discerning consciousness to reveal the pattern which may only become evident in retrospect. Although any one archetype can disclose an aspect of spirit, Corbett asserted that the Self in Jung's psychology represents the entire ensemble of all expressions of spirit.

Aziz (1990), in *C.G. Jung's Psychology of Religion and Synchronicity*, stressed the crucial importance of the Self in Jung's psychology as the beginning and ultimate goal of psychic life. Jung (1961/1989), in *Memories Dreams Reflections*, described

individuation as the “*opus magnum* or *divinum*” (p. 206) (divine work) to become more conscious through the integration of contents of the Self experienced as symbols arising from the unconscious. In “Symbol as Psychic Transformer,” Stein (2009a; 2009b) offers a more extensive review of the function of symbols appearing from the unconscious. Aziz (2007), in *The Syndetic Paradigm*, has reconsidered his previous position on the crucial importance of the Self and argued that Jung’s writings reflect an ambiguity as to whether the Self creates the person or the person creates the Self. Jung (1929/1967), in “Commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower,” described the “production and birth of this superior personality” (p. 46 [CW 13, para. 68]) resulting from a movement of the center of the total personality from the ego to the Self along the ego-Self axis. Aziz (2007) argues that Jung’s depiction of the Self as both an eternal, a priori archetype as well as a creation is a contradiction which remains both unresolved and unrecognized even today. In *Imago Dei*, an extensive study of the God-image or Self, Heisig (1979) comments on Jung’s occasional, but not consistent, reference to the Self as an archetype. This point of conjecture has implications for the nature of individuation and for the new myth of meaning evolving in Western spirituality and discussed in this work, an example of which is described in detail by Le Grice (2013) in *The Rebirth of the Hero*.

**Synchronicity and contemporary spirituality.** Corbett (1996, 2007) is a key depth psychological researcher exploring the distinction between direct, spiritual experience distinctive of such spiritual teachings as Gnosticism, and indirect religious experience constrained by dogma tending to insulate if not discourage direct spiritual experience often found in traditional religion in the West, particularly Christianity. Corbett’s works include *The Religious Function of the Psyche* (1996), and *Psyche and the*

*Sacred: Spirituality Beyond Religion* (2007). His works are joined by Tacey's (2004) *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality* and Stein's (2014) *Minding the Self: Jungian Meditations on Contemporary Spirituality*; both these researchers focus on the small but burgeoning spiritual revolution currently stirring in the West.

Tacey in *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality* (2004), *Imagining Transcendence at the End of Modernity* (2008), and *The Darkening Spirit: Jung, Spirituality, Religion* (2013), emphasizes the spontaneous origins of this spiritual revolution, auguring a fresh approach to the pressing need for deep healing and renewal in virtually all areas of a spiritually empty Western society. He argues that the West has outgrown the ideals of the Scientific Revolution, which promised a brighter, more fulfilling future but instead transformed the individual into a resourceful robot. He points out that the sciences of physics, psychology, and biology, once adversaries to religion, through revolutionary discoveries have become quantum physics, depth psychology, and the biology of morphogenic fields, breathing new life into spiritual beliefs formerly held to be outmoded. But neither can the West return to dogmatized religions that have lost their relevance to the often young spiritual progressives who are increasingly dissatisfied with fundamentalist rhetoric or the reductive methods of professionals trained in the secular business of healing, but lacking answers to the deeper questions of life. Tacey (2004) calls for a revolution in the myths and stories enveloping our lives, to address the epidemic outbreak of "depression, suicide, addiction, and psychological suffering" (p. 3) tearing at the fabric of Western

society. In my work I will address the ways in which recognition of the spiritual nature of synchronicity might bring a measure of spiritual healing to Western society.

According to Hoeller (2002) in *Gnosticism: New Light on the Ancient Tradition of Inner Knowing*, Jung's world-affirming interpretation of ancient Gnostic beliefs has entered contemporary Theosophy and, in Lynch's (2007) view, in *The New Spirituality*, has become central to a very small but significant spiritual, as opposed to religious, movement emerging in the West termed "progressive spirituality" (p. 53), which possesses specific characteristics. Lynch (2007) points out that, as in the East, individuals may seek mokṣa, the self-realization of oneness with the Cosmic Consciousness woven into nature. However, while strongly advocating the essential oneness of the Transcendence that unites all opposites as in the Tao or Jung's Self, Lynch asserts that progressive spirituality is wary of the possibility that monotheistic rigidity, evident at times in the intolerant and patriarchal God of Christianity, may exclude other expressions of the divine. Lynch notes that the worship of the feminine as the nurturing Earth-Mother Goddess within nature was repressed by a dominating, patriarchal Sky-God transcendent over humans and nature. Reflecting the need to compensate this imbalance, he emphasizes how progressive spirituality embraces the Divine Feminine through the inclusion of Mother Goddess symbols in rituals and practices to honor the divine. As well, like the nature religions, Lynch describes how progressive spirituality holds that the divine is either intrinsically bound up within nature in all its material manifestations or is the intelligence directing the ongoing evolution of the universe.

In a work of remarkable depth and scope, Taylor (2007) has meticulously portrayed the impact on contemporary society of the loss during the last 500 years of the

felt-presence of an imminent Christian God acting in the world. Taylor shows how the emergence of compelling alternatives to the Christian faith began in a period in which the unquestioned authority of the word of God and the Church was inextricably woven into all facets of social, political, religious, and individual life. He demonstrates how the birth of modernity has created an immense shift in the “human epistemic predicament” (p. 293) resulting from the exploration of nature using only “disengaged reason” (p. 294). Thus, God’s natural order came to be understood by means of reason, not faith in scripture, through inventions created by man, not God, resulting in a “disenchanted” world devoid of the supernatural or spiritual forces such as demons and angels.

Taylor’s (2007) work is thoroughly researched and brilliantly written, but does not directly address the issues of progressive spirituality described by Lynch (2007), such as the valuing of the Mother Goddess or the feminine, mystical union with the divine, or finding meaning in a complex, evolving universe. Like Lynch, Taylor explains that the lack of higher purpose extant in Western culture has launched a quest for direct spiritual experience, spontaneity, individual wholeness, and authenticity free from religious constraints. Taylor’s proposed measure of the evolution of this dramatic shift is an individual experience of “fullness” (p. 26), which he admits is difficult to define but may be partially illustrated by a state “of peace and wholeness....of joy and fulfillment” (p. 5). Musil describes fullness as a state of consciousness where “ordinary reality is ‘abolished’ and something terrifyingly *other* shines through” (Musil, as cited in Berger, 1992, pp. 128-129), a description that bears a remarkable resemblance to a numinous experience of the Self as may occur in a synchronicity. By focusing mainly on the transformation of

religious as opposed to spiritual beliefs, Taylor complements Lynch. However, neither Lynch nor Taylor examines this shift from a depth psychological perspective.

Throughout his work Taylor (2007) emphasizes the theme of “disenchantment” (p. 25) envisioned by Romantic philosopher Schiller and developed by Weber (1946) to describe the contemporary spiritual condition devoid of cosmic order in which “no mysterious incalculable forces come into play” (p. 154). Main (2013) writes that Weber (1946) characterized the Western secular age by “rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the ‘disenchantment of the world’” (p. 155). Main notes that Weber had no interest in either re-enchantment or any attempt to uphold the aims of both science and religion. The theme of reenchancement is further explored by Berman (1981) in *The Reenchantment of the World*, and Bailey (2005) describes the effects of technology on our modern worldview in *The Enchantments of Technology*. In accord with Taylor, Tarnas (2006) views disenchantment as objectification of the material world, transforming the *anima mundi* into unconscious, soulless matter animated only by visible forces that can be controlled and measured. The effect of this worldview has been to strip the world of inherent meaning, to discount any sense of subjective purpose or importance symbolized in events or experiences such as synchronicities. Instead, the individual has become the focus of all subjectivity and has been granted immense freedom and power to shape and define the reason for existence independently from God or a Church. This potential is exemplified in *The Rebirth of the Hero*, in which Le Grice (2013) parallels the hero’s journey with the process of individuation portrayed as a spiritual journey of transformation of the individual who thereby plays a vital role in the evolution of collective consciousness.

In *The Archetypal Cosmos*, Le Grice (2010) explores how the unwarranted and overly optimistic belief in science to provide answers to the ultimate questions of life has become the dominant, unquestioned, and tacit assumption of the Western worldview, eclipsing any regard for the spiritual aspect of existence. Le Grice (2011) shows how myth, like the spiritual, has been depotentiated in a process termed by mythologist Honko (1972) as *total demythologization* (Honko as cited in Le Grice, 2011, p. 2), over the last 200 years and replaced by rational, scientific explanations. Le Grice (2010) refers to Campbell's (1976) observation that myth provides the fertile ground from which grow the empowering images and symbols of whole societies "by which the energies of aspiration are evoked and gathered towards a focus" (p. 5) without which the Western world would become a spiritual "wasteland." Campbell's (1968; 1971; 1976; 1981; 2007) work proves a rich source of mythological material used to construct a modern myth for humanity in this work. Le Grice (2010) in *The Archetypal Cosmos* argues that up to fifty years ago, the myth of Christianity was the "grand narrative" nominally sustaining deeper spiritual beliefs in the West (p. 31). In the last 50 years, according to Le Grice, the Christian myth has been all but swept away in the swift currents of science (p. 32).

But as old myths fade, the earth is prepared for new, vibrant myths such as those described in *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man* (Edinger, 1984) and *The Myth of Meaning In the Work of C. G. Jung* (Jaffé, 1984), or the integral stage of consciousness described by Gebser (1953/1986) in *The Ever-Present Origins*. The new myth of meaning evolving in Western spirituality is exemplified by the innovative work of Le Grice in *The Archetypal Cosmos* (2010), *Discovering Eris* (2012), and *The Rebirth of the Hero* (2013). Drawing on the work of key writers in the fields of



depth psychology and the new paradigm sciences, Le Grice (2010) has synthesized in *The Archetypal Cosmos* a theoretical framework for a unique cosmology called archetypal astrology, which Le Grice (2009) describes as “a new cosmological interpretation of Jungian psychology” (p. v). The prevailing Western scientific view allowing only formal and efficient forms of causation has overshadowed the significance of synchronicity as an acausal connecting principle, making “it difficult, if not impossible, to understand the astrological hypothesis of a relationship between the planets and the archetypal dynamics of human experience” (Le Grice, 2010, p. 131). Le Grice draws on the findings of modern physics and systems theory to apply to astrology two basic concepts arising from the new paradigm sciences. First, “there is a fundamental unity between all existent things in the universe” (p. 98) understood as the *holistic* view of reality. Second, “the universe itself can be conceptualized as a vast living system that can be analyzed and explicated using systems concepts” (p. 101) drawn from a discipline called *systems theory*. These observations lead to the premise of archetypal astrology: “the astrological perspective recognizes a metaphysical order and pattern of archetypal meanings pervading the whole of existence” (p. 106) a finding that has far-reaching implications for Western spirituality, that I will explore further in my proposed work.

By establishing the theoretical underpinnings and collective viability of archetypal astrology in *The Archetypal Cosmos*, Le Grice (2010) has created a meta-mythology capable of awakening and revitalizing the collective awareness and imagination of humanity to embrace a purpose transcending the banalities of life. As an alternative to a single myth serving as a grand narrative pervading and sustaining the collective Western psyche as has been the role of Christianity, Le Grice offers the

framework of archetypal astrology upon which each person can construct a distinctive, personal myth. In *The Rebirth of the Hero*, Le Grice (2013) illuminates the phases and themes of the mythic hero's journey from an archetypal perspective. Equipped with these insights an individual is well prepared to create their own personal myth in the manner of the hero's journey, from existential crisis, to spiritual awareness, and ultimately to psychological rebirth. In *The Rebirth of the Hero*, I believe that Le Grice has demonstrated that myths are a measure of the spiritual evolution of humankind. It is my premise here that synchronicity can reveal spiritual truths through mythic themes that hold the potential to be extremely powerful in promoting individual and global spiritual development. Thus, it is a major aim of this work to develop a modern myth for humanity centered on the role of synchronicity in the spiritual growth of the individual and the collective. The synchronistic principles of Taoist philosophy will be shown to provide support for this new myth. In my work I will address the ways in which recognition of the spiritual nature of synchronicity might promote spiritual awareness in the Western psyche.

### **Statement of the Research Problem and Question**

**The research problem.** As many commentators have observed, the influence of Christianity, the dominant religion defining the central myth of Western culture, is breaking down, resulting in the loss of individual and cultural meaning and values. In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung (1933/1933) described "the senselessness and emptiness" of the lives of his patients, a condition he cited as "the general neurosis of our age" (p. 61). Jung's premise, and the premise embraced here, is that only a vibrant new myth will awaken and re-energize the listless melancholy that imprisons individuals and

Western culture. Jung (1961/1989) was keenly aware of the need in the West to formulate a new myth for individuals, for he had realized himself that he was in need of a personal myth to lend meaning to his existence (p. 338).

In the first half of the 20th century, the world had witnessed wars, holocausts, and destruction on an unprecedented scale. Jung realized that unavoidable internal contradictions in the image of the Christian creator-god had led to the demise of an image of the Christian God as all-good. In the unconscious of the Western psyche, Jung rediscovered an archetypal God-image he called the Self, the psyche's central organizing agent and the image of wholeness in which opposites are reconciled. Jung maintained that once the Self had been experienced, the ambivalence in the image of the Christian God would cease to present difficulties. In the process Jung called individuation, a facet of the Self rises to consciousness and can be integrated into the personality. Regarding individuation, Jung (1961/1989) explained:

That is the goal, or one goal, which fits man meaningfully into the scheme of creation, and at the same time confers meaning upon it. It is an explanatory myth which has slowly taken shape within me in the course of the decades. It is a goal I can acknowledge and esteem, and which therefore satisfies me. (p. 338)

**The research question.** My research question asks “What, if anything,—do the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity, reveal about the spiritual dimension of the psyche?”

My research will be guided by the following eight sub questions:

1. What is the link between synchronicity and spirituality or transcendence?

2. How, if at all, do synchronistic experiences assist in furthering the process of individuation and under what circumstances is the process of individuation furthered?
3. What makes a synchronistic experience spiritually meaningful?
4. How, if at all, does degree of consciousness influence the interpretation of a synchronistic experience?
5. To what extent do synchronistic experiences help transform the contemporary belief in the fundamental separation between nature and psyche into a realization of the holistic nature of the cosmos?
6. If synchronistic experiences have a spiritual nature, how does this possibility promote spiritual awareness in the West?
7. Do synchronistic experiences suggest an ultimate purpose or purposes beyond individual psychological growth?
8. How do the phenomenon of synchronicity and the principle of synchronicity each function to further the process of individuation?

The methodology termed dialectical hermeneutics (Palmer, 1969, pp. 194-217), which was further developed by Gadamer (1975/2004) in *Truth and Method*, is well-suited to this purpose. It is important to note that depth psychological hermeneutical methods are appropriate to examine personal experiences of divinity since these experiences are unrelated to preconceived assumptions of religious doctrine (Corbett, 1996).

## Chapter 2

### Methodology and Procedures

#### Research Approach

My research will employ the Jungian depth psychological approach, which explores the unconscious levels of the psyche, the deeper meanings of the soul, and honors the integration of the inner realms of existence. This study will seek to place Jung's theory of synchronicity in dialogue with contemporary religion and spirituality. In general this research will employ the dialectical hermeneutic methodology.

Based on my life experiences, my philosophical stance towards research is based in the Jungian depth psychological tradition. Coppin and Nelson (2005) articulate the dialectical process of inquiry that moves naturally out of the commitments of depth psychology. From this stance, the special task of psychological inquiry is "not merely to answer questions at their surfaces but to see how the deeper rhythms of thought and feeling interweave to shape not only answers but also the very natures of the questions themselves" (p. 62).

#### Research Methodology

**Hermeneutics.** Gadamer (1975/2004) records how Schleiermacher first described the hermeneutic circle,<sup>19</sup> in which interpretation takes place within a circle comprised of the whole and its parts. The parts are always interpreted with partial understanding of the whole, and an understanding of the whole is achieved by refining an understanding of the

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<sup>19</sup> For further reading on the hermeneutic circle see Gadamer (1975/2004) *Truth and Method* pp. 184—193.

parts so that with greater understanding, comes a change in one's starting premises. Thus, the researcher is in a dynamic, dialectical relationship with the research.

Gadamer (1975/2004) describes a critical turning point in hermeneutics centered on Heidegger's (1927/2008) description of the hermeneutic circle. For Heidegger, the hermeneutic circle described "understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter" (as cited in Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 293). He maintained pre-understanding is a product of one's commonality with tradition, but because we participate in the evolution of tradition, our commonality with tradition is also constantly changing.

**Dialectical hermeneutics.** Gadamer (1975/2004) expanded Heidegger's work by developing a system of "philosophical hermeneutics" (p. 42), described by Palmer (1969) as being "antiscientific" (p. 126) in a manner similar to Heidegger. The new hermeneutics of Gadamer is also called dialectical, ontological, historical, relational, or constructivistic hermeneutics. In particular, my research employs dialectical or philosophical hermeneutics described as "philosophical in that it strives to discern objectivities within the subjective voice" (Davey, 2006, p. 1). In reflecting on the historical and cultural preconditions of individual hermeneutic experience, philosophical hermeneutics "seeks to discern in it something of the predicament, character, and mode of being of those who undergo such experience" (p. 1). Thus, Gadamer maintained that it was not possible to understand a text without its dialectical, historic, and linguistic context. This assertion is key to understanding my interpretation of Jung's theory of synchronicity, and especially the meaning of spirituality or transcendence.

Gadamer's hermeneutics thus ushered in the "linguistic" phase, with the assertion that "'Being that can be understood is language.' Hermeneutics is an encounter with Being through language" (Palmer, 1969, p. 42), so that reality itself assumes a linguistic character. Hermeneutics thus must investigate "the relationship of language to being, understanding, history, existence, and reality" (Palmer, 1969, p. 43). Importantly, the researcher must discover the writer's intended question and determine the difference between it and the researcher's question. As Gadamer (as cited in Palmer, 1969) explained "the text must be placed within the horizon of the question that called it into being" (p. 200). Critical to my research is Gadamer's assertion: "It is imagination...that is the decisive function of the scholar. Imagination naturally has a hermeneutical function and serves the sense for what is questionable" (Gadamer, 1976/2004, p. 12) because imagination unveils "real, productive questions" (p. 12). Texts comprise the field of my research, thus hermeneutics, as a philosophical technique concerned with the interpretation and understanding of texts, is ideally suited to this task. However, texts may also be interpreted to include non-text items such as events or works of art.

Gadamer (1975/2004) argued that people have a "historically effected consciousness" (p. 33) because they are embedded in the particular history and culture that shaped them. For Gadamer a horizon includes everything one can see in any direction from a certain vantage point. Gadamer believed that finding the appropriate horizon of inquiry for the questions emerging from encounter with the traditions researched was the key to successful inquiry. Thus, interpreting a text involves a "fusion of horizons" where the researcher discovers the resonances between a text's history and the researcher's background. He was convinced that any attempt to bracket the

researcher's prejudices would ultimately fail and simply lead to the coloring of the work through unconscious personal and cultural biases. From Gadamer's perspective, horizons encompass the whole of an individual's tradition, but are not fixed or authoritative. Even if two or more horizons come from the same tradition, no two horizons are alike. Given that two different data sources will produce two different experiences or understandings of synchronicity and spirituality, I will aim to paint a contiguous field of knowledge that communicates with other horizons.

For Gadamer, understanding other horizons means trying to build a bridge between the alien other that we seek to understand and the familiar ground upon which we already stand. The research objective then becomes one of constructing a meaningful dialogue between the horizons of different traditions. Through assimilating the alien concept or object into the horizon of the interpreter-as-researcher, the research moves toward what Gadamer (1975/2004) refers to as a "fusion of horizons" (p. xix). In a fusion of horizons "old and new grow together again and again in living value without the one or the other ever being removed explicitly" (p. xix).

From the perspective of depth psychology, in researching what aspects of the spiritual dimension of the psyche may be revealed in a synchronicity, understanding how the traditions and horizons of religion, spirituality, depth psychology, history, and culture interact is necessary for a careful and structured research protocol. I will be especially mindful to remember that Jung was always careful to respect the psyche's ultimate mystery, which cannot be captured in rational terms and categories. As Jung (1954/1969c) said, "the psyche is part of the inmost mystery of life, and it has its own peculiar structure and form like every other organism" (p. 101 [CW 9i, para. 187]), to



which Jaffé (1984) added, “any statement that pays no heed to the mystery of the psyche is false from the scientific standpoint” (p. 28).

## **Research Procedures**

**Procedures for gathering and analyzing data.** In *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, Creswell (2007) outlined five philosophical assumptions or worldviews the qualitative researcher must keep in mind while conducting research. These overarching philosophical assumptions include the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological which Creswell (2007) describes as follows: Ontology asks “What is the nature of reality?” Epistemology asks “What qualifies as knowledge and What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?” Axiology asks “What is the role of values?” Rhetoric asks “What is the language of research?” And methodology asks “What is the process of research?” I have chosen to use Creswell’s categories as a guide to formulate my methodological data collection and analysis.

***Ontological and epistemological assumptions.*** Ontology is the study of the nature of existence and being. It explores the nature of reality, whereas epistemology is the study of how we come to understand and what qualifies as knowledge. My research will be based on an ontology rooted in the assumed reality of the unconscious. As a reaction against the Enlightenment emphasis on logic, 19th-century German Romantic philosophers created a large body of literature emphasizing individuality, the irrational, and the mystical reflected in the fundamental Romantic concept of the unconscious. The unconscious became the collective unconscious of Jung (1931/1969c), which he claimed was “the very source of the creative impulse” (p. 157 [CW 8, para. 339]). I take the whole

psyche, including consciousness and the unconscious, as my major source of knowledge. There is a recursive relationship between being and knowing, between ontology and epistemology in a depth psychological sense. As one becomes more conscious of some unconscious content, the related unconscious complex may be somewhat resolved. However, this change influences the archetype at the core of the complex in ways that are not predictable. However, rather than thinking of the unconscious as a scientifically valid theoretical construct, I believe with von Franz (1970/1974) that the collective unconscious is “*the* living creative matrix of all conscious and unconscious functionings, the essential structural basis of all our psychic life” (p. 4).

Practically speaking, the qualitative researcher recognizes that personal projections are a basic way of being in research and that knowing cannot be separated from being. Projections result from unconscious complexes. Romanyshyn (2007) observes, “There is no perception and no thought that is not mediated by a complex unconscious perspective” (p. 26). In fact, Goodchild and Romanyshyn created the method they termed *alchemical hermeneutics* specifically to account for the effects of the unconscious complexes of the researcher on the research. Romanyshyn explains: “The psychologist who would keep soul in mind, however, is charged to mind the gap in his or her research between his or her conscious claims about the work and his or her complex unconscious ties to the work” (p. 26). Given that the topic chooses the researcher through his or her complexes, research with soul in mind becomes a process of working out the transference between the researcher and the topic.

Romanyshyn (2007) describes other phenomena that Jung encountered in quantum physics which must be considered in ontological and epistemological assumptions. In both quantum physics and analytical psychology, the principle of complementarity applies although in different contexts. Complementarity may be described as “the indissoluble bond that exists between the object to be investigated and the human investigator” (p. 31). To illustrate the principle of complementarity in psychology, Jung offered the example of synchronistic experiences that disappear as soon as a psychic content crosses the threshold of consciousness and time and space resume their control of conscious subjectivity. This example illustrates the complementary nature of the connection between the physical world and the psychological world, which in synchronistic events is governed by whether the observer is in a conscious or unconscious state in relation to the synchronistic event. The assumed dualism of subject and object is thus obfuscated by the principle of complementarity because the subject plays an essential role in defining reality. To further complicate matters, the subject, that is, the researcher, is vulnerable to the unpredictable influences of unconscious complexes. The result I must keep in mind in my research is that there is always something incomplete in my observations or interpretations of a text.

As an example of complementarity in quantum physics, Romanyshyn (2007) offers one of the results from experiments on the nature of light<sup>20</sup> in which “depending

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<sup>20</sup> The current probabilistic interpretation of quantum mechanics, also called the Copenhagen formulation describing the nature of particles, is based on the wave equation proposed in 1926 by Schrödinger and championed by Niels Bohr. Although an alternative solution termed *pilot-wave* theory by French physicist Louis de Broglie in 1927 predicted

upon the experimental procedure established by the physicist, light shows itself as either a wave or a particle” (p. 31). Light exists as a quantum potential which is neither wave nor particle before it “collapses”<sup>21</sup> due to the measurement process into either a wave or a particle.<sup>22</sup> Romanyshyn explains that the role of the observer in the experiment may only be the choice of “measuring instrument he or she has consciously designed and employed for the experiment” (p. 33). Such an interpretation is in accord with the conclusions of *The Observer in the Quantum Experiment*, authored by Rosenblum and Kuttner (2002), who argue: “If we assume that no observable physical phenomena exist beyond those predicted by the theory, we argue that no interpretation of the quantum theory can avoid a measurement problem involving the observer” (p. 1274). They clarify that the measurement problem “does not necessarily imply that something from the mind of the observer affects the external physical world” (p. 1284). However, they add that the measurement problem does point to an unknown in the physical world that is not described by quantum theory. As Romanyshyn (2007) observes, “in some unobservable

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results identical to the Copenhagen formulation, but the Copenhagen solution prevailed. Encouraged by Einstein, physicist David Bohm modified de Broglie’s pilot-wave theory in 1952 to create the de Broglie-Bohm theory, also known as Bohmian mechanics.

<sup>21</sup> However, as Greene (2005) in *The Fabric of the Cosmos* comments, “After more than seven decades, no one understands how or even whether the collapse of a probability wave really happens” (p. 119).

<sup>22</sup> For more information on the effects of observation in quantum physics experiments see Radin (2006), *Entangled Minds: Extrasensory Experiences in a Quantum Reality* pp. 208-239.

way, consciousness and nature are one. The being of nature is also a way of knowing it” (p. 36). Of major importance to me as a researcher is the principle that the conscious realization of unconscious contents changes both unpredictably. The effect is to limit the objective nature of the unconscious, even lending it “a certain subjectivity” (p. 36).

But there is a third and critically important parallel between physics and psychology that is fundamental to my research. Jung noted that the unconscious is only known through its effects on conscious contents which issue from an unconscious that behaves subjectively, that is, “like a consciousness” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 37). Jung (1954/1969b) conjectured, “It seems to me probable that the real nature of the archetype is not capable of being made conscious, that it is transcendent, on account of which I call it psychoid” (p. 213 [CW 8, para. 417]). In this psychoid realm, which is unobservable and is known only by its effects in the material and psychological worlds, psyche is nature and nature is psyche. At the deepest levels of the unconscious, the psychoid nature of the archetype renders it neither psychic nor material, but a potential that can transform into both as in a synchronicity. In a synchronicity, an archetype may appear here as a psychic image, there as a physical, material, external fact. This concept is key to my research.

***Methodological assumptions.*** Dialectical hermeneutic inquiry does not emphasize methods to be employed. However, in this research I will take into consideration the following principles. This inquiry will disclose any pre-knowledge by entering the hermeneutic circle in the reverse direction of the usual hermeneutic arc. This referential process leads to understanding by comparing what I already know with what I have learned about the subject. To this end I will describe my reason for interest in the

subject and initial thoughts. In the spirit of Heidegger and Gadamer, and the alchemical hermeneutic method, knowing that unconscious complexes will inevitably color my work, I will utilize my preunderstanding as a starting point.

***Rhetorical assumptions.*** The language of my research will be guided by the voices of the psyche to which I attribute reality and which can speak much more eloquently than I. This reflects my ontological, epistemological, and axiological relationship to my topic. Guided by the voices of the psyche, I may find that language becomes inadequate to express the new concepts or ideas that emerge with research. Language itself may be viewed as a rhetorical scaffolding providing the framework for a larger structure that is more able to communicate and recognize the intrinsic limitations. Rhetorical devices such as metaphor, figurative language, and personification are used to express a particular perspective and thus stimulate a certain effect in a reader. For example, Donati (2004) posits that Jung, using the rhetorical device of personification, suggested a form of psychological animism “in which we might treat objects in a different way, taking special care of them almost as if they were alive” (p. 708). The rhetorical device of personification thus serves as a stimulus to the reader to consider the wider possibility that nature itself is animated and alive. Jung’s psychological animism assumes the presence of a reflecting ego-consciousness when observing events in the environment. Of fundamental importance to Jung’s animistic psychology is its foundation on the first stage of consciousness in which no reflecting ego-consciousness is present as attested to in the work of Jung (1952/1969b), Neumann (1949/1970), Wilber (1993; 1995; 2001), and Gebser (1953/1986). The vocabulary I employ will not be fixed but fluid in nature, reflecting

the emergence of new ideas throughout the course of study. As suggested by Gadamer, dialectical inquiry will guide me to listen for the questions authors are endeavoring to answer, to differentiate my questions from their questions, and to record the unanswered questions that will emerge from the text.

**Procedures for analyzing data.** Using Gadamer's approach, in my reading I will be cataloguing the questions authors are attempting to answer, seeking the answers provided by the text to the questions I am asking, and differentiating my questions from the author's questions. Again following Gadamer, who maintained it was not possible to understand a text without its dialectical, historic, and linguistic context, I will take account of the various contexts that define this research to maintain proper tension between my understanding of a text and its dialectical, historic, and linguistic context. In particular, there is the especially challenging task of the interpretation of symbolic material requiring the understanding of symbols in dreams and fantasies, for example, to which Jung struggled to bring a scientific attitude.

In a brilliant defense of a hermeneutics of symbols, Jung (1916/1966) asserted that the symbols and images of the unconscious were more than a "disguise" of the primary meaning of the dream or fantasy; in fact the unconscious "remains the creative matrix for everything that has made progress possible for humanity" (p. 290 [CW 7, para. 490]). Jung maintained that the symbol has an intrinsic, irreducible value because it is a psychic function with roots in both the conscious and the unconscious contents of the individual and the collective. He argued against the literal interpretation of symbols which had heretofore rendered them worthless when understood this way. But if symbols are understood "*hermeneutically, as an authentic symbol*, it acts as a signpost, providing

the clues we need in order to carry on our lives in harmony with ourselves” (Jung, 1916/1966, p. 291 [CW 7, para. 490]). For Jung, the significance of a symbol lies in its ability to illuminate something completely unknown in the unconscious that is still in the process of forming. By reducing a symbol to a sign the real value of the symbol is destroyed, but the “essence of hermeneutics...consists in adding further analogies to the one already supplied by the symbol” (p. 291 [CW 7, para. 490]). In the final analysis, the value of symbols lies in “their intense value for life” (p. 291 [CW 7, para. 490]).

**Limitations and delimitations.** Rather than seeking absolute truths about the psyche, Jung (1929/1961) viewed “true expression” (p. 334 [CW 4, para. 771]) as the central issue that would decide whether psychology could ever become a “science of subjectivity” (Shamdasani, 2003, p. 37). By true expression Jung (1929/1961) meant “an open avowal and detailed presentation of everything that is subjectively observed” (p. 334 [CW 4, para. 771]) constituting a “subjective confession” (Jung, 1935/1976, p. 125 [CW 18, para. 275]) of one’s personal psychology. By admitting to personal biases, Jung believed that each psychologist is actually contributing to an objective psychology in which each individual could find a psychology suited to their personal needs. My personal experiences have led me to a certain stage of spiritual growth and will necessarily bias my research but my goal is to provide as complete and true an expression of my prejudices as possible to further the goal of a more complete objective psychology. In addition, Shamdasani (2003) describes the notion coined by American psychologist William James of a “personal equation,” (p. 75) which Jung proposed was not related to one’s biographical history, but rather to one’s psychological type. This insight meant that if people’s psychology represented their subjective confession, their psychology was not



fully a derivative of personal history but was instead partially the product of the particular worldview imposed by their psychological type. Certainly my “ethereal” psychological type as described by Giannini, Beebe, and McCaulley (2004), will affect my worldview.

Important areas that I have chosen not to address or that I mention only briefly in this study include the contributions to our understanding of synchronicity and spirituality offered by the new paradigm sciences of quantum physics, complexity theory, morphogenesis, and systems theory. For example, physicists Bohm and Hiley (1993) in *The Undivided Universe* and Bohm (2002) in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* explored the holistic nature of the universe and the findings of quantum physics and their relevance to human spirituality. He constructed a vision of a self-organizing universe, analogous to Jung’s unus mundus, that is permeated by a living field of meaning including human beings who actively share in co-constructing that “meaning-field” (Nichol, 2003, p. 5). My field of inquiry will also not primarily include synchronicity as an emergent phenomenon of complex dynamic systems, a current burgeoning field explicated by Cambray (2002, 2006, 2009), Hogenson (2005), (Kaufmann (1993, 1995), and others. The spiritual and synchronistic dimensions of morphogenesis as elucidated by Sheldrake (2009, 2012) and of a divinely ordered cosmos as explored by Barrow and Tipler (1988) and physicists Jantsch (1980), Davies (1983, 1988, 1992), Bohm and Hiley (1993), Bohm (2002), Wolf (1999), Stapp (2009, 2011), and Susskind (2005), for example, will not be the major focus of this study.

In addition, a host of psychological, psychiatric, biological, social, and other factors that may influence the process of individuation or one’s spiritual evolution will

not be examined here. As mentioned previously, excluded also are the paranormal phenomena of clairvoyance, telepathy, psychokinesis, and precognitive synchronicities.

**Procedures for dealing with ethical concerns.** Although the nature of this research project is text based and does not draw upon work with participants, ethical considerations beyond being conscious and reflective of my interpretation of texts do include some important concerns. First is the nature of spirituality as experienced by different religions, spiritually based groups, cultures, or ethnic traditions. Every effort will be made to remain objective and unbiased in assessing the spiritual dimension of the psyche revealed in the phenomenon of synchronicity.

A second concern is that although this will be text-based research, my selection of texts cannot be exhaustive because time and resources are necessarily limited. To some extent, therefore, my personal choices will direct the research and thus implicate me in the findings however studiously I may endeavor to view the work in a reflective, reflexive, and sincere manner. As well, I realize that I, as the researcher, will be in a dynamic, dialectical relationship with the research. It is acknowledged that the interpretation of a text, as Gadamer said, involves a fusion of horizons, where I as the researcher discover the resonances between a text's history and my background.

**Axiological assumptions.** Axiological assumptions of hermeneutic inquiry keep in mind that research is value-laden by nature. The axiological assumption cited in Creswell (2007) maintains that values permeate all research and therefore "includes the value systems of the inquirer, the theory, the paradigm used, and the social and cultural norms for either the inquirer or the respondents. Accordingly the researcher admits and discusses these values in his or her research" (p. 247). Qualitative researchers, therefore,

employ an engaged attitude in their research practices and embrace this projection as a major contributing factor to the outcome of the research.

*Axiological assumptions and the purpose of research.* Another axiological assumption focuses on the purpose of research. The empirical scientist values research that can be predicted, manipulated, and controlled. Kuhn (1996) cautioned that empirical models tend to discard exceptions in research outcomes as unimportant. Empirical scientists do not know what to do with inconsistent findings, because their research is focused on specific causal outcomes. However, this is contrary to the values of qualitative researchers who do not presume to control the direction of the study or discard exceptions in findings; the focus of such work could take the researchers in unpredictable directions. Hillman (1992) cautioned that “discipline of the imagination does not have to become a program for the imagination” (p. 40). He reminds me that alchemists worked with intense discipline and religious devotion, yet readily accepted bizarre and even heretical results because they were open to diversity, understanding that the measure of success was not conformity and repeatability. Their example of allowing the images to work on them teaches me that I must “learn to become the object of the work—even an object, or objectified image, of the imagination” (p. 40). In effect, I must avoid the temptation to take control of the *opus*, the research process fired by the imagination in the *vas alembic* of my mind, and sacrifice my ego in these same fires to become the opus.

### **Dissertation Summary**

This dissertation will examine both Eastern and the Western influences on key concepts in depth psychology such as the psyche, the unconscious, the Self, and individuation in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between

synchronicity and spirituality at the symbolic, archetypal, and mythological levels. Consciousness will be shown to play a pivotal role in essentially all aspects of this study necessitating an examination of various theories of consciousness and their relationship to spirituality and synchronicity. A discussion of the power of images and their impact on the cultural psyche will illuminate the Western cultural, historical, and imaginal landscapes revealing possibilities for the reconciliation of mind and matter, thereby offering hope for the re-enchantment of the West. By tracing the evolution of the God-image in the West this research will elucidate the condition of contemporary spirituality, and the spiritual experiences sought after in progressive spirituality. Hidden within the history of the evolution of the Western God-image lies the key to understanding the central proposition of this dissertation—that synchronicity can be a spiritual path leading to psychic healing. Jung emphasized that one's relationship to the numinous is the real therapy. By paying careful attention to numinous experiences he believed the spiritually empty current day Westerner could be released from the grip of pathology. Using a depth dialectical hermeneutic approach to trace the parallels between the emergence of the spiritual dimension of the psyche and the prevailing Western God-image, this study will explore the thesis that the merging of these two streams of evolution can lead to synchronicity as a spiritual path in a secular age.

### Chapter 3

#### Dimensions of Synchronicity and Spirituality

Depth psychology fulfills only the psychological function of myth and fails to address the cosmological function. We cannot begin to see the world once more as a ‘single great holy picture’ or discern our relationship to the powers of nature and the cycles and rhythms of the cosmos if our concern is only inward and psychological, if it is restricted only to the interior of a human subject.

(Le Grice, 2010, p. 53)

In this chapter, we begin to build the necessary foundation on which we may construct in the following chapters, a modern myth centered on synchronicity as a spiritual path. Of central importance to the vitality of this myth, is the necessity of turning the focus of attention from the interior, psychological life of a human subject, to the boundless cosmos in which a human subject plays a crucial, interactive role. Such a myth could then potentially fulfill the cosmological function of myth,<sup>23</sup> described by Campbell (1976) as portraying the relationship between a culture and its then current scientific understanding of the cosmos which, regardless of scientific explanation, still retains its inherent mystery (p. 611). I would like to add that I believe that depth psychology—and in particular synchronicity seen in a spiritual light—can also meaningfully contribute to the metaphysical function of myth which, at the risk of excessive brevity, is to awaken humanity to the transcendent mystery resplendent in the cosmos (p. 609). Through the

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<sup>23</sup> For further reading on Campbell’s four functions of myth see Campbell (1976),

*Creative Mythology* pp. 608-624.

mystical power of myth and metaphor, depth psychology is naturally suited to inspire a sense of wonder and awe at the mystery of existence which lies beyond the veil of the material world. Thus reenchanting, the universe can once again be viewed as a “single great holy picture” (Le Grice, 2010, p. 53).

### **The Implications of Expansion of the Psyche in Jung’s Psychology**

The task of reenchanting the world through the power of myth and metaphor will require further exploration of some concepts of Jungian psychology in light of the development of his thought in his later years, specifically in regard to the psyche. For the phenomenon of synchronicity demands that the domain of the psyche be expanded beyond the bounds of “the interior of a human subject” in order to discover “our relationship to the powers of nature” (Le Grice, 2010, p. 53). Aziz (2007) has perceptively asked why Jungian and other depth psychologists have been so tentative in pursuing the theoretical inferences of synchronicity (p. 10), a question I will address, if only partially, in this work as it pertains to synchronicity as a spiritual path.

As a pioneer encountering unexplored psychological vistas, Jung necessarily becomes the focus of our attention in this chapter. For, although his theories are critically important, those seeking to understand the complexities of synchronicity must grasp more than his theories. Jung did not want people to become “Jungians,” yet by having a deeper understanding of his spiritual approach to interpreting events in his life, his temperament, and the psychological clearing he created, we may be better able to catch a glimpse of the world as seen through Jung’s eyes so that we might learn how synchronicity can become a spiritual path. There is no expectation that this brief survey of Jung’s life will be adequate to understand Jung’s psychology or spiritual evolution in which synchronicity

played a significant role. One of the aims of this chapter is to illustrate how some of Jung's personally experienced synchronicities coupled with his finely tuned sensibility of the symbolic relationship between events in his inner and outer worlds shaped many of his concepts and theories. The convictions that drove him on in the face of fierce opposition to his misunderstood theories are as important as what he discovered. His spiritual journey illustrates how conscientious and mindful awareness of the synchronicities occurring in our daily lives can provide spiritual guidance in a secular age. It is most fitting, then, that Jung should demonstrate by example the path of individuation that one can potentially follow to become psychically whole. Closely associated with individuation is the importance of developing a symbolic sensitivity to events such as dreams, for instance, which also played a major role in the development of Jung's psychology.

Jung spent a lifetime painstakingly constructing a sophisticated and revolutionary model of the human psyche. However, in the last years of his life, Jung publicly began to reveal an expanded view of the psyche stemming from theorizing much earlier in his career, a view that released the psyche from the physical boundary of a human being. He sensed, I believe, the implications of synchronicity as the fourth fundamental law of physics operating throughout the entire universe. What we want to develop here is not only a more complete understanding of Jung's work as it pertains to synchronicity, but also an appreciation of the challenges confronting Jung as his model of the psyche evolved. Bennet quoted Jung's appraisal of biographies of his work: "Unless the development of his thought were central to his biography it would be no more than a series of incidents, like writing the life of Kant without knowing his work" (Bennet, as

cited in Shamdasani, 2003, p. 25). In a complementary way, in this chapter I will examine how Jung's life experiences influenced his theories as he developed his views of the psyche in light of the cosmic implications of synchronicity.

**The creation of a modern myth.** Perhaps one starting point for the creation of a modern myth for humanity is to be found in Roman mythology. Human beings share a trait with one of the Roman numina<sup>24</sup> the Roman god Januarius “the god of the threshold” (Smart, 1998, p. 238) who is generally depicted with two faces looking in opposite directions and thus able to see both past and future simultaneously. I assume that, in the same way, humans also stand at the threshold of the universe as spiritual beings facing both outwardly to the vastness of the cosmos and inwardly into the infinite depths of the psyche. For Jung and this work, the microcosm of the psyche is postulated to be just as real as the macrocosm of the material world. Although modern thinkers have essentially relegated the mind to an epiphenomenon of matter, Jung (1921/1976e) held to the conviction of the reality of the psyche<sup>25</sup> because of its “obstinate persistence as do the real things of the external world,” (p. 168 [CW 6, para. 279]). When Jung looked inward into the infinite depths of the psyche, he envisaged the collective unconscious populated with archetypes just as real as the material world. Many of the concepts of Jung's view of the unconscious can be found in Romantic philosophy, to which I next turn.

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<sup>24</sup> The Roman *numina* were spirits pervading all of reality and human life. See also Hamilton (1998), *Mythology* p. 51.

<sup>25</sup> For further discussion on the reality of the psyche, see Jung (1921/1976e, pp. 166-169 [CW 6, paras. 275-280]), “The Type Problem in Poetry.”



**Romantic philosophy's influence on Jung's psychology.** Jung (1961/1989) did not fail to pay homage to Freud, who “demonstrated empirically the presence of an unconscious psyche which had hitherto existed only as a philosophical postulate, in particular in the philosophies of C. G. Carus and Eduard von Hartmann” (p. 169). These and other German Romantic philosophers profoundly shaped the formulation of Jung's psychology. Shamdasani (2003) explains that the concept of the collective unconscious was actually the culmination of the cumulative ideas of the unconscious derived from the work of German Romantic philosophers over the course of the 19th century, even though Jung is often considered to have discovered this aspect of the unconscious (p. 235). Thus, Jung's collective unconscious represents an amalgamation of theories widely discussed in 19th-century Europe, but which he enriched by the addition of the theory of archetypes discovered through his own explorations. I believe that an appreciation of the history of these foundational concepts of Jungian psychology can add a depth of meaning and a sense of participation in a collective spiritual movement that offers the potential to bring meaning into the lives of not only individuals but also all of humanity. Through dreams, synchronicities, and other phenomena, archetypes of the unconscious, acting as transpersonal factors beyond the control of the ego, can offer transpersonal resolutions to those challenges presented by life which are otherwise unsolvable by the ego, such as the existential questions I faced after sloughing off my old identity as an engineer. The assurance that the unconscious is deeply rooted in human experience and history offers people in contemporary societies the solid foundation from which to explore synchronicity as a spiritual path, an exercise which might otherwise seem like just another ethereal spiritual practice.

The explosion of technology in the Scientific Revolution and the enthronement of Reason in the Enlightenment led to the reactionary period of Romanticism most prominent in 19th-century Germany, where the movement paved the way for the modern and postmodern eras in the West (Tarnas, 1993, p. xiii). The philosophy of Romanticism originated with pre-Socratic philosophers such as Pythagoras and extended to Socrates's most famous student Plato (Douglas, 2008, p. 21). Reaching its zenith in Germany between 1800 and 1830, Romanticism emphasized individuality, the irrational, and the mystical (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 199). In Ellenberger's view, virtually all of Freud's and Jung's concepts were drawn from the natural philosophy of the German Romantic movement (p. 205).

Emerging from the German Romantic movement, von Schelling (1775-1854) gave birth to a branch called the philosophy of nature, also known as *Naturphilosophie*. Von Schelling declared, "Nature is visible Spirit, Spirit is invisible nature" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 202), contending that both spirit and nature arose from the same eternal ground and formed an imperishable unity. Leibbrand (1937) (as cited in Ellenberger, 1970) observed that "C. G. Jung's teachings in the field of psychology are not intelligible if they are not connected with Schelling" (p. 204). I believe such a broad generalization would be better tempered by my premise that Jung employed at least two methodologies in his writings. Although both methodologies are phenomenological, one views psychology as a human science, which reflects the philosophy of the Romantic Movement such as von Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. This methodology is termed *existential phenomenology* and will be described presently. The other methodology, to be examined shortly, sees psychology as a natural science employing the phenomenological

method stemming from the philosophy of Husserl. Von Schelling is generally given credit for coining the term *unconscious*, which is key to Romantic philosophy and became fundamental to Jung's psychology (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 204). For the Romantics, the unconscious became "the very fundament of the human being as rooted in the invisible life of the universe and therefore the true bond linking man with nature" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 204). As the link between humankind and nature, the unconscious thus became key to the realization of Jung's goal to bridge that enigmatic gap.

However, it was to Carus that Jung (1934/1969) attributed the expansion of the concept of the unconscious into a system (p. 102 [CW 8, para. 212]). Carus authored *Psyche*, recognized as the first effort to build a comprehensive and objective account of the psychology of the unconscious, which he believed held the treasures of the "nature of the soul's conscious life" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 207). Jung (1955-56/1970c) affirmed that it was Carus who revived the psychology of the unconscious passed down by the alchemists, which was to become Jung's analytical psychology (p. 555 [CW 14, para. 791]). Initially Jung used the term *absolute unconscious* as Carus had done, but later Jung changed it to *collective unconscious* (Shamdasani, 2003, p. 235).

In the unconscious of the human psyche, Jung (1955-56/1970a) discovered not only archaic contents but also "the sinister darkness of the animal world of instinct" (p. 417 [CW 14, para. 602]). Carus saw psychology as the science of the soul's growth in the gradual unfolding of the unconscious into consciousness in order to compensate for inflated contents of consciousness (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 207). Jung took care to caution against the encroachment and possible assimilation of the ego by the Self which can result in inflation due to the identification of the ego with the Self. This theory forms the

basis of analytical psychology's therapeutic method, which Jung (1954/1969a) termed the process of individuation (p. 40 [CW 9i, paras. 83-84]).

In the Romantic principle of the harmony and unity of nature, Jung saw the Platonic ideal of pure mental forms termed *noumena*, which he called archetypes, springing from the minds of the gods and thus transcending the imperfect world of phenomena (Douglas, 2008, p. 25). Jung's idea of the archetypes was also captured by the Romantic concept of primal phenomena termed *Urphänomene* (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 203-204). The dynamic interchange of psychic energy between opposites characterizing the *Urphänomen* eventually leads to a sequence of metamorphoses resulting in an increase in consciousness in an individual (Douglas, 2008, p. 23), a phenomenon Jung would later call individuation. The Romantic concepts of *Urphänomen* and metamorphosis featured throughout Jung's (1955-56/1970b) works, especially in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* where the opposites that unite are conceived as initially forming a duality (p. 3 [CW 14, para. 1]). The Romantic theories of Hegelian dialectical logic and the interplay of opposites led Jung (1948/1969c) to propose that life ordered itself through polarities since "life, being an energetic process, needs the opposites, for without opposition there is, as we know, no energy" (p. 197 [CW 11, para. 291]).

Of significance to analytical psychology was Carus's speculation concerning the "autonomous, creative, compensatory function of the unconscious" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 208). In the spirit of the Romantic quest to understand Nature, Jung (1931/1969c) reflected on the collective unconscious as "the very source of the creative impulse. It is like Nature herself" (p. 157 [CW 8, para. 339]). Importantly, Carus depicted the process of individuation described later by Jung, but in terms of the dynamic healing process of

the psyche in which the unconscious compensates for the one-sided attitude of consciousness<sup>26</sup> to restore equilibrium, as may be evident in the content of dreams (Douglas, 2008, p. 26). This theory was presented in 1914 by Jung (2009) when he argued that in cases of psychopathology the unconscious attempts to compensate for an unbalanced conscious attitude by supplying appropriate symbols in dreams, fantasies, or other imaginative processes (p. 201). This profound insight was stressed by Jung (1928/1966) in his description of the archetypes of the collective unconscious as autonomous psychic structures directing not only physical but also psychological modes of actions and perceptions (p. 190 [CW 7, para. 300]).

In retrospect, Aziz (2007) has offered the opinion that Jung adopted the Romantic proclivity “for subjectivity and inner-world experience” to such an extent that Jungian psychology is currently entrenched in what Aziz terms a “full solipsistic split” (p. 13). I include this extreme view because those who would endeavor to follow the spiritual path outlined in this work might otherwise find themselves unprepared to counter this criticism of Jungian psychology. In the first place, it is simply not possible to generalize such an assertion to cover every Jungian psychologist or Jungian psychology in general because of the diversity of opinion among schools of analytical psychology.<sup>27</sup> If Aziz’s

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<sup>26</sup> Jung (1940/1969a, pp. 162-164 [CW 9i, paras. 276-277]) notes that it is characteristic of the conscious mind to exclude certain conscious contents while concentrating on a limited few contents. In Jungian psychology, the unconscious compensates in a meaningful way for this one-sided attitude of consciousness through the activation of an archetype or archetypes in order to restore equilibrium.

<sup>27</sup> For further reading on the various schools of analytical psychology, see Samuels

charge were true,—which I do not believe,—Jung might then be interpreted as saying that an individual can only truly know his or her own experiences, or in the extreme, that only the personal self has real existence. To further extend this line of reasoning, Jung could be thought to have built an impenetrable wall dividing the psychic inner realm and the material outer world. If this were true, which I do not propose, it would indeed provide strong evidence for the charge of psychologism, a reductionist view, which argues that religious symbols, experiences, and even God are nothing but expressions of unconscious processes with psychological explanations (Aziz, 1990, p. 6).

**Psychologism and Jung's psychology.** The charge of psychologism, leveled by many critics, would tend to weaken the entire case for synchronicity as a spiritual path. However, as will be shown presently, Jung convincingly refuted the charge of psychologism. What would be the point of attempting to live a spiritual life based on synchronicity if the entire premise of synchronicity was founded on a false assumption? This point will be examined in Jung's epistemology through which he attributed meaning to apparently chance events, whether in his inner world or his outer world, which he believed were acts of God regardless of the disruptive or constructive nature of the event. Synchronicities involve the meaningful parallel of inner and outer events over which we have no control—they just happen. In a synchronicity, it is as if there existed a transcendent intelligence, not created by the ego, with seemingly perfect knowledge of the ultimate purpose guiding one's life. This is especially true in the case of numinous experiences. A psychological explanation simply cannot account for such random yet meaningful events.

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(1986) *Jung and the Post-Jungians* pp. 1-22.

**The collective unconscious.**

The collective unconscious, it's not for you or me, it's the invisible world, it's the great spirit. It makes little difference what I call it: God, Tao, The great Voice, The Great Spirit. But for people of our time God is the most comprehensible name with which to designate the Power beyond us. (McGuire & Hull, 1980, p. 375)

Jung's particular formulation of the concept of the collective unconscious brought attention to a portal leading to what I am calling the spiritual dimension of the psyche. It also ushered in the psychological stage of the evolution of the god-image he called individuation in which, as mentioned previously, consciousness recognizes religious images as products of the collective unconscious. In the West, many invoke the name of God in response to the awe and wonder inspired by the magnificence of the Mystery spread out before us in the cosmos where ecstatic beauty and unthinkable violence lie cradled side-by-side, forever beyond our comprehension. Jung (1916/1961) saw this vast macrocosmos mirrored in the limitless microcosmos "of unimaginable complexity and diversity" (p. 331 [CW 4, para. 764]) of the human psyche which he described as a "non-spatial universe....[which is] the only equivalent of the universe without" (p. 332 [CW 4, para. 764]).

**Jung and the unconscious.**

My life is a story of the self-realization of the unconscious. Everything in the unconscious seeks outward manifestation, and the personality too desires to evolve out of its unconscious conditions and to experience itself as a whole. I

cannot employ the language of science to trace this process of growth in myself, for I cannot experience myself as a scientific problem. (Jung, 1961/1989, p. 3)

The concept of the unconscious is central to Jung's psychology and especially the work of individuation, which has been described as a spiritual journey. Tracing Jung's evolving understanding of the unconscious can provide a guide to assist in navigating the potential challenges and doubts which Jung himself faced, such as the charge of psychologism. As early as 1902, Jung (1928/1966) arrived at the idea of an independent or autonomous unconscious stemming from the findings of his psychiatric studies of a young female somnambulist (p. 123) as described in Jung's (1902/1970, pp. 3-88) doctoral dissertation. As natural products of the unconscious, dreams spontaneously manifest thoughts and Images beyond our conscious control (Jung, 1928/1966, p. 131 [CW 7, para. 210]), Jung (1928/1966) postulated that the autonomous nature of dreams as "self-representations of the psychic life-process" (p. 131 [CW 7, para. 210]) could offer an objective view of psychic activity. Because dreams are a type of life-process, they are not only the result of a series of causes, but also possess a teleological quality that Jung conjectured may reveal something about their objective causes and final ends.

A dream leading to Jung's conviction of the existence in the psyche of a level he termed the collective unconscious came while he was sailing to America with Freud in August of 1909 (McLynn, 1996, p. 137). Jung (1926/2012) described a dream about living in a multi-storied house which in the dream was his home (p. 23). The multiple levels of the house's structure apparently presaged his formulation of the stratified nature of the psyche, ranging from ego consciousness to the collective unconscious. As he descended from the upper stories to the main floor of this home, the furnishings oddly



became many centuries older. Descending further to the basement he entered an enormous arched room dating back to perhaps the ancient Roman era, and upon lifting a large stone covering a hole in this floor Jung discovered a subbasement consisting of a prehistoric tomb-like cave littered with skulls and bones. Jung attributed the origin of his *Psychology of the Unconscious* later titled *Symbols of Transformation*, to this dream. This dream and others like it may be viewed as examples of living a symbolic life by paying close attention to the symbolic messages arising from the collective unconscious (p. 22). According to Jung it was this dream that first made him realize that there were “contents of an impersonal, collective nature in the psyche” (McLynn, 1996, p. 137).<sup>28</sup>

In around 1910 Jung (1961/1989) was reading about a collection of carved soul-stones found in Switzerland when he suddenly recalled a memory from his childhood. He visualized himself at the age of 10 being inexplicably drawn to carve a small manikin, which he fitted out with a coat and placed in a protective pencil box along with a black stone he had kept in his trousers. Occasionally he wrote little notes to the manikin in a secret script, scrolled them up, and placed them in the manikin’s box (pp. 20-23). Then he imagined his manikin as the son of the Greek god of healing, Asclepius, reading a scroll to his father. In difficult times as a child, Jung would remember this secret ceremony and feel safe. Twenty-five years later, while writing what was to become *Psychology of the Unconscious*, published in 1912, Jung (1961/1989) recalled the black stone he had placed with his carved manikin after reading about a “cache of soul-stones

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<sup>28</sup> For alternative explanations of this dream see Myers (2009) “The Cryptomnesic Origins of Jung’s Dream of the Multi-Storeyed House” and Jones (2007) “A Discovery of Meaning.”

near Arlesheim, and the Australian churingas [carved stones]” (p. 22). He realized that the manikin he had carved in his youth “was a little cloaked god of the ancient world, a Telesphoros such as stands on the monuments of Asklepios and reads to him from a scroll” (p. 23). This remembrance led Jung to “the conviction that there are archaic psychic components which have entered the individual psyche without any direct line of tradition” (p. 23). This was his first recognition of the existence of what he was later to call archetypes of the collective unconscious. I believe this story to be one of many instances in which Jung’s attunement to the symbolic relationship between events played a key role in the formulation of his psychology.

With the approach of Christmas 1912, Jung (1961/1989) had a dream presaging a major encounter with the unconscious (p. 171). He found himself seated on a golden, Renaissance-period chair resting on a fabulous Italian marble terrace cradled in a lofty castle tower. Before him was a dazzling emerald green stone table around which his children were also seated. Alighting on the table was a small white bird which surprisingly transformed into a blond-haired young girl who immediately began to play with his children. Upon returning, the small girl lovingly wrapped her arms about his neck and instantly changed back into a dove which spoke to him, “Only in the first hours of the night can I transform myself into a human being, while the male dove is busy with the twelve dead” (p. 172). As the bird flew away Jung woke up. Jung (1926/2012) describes this dream as evoking the “conviction that the unconscious did not consist of inert material only, but that there was something living down there” (p. 42).

Among numerous dreams and experiences, the preceding three examples taken together reveal a deepening of Jung’s understanding of the unconscious. The dream about

his home revealed the multi-leveled structure of the psyche and the “primitive man” (Jung, 1926/2012, p. 160) residing in the lowest level, the collective unconscious of all humanity. The manikin story convinced Jung of the existence of archaic remnants in the psyche—archetypes, while the dream of the little girl and the dove instilled life into the contents of the unconscious he once assumed to be lifeless. These brief stories are intended to illustrate what is meant by living the symbolic life in which one is open to possible transcendent meaning in the flow of life events.

I believe these events foreshadowed Jung’s (1961/1989) extraordinarily important “confrontation with the unconscious” (pp. 170-199) between 1913 and 1917, which he described in more detail in *The Red Book* (2009). Out of this creative period which Jung (1961/1989) described as “a state of disorientation” (p. 170), evolved the more mature aspects of Jung’s (1916/1966) psychology which he first presented in 1916 as a lecture on *The Structure of the Unconscious* (pp. 269-304 [CW 7, paras. 442-521]). The key theoretical outcome of this period was his formulation of the nature and stages of development over time of a higher synthesis of a human being, the process of individuation, a fuller expansion of which was to absorb the energy of a lifetime.

***The seven sermons to the dead.*** A seminal turning point in Jung’s understanding of the unconscious came in 1916 with his writing of the *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* (Seven Sermons to the Dead), to be discussed further in this chapter. Jung (1961/1989) related the strange circumstances surrounding the undeniable compulsion he felt to write the *Septem Sermones* in a period of 3 days: “there was an ominous atmosphere all around me. I had the strange feeling that the air was filled with ghostly entities. Then it was as if my house began to be haunted” (p. 190). This experience led to the emergence in Jung’s

mind of a prototype of the Self, one of the pivotal concepts in the process of individuation. Writing the *Seven Sermons to the Dead* under the pseudonym of the gnostic Basilides<sup>29</sup> of Alexandria, Jung distinguished between the gnostic concepts of the *Pleroma* and the *Creatura* (Heisig, 1979, p. 32). The Pleroma may be described as the undifferentiated totality of all divine powers existing in potential only, in the yet-to-be-formed cosmos. Stein (2010) points out that Jung later described the Pleroma as “a way of talking about the collective unconscious *in potentia*.”

***The seven sermons to the dead and the collective unconscious.*** Out of this indistinct potential emerged distinct Creatura, created beings such as humans, gods, and even the abstract notion of God as a place holder term, having definite names and forms but inferior in nature to the Pleroma. In making these distinctions Jung envisaged two ways of conceiving the collective unconscious based on the extent to which the collective unconscious can be known. Considering the nature of the Pleroma, Jung viewed the collective unconscious as an impenetrable, unknowable, and transcendent collective of divine entities as it exists in itself, *in se*, utterly beyond human comprehension. Thus, Jung maintained that nothing can be said about the potential identification of God and the unconscious as they exist in and of themselves. However, a second way of viewing the unconscious resulted from consideration of the Creatura. In this case the collective unconscious may be seen as that more constrained psychic energy that resides in us, *in*

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<sup>29</sup> For further reading on Basilides see Hoeller (1989) *Jung and the Lost Gospels* pp. 80-81; Hoeller (2002) *Gnosticism: New Light on an Ancient Tradition of Inner Knowing* pp. 120-123; Jonas (1991) *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginning of Christianity*.

*nobis*, which Jung called “God” and identified with the *Creatura*. He explained that this libidinal energy is responsible for our projection of God-images originating from the unconscious.

However, at the conclusion of the Seven Sermons Jung resolved these projections through a union of opposites of human ego-consciousness and God as a *Creatura* emerging from the collective unconscious, to yield a God-Man which Jung would later name the Self, first described in 1921 in *Psychological Types*. I believe that the unusual circumstances surrounding Jung’s compulsive writing of the Seven Sermons, underscores the importance of his intuitive access to unconscious material in the formulation of his psychology. Whereas most psychologists and others labelled him a mystic, Jung stayed true to his inner guidance, which, while writing the Seven Sermons, appeared to him in his imagination as Philemon. To Jung (2009), “Philemon represented superior insight, and was like a guru to him” (p. 209). The focus of Jung’s inner guidance gradually turned to his realization of a psychic energy flow within him unrelated to the ego which seemed to be directing him towards an unknown goal. Jung’s encounter with this energy flow, which he was to call the Self, thus becomes the subject of our next discussion.

**Jung and the Self.** It will be recalled that Jung, from his earliest years, advocated a teleological approach to life, reflected in the evolution of the Self as it proceeds in a circular motion or circumambulation around a center point. Eastern philosophy, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this work, provided a possible origin of the concepts of the Self, a self-regulating psyche, individuation, and the balancing of pairs of opposites as in the Atman-Brahman identity (Jung, 1921/1976d, pp. 118-119 [CW 6, para. 189]). As well, German Romantic philosopher Carus had described the compensatory function of the

unconscious in terms of a healing response of the psyche to compensate for the unbalanced attitude of consciousness. In a synthesis of these concepts, Jung (1928/1966) proposed a self-regulating psyche in which the unconscious originated symbols to restore balance between the unconscious and the conscious ego as occurs in the process of individuation (pp. 177-178 [CW 7, para. 275]). These theoretical formulations led Jung to speculate on some facets of the Self, but it was Jung's personal experiences that guided him to a deeper understanding of the Self and that bring his inner life and personality into sharper focus. The spontaneous appearance of symbols arising from the unconscious revealed knowledge of the Self which Jung could not have attained any other way, and provides us with a window into the dynamics of a mind open to symbolic meaning arising from a synchronicity. The link between symbols and the possible meaning or meanings attributed to them as a result of a synchronicity will be further explored in later chapters.

***Synchronicity and the Self.*** Jung's insightful attunement to the personal meaning of symbols originating in the unconscious led him to a deeper understanding of the Self. Through his insights into his dreams, Jung (1948/1969b) noticed the operation of a more inclusive sort of compensation which appeared to further the evolution of the personality (pp. 289-290 [CW 8, para. 550]). In the period between 1918 and 1920, it was this more comprehensive type of compensation that Jung (1961/1989, pp. 195-199) sensed as a psychic energy flow guiding him to spontaneously draw circular symbols he recognized as mandalas. He realized his ego had neither invoked this phenomenon nor set the unknown goal towards which it was driving him.

***The Self and mandalas.*** There are a number of important points concerning synchronicity to be gained from Jung's experience with mandalas. The first concerns awareness of an event or experience as a synchronicity. One might also ask "When does an experience become a synchronicity?" Initially, Jung was only aware of a compulsion to spontaneously draw mandalas as he surrendered control. In a letter to Neumann dated 10 March 1959 Jung (1975b) explained that "unconscious synchronicities are, as we know from experience, altogether possible, since in many cases we are unconscious of their happening, or have to have our attention drawn to the coincidence by an outsider" (p. 495). But because Jung was initially only aware of his compulsion, from the human perspective his drawing of mandalas was not yet a synchronicity.

However, as he continued to draw mandalas, Jung gradually became aware of a common connection between his drawings and his inner psychic state. This realization leads to a second important point concerning synchronicity, namely being aware that there is the possibility of a common connection between an outer, physical event and an inner, psychic one. One might ask "What is it that these two events have in common that is drawing my attention?" Jung (1952/1969b) explained "synchronicity...is...the equivalence of psychic and physical processes where the observer is in the fortunate position of being able to recognize the *tertium comparationis* (p. 516 [CW 8, para. 965]). The term *tertium comparationis* may be succinctly translated from the Latin as the third part of a comparison. It is the point of comparison or common quality between two objects or events which initially prompted interest in the comparison. Thus, the observer must be open and attuned to the possibility of a connecting link between outer events and

inner psychic states. However, an awareness of a possible connecting link does not constitute the transformation of an experience into a synchronicity.

Jung (1961/1989) remarked that his mandalas “seemed to correspond to my inner situation at the time. With the help of these drawings I could observe my psychic transformations from day to day” (p. 195). As he surrendered control to this unexplained compulsion he began to understand that the mandalas he was drawing were directing him to a central point towards which all his life work had been converging. Gradually Jung came to understand “my mandalas were cryptograms concerning the state of the self [Self] which were presented to me anew each day” (p. 196). This realization constitutes a third and possibly deciding factor in determining the authenticity of an event as a synchronicity. Jung (1952/1969b) remarked “If...the meaningful coincidence or “cross-connection” of [synchronistic] events cannot be explained causally, then the connecting principle must lie in the equal significance of parallel events; in other words, their *tertium comparationis* is meaning” (p. 482 [CW 8, para. 915]).

As he pieced together each of these mandalas Jung (1961/1989) “acquired through them a living conception of the self” (p. 196). He abandoned “the idea of the superordinate position of the ego” and allowed himself to be “carried along by the current, without a notion of where it would lead me.” It became increasingly clear to him that “the mandala is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation” (p. 196). Jung had finally arrived at an understanding of the meaning connecting his mandalas with his inner states. Parallel meaning, as the quintessential link between an inner psychic state and an external event in a synchronicity, was slow in manifesting but proved to be of great importance to Jung’s psychology, and was the



essential factor in transforming this experience into a synchronicity. The external events or objects were Jung's mandala drawings meaningfully paralleling his own changing inner psychic states undergoing individuation even though he was not fully aware of that process initially.

Jung (1961/1989) realized the mandala represented the exemplar of all spiritual paths leading to the objective of psychic development—the Self—representing the “wholeness of the personality” (p. 196) slowly manifested in the process he was to call individuation. Regarding meaning, von Franz (1988/1992) explains, “synchronistic events constitute moments in which a ‘cosmic’ or ‘greater’ meaning becomes gradually conscious in an individual....As Jung points out, such events can also occur without anybody seeing their meaning, but it is latently present there all the same” (p. 272). Thus, it is possible that such events as Jung described here can occur without anyone seeing their meaning and that nevertheless meaning remains in a latent state. I believe an example of a latent synchronicity could be my description of my experiences at the time I was laid off that I did not understand as such until many years had passed and I gained more insight. This possibility would seem to indicate that a synchronicity can occur, but from the human perspective it is not recognized as such until its meaning becomes apparent. All of the foregoing realizations developed as a result of Jung's initial choice to surrender his need to be in control and to yield to the possibility of symbolic meaning arising from the spontaneous act of creation of mandalas apparently guided by a power beyond his ego's control. This synchronicity was a turning point in the development of Jung's psychology and a remarkable example of what it meant for Jung to live a symbolic life open to synchronicities. Having observed how the Self came to be a central feature of

Jung's psychology, it is appropriate to explore the significance and function of the Self in the process of individuation.

### **The Self and Individuation**

For Jung (1961/1989), the psychic healing power of the Self derived from its nature as “the principle and archetype of orientation and meaning” (p. 198). A clearer understanding of the role of the healing power of the Self in individuation can provide a basis for understanding how synchronicity participates in the spiritual journey called individuation. The concept of a God-Man which Jung conceived in 1916 as a union of opposites of human ego-consciousness and God, identified as a *Creatura* emerging from the collective unconscious, has roots which stretch back to Plato. In Plato's system, the divine and human are gradually brought together through the formation of a third ontological type called the “subtle body of soul”<sup>30</sup> which is the true, unique self. In Jung's psychology, the subtle body of soul is the Self viewed as the unifying factor between the human and divine. In his commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower* Jung (1931/1962b) mentioned the subtle body in relation to the Chinese philosophy of yoga, which, in preparation for death, “takes as the purpose of spiritual existence the symbolic begetting and bringing to birth of a psychic spirit-body (‘subtle body’), which ensures the continuity of the detached consciousness” (p. 125). The creation of this subtle body, also referred to as the “diamond body, or...indestructible body” is accomplished by recognizing the vital participation of the unconscious as a co-creator with consciousness of the decisions which guide our life. To the extent to which this is possible “the centre of

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<sup>30</sup> For further reading on Plato's description of the subtle body of soul see Weldon (2004)

gravity of the total personality shifts its position. It ceases to be in the ego,...and instead is located in a hypothetical point between the conscious and the unconscious, which might be called the self” (p. 124).

Thus, the Jungian Self is not only the archetype of wholeness and the psyche’s central ordering factor, it is also the totality of the psyche. As Jung (1936/1968) said “the self is not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness” (p. 41 [CW 12, para. 44]). This formulation of the Self is a paradox since it presents the Self as “both the essence and the totality of one’s personality. The Self initiates life and it is life’s goal” (McGehee, 2010, p. 494). In Jung’s (1951/1969g) depiction of the individuation process, he emphasized the “continual process of transformation of one and the same substance” (p. 257 [CW 9ii, para. 408]). The substance referred to is the Self as an unconscious psychic content as it moves in a circular fashion through four transformational processes before returning transformed to the starting point as a conscious content. This evolutionary process may usefully be depicted as an upward moving spiral of psychospiritual growth leading to greater consciousness and wholeness.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Jung depicted a spiral or circular movement of psychospiritual growth instead of a linear evolution. Growth occurs as a result of circumambulation around a center, the Self. Jung’s theory may be contrasted to those of evolutionary theorists, such as Wilber (1993; 1995; 2001), who depict a linear progression of the growth of consciousness and social evolution. As Kremer (1998) points out, a linear progression model leads to cultural

Taken together, the transformational processes perform the alchemical operations of dissolution (analysis) followed by coagulation (synthesis) before returning to the original state of wholeness at which point the cycle repeats. Importantly, in addition to the four transformational processes, during each of these processes the unconscious content undergoes discrimination by the four functions of consciousness—thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuition—which make a complete description of the content possible by raising to consciousness the original unconscious content. Jung (1951/1969g) comments “the four transformations represent a process of restoration or rejuvenation taking place, as it were, inside the self” (p. 260 [CW 9ii, para. 411]). The rejuvenation and restoration Jung described are sorely needed in our Western culture, which lacks a myth to restore life to soulless matter. Thus, the spirit of the current age becomes the next topic.

### **Materialism as the Spirit of the Age**

There is a burgeoning need in the West for a modern myth to lift humanity above the spirit of the age. As will be developed, synchronicity can play a key role in this unfolding myth which can re-energize the soul of the world. As previously noted, disenchantment in our modern Western culture has transformed our perception of the soul of the world, the anima mundi, into a perception of soulless, dead matter. Jung (1933/1933) has suggested that this transformation has not necessarily been due completely to the triumph of a rational scientific method over superstitious spiritual belief. Rather, this transformation can also be seen as a nonrational shift in the “spirit of

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biases and marginalization of those at so-called “lower” stages of consciousness as opposed to those at a “higher” and generally Eurocentered stage.

the age” (p. 175). Jung believed the spirit of the age has shifted to the rational scientific method which has become the unquestioned judge of all truth because it is obvious, reasonable, and scientific. Jung viewed this nonrational shift as “more akin to a religious conversion” (Clarke, 1992, p. 99) than to the superiority of reason or science over superstitious belief. I believe this shift in the predominant beliefs of the spirit of the age can be viewed as another way of describing the disenchantment pervading Western culture. Currently, speaking against the orthodoxy of the spirit of the age is considered contemptuous, heretical, blasphemous, and unthinkable to all who would suckle on the bosom of the new religion in which all things, including the psyche, are birthed from matter, the very womb of life.

**Materialism as a religion.** In this secular age, in which all things are believed to be birthed from matter, the new religion of *materialism* centers on the worship of matter itself as the Holy of Holies. The philosophy of materialism holds that matter is the only real, and therefore credible, substance of the world, while it considers the psyche merely an epiphenomenon of matter, such as the brain, with no real substance or credibility. Whereas formerly religion venerated the spiritual, matter alone was now worshipped by science. As Jung (1953/1969) explained:

The West thus developed a new disease: the conflict between science and religion....matter was assumed to be a tangible and recognizable reality. Yet this is a thoroughly metaphysical concept hypostatized by uncritical minds. Matter is an hypothesis. When you say ‘matter,’ you are really creating a symbol for something unknown, which may just as well be ‘spirit’ or anything else; it may even be God. (p. 477 [CW 11, para. 762])

Materialism is a widely held belief in the West and has assumed a commanding role in determining the credibility of beliefs in the West's *collective consciousness*. Jung (1954/1969b) warned about the danger of the ego being dominated by the beliefs of collective consciousness represented by some "ism," specifically citing materialism (pp. 219-221 [CW 8, paras. 425-426]). When a particular belief holds sway over an entire group, an individual's sense of self, or ego, can assume the identity of the collective. In so doing, individuals may yield their autonomy to the beliefs held in common by collective consciousness, such as the ideology of materialism. Such a group exhibits what Jung termed the animistic stage of consciousness in which an individual lacks an observing ego consciousness. Jung described consciousness as the awareness of an individual of being a subject separate from other people, objects in the world, and the unconscious. As Segal (1992) explains, "the first center of consciousness is the ego, so that the development of consciousness means at first the development of the ego" (p. 12). This topic of consciousness will be discussed in more depth in following chapters.

**Materialism and animistic consciousness.** What Jung (1928/1969) called a "primitive" living at the dawn of humankind, this work describes as an individual at the animistic stage of development of consciousness.<sup>32</sup> It will be recalled that at the animistic stage of development of the psyche, a person experiences an animation of everything in the environment. Borrowing the phrase coined by the anthropologist Lévy-Bruhl, Jung (1931/1969c) described such an individual as living in a relationship of *participation mystique* (p. 153 [CW 8, para. 329]) with the world in which there was no boundary

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<sup>32</sup> Kremer (1998) emphasizes the indigenous mind rather than animistic consciousness.

between subject and object.<sup>33</sup> According to Jung, this phenomenon is due to the inability of individuals at the animistic stage of consciousness to distinguish themselves and the world, from the projection of the unconscious onto the world.<sup>34</sup> Their encounters are thus with the unconscious, instead of the material world as separate from themselves. As Segal (1992) comments, “in projecting themselves, as personalities, onto the world, they create a religious world—a world ruled not by impersonal forces like atoms but by gods” (p. 12). The animistic stage of consciousness is characterized by a belief in the existence of a spiritual realm, based on direct experience of the manifestations of spirits in the physical world which nurtures a belief in a spiritual reality that is every bit as real as physical reality, and which is undeniably present (Clarke, 1992, pp. 97-107; Jung, 1948/1969d, pp. 302-303 [CW 8, para. 572]). Nonetheless, despite their perception of a close relationship between spirit and matter, those at the animistic stage of consciousness believe that spiritual forces possess an existence independent of matter (Jung, 1948/1969d, pp. 302-303 [CW 8, paras. 572-573]). As Jung (1931/1970a) explained:

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<sup>33</sup> This theory is challenged by Irigaray (1993) in a discussion of the differentiation of the fetus from the mother in utero.

<sup>34</sup> The theory that early humans were not fully conscious is held by some, such as Kremer (1998), to be a false assumption based on the belief that such a worldview does not reflect reality as it has been understood in Western thought. Kremer offers a view of the process of indigenous consciousness which suggests a theory of the history of consciousness which differs from Euro-centered theories, and which cannot be integrated into models of the evolution of consciousness which assume progressive, linear stages such as Wilber (2001).

What we would call the powers of imagination and suggestion seem to him invisible forces which act on him from without....Psychic happenings take place outside him in an objective way. Even the things he dreams about are real to him; that is his only reason for paying attention to dreams....primitive man is somewhat more given to projection than we because of the undifferentiated state of his mind and his consequent inability to criticize himself. (pp. 63-65 [CW 10, paras. 128-132])

The rise of the ideology of materialism among most Westerners has occurred relatively recently and can be compared to the animistic stage of development of humanity up through and including medieval Christianity (Clarke, 1992, p. 98). The animistic stage persisted through medieval times when, as Jung (1954/1969b) described, “the mediaeval man...still acknowledged the equally influential metaphysical potencies which demanded to be taken into account” (p. 220 [CW 8, para. 426]). However, beginning about the 16th century, humanity transitioned to a new age “when the spiritual catastrophe of the Reformation put an end to the Gothic Age” (Jung, 1933/1933, p. 173), marking the onset of what may be called the modern era.

Reflecting on this shift, Jung (1933/1933) noted “the modern man has lost all the metaphysical certainties of his mediaeval brother, and set up in their place the ideals of material security, general welfare and humaneness” (p. 204). Jung viewed the shift in the spirit of the age to the horizontal or material perspective of the modern age, as a swing to the opposite, or *enantiodromia*, in reaction to the vertical or spiritual worldview of the Gothic Age. He saw both worldviews as “a manifestation of the crowd-mind” (p. 177) in which individuals or culture groups are unconscious of their behavior and are thus



examples of Jung's primitive animistic stage of consciousness in which both worldviews lack an observing ego consciousness. According to Jung, because of this characteristic, individuals or culture groups holding either worldview lack the objectivity to formulate a myth that honors both the current scientific understanding of the cosmos and its inherent mystery. Rather, both worldviews are nonrational religions or creeds having "absolutely no connection with reason" (p. 175). As Jung (1931/1969a) explained:

Rationalistic materialism, an attitude that does not seem at all suspect, is really a psychological countermove to mysticism—*that* is the secret antagonist who has to be combatted. Materialism and mysticism are a psychological pair of opposites, just like atheism and theism. They are hostile brothers, two different methods of grappling with these powerful influences from the unconscious, the one by denying, the other by recognizing them. (p. 370 [CW 8, para. 712])

**Materialism and contemporaries.** Against the tide of materialism Jung adamantly and consistently defended the reality of the psyche (Jung, 2009, p. 197), a stance which left him vulnerable to charges of psychologism and loosely reasoned methodology that has been described as a "misuse, of Kant" (Brooke, 1991, p. 75). Both issues will be dealt with shortly. In reaction to the materialistic spirit of the age, a certain small number of Western postmodern individuals, whom Jung referred to as contemporaries,<sup>35</sup> have become increasingly curious about alternative spiritual paths. Jung (1961/1989) described contemporaries as those individuals who are extraordinarily conscious of their existence in the present moment as opposed to the great mass of those

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<sup>35</sup> While the term *contemporary* might normally refer to something belonging to or happening in the present, Jung used the term quite differently as explained in this section.

living essentially unconscious lives at the animistic stage of consciousness.

Contemporaries are acutely conscious of the failure of current forms of religion based on projection to fulfill their spiritual needs, and so reject them as remnants of a nonscientific era. Instead, they seek a spiritual life based on direct spiritual experience, as did those spiritual figures in history whose exemplary lives led to the founding of a religion based on their spiritual teachings, such as Christianity.

Rejecting also a meticulously rational approach to life, contemporaries have an awareness of, and appreciation for, the nonrational aspect of the psyche, as well as its unconscious foundation, and endeavor to attend to it. As Rowland (2010) has cautioned:

Modernity's blindness is to ignore God/the unconscious, the powerful Other within. This inflates the unconscious until the wrath of unindividuated energy is let loose. Indeed, we have allowed the darkness of God/collective unconscious to become incarnated in terrible weapons of mass destruction. In a world where materialism is the creed, matter itself is God. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are the wrath of a God whom we have failed to contain in our symbolism....We need a new myth and new symbols to contain the apocalyptic power of modern warfare. (p. 120)

I believe humanity needs a new myth and new symbols to express the severely repressed energy of the unconscious in this secular age. Those Jung called contemporaries are especially open to examining the possible spiritual meaning embedded in new myths and new symbols such as the myth under development in this work. They are particularly aware of and responsive to the immense pressure of the unconscious to find expression in one's spiritual life. Contemporaries comprise a select

group sensitive to the nonrational stirrings of the unconscious and the obsolescence of outmoded religious forms to account for them. Largely in reaction to the ideology of materialism, Jung (1933/1933) observed that contemporaries seek the spirit world by turning inward to the world of the psyche and the unconscious (p. 239), “whereas in earlier times this interest expressed itself in terms of a spirit world projected outwards onto the cosmos at large” (Clarke, 1992, p. 98). This work maintains, as I believe Jung did, that contemporaries are among those especially able to grasp the significance and importance of synchronicity as a spiritual path in a secular age. They have witnessed and likely felt the spiritually and psychologically destructive impact of the religion of materialism in the Western world promising happiness and fulfilment but leaving people with a sense of emptiness and meaninglessness in their lives. Jung (1933/1933) asserted that contemporaries are determined to escape from this desolate scene and are inextricably drawn on a courageous journey towards an ever-increasing consciousness of what it means to be fully present in the moment. Contemporaries acknowledge the importance of understanding the lessons of history but have left behind the bonds of history and traditions which have fettered those before them and have struck out on their own to seek their own beliefs (p. 197).

### **Jung’s Psychology of Religion**

It [God] is an apt name given to all overpowering emotions in my own psychic system, subduing my conscious will and usurping control over myself. This is the name by which I designate all things which cross my wilful path violently and recklessly, all things which upset my subjective views, plans and intentions and change the course of my life for better or worse. (Jung, 1975b, p. 525)

In this quote, Jung (1975b) offered his personal account of God in a letter on 5 December 1959 in response to a question from a Mr. Leonard who wrote to Jung after hearing him in a BBC interview airing on 22 October 1959. In that interview the interviewer, Mr. Freeman, asked Jung if he believed in God. After a long pause, Jung responded, “Difficult to answer. I *know*. I needn’t, I don’t need to believe. I know” (Jung as cited in McGuire & Hull, 1980, p. 383). Leonard had wanted to know how Jung knew God—a question at the heart of the epistemological debate nascent in the relationship between psychology and religion. In 1952 Jung (1952/1969a) had stated that God is a clearly evident psychic, but not physical fact based on the reality of the psyche, a reality which he lamented most people had not yet grasped, and which had led them to believe he was an advocate of psychologism (p. 463 [CW 11, para. 751]), which reduces all religious phenomena to psychological processes such as projection.

**Projection and Jung’s psychology of religion.** Key to understanding Jung’s (1943/1966) psychology of religion is the concept of psychological projection<sup>36</sup> (pp. 3-119 [CW 7, paras. 1-201]) which may be described as an unconscious process occurring between a projecting subject and a receiving object that thereby becomes a carrier of the projection. Through projection, unconscious contents of an individual are unconsciously ascribed or transferred to an object or carrier which can be a person or an inanimate object such as matter (Meier, 1959, p. 22). This is an especially important possibility for those engaged in spiritual pursuits since unconscious contents can seem to appear as qualities in others with no awareness that the projected contents do not belong to the

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<sup>36</sup> See also Jung (1955-56/1970c, pp. 488-489 [CW 14, paras. 695-697]), “The conjunction.”

carrier but to the subject. This phenomenon, discovered by Freud, is known in psychology as a *transference*. Subjects can expand their consciousness through identification and integration of unconscious projected material if they are willing to accept responsibility for the fact that the projected content originated in their mind. The process of accepting responsibility or owning projections can continue throughout a person's life, assuming they are willing to accept responsibility for the projected quality. Owning of projections can thereby become a critically important factor in increasing consciousness and self-knowledge.

**Projection and the collective unconscious.** Jung endeavored to identify the factor in the unconscious which appears to control a subject's choice of projected material. Jung observed that this factor appeared to follow an overall plan for the evolution of the subject's personality, and furthermore, that it usually appears in dreams and fantasies as someone of the opposite sex to the subject. In a man, Jung called this numinous projection producing factor, or archetype, the *anima* and in a woman the *animus*. Critically, in the process of individuation, a person will not only own their projection but also recognize the inner source creating the projection, the planner and originator of the projection which Jung called the collective unconscious and sometimes referred to as the *objective psyche*<sup>37</sup> (Meier, 1959, p. 24). However, projection of archetypal material of transpersonal origin can result in numinous effects on the carrier of the projection as compared to the effects resulting from a projection based on material from the personal unconscious of a subject.

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<sup>37</sup> Jung also called the objective psyche the collective unconscious, and the subjective psyche the personal unconscious.

Furthermore, the carrier of an archetypal projection has no plausible way of knowing beforehand (short of telepathy) that the subject has initiated the projection.<sup>38</sup> In this case there is no apparent causal mechanism to explain the effect of the transference on the object, an effect that is termed a *countertransference*. Since there is no apparent transfer of energy between subject and object it is reasonable to posit a transcendental arranging factor common to both which is totally intangible and indiscernible yet responsible for the clearly analogous symmetrical pattern of transference and countertransference observed in each (Meier, 1959, pp. 27-28). Jung called this example of acausal orderedness a synchronicity patterned by a constellated archetype. In such a model, a symbol has materialized as a creative factor transforming both the subject and the object through their shared experience and increased consciousness (Heisig, 1979, p. 28). Here the importance of an understanding of projection becomes clear to those endeavoring to live a symbolic life. If Jung's psychology were merely a product of projections it would be vulnerable to the charge of psychologism, thereby discrediting synchronicity as a spiritual pursuit. Understanding Jung's efforts to arrive at a deeper understanding of the nature of the unconscious may help alleviate the doubts of those contemporaries struggling with the issue of psychologism.

**Projection and psychologism.** In Jung's (1912/2002) early writings, notably *Psychology of the Unconscious*, his psychology of religion might be said to reduce religious ideas to psychological concepts, which rendered his methods of interpretation of

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<sup>38</sup> See also Jung (1946/1966) "The Psychology of the Transference" *CW* 16, pp. 163-323 and Meier (1959) *Projection, Transference, and the Subject-Object Relation in Psychology*.

religious phenomena open to the charge of psychologism, a charge that Jung contended with for most of his life (Heisig, 1979, p. 28, p. 121). In *Psychology of the Unconscious* Jung sought the final causes of religious projections which he viewed as symptoms of deeper tensions he was attempting to understand and resolve (Heisig, 1979, p. 23). For example, Jung viewed *libido* as indeterminate psychic energy (p. 24) which can assume many forms as opposed to Freud's solely sexual connotation. Jung initially maintained that the God-concept originated in the unconscious as a manifestation of repressed libido seeking consciousness (Heisig, 1979, pp. 24, 27). This repressed libido can emerge into consciousness in the form of religious symbols and beliefs that may be understood on the one hand as a need to connect with the transcendent realm, and on the other hand can be viewed as projections rather than compensation for repressed libido.

The preceding explanation of projection exemplifies the tendency of those at the animistic stage of consciousness to ascribe human and animal characteristics to objects in their environment and thereby construct a primarily subjective world as opposed to one consisting of distinct objects perceived as separate from humans (Heisig, 1979, p. 25). Jung (1952/1967c) held that "as a power which transcends consciousness the libido is by nature daemonic: it is both God and devil" (p. 112 [CW 5, para. 170]). Further, Jung (1952/1967b) viewed the God-concept or God-image as "a complex of ideas of an archetypal nature" (p. 56 [CW 5, para. 89]) and God as "the name for a complex of ideas grouped round a powerful feeling" (Jung, 1952/1967c, p. 85 [CW 5, para. 128]) representing some quantity of libido which is projected from the unconscious thereby becoming a metaphysical reality. At this stage of development of Jung's psychology of religion, he did not aim to deify the unconscious but rather to explain in psychological

terms that the divine may be viewed as a projection from the unconscious<sup>39</sup> (Heisig, 1979, p. 26). This explanation is an example from Jung's early writings that led to the charge of psychologism. As a result, Jung's psychology itself was accused of being a religion.

Through a series of transformational events, Jung's views of the unconscious changed decidedly.<sup>40</sup> As mentioned earlier, Jung (1961/1989) experienced what he called a period of disorientation from late 1913 through 1916 when he witnessed many visions (p. 170). In the early winter months of 1916, Jung's final visions inspired him to write "The Seven Sermons to the Dead," included as "Scrutinies" (pp. 331-359) in *The Red Book*, written in the style of the early second century gnostic scholar Basilides as previously mentioned (Hoeller, 1982, p. 7). This text helped to solidify in Jung's mind a host of crucially important concepts in his analytical psychology. Visualized in the language of the unconscious presented to Jung were, among other concepts, the collective unconscious, archetypes, the Self, complexes, the ego, individuation, libido, and the union of opposites. Especially, the union of the opposites of good and evil in one God gave birth to a revitalized God image in his soul and a new cosmology created through a union of psychology and theology. The union of good and evil in one God was symbolically portrayed in Jung's active imagination fantasies as Abraxas, "the son of the frogs" (Jung, 2009, p. 205), who represented the union of the all-good God of Christianity with the archetypal evil of Satan. Abraxas symbolized the birth not only of a

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<sup>39</sup> See also Jung (1912/2002), pp. 199-201 on God as a projection of one's thoughts.

<sup>40</sup> See also Heisig (1972), "The VII Sermones: Play and Theory," pp. 206-218.



new God-image in Jung's soul, but also by extension, the transformation necessary in the contemporary God-image of the nominally Christian West, to restore balance to a one-sided understanding of God.

Of vital importance, Jung learned of the final destiny and destination of souls, where time meets eternity. In so doing Jung found his soul and was given the knowledge and wisdom to help others overcome the deadening disorder of his time—spiritual alienation. Clarke (1994) cites as one of Jung's major contributions his efforts to re-introduce the energizing power of the symbolic and imaginal into the empty and meaningless world of modern man (p. 84). When Jung spoke of modern man in search of his soul, he realized that what the alienated individual needed is some connection with the transcendent within himself or herself, some contact with eternity and immortality so that the soul has a destination, a home, after passing through this world. I submit that the motif of a final home for the soul must play a central role in the formation of a new myth centered on synchronicity if it is to capture the imagination and faith of contemporaries. This motif is central to the mythologies of several world religions such as Christianity and Islam.<sup>41</sup> All of this was revealed in a synchronicity intended to address his own spiritual illness. I believe that such spiritual revelations are desperately needed in contemporary Western culture. Of this critically important creative period Jung (2009) said in *The Red Book*:

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<sup>41</sup> For a concise description of the evolution of Christian beliefs see Armstrong (1993) *A History of God* pp. 79-106. For a similar description of Islam see Armstrong (1993) pp. 132-169.

The years, of which I have spoken to you, when I pursued the inner images, were the most important time of my life. Everything else is to be derived from this. It began at that time, and the later details hardly matter anymore. My entire life consisted in elaborating what had burst forth from the unconscious and flooded me like an enigmatic stream and threatened to break me. That was the stuff and material for more than only one life. Everything later was merely the outer classification, the scientific elaboration, and the integration into life. But the numinous beginning, which contained everything, was then. (Jung, 2009, p. vii)

Through his study of psychotics who believed they were God, Jung's view that the concept of God was a repressed desire shifted to the conclusion that the concept of God actually symbolized the collective unconscious (Heisig, 1979, p. 31). Unlike religions based on divine images resulting from projection, those psychotics who deified themselves were actually introjecting images from the unconscious into the domain of consciousness. In a lecture in 1934, while Jung (1934/1970) retained his view of the unconscious as a union of opposites of good and evil, he announced that the God-image arising from the unconscious was, according to Heisig (1979), "not only a symbol *from* the collective psyche, but also a symbol *for* that deep and mysterious layer of the mind"<sup>42</sup> (p. 31).

In view of Jung's (1940/1969b) Terry Lectures in 1937, some believe Jung's early psychologism was superseded by a complete reassessment of the origins and meaning of religious symbols and impulses. His attention turned to identifying a God-image, a "religious symbolic" (Stein, 1981, p. 119) in the human psyche, through the examination

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<sup>42</sup> See also Jung (1934/1970), Vol. 10, pp. 157-173.

of material emanating from the unconscious in the form of dreams, daydreams, symbols, images, visions, fantasies, and other products. Thus, although he did on occasion use the term *psychology of religion*, it was with this revised connotation in mind. As a consequence, in his Terry lectures of 1937 at Yale University, Jung generally preferred the term *psychology and religion* as opposed to *psychology of religion* (Stein, 1981, p. 119).

### **Jung's Epistemology**

Some appreciation of Jung's epistemology and methodology offers the contemporary spiritual seeker some insight into not only Jung's approach to acquiring knowledge but also how it might open a portal to greater individual self-understanding. In his response to Mr. Leonard on 5 December 1959 already quoted, Jung disclosed two methods of knowing through reference to his personal experiences, disclosures which offer some insight into Jung's mature thinking regarding his epistemology. In his inner world, Jung experienced God as emotions overpowering his conscious control. In his outer world, God manifested in disruptive and seemingly arbitrary accidents invading his ordered life and sending it careening in a completely unknown direction. In either case, although Jung lost conscious control of his plans and intentions, he nevertheless attributed meaning to apparently chance events that for him were acts of God. With the critical difference of an observing consciousness, this describes the world of those humans living at the animistic stage of consciousness, in which no boundaries exist between their inner world and an outer world in which every stirring of the trees, every fluttering of the birds, and every shift of the wind is pregnant with the spirit of the gods giving birth to meaning.

Aziz (1990, p. 4) and Raff (2000, pp. 1-5) have argued that Jung's theoretical formulations are distinctly different from how he actually lived his own life, in which he assumed a world pervaded by synchronistic experiences and events that significantly influenced his personal life. Jung led a spiritual life that may seem inconsistent from the scholarly demeanor he adopted when presenting his theories to the world. He did not define in writing the concept of synchronicity as a spiritual path. Instead, synchronicity as a spiritual path is the way I believe he lived his life, as I have endeavored to illustrate through descriptions of stories and synchronicities regarding this aspect of his life. My effort here is to fill in, at least partially, the gap in understanding of this aspect of Jung's spiritual nature, which has not garnered much attention. I suggest that Jung's intention in maintaining a separation between his academic career and his personal life was to maintain his status in the academic community, where his spiritual beliefs might be questioned, and thereby defend the viability and credibility of his theories regarding synchronicity on the world stage.

Working closely with von Franz in the 1970s, Raff describes her characterization of Jung as a spiritual teacher who emphasized experience over theory, although his rather erudite published work generally does not express the importance he placed on direct dialogue with the Self. Jung taught his colleagues and friends to consider the Self to be an autonomous inner counselor, the spiritus rector informing everyday life choices and events (p. 4). As explained previously, Jung maintained that experiences of the Self were indistinguishable from experiences of what the nominally Christian West refers to as God, in that the ego would rather forego the problems presented by the Divine. By creating symbols, Jung believed that the Self was revealing its attributes in order to lead

an individual to greater wholeness since the Self, as the union of all opposites and focal point of the psyche is the source and the ultimate goal of individuation. In adopting a religious attitude, one pays scrupulous attention to the inner voice of the Self and the symbols it creates and seeks a harmony with them. This, for Raff, is “the heart and soul of Jung’s spiritual model” (p. 3). This is another example of what Jung meant by living a symbolic life. Jung lived his life very differently from the scholarly way he presented his theories to the world. He did not define in writing the concept of synchronicity as a spiritual path. Instead, that spiritual path is the way he lived his life, as I have attempted to illustrate through descriptions of stories and synchronicities illuminating his life in this work.

Jung affirmed the psychological truth of an idea, regardless of the truth or falsity of the idea itself, simply because of its existence. He considered an idea to be subjective if it is limited to an individual, but objective if it is common to a collective, such as a particular culture as in the case of the Roman College of Augurs. The ancient Roman College of Augurs exemplifies a collective practice illustrating what Jung considered to be an objective psychological truth gained from the outer world through events that were considered acts of the gods. Whenever any major state decision was to be made, a highly esteemed select group of priests sequestered themselves on a hill and carefully observed the flight of birds believed to be guided by powers beyond their control. A rigid set of rules was used to judge whether the flight of the birds did or did not bless the state undertaking (Edinger & Wesley, 1996, pp. 36-37). This religious ritual demonstrates the meaning of the Latin word *religere*, which means to carefully observe and take account, and accords with Jung’s (1943/1966) definition of religion as the “careful and scrupulous

observation of...the numinosum... a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary, it seizes and controls the human subject, who is always rather its victim than its creator” (p. 7 [CW 11, para. 6]).

As noted in Chapter 1, the unconscious can compensate for the one-sided attitude of ego consciousness.<sup>43</sup> One of the ways this compensation can occur is through a synchronicity when an archetypally structured expression of the Self, having deeply significant personal meaning to an individual, manifests in an outer event to compensate for that individual’s one-sided conscious attitude. This power of synchronicity to compensate for a conscious attitude if one is open to the symbolic leading of the Self, is illustrated in the story of Jung’s (as cited in Tarnas, 2006, p. 54) meeting in the 1950s with a friend, Fierz, for the purpose of determining whether a manuscript of a recently deceased scientist should be published. Jung had read the book and had decided against publication, but Fierz thought it worthy of publication. Their discussion became rather animated, and Jung finally decided he had spent enough time with this matter and asked Fierz at what time he had arrived, to which Fierz responded five o’clock. Jung remarked that he had just had his timepiece checked out that morning and yet it read 5:05, while Fierz’s watch said 5:35. Noting that he had the wrong time while Fierz the right one, he realized he had the wrong attitude and Fierz the right one. As a result, he resumed

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<sup>43</sup> Jung notes that it is characteristic of the conscious mind to exclude certain conscious contents while concentrating on a limited few contents. In Jungian psychology, the unconscious compensates in a meaningful way for this one-sided attitude of consciousness through the activation of an archetype or archetypes in order to restore equilibrium.

discussion and this time agreed on publication (Tarnas, 2006, p. 54). Jung grasped the symbolic relationship between their different attitudes and the times reported by their watches and was prepared to yield his conscious opinion because of his desire to harmonize his attitude with the symbolic meaning discernible in the patterning of events happening at the time. The meaning of this event for Jung was “as transparently intelligible as if he were reading a newspaper” (p. 54). Tarnas explains that Jung intuited he was immersed in a greater “field of meaning” (p. 54) enveloping and patterning events around him which were not causally linked in an obvious way but which Jung recognized as part of a more general acausal orderedness that subtly implied a more expansive blueprint of meaning.

As one conscientiously endeavors to attend to unconscious contents as they enter the light of consciousness through synchronicities, dreams, psychological disturbances, and other expressions of the unconscious, Jung was convinced that all the vagaries of one’s psychic and physical life not only begin to take on meaning but also begin to be viewed as manifestations of the archetype’s transpersonal formations and energies. For these people, at some point in the process of individuation, chance ceases to exist as it did for Jung in the story just cited. As we have noted, Jung (1975b) believed that God was “all things which cross my wilful path violently and recklessly” and change the “course of my life for better or worse” (p. 525). This suggests that at least one facet of individuation might then be said to be the willingness to accept chance events as opportunities to expand one’s consciousness when spurred by apparently chance events that seem to convey a meaningful message presented in symbolic form. However, for those Westerners lacking such insight, the chronic assault of chance events randomly

disturbing an otherwise ordered life may induce troubling feelings of helplessness and alienation from life such as Jung observed in his practice. The evolution of consciousness in the process of individuation is the major theme of the next chapter.

### **Jung's Methodology**

Brooke (2010) believes that “Jung’s approach to psychology and to the psychological study of religious experience cannot be understood without an appreciation of his fundamentally phenomenological method” (p. 489). Husserl, father of phenomenology, championed the call to return to things as they are, to an epistemology founded in a methodology of description as free of preconceptions as possible. Although it may be speculated that Jung endeavored to pay tribute to Husserl’s phenomenological legacy, it is proposed here that Jung unconsciously employed a phenomenology more suited to psychology as a human science, namely, existential phenomenology as described by Brooke, which will be examined shortly. The insights gained through a knowledge of the development of Jung’s methodology can open a window into Jung’s inner world and allow contemporaries to see and potentially experience the world symbolically as did Jung.

Jung was not without his detractors, especially those who would expose weaknesses in his phenomenological methodology. Brooke (2010, p. 489) and Heisig (1979, p. 127) claim that Jung did not undertake an organized explanation of his methodology but instead simply referred to it in passing, thus leaving unanswered several basic questions about it.<sup>44</sup> I believe this charge is valid because Jung did not substantiate many of his claims and therefore left himself open to criticism, given that “the mass of

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<sup>44</sup> For further critique of Jung’s methodology see Heisig (1979) pp. 104-145.



allegedly unimpeachable empirical data that Jung treated as bedrock foundation for his psychological theory begins to assume the status of a vast construct born of other concerns than critical objectivity” (Heisig, 1979, p. 127). This undercurrent of criticism could perhaps deter contemporaries from taking Jung seriously and warrants further discussion before proceeding.

Jung was keenly interested in legitimizing psychology as a science distinct and separate from its previous association with metaphysics and religion, both of which he deemed to be philosophical and theological conjecture about the incomprehensible (Heisig, 1979, p. 121). Further, Jung aimed to raise psychology to the status of “superordinate science, the only discipline supposedly capable of grasping the subjective factor” (Shamdasani, 2003, p. 29) undergirding every scientific endeavor. Jung (1940/1969b) described his methodology as “exclusively phenomenological, that is, it is concerned with occurrences, events, experiences—in a word, with facts. Its truth is a fact and not a judgment” (p. 6 [CW 11, para. 4]). In his study of phenomena Jung looked across diverse cultures for comparable or different images with the aim of extracting what he believed was a depth of meaning, or structure, residing at the core of the many different examples of the phenomenon. Further, he asserted that the meanings derived from these religious images or rites should honor and hold sacred the deep religious significance of the experience without attempting to reinterpret them in terms of psychological phenomena, a caution which extended especially to archetypes (Brooke, 2010, pp. 489-490).

As a psychologist employing the phenomenological method, Jung insisted he was avoiding metaphysical speculation such as the question of the existence of God, instead

advocating the development of a dialogue exploring religious experience itself and not the ontological implications, which for Jung were considered unknowable. In so doing, Jung explained that as a psychologist he wanted to acknowledge the limits of his epistemology. Approaching psychological phenomena in their natural contexts instead of engaging in theoretical speculation is a basic principle of phenomenology termed bracketing, a process which endeavors to bracket or exclude any preconceptions a researcher may have, but which in practice is virtually impossible to achieve. However, as Brooke (2010) points out, Jung did not sufficiently bracket his Cartesian assumptions, resulting in the criticism that much of his work failed to meet the criteria demanded of the phenomenological method (p. 490). For example, Jung employed many Cartesian dualities such as body-mind, and subject-object throughout his work, perhaps as a result of his conviction that all psychic states must be viewed as a tension of opposites (Heisig, 1979, p. 117). This idea could be inferred in Jung's (1975b) observation that "the language I speak must be ambiguous, must have two meanings in order to be fair to the dual aspect of the psyche's nature" (p. 70). Thus, it is acknowledged that Jung's theories often resonated with 19th-century Cartesian overtones (Brooke, 1991, p. xvii).

This Cartesian duality appears in his neo-Kantian reference to archetypes as not only categories of apprehension structuring experience but also the architect of images or objects in the psyche (Brooke, 2010, p. 491). Thus, contained within the psyche are the archetypes that structure both psychological experience and perception of the objects to which we relate. For Jung, archetypes were not simply comparable to Kant's categories, but actually served as the foundation of categories. Jung (1918/1970) argued that ideas themselves are not inherited, but rather the "innate possibilities of ideas, *a priori*

conditions for fantasy-production, which are somewhat similar to the Kantian categories” p. 10 [CW 10, para. 14]). In Jung’s methodology, archetypes were appointed to the status of sovereign authority determining not only the psyche’s understanding of itself but also its contents. In light of his understanding of the psychoid unconscious as the ground of the archetypes, Jung took the further step of describing archetypes as transcendental entities suggesting an indiscernible, noumenal reality beyond all faculties of perception except intuition. Thus, Jung agreed with Kant’s distinction between noumena and phenomena as applied to archetypes, in that we can perceive the phenomena of images presented by archetypes but we cannot know the noumenal archetype in itself. This accords with Jung’s assertion that we cannot distinguish God directly, only the God-images resident in the psyche.

Thus, for Jung, God as the Other beyond all categories of knowing and relating remained relegated to the Kantian category of noumenon, which refers to the thing-in-itself. In alignment with Kant regarding the phenomenal realm, Jung (1975a) said “we know from experience that all acts of apperception are influenced by pre-existent patterns of perceiving objects.... archetypes” (p. 135). Hence, in further agreement with Kant, Jung concluded that absolute knowledge of an objective reality was simply not humanly possible. As well, as Pietikainen (1998b) has already pointed out, this closed circuit of archetypally determined experience and perceived object in some of Jung’s work has been called a form of solipsism, psychologism, and a “quasi-Kantian subjectivism” (Heisig, 1979, p. 111). Both Shamdasani (2003, p. 237) and Heisig (1979, p. 111) have suggested that Jung’s frequent references to Kant<sup>45</sup> might have been his strategy to

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<sup>45</sup> For more reading on criticism of Jung’s use of Kant see De Voogd (1991) pp. 204-228.

legitimize his particular methodology and epistemology, and to deflect criticism of his philosophical analyses (p. 112). Brooke (1991) has provided another possible route into the depths of Jung's psychology through a methodology grounded in the philosophy of Heidegger termed existential phenomenology which will be examined next.

**Jung and existential phenomenology.** I believe the lens of existential phenomenology can provide a clearer view of portions of Jung's work than the phenomenology just described. Unlike Husserl, Heidegger<sup>46</sup> emphasized ontology, the study of Being, over epistemology and reckoned that phenomenology must be founded on the study and assessment of the human being "thrown into the world" in a certain condition, who then studies the underlying ontology of the "lifeworld"<sup>47</sup> or *Lebenswelt*. Perhaps the most obvious reason for examining existential phenomenology is the fact that it can provide a specific methodology native to psychology when seen as a human science as opposed to the experimental procedures of natural science. Brooke (1991) has pointed out that to understand Jung's psychology it is imperative to understand Jung's phenomenological methodology. As was explained previously, Jung laid great importance on his claim to being a phenomenologist, but in his application of phenomenology, he was either inconsistent, superficial, or disorganized thereby drawing justifiable criticism.

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<sup>46</sup> For further reading on existential phenomenology see Heidegger (2008) *Being and Time*.

<sup>47</sup> For further discussion of the concept of lifeworld see Gadamer (1976/2004) *Philosophical Hermeneutics* pp. 182-197.

To bridge the gap of understanding between Jung's work and his method, Brooke (1991) believes it is necessary to return to Jung's writings to examine his struggle to express adequately his life experiences in terms of conceptual thought, a tension he was rarely able to resolve (p. xvii). As an example, Jaffé (1984) recounts an Eranos conference at which Jung gave an improvisational talk on a very complex subject. She recounted Jung as saying, "I can formulate my thoughts only as they break out of me. It is like a geyser. Those who come after me will have to put them in order" (Jung, as cited in Jaffé, 1984, p. 8). Here Jung speaks as if he were compelled by some inner guidance to express himself in a way that did not involve thinking. This example reflects those occasions for Jung when the primacy of inner experience and the necessity to engage a personal urgency superseded conscious reflection or theoretical argument. His emphasis here was on meaning derived from within thus illustrating a deep understanding and appreciation of human existence, an understanding which is essential to existential phenomenology.

However, in his attempt to relate these deep insights conceptually Jung was often inclined for several reasons to shift his perspective to more accurately reflect his meaning, a trait Brooke (1991) has called "conceptual eclecticism" (p. 3). It is helpful to keep this peculiarity in mind when interpreting Jung since his perspective is not always immediately obvious and may frustrate those seeking a deeper understanding of his writings especially concerning synchronicity. Although Jung experienced the immediacy of the world as an existential phenomenologist, at the same time he also distanced himself from the world by retreating to the realm of theoretical thought of the natural scientist.

Brooke (1991) argues that Jung's work contains within itself the means to bridge the language barrier from Jung's interpretation of his work to an existential phenomenological interpretation. It is possible that Jung experienced life as an existential phenomenologist (p. 2) who simply was not in possession of the conceptual means to articulate his insights in an academically informed existential phenomenological way. Jung's language in the previous example and throughout much of his work exhibits a creative immanence exemplified by poetry, a language of images that signals a shift in the perspective of Jung's psychology from natural-scientific to poetic. Hillman (1978) noted that Jung's "theory of images announced a poetic basis of mind, and active imagination put it into practice, even while Jung went on using scientific and theological language for his explanations" (p.162). The poetic perspective Jung employed reveals itself in an inner discourse which necessarily does not commend itself to a natural-scientific interpretation but to a very personal one. Thus, to understand what Jung was attempting to describe, one must adhere as nearly as possible to this inner dialogue, as must the contemporary seeking to follow synchronicity's possible spiritual leading. What attending to this inner dialogue entails will become a central theme of this work.

Seen from the poetic perspective, much of Jung's work may be said to employ the language of myth, religion, and depth psychology, a language harkening back to a primordial age when the earth was still perceived as being alive with a soul and spirits, captured in the language of metaphor. The spirit of the German Romanticists could be said to be alive and well in Jung's psychology. For Jung, the "as-if" nature of metaphor embodied the ethereal improbability of human existence and the expectant immediacy of life, making it the ideal language of analytical psychology. The shift in perspective from

natural-scientific to poetic radically transformed Jung's view of humankind and the psychology he developed to encompass the breadth and depth of human existence.

From its inherently poetic perspective, analytical psychology can penetrate through the persona of scientific psychology to the visionary inner core creating and informing it, that is, the archetypes. In Jung's view, it is the archetypes which shape the ideas with which psychology operates in the psyche and thereby lend to these ideas an abstract mythical quality. Thus seen, scientific psychology becomes a form of myth-making, and materialism merely God by another name (Jung, 1931/1969b, p. 341 [CW 8, para. 655]). As Jung (1940/1969a) said, "psychology therefore translates the archaic speech of myth into a modern mythologem—not yet, of course, recognized as such—which constitutes one element of the myth 'science'" (p. 179, [CW 9i, para. 302]).

Perhaps Heidegger (1971) best described the sense in which Jung was a poet when he said, "We are too late for the gods and too early for Being. Being's poem, just begun, is man" (p. 4). Here Heidegger (1927/2008) distinguishes between being as things as they exist in themselves and Being which he termed *Dasein* as the human confrontation with being and the ensuing revelation of something previously hidden. Jung the poet emerged as a pivotal figure in the spiritually destitute wasteland between the dawn of the Enlightenment signaling the death of the gods and the yet-to-be realized advent of Being. As noted previously, Jung (1933/1933) was keenly aware of "the senselessness and emptiness" (p. 61) of the lives of his patients, and of his mission as therapist to desperate souls. He endeavored to reawaken in humanity a poetic sensibility that sees the divine in all things, including each human being, and thereby be moved to attend to the soul of the world. As Heidegger announced, humanity is Being's poem and

Jung saw humanity through the eyes of a poet. Jung was, in a sense, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “The gods have become diseases, Zeus no longer rules Olympus but the solar plexus” (1929/1967, p. 37 [CW 13, para. 54]). This characterization of Jung (1921/1976b) as “the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (p. 402 [CW 6, para. 662]) was in fact incorporated in his description of the introverted intuitive in his work on psychological types to be addressed presently.

As Hillman (1978) noted previously, Jung continued to use natural-scientific language to describe his psychology, even as he employed the human science language of myth and metaphor to illustrate his theory of images. However, although myth and metaphor infuse human existence with renewed energy, the inherent mystery and wondrous spectacle of life refuse to be captured by natural-scientific language. A tension is necessarily created between the typical Western view insisting on rational-logical explanations couched in natural-scientific language, and the opinion of those, notably contemporaries, recognizing the futility of attempting to define the indefinable. As Jung (1926/1969) asked, “How can we bring within the orbit of our thought those limitless complexes of facts which we call ‘spirit’ and ‘life’ unless we clothe them in verbal concepts, themselves mere counters of the intellect?” (p. 319 [CW 8, para. 601]). From this tension, a symbol can be born, as Jung (1926/1969) explained:

When the idea or principle involved is inscrutable, when its intentions are obscure in origin and in aim and yet enforce themselves, then the spirit is necessarily felt as an independent being, as a kind of higher consciousness, and its inscrutable, superior nature can no longer be expressed in the concepts of human reason. Our



powers of expression then have recourse to other means; they create a symbol.

(pp. 335-336 [CW 8, para. 643])

The vital role of tension between opposites in creating symbols will be explored further in following chapters. I believe the tension just described between natural-science and human-science language prompted Jung to use ambiguous language to reflect the dual attributes of the psyche. Pairs of opposites, such as the paradoxical Self, figure prominently in Jung's psychology, as Jung (1955-56/1970b) noted when he explained that "the pairs of opposites constitute the phenomenology of the paradoxical *self*, man's totality" (p. 6 [CW 14, para. 4]). Jung's reference to pairs of opposites also demonstrates the influence on his psychology of the Eastern principles, mentioned earlier, of *ṛta* and *dharma* operating as regulators to maintain balance between pairs of opposites, and the Romantic theories of the interplay of opposites. This characteristic of ambiguity resulting in tension is also fundamental to the ontology of existential phenomenology, which undergirds Jung's poetic perspective with both the ontology and the epistemology of its well established tradition. To understand what it means to see the world from a poetic perspective, it is helpful to look more closely at the etymological root of our word *poetry*, which is derived from the ancient Greek verb *ποιέω*, meaning to create or make. As a verb *ποιέω* denotes an activity that both transforms and sustains the world not in a physical or technical way, but rather in a metaphysical sense. As a noun *ποιέω* becomes *ποίησις*, meaning creation or production, which becomes *poiesis* in English. Thus, *poiesis* is a creation which both transforms and sustains the world in a metaphysical sense. To assess Jung's work as *poiesis* means to validate the epistemology of metaphor and the ontological reality from which it springs.

**Jung's psychological type.** What caused Jung to describe his psychology from a poetic perspective in such a compelling way? As discussed earlier, Jung proposed that an individual's psychology is a manifestation of their subjective confession (Shamdasani, 2003, p. 75) that constrains an individual to see life through a particular lens. That lens has been called a mode of consciousness (Beebe, 2004, pp. 83-115), an inborn disposition (Shamdasani, 2003, p. 75), or by Jung (1933/1933) psychological type (pp. 74-94). The concept of type is deeply ingrained in Jung's (1925/1976) psychology, especially in the process of individuation, describing the evolution of the personality towards psychic wholeness in which an individual endeavors to make conscious the functions of "*sensation, thinking, feeling, intuition*" (p. 518 [CW 6, para. 899]).

There has been much conjecture regarding Jung's possible psychological type but Heisig (1979, footnote 4, p. 105) notes that Jaffé believed that although Jung himself vacillated on whether intuition or thinking was his dominant or auxiliary function, Jung's attitude-type was most definitely introverted. The Osmond Group's typology (Giannini, Beebe, & McCaulley, 2004, pp. 195-234) avoids the indecision about which function is dominant by combining the four functions into pairs regardless of which function is primary.<sup>48</sup> The result of combining the thinking and intuitive modes of Jung's consciousness forms the archetype of the NT "Ethereal" (p. 198). This archetype resonates with both inner and outer cosmic reality reflected in Jung's development of the principle of synchronicity which unites both subject and object, inner and outer (pp. 198-99). Intuition may be thought of as the indirect perception of material arising from the unconscious (Jung, 1931/1976, p. 538 [CW 6, para. 951]) to which the unconscious adds

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<sup>48</sup> See also the Osmond group regarding types in Giannini et al. (2004, pp. 189-201).

associations from external sensations (Myers & Myers, 1995, p. 2). Through intuition, the Ethereal experiences the inner world of imagination with the same intensity and realism as the outer material world, a trait already noted.

The Ethereal's experience of reality expands far beyond the concerns of the material world into transcendental realms. Reality for the Ethereal is "the psyche, experienced as synonymous with the mind, and the limitless possibilities offered by the mind" (Osmond, Siegler, & Smoke, 2008, p. 213). When the Ethereal type is realized in an introverted attitude such as Jung's, an individual sees future possibilities in the visions arising from the unconscious in which space and time have ceased to have relevance. Thus, "the separation of events in space or time is skipped over in favor of coincidences on the level of the collective unconscious (synchronistic connections)" (Meier, 1975/1995, p. 49). Jung's introverted Ethereal type may partially help to explain why he developed the theory of synchronicity, and his heightened attunement to synchronistic experiences. This observation suggests that those individuals with the qualities of the Ethereal, especially the introverted Ethereal psychological type, may be more innately predisposed and prepared to see the synchronistic connection between inner psychic and outer material events.

But the Ethereal's mystical world is also balanced and constrained by the strong and decisive organizing capability of the introverted thinking function, in which facts become the building blocks of a theory, whether or not the facts actually fit the theory, so that the imagination may wander uninhibited (Jung, 1921/1976b, p. 381 [CW 6, para. 629]). Given the combination of qualities of creativity and organization, the Ethereal could also be called the "Creative Scientist" (Giannini, Beebe, & McCaulley, 2004, p.

199). Brooke (2010) has conjectured that Jung's "theory of psychological types suggests that there may be constitutionally different ways of being a religious person, and that at least some of our theological, ritualistic, or experiential differences might be typological" (p. 491). Thus, for the contemporary seeking to tease out the possible symbolic meaning or meanings potentially embedded in a synchronicity, psychological type may play a significant role in the choice of certain symbolic meanings over others.<sup>49</sup>

### **Psyche and cosmos.**

The occurrence of synchronicities is seen as permitting a continuing dialogue with the unconscious and with the larger whole of life while also calling forth an aesthetic and spiritual appreciation of life's powers of symbolically resonant complex patterning.... Jung saw nature and one's surrounding environment as a living matrix of potential synchronistic meaning that could illuminate the human sphere. (Tarnas, 2006, p. 56)

In his later work, Jung (1954/1969b) indicated that it was probable that psyche and matter were different facets of an underlying unity (p. 215 [CW 8, para. 418]). Le Grice (2010) observes that Jung's studies of synchronicity influenced him to reconsider his long-held belief of two separate domains consisting on the one hand of an intrapsychic domain and on the other of the whole of nature. It is proposed that these considerations culminated in Jung's general agreement to an "underlying psyche-cosmos identity" (pp. 170-171). In a letter dated 30 August 1951, Jung (1975b) refers to the archetype as an "arranger of

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<sup>49</sup> For a more detailed discussion of psychological type from a depth psychological perspective see Meier (1975/1995), *Personality: The Individuation Process in the Light of C. G. Jung's Typology*.

psychic forms” (p. 22), which appears to be both internal and external to the psyche.

From this one might gather that Jung continues to adhere to Kantian dualism and does not yet endorse the unity of the psyche. However, as Le Grice (2010, p. 171) points out, by 21 October 1957, Jung (1975b) was endorsing the model of a cosmic psyche (*psyche tou kosmou*) known also as the *anima mundi*, where individual psyches merge becoming identical and functioning as a unified whole (p. 399).

Jung (1975b) continues in his 21 October 1957 letter to explain that evidence for a cosmic psyche can be observed in parapsychological “psi-phenomena” (p. 399) such as a precognition, an example of which he had personally experienced before WWI.

Crucially, I believe that Jung reached this conclusion through a series of personal synchronistic experiences that accumulated over a lifetime and not simply through metaphysical arguments. One might describe the feeling arising from the successful construction in the mind of a metaphysical argument as spiritual, whereas personal experience of the spiritual through a synchronicity, discerned as a felt-sense in the body, results in soul-making. As Corbett (2010) explains, “the soul casts the experience of spirit into emotions and images that are transmitted into personal awareness and into the body, a process known as the ego-Self axis” (p. 866).

As mentioned previously, the foundation of Jung’s psychology is neither spirit nor matter but a third domain between them he termed *esse in anima*, namely soul, which binds the opposites of spirit and matter in a dynamic tension. Corbett (2010) explained that Jung used the term *soul* in different ways (p. 866). For example “sometimes ‘soul’ was used as if it were synonymous with the whole psyche, which for Jung is an irreducible realm in its own right” (p. 866). However, at other times “Jung also uses the

term soul as if it were a kind of psychological organ which produces images and symbols which act as a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious” (p. 866). Corbett (2010) explains the difference between soul and anima: “Jung used the term ‘soul-figures’ to refer to a female figure in a man’s dream (the anima) or a male figure in a woman’s dream (the animus)” (p. 866). So the anima (or animus) is a soul-figure as opposed to soul itself. Corbett remarks “today, we are reluctant to attribute specific gender qualities to the soul, because these often repeat gender stereotypes. What remains important is the soul’s function of linkage to the unconscious” (p. 866).

Thus, Jung’s ontological position of *esse in anima* or being in soul means “that our experience of the world is a combination of its material reality and the way the psyche or the soul imagines or fantasizes about it” (p. 866). I believe that Jung’s (1933) emphasis on soul stemmed in part from his acute awareness of the “the general neurosis of our age” (p. 61) created by the psychological void left by the diminution and eventual virtual banishment of soul from Christianity beginning in its earliest days with the apostle Paul. As Hillman (2013) noted “these ancient historical events are responsible for the malnourished root of our Western psychological culture and of the culture of each of our souls” (p. 72). This topic will be revisited in Chapter 5.

The anima as soul and the anima as a component of the Self are related but distinct ideas in Jungian depth psychology. Jung (1951/1969h, p. 22 [CW 9ii, para. 42]) discussed the archetype of the anima as a component of the *syzygy* of anima and animus and its relation to the Self. He described the construction of two related but different archetypes, each of which he called the *marriage quaternio*, which are in turn each composed of four archetypes, two of which are imminent and two of which are

transcendent. In a man the marriage quaternio is composed of two imminent archetypes, the masculine subject, the opposing feminine subject, and two transcendent archetypes, the anima, and the Wise Old man. In a woman the imminent archetypes are the same, but the transcendent archetypes are the animus and the Chthonic Mother. Jung stated that “the marriage quaternio provides a schema for the Self” (p. 22 [CW 9ii, para. 42]). Thus, the syzygy plays a key role in Jung’s depiction of the Self. However, he seems to be undecided as to whether or not the syzygy may actually be the two halves of the Self, and not just component parts of the two halves of the Self.

I believe that Jung’s (1961/1989) view of the relationship between psyche and cosmos was deeply influenced by a personal synchronicity during a near-death experience in early 1944 (pp. 289-298). In a state of near-death he had a profound spiritual experience that completely changed his perspective on his earthly existence. Near death, he experienced himself floating high above the earth and realized he was departing the world of the living. Floating in the inky blackness of space, he became aware of a huge, dark block of stone with an entrance, and, as he approached, he became painfully aware of being stripped of all his worldly desires and left in “objective form” (p. 291) no longer needing or desiring anything. What remained was a certainty that he was the sum total of all his experiences. Emptied of his desires, he was left only with a feeling of “great fullness” (p. 292).

Suddenly he was called back to the world of the living by his doctor, who told him the earth refused to grant him the right to die. I believe this was a major synchronicity in Jung’s life, offering him a view of the psyche literally from a cosmic perspective and thereby confronting him with the need to revise and expand his

intrapsychic model of the archetypes and the collective unconscious to account for what he had been gifted to see—psyche as cosmos. It was as if the unconscious knew his thinking was too restrictive and attempted to compensate his conscious position with an extraordinarily dramatic and graphic vision clothed in a synchronistic near-death experience. I believe the spiritual truth revealed in this life-altering synchronicity had a transformative effect in Jung's psyche, making the psychoid archetype a reality to him and thereby releasing him from imprisonment within the human frame. Jung's (1961/1989) synchronicity brought numinous visions of "the end of all things" (p. 297) that resulted in his surrendering himself to the unrestricted flow of his thoughts in imagining new theories, a natural response facilitated by his Ethereal nature.

Jung's major essays "On Synchronicity" (1951/1969b), and "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle" (1952/1969b) did not explicitly express his expanded view of the psyche, but Tarnas (2006) believes this change is evident in the way Jung conducted his life thereafter (pp. 56-57). Recently, Le Grice (2010) has cogently presented the case for expanding the depth psychological notion of psyche from an exclusively intrapsychic process to one in which psyche and cosmos are identical at some fundamental level. Although psyche and cosmos both derive from a common substratum, they are essentially distinct dimensions of that common ground, but with some degree of correlation. In some respects, this may have similarities to the syndetic model of Aziz (2007), who has called for a shift from a closed-system intrapsychic model of a self-regulating psyche to an open-system model of a psyche that extends beyond the intrapsychic and is seamlessly woven into the fabric of a totality encompassing nature in its entirety. Aziz (2007) calls this model the syndetic paradigm, in which the self-



regulation of the psyche is no longer an interactive compensation between the conscious and the unconscious, but rather between “consciousness and nature in its entirety” (p. 35). This vision is commensurate with the view of modern physics of “a world which ultimately constitutes a dynamic, inseparable whole....of the ultimate dynamic interconnectivity of phenomenal reality” (p. 36) replacing a mechanistic worldview in which the whole is equal to the sum of its parts.

It is here proposed that Jung’s intrapsychic model of the psyche with the Self and archetypes of the unconscious is still very relevant to those in the early stages of spiritual development, a view to be discussed in the next chapter.<sup>50</sup> But for those contemporaries seeking a spiritual path that ventures beyond the gravity of the intrapsychic model where archetypes orbit the Self in a planet-like fashion, there is ample evidence to support the concept of a holistic, self-organizing, archetypal cosmos in which an enduring synchronicity is astrologically played out in the transits of the planets amongst the constellations of the stars and their correlations with archetypal themes in human experience. I believe Jung’s intention to view synchronicity as played out in the fullness of nature, as implied by his introduction of the psychoid nature of the archetypes, can finally be fulfilled by embracing the possibility of a holistic, self-organizing, archetypal cosmos.

**The psychoid nature of the archetypes.** Having charted a heretofore unknown route to the new world of the unconscious, in his later life Jung postulated the psychoid nature of the archetypes permitting the appearance of both psychic and physical forms

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<sup>50</sup> For further discussion of spiritual growth, see Carlock (2003), *The Quest for True Joy in Union with God in Mystical Christianity: An Intuitive Inquiry Study*.

linked in meaning by a symbol as in synchronistic experiences. In his 21 October 1957 letter Jung (1975b) disclosed that there are two possible ways to experience the psyche. Within our ordinary world of measurable space and time we experience the psyche as “within.” However, space-time, either relatively or totally, vanishes (p. 399) in the collective psyche, the psychoid archetype realm of the cosmic psyche. I believe Jung’s near-death vision brought this home to him. When questioned about the non-objectivity of time and space, Jung said he preferred to ask, “On which level or in which world are space and time not valid?” (p. 398). Westerners limited by lack of experience of any other reality believe the world is real and can be described by objective measures of space and time. When Jung equates psyche and cosmos, he is speaking about their equality in the psychoid archetype realm, not in the “objective” or visible world of nature. As he said, “in the Unus Mundus,<sup>4</sup>...there is no incommensurability between so-called matter and so-called psyche” (p. 400) because they are one and the same.

The expanded worldview implied in Jung’s synchronistic near-death experience reflects “the view of reality emerging from the new paradigm sciences, [that] there is a fundamental unity between all existent things in the universe” (Le Grice, 2010, p. 98). In describing the archetype as psychoid, Jung identified it as operating in the same realm as quantum physics, where time and space become relative in a unitary reality of a “dynamic interconnected whole” (Aziz, 2007, p. 58). Released from the confines of an intrapsychic phenomenon, synchronicity became for Jung a way of conversing with all of nature and developing an appreciation for the spiritual significance of “*symbolically resonant complex patterning*” (Tarnas, 2006, pp. 56-57). The soul of the world, the anima

mundi, was restored to its rightful place as the “voice” of synchronicity in a cosmos alive with meaning.

**Mind-matter split.** The collaboration of Jung and Pauli may be viewed as a dialogue between depth psychology and quantum physics which addressed their critically important common ground—the mind-matter connection. In particular, I propose that Jung and Pauli’s mutual interest in reconciling the mind-nature split was spurred by a series of synchronicities resulting in a reformulation of the archetype with the potential to expand the limits of the psyche. Their dialogue which led to this expansion is an example of the ordering principle of entelechy, operating in a holistic, self-organizing universe as described, for example, by Jantsch (1980). Laszlo (2008) emphasizes that the universe is not merely a vacuum of empty space but “an energy and information-filled ‘cosmic plenum,’ the womb of all that exists, and the background of all that happens, in space and time” (p. 89). Similarly, theoretical physicist John Wheeler sees the universe as an enormous “information processing system” (Davies & Gribbin, 1992, p. 307) something like a giant computer whose final goal, if any, is undecided.

Early in their collaboration from 1932 to 1958, Jung interpreted many of Pauli’s powerful archetypal dreams, which Lindorff (2004) suggests encouraged a movement towards psychic wholeness as if some invisible mentor, which Jung called the Self, knew his future and was leading him to his destiny (p. 30). Through his dreams, Pauli came to appreciate intuition as a valid source of knowledge unavailable to the intellect alone, and thus to understand the role of the archetypal unconscious as the ground of creativity (p. 85). Some of the symbols in his dreams during World War II were physical representations of central concepts in physics leading him to believe that these symbols

had an archetypal origin (p. 91). Because of the striking correspondence of inner and outer, between the symbols of his dreams and their dual meaning in physics, he became determined to identify a common substrate uniting matter and psyche in which they were “complementary aspects of the same reality” (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955, p. 210). Because of an especially helpful conversation with Jung in 1948, Pauli encouraged him to write about “‘the synchronicity’ of dreams and outer experiences” (p. 99). Largely through Pauli’s insistence that physical as well as psychic activity be included in the description of the archetype, Jung (as cited in Meier, 2001, pp. 36-42) wrote his major essays “On Synchronicity” (1951) and “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle” (1952) relating the psychic and physical through the psychoid nature of the archetype (p. 100).

In his letter of 21 October 1957 Jung (1975b) stated that the phenomenon of synchronicity is “relatively rare” (p. 399) but it is nonetheless “an all pervading...principle in the universe, i.e., in the *Unus Mundus*” (p. 400). Importantly, Jung (1952/1969b) conceded that if there existed a synchronistic relationship between body and soul then he would need to reassess whether synchronicity is actually rare (p. 500 [CW 8, footnote 70, para. 938]). His 1957 letter is extraordinarily revealing in that he concedes that in his experience there is no consistent connection between archetype and synchronistic event (p. 399). This work assumes that the principle of synchronicity pervades the universe at the level of the *unus mundus*, and that through synchronicity the spiritual dimension of the psyche unfolds into the physical world.

Cambray (2014, p. 50) points out that Jung’s (1954/1969b, p. 215 [CW 8, para. 418]) hesitancy to accept the dual-aspect nature of psyche and matter, might have resulted from an inadequate understanding of the significance of quantum entanglement

for synchronicity and the psychoid nature of the archetypes. As Aziz (2007) has noted, the ripple effect of Jung's tentative attitude has been to lessen the potential significance of synchronicity in depth psychology and the world at large. As discussed previously, quantum physicists have verified an instantaneous, non-local correlation termed quantum entanglement, between atomic-scale particles separated by large distances (Nichol, 2003, p. 4). Non-locality in quantum physics means that the properties of a system are holistic rather than dependent on the interaction of separate parts in a specific locality (Mindell, 2004, p. 241). The instantaneous communication between atomic-scale particles with no apparent cause-and-effect interaction resembles the apparently acausal relation of psychic and physical events in a synchronicity arising from activated archetypes in the psychoid realm where the "apparent objectivity of time and space" (Jung, 1975b, p. 398) is relativized. The phenomenon of entanglement in quantum physics may be the closest analogy to Jung's conception of the psychophysical phenomenon of synchronicity (Filk, 2014, p. 103).

Entanglement at the quantum level and throughout the cosmos would strongly point to some type of interconnectivity between various dimensions of the universe. This possibility is suggested, for example, by astrology, which, as Le Grice (2010) states, is based on a remarkably constant correlation of cycles and configurations of the planets at a given point in time and meaningful "archetypal themes" (p. 91) emerging from this correspondence not only individually, but also globally (pp. 125-29). As previously noted, because of these extraordinarily consistent correlations, astrology may be viewed as being founded on a type of "enduring synchronicity" (p. 129).

Regarding his rationale for studying synchronistic experiences, Jung (1952/1969b) revealed “how much these inner experiences meant to my patients,” and yet his patients were reluctant to disclose them, “for fear of exposing themselves to thoughtless ridicule.” As a result, Jung noted, “my interest in this problem has a human as well as a scientific foundation” (p. 420 [CW 8, para. 816]). I believe there are fundamental reasons why synchronicity has apparently proved difficult to validate so far. As Cambray (2009) has explained, “events that are unique, not reproducible, and have an idiosyncratic quality are subjective, and subjectivity thus has an asymmetric dimension....the unique quality of the experience cannot be wholly communicated” (p. 67). I would agree that acausal, unreproducible, unique events cannot, by definition, be subject to scientific methods based on the laws of causality used to objectively authenticate data surrounding an event, whether on the astronomical or quantum physical scale. As Jung (1975b) said, “everything that can be repeated experimentally is necessarily causal, for the whole concept of causality is based on this statistical result” (p. 420).

Tarnas (2006) believed regarding synchronicities that “only if such phenomena were in some sense public and pervasive rather than private and exceptional... could the suggestion of a deeper order be effectively substantiated” (p. 61). As described previously, Jung (1952/1969b) distinguished synchronistic events as “acts of creation in time” (p. 517 [CW 8, para. 965]) as distinct from the acts of creation belonging to the category of general acausal orderedness represented by phenomena which have always existed. Tarnas (2006) maintains that astrology “posits a systematic symbolic correspondence between planetary positions and the events of human existence” (p. 61)

and thus belongs to the classification of general acausal orderedness. It was not only Jung's (1954/1969b) interest in his patients' experiences but also his attraction to astrology that led to his researches in that subject since he was convinced that astrology and the techniques of the *I Ching* were based on synchronicity (p. 205 [CW 8, footnote 118, para. 405]). Jung's (1952/1969b) researches on astrology, recorded in "An Astrological Experiment," attempted to demonstrate the existence of synchronicity, but he acknowledged "that his views concerning synchronicity have not been proved" (Jung as cited in Main, 2004, p. 38). Nonetheless, Jung (1931/1962a) expressed the opinion that "astrology would be an excellent example of manifest synchronicity if it had at its disposal thoroughly tested findings" (pp. 141-142).

I would like to propose that the comprehensive, indeed exhaustive, research by Tarnas (2006) into the manifestation of the principle of synchronicity in astrology meets Jung's stated criterion. Tarnas explains:

I have become convinced, after the most painstaking investigation and critical assessment of which I am capable, that there does in fact exist a highly significant—indeed a pervasive—correspondence between planetary movements and human affairs, and that the modern assumption to the contrary has been erroneous. The evidence suggests not that the planets themselves cause various events or character traits, but rather that a consistently meaningful empirical correspondence exists between the two sets of phenomena, astronomical and human, with the connecting principle most fruitfully approached as some form of archetypally informed synchronicity. (pp. 68-69)

As previously noted, because of these extraordinarily consistent correlations astrology may be viewed as being founded on a type of “enduring synchronicity” (Le Grice, 2010, p. 129).

**Synchronicity and time.** It is useful at this point to examine more closely Jung’s thoughts on synchronicity in order to gain a greater understanding of the possible roles of time in a synchronicity. Main (2004) asserts that “even if we restrict ourselves to the examples of synchronicity provided by Jung, we find that the range of phenomena to which the notion is applied is so wide that not one of his attempts at detailed definition adequately encompasses it” (p. 39). To be fair to Jung, I believe that one must acknowledge Jung’s own thoughts regarding his attempts to define and clarify this difficult concept. Jung (1952/1969b) conceded that “the difficulties of the problem and its presentation seemed to me too great; too great the intellectual responsibility without which such a subject cannot be tackled; too inadequate, in the long run, my scientific training” (p. 419 [CW 8, para. 816]). He recognized that “there can be no question of a complete description and explanation of these complicated phenomena, but only an attempt to broach the problem in such a way as to reveal some of its manifold aspects and connections” (p. 420 [CW 8, para. 816]). Likewise, no attempt will be undertaken here to categorically define what may or may not be a synchronicity. In light of the prevailing authority of science to render the judgment of truth or falsehood on virtually all aspects of Western thinking, definitions will be offered but only to serve the purpose of providing a starting point for inquiry into this innately depth psychological concept in which the law of causality is superseded by the law of acausality and all its implications.



For example, for purposes of discussion at the beginning of this work, a synchronicity was described as a “dream, fantasy, feeling, or other psychological state” of an individual that was experienced as related in a personal and meaningful way to an objective event not caused by the individual. This description does not mention time whereas Jung (1952/1969b) stated that “synchronicity...means the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state—and, in certain cases, vice versa” (p. 441 [CW 8, para. 850]). Here Jung used the phrase “momentary subjective state,” introduced previously, to indicate that even though events do not happen at the same clock-time, they are consciously experienced as such when unconscious contents rise to the level of consciousness. Jung is deliberate in his choice of the term *synchronicity* “because the simultaneous occurrence of two meaningfully but not causally connected events seemed to me an essential criterion” (p. 441 [CW 8, para. 849]).

Another difficulty in understanding the role of time in Jung’s definition of synchronicity arises from his use of the terms state and event. Main (2004) notes that Jung uses the terms *state* and *event* throughout his work but nowhere defines them (p. 42). One might assume that a state refers to a psychic state and an event refers to a physical event; however, this can only be inferred. From Jung’s description of a “momentary subjective state” one might also gain the impression that such states are quite brief and physical events even shorter. However, as Main points out, Jung has cited at least one example in which an inner psychic state is not at all brief but rather an “ongoing subjective state” (p. 42). Then there are synchronistic events that fall under the classification of general acausal orderedness, which Jung (1952/1969b) previously

described “as the continuous creation of a pattern that exists from all eternity, repeats itself sporadically, and is not derivable from any known antecedents” (p. 518 [CW 8, para. 967]).

Jung (1952/1969b) established a definition of synchronicity referencing a “momentary subjective state,” (p. 441 [CW 8, para. 850]) but shortly after offered an alternative definition which added a second psychic state. Jung here defined synchronicity as the “simultaneous occurrence of two different psychic states. One of them is the normal, probable state (i.e., the one that is causally explicable), and the other, the critical experience, is the one that cannot be derived causally from the first” (pp. 444-445 [CW 8, para. 855]). Main (2004) explains that the apparently missing reference to a physical event “is understood as the ‘objective existence’ of the ‘critical’ psychic event” (p. 44). Main interprets Jung as saying that “synchronicity consists of the coincidence not between the critical psychic event and its objective correlate but between two psychic events” (p. 44). According to Jung’s (1952/1969b) alternative definition a synchronicity occurs when “an unexpected content which is directly or indirectly connected with some objective external event coincides with the ordinary psychic state” (p. 445 [CW 8, para. 855]).

In the case presented earlier of Jung’s (1952/1969b) female patient who dreamed of receiving jewelry in the form of a golden scarab beetle, the dream would be the unexpected content, whereas the objective material event to which this is “directly or indirectly connected” (p. 445 [CW 8, para. 855]) is the arrival in Jung’s therapy room of an actual beetle closely resembling the golden scarab beetle of her dream. The “ordinary psychic state” (p. 445 [CW 8, para. 855]) of mind of the patient would be identified as her

undue rationalizing and intellectualizing. As Main (2004) explains, “it is this ordinary state which is simultaneous with the unexpected content of the dream and which Jung...says ‘coincides’ with it” (p. 45).

Recognizing the need to clarify the definitions of synchronicity offered in Jung’s 1952 essay “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle,” Main (2004, p. 45) notes that Jung added a *Résumé* to the 1955 English translation of this essay. In this edition Jung (1952/1955) described synchronicity as the occurrence of a “*meaningful coincidence in time*” (p. 144) taking one of three forms as follows:

1. The coincidence of a certain psychic content with a corresponding objective process which is perceived to take place simultaneously.
2. The coincidence of a subjective psychic state with a phantasm (dream or vision) which later turns out to be a more or less faithful reflection of a 'synchronistic', objective event that took place more or less simultaneously, but at a distance.
3. The same, except that the event perceived takes place in the future and is represented in the present only by a phantasm that corresponds to it. (pp. 144-145)

I believe definitions two and three fall into the categories of clairvoyance and precognition, given that “the coinciding events are not yet present in the observer’s field of perception, but have been anticipated in time in so far as they can only be verified afterward” (p. 526 [CW 8, para. 985]). As noted previously, the phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, and precognition will not receive as much attention as Jung’s first category but are included for completeness in this work.

In the first category it is interesting to note that the “objective process” is reduced to being merely “perceived to take place simultaneously” as contrasted to the previous requirement of strict simultaneity in time even though Jung began his definitions with the descriptor “meaningful coincidence in time.” Jung (1952/1955) contrasts the description of a synchronicity in the first category with the other two categories. In the first category of synchronicities, “an objective event coincides with a subjective content” (p. 145). However, in the other two categories, “the synchronicity...can only be verified subsequently, though the synchronistic event as such is formed by the coincidence of a neutral psychic state with a phantasm (dream or vision)” (144-145). The focus of the second and third definitions of synchronicity in 1955 changed from coincidence between a psychic state and a physical event as described in his 1952 definitions, to coincidence between two psychic states.

Jung’s introduction of the normal psychic state allowed him to maintain his insistence on simultaneity in time. In all three categories, synchronicity required simultaneity in time between a normal psychic state and an unexpected psychic content regardless of the separation in space or time between the unexpected psychic content and its objective physical correlate. However, as Main (2004, p. 46) points out, in making this change Jung created a second acausal relationship between the two psychic states alongside the already acausal relationship between the unexpected psychic content and the physical event corresponding to it. Main asserts that Jung did not acknowledge this difficulty. He also apparently did not address the problem that the two psychic states are not only essentially impossible to document, since they are intrapsychic, but are also potentially causally connected. Such inconsistencies prompted Main to state “Jung’s

attempts at detailed definition of the phenomenon are inadequate even to account for his own examples” (p. 47).

Jung never dealt with the inconsistencies of time in his writings on synchronicity (Aziz, 1990, p. 149). He distinguished only between the “fixed time” of consciousness and “relative time” of the psychoid unconscious through which the timeliness and timelessness (Bishop, 2008) of the spiritual dimension of the psyche is revealed in synchronicities. Also, Jung did not consistently indicate which notion of time he was referencing in his discussions, resulting in confusion even today (Aziz, 1990, p. 58). Aziz proposes that the term *synchronicity* be reserved for the relative time of the psychoid world and the descriptor of synchronistic event be used for fixed time experiences (p. 59). Relative time may be involved in Cambray’s (2009) illustration of a “cultural synchronicity” (pp. 88-107) concerning a series of “serendipitous” events that took place over a period of approximately twenty years and that likely include a synchronicity leading to the discovery of penicillin.

The issue of time in Jung’s description of synchronicity is possibly one of the most confusing aspects of Jung’s theory, a confusion that could potentially discourage contemporaries from seriously considering synchronicity as a spiritual path (Aziz, 1990, p. 63). Perhaps one approach to understanding Jung’s stress on simultaneity in his early formulation of synchronicity comes from understanding Jung’s keen interest in Chinese philosophy, especially the *I Ching*, with which he became quite familiar as early as 1920 (Jung, 1961/1989, p. 373). From his early experiments with the Chinese oracle he realized it provided meaningful but inexplicable associations with his personal thoughts, in other words, synchronistic associations (p. 374). Then, in 1928 Jung painted a mandala

featuring at the center a very Chinese-looking golden castle.<sup>51</sup> Shortly after this he received from his friend Wilhelm<sup>52</sup> a copy of the Taoist-alchemical text *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, which described the “yellow castle, the germ of the immortal body” (p. 197) which is none other than a symbol of the Self, confirming Jung’s speculations about the significance of the mandala as a symbol of the Self. Recognizing this coincidence as a highly meaningful synchronicity, I believe Jung was influenced to emphasize the “Chinese notion of time as a continuum in which certain qualities manifest relatively simultaneously in different places” (Meier, 2001, p. xxx). Also worth noting is the natural human tendency to ascribe more significance to relatively simultaneous events if only because the timing of the events seems too close to be purely coincidental.

However, as has been discussed previously, Jung’s emphasis on simultaneity in time shifted significantly when he considered the relativity of time as proven by Einstein’s theory of relativity. After considering the evidence, Jung (1975b) said in a letter to Harding 5 December 1951 that he was persuaded to believe “that the psyche exists in a relative space and in a relative time, that is, in a relatively non-extended and eternal state” (p. 29). Here Jung (1952/1969b) demonstrated the influence of Chinese philosophy on his thinking regarding the psychoid nature of the archetypes. The concept of relative space and time also has roots in the *Tao Teh Ching* in which Tao, translated as meaning by Wilhelm (1967), exists as a “non-spatial and non-temporal unity” (p. 487

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<sup>51</sup> For further details on this figure see Wilhelm (1931/1962) *The Secret of the Golden Flower* fig. 10. See also Jung (1955/1969b), “Concerning Mandala Symbolism” fig. 36 and p. 377.

<sup>52</sup> On Richard Wilhelm, see Jung (1961/1989) pp. 373-377.

[CW 8, para. 921]). Thus, whereas consciousness may perceive events as greatly separated in linear time, they may actually not be separated in the domain of the psyche where the concept of time separation does not exist.

Jung's emphasis on inherent meaning in a synchronicity may well have been influenced also by observing that the *I Ching* imbues each moment in time with a unique quality pregnant with meaning unlike the otherwise meaningless scientific measurement of time in the West. The *I Ching* is based on the principle that all things are interconnected, so that the principles of Yin and Yang work in our psychology as well as in the stars and the majestic movements of the planets (Jung, 1984, pp. 415-417). It might be noted that astrology also places much emphasis on a unique meaning associated with a particular time.<sup>53</sup> As previously stated, archetypal astrology views the configurations of the planets in a self-organizing universe as the physical expressions of underlying, archetypally structured, meaningful patterns manifesting in diverse ways and extending to the deepest levels of human existence (Le Grice, 2010, p. 112). Although greatly simplified for this example, one may envision the astrological chart as portraying a unique configuration of interrelated archetypal energies converging at the time of an individual's birth and imbuing that individual with a specific set of potentials or possible outcomes for their particular life. In astrology as an enduring synchronicity, strengths, weaknesses, destinies, and fates are given a form in a unique human being who will encounter synchronicities in their life as I did in my second Saturn return. In the

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<sup>53</sup> For further discussion on the significance of time in astrology see Arroyo (1992)

*Astrology, Karma and Transformation* (2nd ed.).

following chapters the relationship between meaning and consciousness will be explored in more detail.



## Chapter 4

### On Synchronicity and the Psyche

It has been argued to this point that the psychic reality of the Jungian collective unconscious or objective psyche has been established through the examination of its deep roots in philosophy and human experience.<sup>54</sup> Jung (1921/1976e) claimed that empirically derived data provided the psychological foundation “to treat the contents of the unconscious as just as *real* as the things of the outside world, even though these two realities are mutually contradictory and appear to be entirely different in their natures” (p. 168 [CW 6, para. 279]). With that assurance, those in the modern West who have become disenchanted with the empty promises of materialism may discover renewed meaning for their lives by consciously choosing, as Le Grice (2016) has said, to “access an unsuspected realm of unconscious motivations, deeper life meanings, and powerful dynamisms that shape our lives in the background of our awareness” (p. 3). Jung (1961/1989) offered his personal testimony in support of this claim: “My life is a story of the self-realization of the unconscious. Everything in the unconscious seeks outward manifestation, and the personality too desires to evolve out of its unconscious conditions and to experience itself as a whole” (p. 3). In Jungian psychology the unconscious and *unus mundus* form the bedrock from which the personality and life itself evolves and emerges into consciousness, thus requiring further examination.

Explored in this chapter also are the nature of the apparent duality of mind and matter which brings into question the relationship between consciousness and the brain or body; the relationship of consciousness to ego and the Self; a possible perspective on the

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<sup>54</sup> See Le Grice (2016) pp. 1-22 on the roots of depth psychology.

relevance of time in synchronicity, a topic which has stirred considerable debate in depth psychological literature; a discussion of the important distinction between synchronicity as an existential phenomenon and a principle in nature; an overview of the spectrum of synchronicity as an existential phenomenon; various definitions of synchronicity highlighting the challenges presented by the Western tendency to analyze and define; a possible starting point for a discussion of meaning and synchronicity; and the implications of a study of exceptional experiences including coincidence phenomena.

### **Synchronicity and the Duality of Mind and Matter**

Alluding to his certainty about the authenticity of telepathy as demonstrated by the experiments of Rhine, Jung (1952/1969b) maintained that “synchronicity is a highly abstract and ‘irrepresentable’ quantity. It ascribes to the moving body a certain psychoid property which, like space, time, and causality, forms a criterion of its behavior” (p. 505 [CW 8, para. 947]). As a result, he emphasized that “we must completely give up the idea of the psyche’s being somehow connected with the brain” (p. 505 [CW 8, para. 947]).

There exist references to the “human psyche,” which might lead one to believe that the psyche is a function of the brain or coextensive with the brain and entire body. This misconception can lead to the assumption of a psyche-body or psyche-world duality, which is actually an artifact of human perception.

**Existential and ontological views of the duality of mind and matter.** Corbett (1996) explains that the ego’s belief in a sense of separation from the Self and the physical world may be due to the way the brain processes perceptual information which is necessarily limited because of the impression of physical boundaries relayed by the senses (p. 41). As opposed to one’s sense of separation from the Self as determined by

preconceived human perception, Jung (1951/1969a) explained that “the Self...invariably expresses a situation within which the ego is contained....the Self cannot be localized in an individual ego-consciousness, but acts like a circumambient atmosphere to which no definite limits can be set, either in space or in time” (pp. 167-68 [CW 9ii, para. 257]). As Christou (1976) observed, the “unitary field” of the psyche surrounds a person, as opposed to the common belief that the psyche is in some way confined within a person (cited in Corbett, 1996, p. 125). Thus, according to Corbett (1996), it is not “necessary to postulate that the archetypes interact with the brain as if they were separate” (p. 58). Although a person’s lived experience may psychologically seem to validate an existential separation between ego and Self, they are actually ontologically united in Jungian psychology.

**Secular and sacred experience of the psyche.** In chapters 1 and 3 of this work Jung (1975b) described how the psyche can be experienced in two different ways, which reflect what I believe is an example of sacred and secular dualistic thinking. As seen in Chapter 1 of this work, for instance, in his 21 October 1957 letter to Abrams, Jung (1975b) explained that in this secular existence bounded by space and time, individuals experience themselves as limited within their separate psyches. However, in the “world-system of the collective psyche” (p. 399), that is, in the domain of the collective unconscious, the concepts of space and time lose their relevance. As described in Chapters 1 and 3, Jung’s (1975b) mature thinking led him to believe that in the *unus mundus* “all individual psyches are identical with each other, and where they function as if they were the one undivided Psyche the ancients called *anima mundi* or the *psyche tou kosmou* [the cosmic psyche]” (p. 399). Jung (1954/1969b) explained that archetypal

processes in this domain convey an intrinsic pattern of meaning experienced as spirit (p. 211 [CW 8, para. 414]). This is the spiritual or sacred domain to which I refer. Some of the experiences that I believe were instrumental in the shift in Jung's thinking from secular to a balance of secular and sacred were outlined previously, several of which were in the form of powerful synchronicities.

**Secular and sacred experience of the Self.** Thus, although the Self is the medium through which experience is possible, in the case of a numinous synchronicity the Self may be experienced as totally Other. If one holds the secular point of view, it is possible to understand how the perception of a body-psyche duality may arise. However, as Le Grice (2010) has observed, "a phenomenological examination of human experience...reveals that mind and matter always occur together as an existential unity, and that the Cartesian distinction between inner and outer is only a useful conceptual differentiation, not an absolute ontological fact" (p. 172). In terms of the experience of self-consciousness, Corbett (1996) clarifies that "the Self is the medium...of awareness....the act of self-consciousness occurs within, and by means of, the divine ground. Or, the Self contains all selves; the oneness often described in the religious literature is actually the continuity of consciousness" (p. 41).

Regarding the term human *psyche*, consider the analogy between the human brain or even the entire body, and a radio, which must be functioning correctly to receive electrical signals and extract intelligible information. The radio is the medium by which intelligence can be received by a person, just as the Self is the medium making experience possible. Of particular interest is Corbett's (1996) further elaboration of the Self: "if the Self is the totality of consciousness then it is also the field within which all

experience occurs” (p. 41). Thus, the Self, in Corbett’s terms, is the pervasive medium of awareness embracing all selves, all individual egos, and actually all things, in a continuity or field of consciousness experienced as a sense of oneness much like the cosmic consciousness of Hindu *mokṣa* or Buddhist *nirvana*, the state of enlightenment described in Chapter 1 of this work. Thus, a brief discussion of the nature of consciousness is necessary to further understand the relationship between the ego and the Self, and between psyche and cosmos.

### **The Relationship of Consciousness to Ego and Self**

Corbett’s view of consciousness can be contrasted to Jung’s (1921/1976f) early thoughts on consciousness in *Psychological Types* where he said, “by consciousness I understand the relation of psychic contents to the *ego*, in so far as this relation is perceived as such by the ego. Relations to the ego that are not perceived as such are unconscious” (p. 421 [CW 6, para. 700]). Using this definition, Edinger (1984) asserted that Jung “states explicitly the important fact that the ego is the carrier of consciousness” (p. 36). At this stage of evolution of Jung’s psychology, the primacy of ego-consciousness in defining consciousness is evident. Further in his definition of consciousness, Jung maintained “consciousness is not identical with the *psyche* (v. *Soul*), because the psyche represents the totality of all psychic contents, and these are not necessarily all directly connected with the ego” (p. 422 [CW 6, para. 700]).

However, as Le Grice (2010) points out, “Jung, in this later thought, began to recognize an underlying identity of the psyche and the cosmos” (p. 171). As reviewed previously, in 1957 Jung (1975b) had come to believe that all separate psyches are united as “one undivided Psyche the ancients called *anima mundi* or the *psyche tou kosmou* [the

cosmic psyche]” (p. 399). As Le Grice (2010) has observed, “thus understood, the psyche is much more than a merely human psyche, for the collective unconscious is effectively in contact with all aspects of reality” (p. 171). This shift in Jung’s view of the psyche requires a different perspective of ego-consciousness. I believe Corbett (1996) captures this transformation using the phrase self-consciousness in place of ego-consciousness when he states that “the act of self-consciousness occurs within, and by means of, the divine ground,” which is the Self, described as “the field within which all experience occurs” (p. 41). I believe this description has parallels to Jung’s (1951/1969a) statement that “the self cannot be localized in an individual ego consciousness, but acts like a circumambient atmosphere to which no definite limits can be set, either in space or in time” (pp. 167-168 [CW 9ii, para. 257]).

Corbett (1996) advocates a view of consciousness connecting it to psyche and mind, ideas which are, to say the least, difficult to define. His appraisal reflects my own views of these challenging terms eluding a definition of their true nature, rather like trying to define the soul from a theological or other perspective. Thus, Corbett explains, “for me, psyche is also synonymous with mind or consciousness, and their nature is equally unknown....My commitment is to the idea of consciousness as an irreducible ontological reality that is common to all experience” (p. 117). Thus, in this work the terms *consciousness*, *psyche*, and *mind* are essentially interchangeable, although my emphasis on particular aspects of each will seem to create a distinction. It is as if the same object, when viewed from multiple aspects, creates the perception of seeing a different object.

Corbett (1996) views the Self, as the composite of all archetypes, as a “supraordinate information source...which informs the structure and function of both psyche and body, thought of not as separate but as an indivisible continuum. This continuum is everywhere permeated and organized by consciousness” (p. 58), structuring not only psyche and body, but also psyche and cosmos as previously discussed.

**Consciousness, matter, and synchronicity.** In Chapter 3 in this work on the topic of materialism as a religion, I noted Jung’s (1953/1969) assertion that matter itself is a hypothesis, a symbol created to designate something as yet unknown (p. 477 [CW 11, para. 762]). Corbett (1996) speculates that “matter may be composed of pure consciousness; matter is then that form of consciousness that we perceive through our senses. The archetypes are the laws of consciousness that give order and form to the universe as we know it” (p. 58). Jung (1952/1969b) speculated about “whether the coordination of psychic and physical processes in a living organism can be understood as a synchronistic phenomenon rather than as a causal relation” (p. 505, [CW 8, para. 948]). These conjectures suggest that consciousness itself may be founded on the principle of synchronicity informing both psychic and physical phenomena. This speculation will be pursued further in this chapter to determine if there might possibly be support for such a proposal and what role it might play in the modern myth for humanity. In my view, Jung’s term “synchronistic phenomenon” in the foregoing quote denotes the principle of synchronicity underlying the coordination of physical and psychic processes (p. 505 [CW 8, para. 948]), which Jung also described as general acausal orderedness. This term must be differentiated from the phenomenon of synchronicity as events experienced by an individual or individuals.

**Panpsychism.** In philosophy, the view that consciousness, whether it is called mind or soul, pervades all things is called panpsychism,<sup>55</sup> a philosophy that undergirds Taoism. Grof and Bennett (1992) likewise propose a Cosmic Consciousness which “permeates the entire universe and all of existence” (p. 18) as mentioned in Chapter 1 of this work. I believe that Grof and Bennett’s proposal of a cosmic intelligence parallels Corbett’s premise of a supraordinate intelligence, both of which inform and structure psyche and cosmos.

### **Synchronicity and Time**

As described in Chapter 1 of this work, it was in November of 1928 during a seminar on dream analysis, when Jung (1984) first described the odd associations between dreams having a notable effect on a dreamer and subsequent events in the dreamer’s life that seemed to mirror each other in meaning even though there was no plausible causal connection between the dream and the events. He initially termed this phenomenon the principle of “synchronism.” In 1930, Jung (1931/1962a) renamed the principle of synchronism as the “synchronistic principle” (p. 141) because he noticed that parallel psychic experiences appeared to be primarily connected through simultaneity in time (p. 141). Main (1997, p. 23) explains that because Jung’s early thoughts on synchronicity were shaped by astrology and his study of Chinese philosophy, especially the *I Ching* with its emphasis on the unique quality associated with each moment in time, the notion of *qualitative time* assumed a pivotal role in his theorizing. Jung (1984) explained that the Chinese notion of qualitative time “understood as a peculiar form of

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<sup>55</sup> Panpsychism is among the oldest of philosophical theories. Proponents include Plato, Spinoza, Leibniz, and James.



energy, coincides with our psychological condition. The moment is unique, so that whatever has its origin at a certain moment has the energy and qualities of that particular moment” (p. 415).

**Synchronicity and time in Chinese philosophy.** Jung’s (1961/1989) interest in the I Ching culminated around 1920 when he “resolved to make an all-out attack on the riddle of this book” (p. 373). As Jung explained it, “I would sit for hours on the ground beneath the hundred-year-old pear tree, the *I Ching* beside me, practicing the technique by referring the resultant oracles to one another in an interplay of questions and answers” (p. 377). “Time and again” the I Ching produced “meaningful connections with my own thought processes....amazing coincidences which seemed to suggest the idea of an acausal parallelism” (p. 378).

Thus, given Jung’s personal experience with the I Ching, Jung (1931/1962a) was able to say in his memorial to Wilhelm that his purpose was not to prove “the validity of the prophecies of the *I Ching*, but take...as a premise.... the amazing fact that the *qualitas occulta* [hidden quality] of the time-moment became legible by means of the hexagram of the *I Ching*” (p. 142). Using the principle of causality, Jung could not explain the coincidences between uncannily accurate readings of the I Ching and the psychic parallelisms of the remarkable phenomena he had experienced. He thus proposed a connecting principle that appeared to “lie mainly in the relative simultaneity of the events, therefore the expression ‘synchronistic’” (p. 141). In light of the influence of Chinese philosophy, it is perhaps understandable that Jung invested greater meaning in parallel, synchronistic events that were closely spaced in time, than to events that were more spread out in time. Given enough time it is conceivable that any meaningful

connection between two or more events might fade from memory and be lost to consciousness.

**Synchronicity and the concept of *kairos*—the right time.** Regarding the issue of time in a synchronicity, it is possible that time may play another role in the development of a modern myth for humanity. Schweizer (2009) describes how synchronicity may be seen as a key ingredient in alchemical processes by examining the idea of “the right time” or *kairos*. I believe Von Franz (1988/1992) reflected this concept in her observation “a numinous time moment is called *kairos* in Greek. *Kairos* means a magical moment in which synchronistic events happen” (p. 146). As in the I Ching, alchemists accorded each moment in time “its specific value or feeling quality” (p. 92). He explains that alchemists such as Zosimos<sup>56</sup> believed that the success of an alchemical operation depended upon its being performed at “the right moment” (p. 92). As Jung had already established, time and space as scientifically understood do not exist in the unconscious. Instead, Schweizer suggests that the unconscious possesses a unique quality he calls “a synchronistic time structure” (p. 92).

Psychologically, this means that although contents of the unconscious may momentarily reach consciousness they may just as quickly vanish unless it is the right time, or *kairos*, for an individual to understand and integrate them into consciousness. As Schweizer (2009) explains, *kairos* is bestowed “as myth would formulate it” (p. 93), if a messenger calls on us offering the prepared individual the opportunity to reach out and receive a divine guest who may otherwise have continued to languish in the dark corners

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<sup>56</sup> Zosimos (circa 300 CE) Egyptian alchemist and Gnostic mystic—author of the oldest books on alchemy.

of the unconscious. That is, at synchronistic moments in the myth, an individual would be offered the gift of welcoming, or integrating, new material from the unconscious into consciousness. Given the right time, such moments can usher in the gift of creativity, if one possesses “an attentive spirit” and “the awareness of the specific quality of such a moment” (p. 93). The concept of *kairos* plays a central role in the modern myth for humanity.

This attitude is similar to Jung’s description of the correct approach to the unconscious and to religion as noted in chapter one of this work. There Jung (1975b) explained “religion means a watchful, wary, thoughtful, careful, prudent, expedient and calculated attitude towards the powers-that-be” (p. 483). Schweizer (2009) emphasizes “the realization of synchronistic time-quality, therefore, is of greatest importance and has a lot to do with the creative principle in general” (p. 92). The concept of synchronistic time-quality, therefore, will play a central role in the evolving myth of synchronicity as a spiritual path.

### **Synchronicity as Empirical Phenomenon and Ontological Principle**

Jung’s early thoughts on synchronicity were chiefly concerned with the experience of synchronicity as it related personally to individuals although he did refer to it as the synchronistic principle. However, through the influence of physicists such as Einstein and Pauli, and the parapsychological experiments of Rhine circa 1930, Jung began to understand that his initial formulation of the synchronistic principle needed to expand. In particular, Pauli pointed out that the consistent reproducibility of the laws of quantum physics using statistics represented “such a fundamental difference between the acausal physical phenomena (such as radioactivity) and the ‘synchronistic’ phenomena in

the narrowest sense of the term...that I would like to propose that they be construed as *phenomena or effects on different levels* [original italics]" (Meier, 2001, pp. 55-56).

Therefore, Pauli expressed "grave misgivings about placing physical discontinuities and synchronicity on the same level, which is what you do"<sup>57</sup> (p. 56).

In a letter to Pauli 30 November 1950 Jung (as cited in Meier, 2001, p. 60) conceded there is a basic difference between the phenomena of synchronicity and quantum physics prompting him to begin formulation of a more general dual theory that accounted for both phenomena. In what may be his most transparent and succinct summary of synchronicity Jung discloses:

Insofar as for me synchronicity represents first and foremost a simple state of being, I am inclined to subsume any instance of causally nonconceivable states of being into the category of synchronicity. The psychic and half-psychic cases of synchronicity would be the one subcategory, the nonpsychic ones the other.

(Meier, 2001, p. 60)

**The development of a global acausal conception of reality.** Donati (2004) states that Jung's intentions in the distinction are clear: Jung "wishes to develop a global acausal conception of reality that includes both synchronistic and quantum physical phenomena" (p. 716). This, as examined in Chapters 1 and 3, was Jung's (1952/1969b) theory of general acausal orderedness encompassing all of nature implying "synchronicity in the narrow sense is only a particular instance of general acausal orderedness" (p. 516 [CW 8, para. 965]). Thus, psychic and half-psychic instances of

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<sup>57</sup> Jung (1952/1969b, p. 517 [CW 8, para. 966]) described the phenomena of discontinuities, such as radioactive decay, as examples of synchronicity.

synchronicity in the narrow sense were placed in the first subcategory of empirical phenomena of synchronicity, whereas nonpsychic instances were grouped in the second subcategory of phenomena demonstrating the ontological principle of synchronicity. Jung (1952/1969b) described the defining characteristic of the second category as “the continuous creation of a pattern that exists from all eternity” (p. 518 [CW 8, para. 967]). For example, the phenomenon of entanglement (Filk, 2014, p. 103) described in Chapter 3 of this work may be considered to fall into the second category of the principle of synchronicity created by Jung (Meier, 2001, pp. 55-56). As another example of the second category of synchronicity, I believe it is possible to compare Le Grice’s (2010) reference to astrology as being founded on a type of “enduring synchronicity” (p. 129) with Jung’s description of the second category of synchronicity as “the continuous creation of a pattern that exists from all eternity” (p. 518 [CW 8, para. 967]).

***Synchronicity and continuous creation.*** It is insightful to reflect on Jung’s metaphysical interpretation of the term “continuous creation” through which Jung clarified the defining characteristics of the second subcategory of synchronicity. In so doing I believe he set the stage for the invocation of the principle of synchronicity as the fourth law of nature as if it was decreed by God, in a manner similar to God’s creation of the cosmos. The creation to which he referred is the act of creation of the cosmos by the Old Testament God described in the first chapters of the book of Genesis.<sup>58</sup> Jung (1952/1969b) suggested that continuous creation was “to be thought of not only as a

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<sup>58</sup> The book of Genesis in the Christian Bible describes the creation of the world: “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1 New International Version).

series of successive acts of creation, but also as the eternal presence of the one creative act” (footnote 17, p. 518 [CW 8, para. 967]) again referring to the one creative act as God’s creation of the cosmos. In this passage Jung presented a paradox reflecting the paradox which characterizes the Self and therefore the God-image. In this way Jung introduced and linked the domains of the profane and the divine. Thus, in Jung’s characterization of the second subcategory of synchronicity, familiar linear time is paradoxically also timeless divine time, as well as the archetypal time of the *unus mundus*.

***Time and the unus mundus.*** Expanding his thoughts on time and God, Jung (1952/1969b) added the corollary “what happens successively in time is simultaneous in the mind of God” (footnote 17, p. 518 [CW 8, para. 967]). As well, Jung quoted Prosper of Aquitaine (1963, as cited in Jung 1952/1969b), who defended the doctrines of St. Augustine<sup>59</sup> when he wrote “an immutable order binds mutable things into a pattern, and in this order things which are not simultaneous in time exist simultaneously outside time” (footnote 17, p. 518 [CW 8, para. 967]). Reaching back 15 centuries into Christian history, Jung cited a Christian apologist for St. Augustine espousing a metaphysical doctrine that describes the environment of the *unus mundus* and the view of the cosmos embedded in Taoist philosophy. In so doing, Jung extended the reach of the principle of synchronicity from the domain of the merely profane and mutable to embrace the entire

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<sup>59</sup> St. Augustine (354-430 CE) is regarded as the most influential early Christian Church philosopher and theologian responsible for shaping foundational Christian doctrines such as the doctrine of original sin. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine\\_of\\_Hippo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo) for further discussion.

cosmos with the force of an immutable or divinely decreed order and pattern. The centrality of time in these passages is further evidence, I believe, of the distinct influence of the Taoist interpretation of time on Jung's theory of synchronicity, although this is not to disregard other sources. That is, events that do not appear to happen simultaneously in the physical world exist in a timeless domain as simultaneous events beyond the time- and space-bound limitations of the physical world. I believe it would not be appropriate to say that events happen in this domain because that would imply the existence of time in this realm.

**Synchronicity and spiritual growth.** The distinction between the first and second subcategories of synchronicity can serve to differentiate two major stages in the spiritual growth of an individual, which will be discussed in more depth presently. Briefly, leading up to the first stage a person may not take notice at first of a single event that seems purely coincidental although highly unusual. As more coincidences of an unusual nature accumulate, sometimes in closely spaced succession, it may occur to the individual that the connection between this series of events is more than purely coincidental. At this point a person may experience an extraordinarily unusual event or series of events that almost seem to be trying to attract attention, or even convey a message that may or may not be relevant to some current personal matter. The individual may then become more open to the possibility that events have a specific meaning tailored to their individual situation, a possibility that implies a source of knowledge beyond their grasp. This realization, of course, represents a radical challenge to those whose identity is founded on an ideology-adopting a so-called common-sense view of reality such as materialism.

Intrigued by this possibility, the person may begin to investigate both the past and present events of their life with this potential in mind. In this way the phenomenon of synchronicity will have served to awaken the individual to a potentially unknown and perhaps spiritual aspect of life which had not been given much consideration before then. As a person deepens into a greater appreciation and acceptance of the reality that appears to be the source of transcendent knowledge entering his or her life, he or she may be more open to the implications of the second subcategory of synchronicity, a holistic universe in which the principle of synchronicity binds all things together in a unity of being. This represents a very brief overview of the major theme of this work, synchronicity as a spiritual path in a secular age.

**Synchronicity and the spiritualization of matter.** At this point I will return to Jung's efforts to present his theory of synchronicity in such a way as to appeal to the broader scientific community. Given the extraordinary worldwide recognition of the achievements of Einstein and Pauli in the field of physics and the rigorous scientific procedures employed in Rhine's paranormal investigations, Jung was likely prompted to merge their findings into the theory of synchronicity in order to advance his unconventional acausal connecting theory in an academic community pervaded by the rational scientific method, or as Jung termed it, the spirit of the age. In a letter dated 24 January 1955 to Hull, Jung (1975b) explained, "the latest comment about 'Synchronicity' is that it cannot be accepted because it shakes the security of our scientific foundations, as if this were not exactly the goal I am aiming at" He goes on to say, "50 years of this stuff could have subdued me easily if I had not had the unshakable experience that my truth was good enough for myself and that I could live with it" (p. 217).



As well, his collaboration with Pauli, a major theoretician in quantum physics in the 20th century, greatly benefited the theoretical maturation of the principle of synchronicity as well as its viability in the worldwide scientific community of that time. As Donati (2004) points out, Jung's shared vision with Pauli of the unity of psyche and matter in the *unus mundus* was "explicitly one of the reasons Jung decided to publish the essay on synchronicity" (pp. 722-723). In Jung's 7 March 1953 letter to Pauli he stated that "the discussion of Matter must have a scientific basis" (Meier, 2001, p. 98). In this letter Jung revealed that his major essay on synchronicity, "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," "attempted to open up a new path to the 'state of spiritualization' [*Beseeltheit*] of Matter by making the assumption that 'being is endowed with meaning' (i.e., extension of the archetype in the object)" (Meier, 2001, p. 98). In rephrasing Jung's endeavor to spiritualize matter, Donati (2004) believes that "Jung suggested a form of psychological animism in which we might treat objects in a different way, taking special care of them almost as if they were alive" (p. 708). With the mythological phrase *as if*, Donati captures the spirit of this work, to treat the soul of the world, the *anima mundi*, *as if* it were alive. This, I believe, is the Taoist Way. In keeping with the Taoist Way, Jung endeavored to create an animistic psychology to reenchant the cosmos because, as Tarnas (2006) observed, "the modern human self has essentially absorbed all meaning and purpose into its own interior being, emptying the primal cosmos of what once constituted its essential nature" (p. 22).

Jung (1952/1969b) began his explanation of the spiritualization of matter by pointing out that for those at the animistic stage of consciousness, "synchronicity is a self-evident fact," although that idea is not recognized by them as such; instead,

everything happens as a result of “‘magical’ causality” (p. 501 [CW 8, para. 941]). To offer some examples: a man bathing in a river is caught by a crocodile acting not by chance, but under the instruction of a magician. Likewise, sickness is not the result of eating tainted food, but rather a spirit entering the body. As well, a snake at a graveside is not seeking the warmth of the sun, but is instead the soul of the deceased. For Jung, magical causality was the precursor to the idea of Tao. He explained that “Chinese philosophy produced from the significance of the magical the ‘concept’ of Tao, of meaningful coincidence, but no causality-based science” (p. 501 [CW 8, para. 941]). Jung’s psychological animism has very deep roots in the history of human beliefs about experiences and events in the world.

Returning to Jung’s letter to Pauli, I believe that one can see Jung’s vision of a return to a holistic worldview grounded in the spiritualization of matter in which the archetype breathes life into and thereby restores meaning to what would otherwise be considered an insensible material world. This worldview is not unlike the animistic stage of consciousness, which persisted into the late medieval period with the vitally important difference of an observing consciousness. As just noted, Jung (1952/1969b) observed the operation of psychological animism in Chinese philosophy, as opposed to the West’s one-sided rationalistic worldview. Jung noted “only in astrology, alchemy, and the mantic procedures do we find no differences of principle between our attitude and the Chinese” (p. 485 [CW 8, para. 916]) for whom the I Ching is the definitive mantic procedure.

**Synchronicity as a bridge between religion and science.** As noted in Chapter 1 of this work, Edinger (1996) referred to the present period of individuation as the psychological stage in the development of the Self, or God-image, because of the ability

of consciousness to differentiate phenomena arising from an animated world from those of the collective unconscious. In the animistic stage, von Franz (1988/1992) explained, “the major part of what we call today the psyche was located outside the individual in the animated matter of the universe.... the conscious ego of man was a helpless victim of different moods or divine influences” (p. 150). Von Franz added that rather than the collective unconscious being psychological, it has always been believed to be extant in the cosmos, in “the extra psychic cosmic sphere” (p. 150). Jung was driven to direct the critical attention of both the scientific community and the world-at-large, to the principle of synchronicity, because he understood its potential to force a redefinition of the relationship between religion and science, between humanity and the manifest world, and between consciousness and the unconscious. In this redefinition, the Western world would no longer be viewed as devoid of meaning, a veritable wasteland in an imprisoned universe suffocating those seeking a spiritual escape from the scientifically constructed vacuum jar enveloping the West. It is this vision which this work is attempting to reawaken in those seeking to understand how synchronicity can be a spiritual path.

As Donati (2004) has clarified, this fundamental transformation in his thinking resulted in the shifting of emphasis from “the phenomenological and empirical features of synchronistic phenomena” to “their ontological, archetypal character” (p. 707). Had Jung (1952/1969b) retained the narrower definition of the phenomenon of synchronicity, he would have continued to assert that “synchronistic phenomena which can be verified empirically, far from constituting a rule, are so exceptional that most people doubt their existence” (p. 500 [CW 8, para. 938]). As Donati (2004) explains, “the more general formulation of synchronicity changes from a purely *empirical concept* to a possible

explicative *principle* that takes its place beside causality in the realm of philosophy of nature [original italics]” (p. 719). Jung’s more comprehensive principle of synchronicity postulates a world alive with meaning not only for the individual but for humanity. As opposed to remaining an empirical concept, synchronicity became a “philosophical principle belonging to an objective field of studies....The same view of synchronicity...shared by Cambray in his fine contribution” (p. 719) “Synchronicity and Emergence” (Cambray, 2002). In Donati’s opinion, the suggestion of a second category of synchronicity was “Pauli’s main conceptual contribution to the formulation of the synchronicity idea” (p. 716). The ramifications of this shift will be explored presently.

**Synchronicity and quantum physics.** Jung believed his studies of synchronicity and the psyche, rooted in analytical psychology, ran parallel to the speculative hypotheses regarding matter in the field of quantum physics. Both researches were pushing forward into the unknown, one from the side of psychology into the nature of the psyche, the other from the side of physics into the nature of matter. As Jung (1955-56/1970c) observed, “both lines of investigation have yielded findings which can be conceived only by means of antinomies, and both have developed concepts which display remarkable analogies” (p. 538 [CW 14, para. 768]).

Influenced by quantum physicists such as Einstein, Bohr, Schrödinger, and Pauli, Jung’s focus turned to re-visioning the phenomenon of synchronicity to accommodate the relativity of the concepts of time and space as understood in quantum physics, and to expanding the notion of his original synchronistic principle to encompass the cosmos by introducing the category of general acausal orderedness. As Jung (1954/1969b) announced, the “seeming incommensurability” of psyche and matter have been joined

“from the physical side by means of mathematical equations, and from the psychological side by means of empirically derived postulates—archetypes” (p. 231 [CW 8, para. 440]). Importantly, Jung (1951/1969g) believed that these fields would approach each other as they “push forward into transcendental territory” (p. 261 [CW 9ii, para. 412]). Here Jung added the key concept of spirit in matter and not just the study of lifeless matter, in alignment with Taoist philosophy.

**Taoist philosophy and the psychoid archetype.** Critically important to one’s understanding of the relationship of Taoist philosophy and Jung’s psychology is the transformation in Jung’s psychology of the archetype from its exclusive role as an intrapsychic factor to the psychoid archetype’s enhanced role described by Aziz (1990) as “a psychophysical continuum of meaning which, being unrestricted by spatial or temporal limitations, is active in nature as a whole” (p. 58). Because all of nature is now the domain of the psychoid archetype, compensation of conscious attitudes can originate both psychically and physically, as in a synchronicity. The pivotal significance of this movement for Jung’s psychology cannot be overestimated. In reinterpreting the archetype as psychoid as opposed to intrapsychic, Jung expanded the landscape of his psychology from the boundaries of human experience to the indefinable realm of soul, the *unus mundus*.

**Soul in Jung’s psychology.** Carus, as discussed previously, placed the growth of the soul at the center of a psychology of the unconscious as the soul gradually emerged into consciousness from the unconscious (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 207). Jung’s psychology revolves around the emergence of the Self, which he described as the subtle body of soul, the *esse in anima* as the third domain between spirit and nature. As discussed in Chapter

3, the preeminence of soul in his psychology was established as a consequence of writing *The Seven Sermons to the Dead* in 1916, through which he gained the knowledge of the ultimate destiny of souls, but most especially he found his own soul. Jung's early view of the unconscious situated his psychology in a relationship to soul, but it is with the revision of the nature of the archetypes as psychoid that the unconscious was transformed into the soul of psychology as opposed to the subject (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 35).

**The principle of synchronicity and Taoism.** Thus, Jung's synchronistic principle began to evolve into the fourth principle of nature, a critical step in the evolution of the myth under construction here of synchronicity as a spiritual path. These changes brought Jung's principle of synchronicity clearly into alignment with Taoist principles especially the interrelatedness and wholeness of the individual and nature. As Jung (1952/1969b) observed, "the concept of Tao pervades the whole philosophical thought of China" (p. 486 [CW 8, para. 917]).

One of the fundamental changes to Jung's understanding of synchronicity revolved around the importance of simultaneity in time of meaningful parallel events. As suggested in Chapter 3, the I Ching's emphasis on the unique quality of each moment in time as a description of "qualitative time," likely influenced him to emphasize simultaneity in time as a key factor in defining a synchronicity. Tarnas (2006) also argues that Jung's emphasis on simultaneity in time derived from the I Ching where "simultaneity does indeed play an essential part, which led Jung to coin the term 'synchronicity'" (footnote 5, p. 499). Jung's shift in emphasis to a more scientific formulation of synchronicity is reflected in his changed perspective regarding the role of time as revealed in a letter dated 26 May 1954 to Barbault, in which Jung (1975b)

explained that qualitative time is a “notion I used formerly but I have replaced it with the idea of synchronicity ....Time in itself consists of nothing....Time is always and exclusively ‘qualified’ by events” (p. 176). In particular “‘qualitative time’ is a tautology and means nothing, whereas synchronicity (not synchronism) expresses the parallelism and analogy between events insofar as they are noncausal” (p. 176). As Jung explained, while the qualitative time hypothesis tried to establish a cause and effect relationship between parallel events, it became meaningless because “qualitative time is nothing but the flux of things” which endeavored to explain “the cause of the flux of things” (p. 176).

This re-scripting of the role of time in a synchronicity is very significant because it demonstrates Jung’s intention to shift the central focus of a synchronicity away from the I Ching’s notion of a predetermined quality of time unassociated with the phenomenon of synchronicity, to the archetypal patterning of parallel events exhibiting the same or similar meaning. With this critically important shift, Jung began emphasizing the archetype’s role as the formal cause of the observed patterning of events in a synchronicity as opposed to a quality of time. As a result of accommodating a more scientific worldview, Jung transformed the role of the archetypes from a strictly intrapsychic phenomenon limited in influence to the domain of the human psyche, to an extrapsychic phenomenon manifesting synchronistically in the material world. As Tarnas (2006) explains, before this shift Jung “worked and wrote within the modern Cartesian-Kantian philosophical framework of a basic division between the human subject and the objective world” (p. 57). Jung’s enlarged view of the influence of the archetypes opened up a panorama of new possibilities in Jungian psychology, not the least of which was a vastly expanded view of the psyche as cosmos, and the role of time in a synchronicity.

Although Jung preserved the I Ching's notion of qualitative time, he did not uphold that "time *itself* was the a priori determining factor of the observed qualities [original italics]" (footnote 5, p. 499). In this way the emphasis on what quality is manifested at any given time would remain undetermined until a definite archetype was constellated, as in an instance of the phenomenon of synchronicity.

### **The Spectrum of Synchronicity**

It also important to note that the examples of synchronicity cited so far, specifically, the stories of Jung's highly rational female patient and the scarab beetle in Chapter 1 and the incorrect time reported by Jung's watch during his discussion with Fierz in Chapter 3, are still relevant in characterizing the more generally understood, although not necessarily definitive, features of synchronicity consisting of relative simultaneity, physical and psychic paralleling of events, and meaningful coincidence. These two examples of the phenomenon of synchronicity are perhaps more readily identifiable as synchronicities because they exhibit these basic characteristics. However, in order to continue to develop the major theme of this work, I believe they must be viewed as part of the spectrum of synchronistic events which are primarily connected and instilled with meaning by the archetypes and only secondarily qualified by relative simultaneity in time or by the idea of qualitative time. Within this spectrum are those synchronicities which Jung (1975b) called "unconscious synchronicities" (p. 495). As already described in Chapter 3, some synchronicities may remain undetected as latent or "unconscious synchronicities" for various reasons, which, as Jung said, "in many cases we are unconscious of their happening, or have to have our attention drawn to the coincidence by an outsider" (p. 495). Nonetheless, these synchronicities have the



potential to exert a life-changing effect once realized and understood in retrospect as I described in Chapter 3.

On the other hand, as Le Grice (2009) has emphasized, in the case of some synchronicities it is “as if the cosmos knows what we are thinking and feeling, that the cosmos itself is aware of our personal situation, and seeks, through a symbolic line of communication, to convey a message to us about our life” (p. 131). He adds that in these cases “synchronicities are often accompanied by a feeling of numinosity” (p. 131). Those types of synchronistic experiences could, indeed, be said to be highly spiritually significant and perhaps life-changing because they potentially point an individual to a source of knowledge and wisdom outside of the human frame of reference. If the individual chooses to understand more completely the message being conveyed and integrates that message into their life, they may then experience resolution and healing of a very pressing personal situation. An individual may encounter these kinds of synchronicities as part of their quest to adopt synchronicity as a spiritual path, and they may strengthen their resolve and confidence in choosing this path.

Again, however, these deeply meaningful and perhaps numinous events only represent a segment of the spectrum of synchronistic experiences one may encounter on their spiritual path. Between the extremes of unconscious synchronicities and deeply meaningful, life-altering, and perhaps numinous experiences, lies a range of events which may possibly be synchronistic but which can vary greatly in the significance of their potential meaning to an individual or group. As Aziz (1990) noted, “not every synchronistic experience releases an earthshaking numinous charge” (p. 97). As well, in regards to synchronicity, Jung (1952/1969b) admitted, “there can be no question of a

complete description and explanation of these complicated phenomena, but only an attempt to broach the problem in such a way as to reveal some of its manifold aspects and connections” (p. 420 [CW 8, para. 816]). Perhaps recollecting Jung’s multiple attempts so far to define the essential elements of a synchronicity, will suggest the mysterious nature of these “complicated phenomena.” Recall that Main (2004) stated that “Jung’s attempts at a detailed definition of the phenomenon are inadequate even to account for his own examples” (p. 47).

**The challenge of defining synchronicity.** In Jung’s continued attempts to define synchronicity, I believe it is possible to see the tension in his thinking between psychology as a natural science and psychology as a human science, as described in Chapter 3. One might also see this indecisiveness as the back-and-forth interplay between Jung’s personality No. 1 and No. 2 as each competed for dominance. Personality No. 1 “was the son of my parents, who went to school and was less intelligent, attentive, hard-working, decent, and clean than many other boys,” whereas for personality No. 2 “there existed another realm, like a temple in which anyone who entered was transformed and suddenly overpowered by a vision of the whole cosmos, so that he could only marvel and admire” (p. 45). The prevailing Western insistence on a natural scientific explanation for every phenomenon must necessarily be in tension with the human science view of contemporaries who, perhaps somewhat in the spirit of Eastern philosophy, have accepted paradox instead of attempting to define the indefinable, such as synchronicity. As Jung (1926/1969) said, “how can we bring within the orbit of our thought those limitless complexes of facts which we call ‘spirit’ and ‘life’ unless we clothe them in verbal concepts, themselves mere counters of the intellect?” (p. 319 [CW 8, para. 601]).

Perhaps a slight adaptation of a Zen story from Reps and Senzaki (1985) called *A Cup of Tea* will help to bring this tension into clearer focus. A Japanese Zen Buddhist master received an intellectual from the West who came to learn about synchronicity. The Zen master served tea. He poured the intellectual's cup to the brim but kept on pouring so that the tea splashed over the intellectual's hand and onto the ground. Wishing to be respectful, the intellectual from the West kept silent until in exasperation the intellectual exclaimed that the cup was full and it was pointless to continue to pour more tea. The Zen Master replied "Like this cup, you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen [i.e. synchronicity] unless you first empty your cup?" (p. 23).

From a Taoist perspective, Cambray (2009) relates the story of Chang Yeh-Yuan, a Taoist monk, who was asked to describe the essential teaching of the *I Ching*. Chang Yeh-Yuan is reported to have explained that "the fundamental idea of the *I Ching* can be expressed in one single word, Resonance (*kan*)," implying that only a mind emptied of superficial thought can resonate with the Tao. Cambray explains this emptiness in Jungian terms as "not a dull blankness but a receptivity marked by nonattachment, with the releasing of prejudices and preconceptions, becoming open to archetypal possibilities" (p. 69). These stories suggest that those who would follow synchronicity as a spiritual practice will need to approach synchronicity and spirituality with an open mind, and a willingness, even if only momentarily, to set aside preconceptions and biases. In this way their being would be receptive to a resonance with nature, that is, the Tao. If it is possible for an individual to begin to set the intention to observe phenomena without forming an attachment, they may experience a deep resonance with nature resulting in a shift in consciousness opening them to a heretofore unknown depth

psychological perspective. This phenomenon will be explored further in the discussion of the relationship between consciousness and synchronicity, and in a discussion of the stages of spiritual consciousness.

However, one must necessarily propose some definition<sup>60</sup> that can metaphorically serve as the teapot, to contain what is to be learned. The teapot is also conveniently equipped with a handle to allow one to pour out the symbolic contents, that is, the symbols manifested in a synchronicity. However, all symbols point to a myriad of potential meanings, and the possibilities in the case of synchronicity are essentially limitless. Like the overflowing tea, synchronicities flow over many in the West without an awareness of the bounty being poured out by the cosmos. In their case, science can supply all their answers, so there is no need to look elsewhere for explanations. In addition, the notion of synchronicity represents too radical a departure from the scientific assumptions on which the Western worldview is based, and therefore is cast aside by many to languish on the fringes of unscientific, metaphysical ideas.

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<sup>60</sup> Le Grice (2010) argues that synchronicity, in its most inclusive definition, appears in many ways: a succession of otherwise unconnected events not related by any known cause but which seem to be connected by a shared meaning; an event, such as a casual meeting or a dialogue that inexplicably addresses one's personal circumstances; finding, apparently by chance, precisely the right reference one needs to complete an especially complex assignment; the appearance of an ominous sign presaging a crucially important decision or the inauguration of a new plan; the occurrence of a dream foretelling a future event (p. 125).

However, as briefly described previously, if people are willing to begin to take notice of at least one unusual coincidence in their life that piques their curiosity and prompts them to doubt that it can be explained by any conceivable cause, it may be possible for those people to begin a life journey centered on synchronicity as a spiritual path, through which they can potentially learn to appreciate the richness and depth of the offering spread out so freely. Of course, in order for such individuals to begin this journey, they would need to be willing, at least briefly, to set aside any previously conceived common-sense view of reality embracing causality, and consider the possibility of a noncausal explanation. An example of this temporary suspension of a fixation on the logical, common-sense approach to reality, is considered later in the case of Jung's extremely rational female patient and a scarab beetle, already described. Such a transformative process can potentially be passed on to and adopted by other individuals in the West, resulting in an increase of collective consciousness and an increased awareness of the phenomenon of synchronicity.

Any definition of synchronicity merely serves as a vessel from which to pour out the boundless spiritual gifts offered by the cosmos through the fourth law of nature, synchronicity. But a definition cannot capture synchronicity, any more than one can capture and imprison a wild animal without extinguishing the flame of its untamed nature. As Jung (1954/1969b) said:

the moment one forms an idea of a thing and successfully catches one of its aspects one invariably succumbs to the illusion of having caught the whole. One has taken possession of it, and it has become an inalienable piece of property like

a slain creature of the wild that can no longer run away. (p. 168 [CW 8, para. 356])

This point is of extraordinary importance to those who would consider synchronicity as a spiritual path. One would not want to succumb to the Western penchant of allowing a definition to hinder one's spiritual growth. The mark of scientific approval afforded by precise, academic definitions so authoritatively displayed in the current age of materialism can exact a high cost in terms of human values and worth.

**A proposed definition of synchronicity.** However, in the interest of providing a starting point for a Western dialogue on synchronicity, I propose the definition given by Atmanspacher and Fach (2013). They consider two or more events which would otherwise be considered merely coincidental, and which are not necessarily closely associated in time, to be synchronistic if they meet these criteria:

1. Each pair of synchronistic events includes an internally conceived and an externally perceived component.
2. Any presumption of a direct causal relationship between the events is absurd or even inconceivable.
3. The events correspond with one another by a common meaning, often expressed symbolically. (p. 229)

These criteria are used to clarify the features of coincidence phenomena described by Atmanspacher and Fach (2013). Of note, this definition does not mention the numinous feeling often referred to by Jung and others in their descriptions of the experiences of synchronicities. Neither does it impose the restriction of simultaneity in time, although

this is not excluded. The criterion of common meaning could apparently be any one or more of the four types of meaning as described in Chapter 1 by Main (2014).

**A comparison of definitions of synchronicity.** To illustrate the point that there are various ways of defining a synchronicity, it may be instructive to begin by enumerating Main's (2007) working definition of synchronicity as follows:

1. two or more events parallel one another through having identical, similar, or comparable content;
2. there is no discernible or plausible way in which this paralleling could be the result of normal causes;
3. the paralleling must be sufficiently unlikely and detailed as to be notable;
4. the experience must be meaningful beyond being notable. (p. 14)

In comparing Part 1 of Atmanspacher and Fach's (2013) definition to Part 1 of Main's, it is noted that Main's definition does not require the distinction of psychic and physical, or inner and outer. Main does not specify an "internally conceived component" (Atmanspacher & Fach, 2013, p. 229) such as the "psychic state in an observer" (Main, 2007, p. 18) or an "externally perceived component" (Atmanspacher & Fach, 2013, p. 229) such as an "objective, external event" (Main, 2007, p. 18).

In point two, while Main describes the possibility of a causal connection between events as indiscernible or implausible, Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) describe any causal relationship between events as "absurd or even inconceivable" (p. 229). Main (2007) explains "'acausality' is relative to the experiencer's or observer's understanding." There may be "some indiscernible (or at least undiscerned) and implausible cause...that one can neither perceive at present nor readily believe possible,

even though it may exist” (p. 20). This may also be compared to Jung’s (1951/1969b) description of acausality: “there is no evidence of a causal connection between the psychic state and the external event, and where, considering the psychic relativity of space and time, such a connection is not even conceivable” (p. 526 [CW 8, para. 984]). Here Jung adds the notion of psychic relativity of time and space, not mentioned in either of the other two definitions. Because of Jung’s reference to psychic relativity, Main (2007) speculates that Jung may have a “theoretical agenda informing his emphasis.” Main adds, “in particular, he finds synchronistic experiences strongly supportive of a unitary view of reality. It may be that his eagerness to present evidence in support of this unitary worldview led him to highlight the kinds of coincidences he did” (p. 20).

In regard to the fourth point of Main’s definition referring to meaning, Main (2007) notes “the experience must be meaningful beyond being notable” however, for Main “the question of what constitutes the meaning is left open” (p. 22). Again, Main questions whether Jung was persuaded by his “psychological agenda” in “his understanding of what constitutes the meaning of synchronicities” (p. 22). Further, Main draws into question the foundational concepts of Jungian psychology, suggesting that “the collective unconscious, the archetypes, compensation, individuation—are questionable at a number of points, this questionability inevitably transfers to his understanding of synchronistic meaning” (p. 22).

**One interpretation of meaning in a synchronicity.** While Jung (1952/1969b) did not always clarify precisely what he meant by meaning, the shared meaning of events in a synchronicity was of fundamental importance, as noted previously (p. 482 (CW 8, para. 915]). It may therefore be useful to refer to Atmanspacher and Fach’s (2013)



interpretation of what Jung might have meant by meaning. However, this interpretation requires some excursion into the terminology used by Metzinger (2003), which involves a brief discussion of the relationship between consciousness and intention. As Combs (2004) explains, “consciousness...is always about something....In other words, consciousness always has a point. In formal terms it is said to be intentional. Something is intended by it....consciousness aligns the processes of the mind into patterns with direction and purpose” (p. 19-20). Using Metzinger’s terminology, Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) describe intentionality as the “reference relation between a representation and its referent” (p. 232) in which the referent is an individual and a representation is an event or experience which has entered the individual’s field of consciousness. As a key indicator of consciousness, intentionality is the reference relation between the individual and the event or experience. If the individual’s consciousness carries no intention with respect to the representation, there is no relationship.

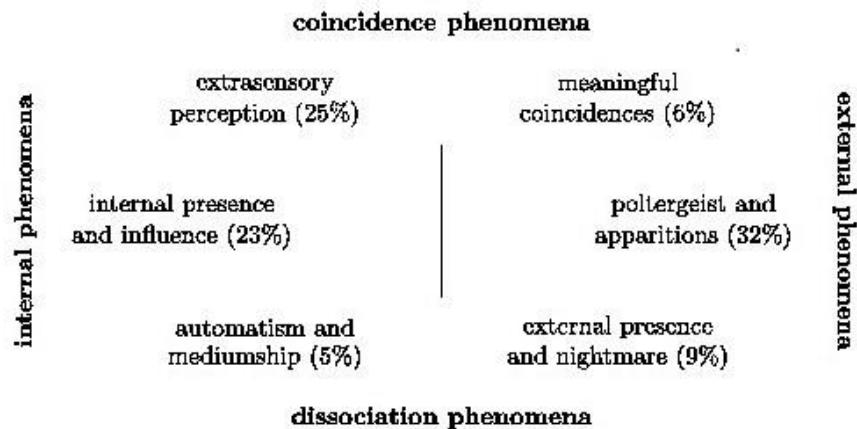
In Metzinger’s (2003) terminology, intentionality “is itself encoded as a (meta-) representation....called a ‘phenomenal model of the intentionality relation’” (PMIR) composed of both intention and phenomenon. Of most interest is the phenomenal content of the PMIR, which describes, according to Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) “‘what it is like to’ instantiate a representation, in other words, to experience it.... to experience a particular meaning. Jung’s usage of meaning refers to the phenomenal content of PMIRs: the subjectively experienced meaning of a synchronistic event” (p. 232). What it is like to experience a particular event is the core understanding of the phenomenon of meaning as it is used in this work. The phenomenon of meaning will be further discussed in relation to consciousness and its role in synchronicity.

**Jung's psychological agenda.** Perhaps these examples of definitions of synchronicity will suggest the possibility of a psychological agenda at work in the shaping of their content. I believe that Jung's agenda, if that is the proper term, was the description of a holistic universe in which the barriers dividing science and religion would be deconstructed and a path opened for reconciliation. In this regard Pauli offered invaluable insights gathered in part by the extraordinary wealth of material he gained from the unconscious. Pauli (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955) emphasized the key role of intuition, in the origination of "the concepts and ideas, generally far transcending mere experience, that are necessary for the erection of a system of natural laws (that is, a scientific theory)" (pp. 151–152). In his later years, I believe Jung was also inspired by the dreams and intuitions of the visionary physicist Pauli. In Jaffé's (1984) view, as a result of this inspiration Jung added "a new dimension to the unitary view of the world that is being sought of necessity today" (p. 132). He held fast to his belief that religion could be interwoven into this unitary vision, without violating its metaphysical ground. As Jaffé remarked, in so doing "Jung bridged over the gulf between science and religion...that he created a basis for a unitary world picture of which religious truths...form an integral part, may well be considered his most important contribution to the history of the mind" (p. 133). It is this agenda that forms the basis of the modern myth for humanity intended to inform and inspire those who would follow the spiritual path unfolding here.

### **A Study of Exceptional Experiences**

It is also instructive to return to Atmanspacher and Fach's (2013) study in order to learn more about the relationship between the phenomenon of synchronicity and the

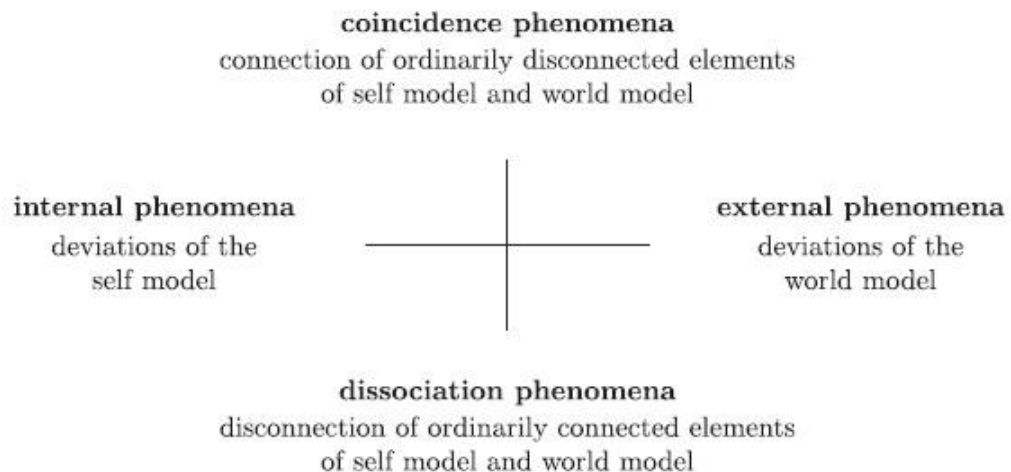
paranormal phenomena<sup>61</sup> of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. From their study of exceptional experiences six patterns of phenomena were catalogued, each type identified by a specific grouping of characteristics as shown in Figure 3 (p. 238).



<sup>61</sup> Mansfield distinguished paranormal phenomena from synchronicity in his essays “Distinguishing Synchronicity from Parapsychological Phenomena: An Essay in Honor of Marie-Louise von Franz (Part 1)” (1998), and “Distinguishing Synchronicity from Parapsychological Phenomena: An Essay in Honor of Marie-Louise von Franz (Part 2)” (1999).

*Figure 3.* Empirically obtained patterns (factors) of EE, embedded within the scheme shown in Figure 4; percentages are relative frequencies of patterns documented by the IGPP counseling team. Reprinted from “A Structural-Phenomenological Typology of Mind-Matter Correlations” by H. Atmanspacher and W. Fach, 2013, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 58(2), p. 238. Copyright [2013] by The Society of Analytical Psychology. Reprinted with permission.

Each of these patterns of phenomena were then assigned to one of four fundamental types of exceptional experiences as described in Chapter 1, and reproduced here in Figure 4.



*Figure 4.* Fundamental types of exceptional experiences resulting from the conceptual framework of dual-aspect monism. Reprinted from “A Structural-

Phenomenological Typology of Mind-Matter Correlations” by H. Atmanspacher and W. Fach, 2013, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 58(2), p. 236. Copyright [2013] by The Society of Analytical Psychology. Reprinted with permission.

Two of those phenomena were extrasensory perception and meaningful coincidences shown in Figure 3, both of which were considered to belong to the fundamental type of coincidence phenomena. However, they were differentiated by determining from the experience a “slight dominance” (p. 237) of either internal (extrasensory perception) or external (synchronistic) phenomena. Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) denote the pattern of meaningful coincidences as featuring a “salient meaningful link between mental and material events” (p. 236), whereas extrasensory experiences refer “to experiences of coincidences of events without causal connection, but related by some common meaning” where the reference to meaning may be understood to refer to similar content. It is as if these twin phenomena, so closely related in Atmanspacher and Fach’s model, are through some enigmatic, perhaps synchronistic cord, conjoined in the *unus mundus*. Rather than attempting to separate them sharply using a definition, it is proposed here to allow them the opportunity to live in a more natural state shrouded in mystery and so become part of the myth unfolding here. In any case, those entering on the journey of synchronicity as a spiritual path may have occasion to experience such phenomena and may appreciate knowing that they may play a mythological role in their spiritual journey.

As noted in Chapter 1, in a letter dated 11 June 1958 to Professor Schmid, Jung (1975b) admitted that given the limitation of available data “all that can be determined about synchronicity at present is a boundless variety of phenomena....Typical

characterizations have therefore been chosen, for instance telepathy, precognition, clairvoyance, etc. But these characterizations are not types of meaning such as the archetypes are” (p. 447). Jung referred to telepathy, precognition, and clairvoyance as synchronistic events but without the meaning conferred by the archetypes, which thereby play a distinguishing role in determining if an event is a synchronicity or an example of the principle of synchronicity manifesting in an event. Perhaps it was the influence of German Romantic philosophy’s emphasis on the irrational and mystical which drew Jung’s attention to such inexplicable phenomena as telepathy, precognition, and clairvoyance. Or it might have been the influence of Jung’s (1961/1989) very early experiences with spiritualism in séances with relatives which he documented in his doctoral thesis (pp. 106-107) entitled *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-called Occult Phenomena* (Jung, 1902/1970, pp. 3-88). In any case, these phenomena remained as examples of synchronicity for Jung.

As regards the influence of Jung’s early experiences of spiritualism on the formulation of his psychology, Charet (1993) believes that “spiritualism later provided him with a religious framework within which he could fit his extraordinary experiences.” It is postulated that Jung’s early personal experiences with the paranormal led him to construct a psychology portraying the archetypal, psychic processes situated on the spiritual end of the psychic spectrum described previously, and to reinforce the archetype’s spiritual nature by endowing them with numinous energy not attributable “to some other causal factor.” In so doing, Charet (1993) remarks, “Jung sought to bring religion and science together in the psyche itself and thereby heal a long-standing schism

and in turn heal himself” (p. 298). More will be discussed presently regarding the numinous quality of the archetypes.

Of the 1465 participants in the study conducted by Atmanspacher and Fach (2013), 6% reported meaningful coincidences while 25% reported experiences of extrasensory perception. I believe this study suggests that synchronistic experiences might occur more frequently than might otherwise be expected. Through most of his career Jung insisted that examples of the phenomenon of synchronicity had to be limited to only those rather rare cases presenting numinous effects. However, as Atmanspacher and Fach explain “only in later years did Jung open up toward the possibility that synchronicity might be a notion that should be conceived as ubiquitous” (p. 230). Thus, in this modern myth for humanity, it is as if synchronicities will increase if only one pays close and careful attention to a world alive with meaning.

### **The Role of the Unus Mundus and Collective Unconscious in Synchronicity**

It is instructive to return to some points previously addressed in order to highlight the distinction between the phenomenon of synchronicity as a distinct event and the principle of synchronicity as the fourth principle of nature, and to differentiate their roles with respect to the major theme of this work. This review of the unus mundus and the collective unconscious is intended to highlight their central role in the phenomenon of synchronicity. Donati (2004) has summarized Jung’s view on synchronicity, explaining that “synchronistic phenomena represent the empirical test corroborating the existence of the *unus mundus*, without which it would be just a theoretical speculation. Consequently, synchronicity is tightly bound to the *unus mundus*-collective unconscious and to the archetypes as such” (p. 713).

**The unus mundus.** To begin, Jung (1955-56/1970c) described the fundamental unity of the unus mundus:

Undoubtedly the idea of the unus mundus is founded on the assumption that the multiplicity of the empirical world rests on an underlying unity, and that not two or more fundamentally different worlds exist side by side or are mingled with one another. Rather, everything divided and different belongs to one and the same world, which is not the world of sense but a postulate. That even the psychic world, which is so extraordinarily different from the physical world, does not have its roots outside the one cosmos is evident from the undeniable fact that causal connections exist between the psyche and the body which point to their underlying unitary nature. (p. 538 [CW 14, para. 767])

As outlined in Chapter 1, Jung and Pauli (1952/1955) proposed a model of the unus mundus underlying the dual aspects of psyche and matter manifesting in a synchronicity. This model is known as *dual-aspect monism*. However, as explained in Chapter 1, in Jung and Pauli's<sup>62</sup> version of dual-aspect monism, although psyche and matter remain undifferentiated in the unus mundus, they appear in a synchronicity as "complementary aspects of the same reality" (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955, p. 210).

Although Jung and Pauli's dual-aspect monism model may seem to be of theoretical interest only, it becomes more significant to this work because of the additional insights offered by Atmanspacher and Fach (2013). As already explained, they introduced the concept of induced correlations, which "refer to the back-reaction that

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<sup>62</sup> See Atmanspacher (2012), "Dual-aspect monism à la Pauli and Jung," for further discussion of this version.



changes of consciousness induce in the unconscious and, consequently, in the physical world as well” (p. 231). The consequence of changes in consciousness resulting in back-reactions emerging from the *unus mundus* is that these back-reactions manifest in the complementary domain of the material world, potentially as synchronicities. In Jungian terms, when an individual “becomes aware of some problematic unconscious content, the corresponding unconscious complex may be (partially) dissolved. This affects the archetypal core that is constellated in the complex, which in turn is supposed to manifest itself in the physical world” (footnote 13, p. 231).

I interpret the foregoing to mean that Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) are postulating that an increase in consciousness may result in an increase in the ability to recognize events as synchronicities. Each recognition of a synchronicity would add an increment of consciousness, which in turn would lead to the recognition of more synchronicities, in a repetitive cycle. One can perhaps understand this process as a reinforcing feedback loop building up consciousness through the successive recognition of series of events as synchronistic. Thus, in this modern myth for humanity, it is as if synchronicities will increase if only one pays close and careful attention to a world alive with meaning. This possibility prompted Tresan (2013) to propose that Atmanspacher and Fach’s (2013) amplification of Jung and Pauli’s version of dual-aspect monism has created “a universe in which synchronicity and related phenomena are normative and frequent, and it is our universe” (p. 251). It is *as if* consciousness grows more rapidly as one successively experiences meaningful coincidences in a world alive with meaning. This possibility will be expanded upon presently.

Perhaps an example will serve to better illustrate this phenomenon. Previously I described the sculpting of my astrological birth chart. At the time, there was no plausible reason to do this other than the fact that I felt a “strong urge” to do so and I needed a project for my masters in spiritual psychology degree. About six months after starting this project I was laid off from my job, but continued to work on my sculpture. On the day of my layoff I read that the life of a Capricorn is divided into two phases represented in the symbol of Capricorn of a goat with a fish or serpent tail. As a goat I had been diligently working to achieve the goal of material success, whereas my transition to a fish marked the beginning of my journey as a seeker after mysteries in the depths of the unconscious, although I did not know this at the time. When I went to work on the same day I read this, I was laid off never again to work as an engineer.

As I explained previously, at that time I did not recognize these two apparently unrelated events as synchronicities. Subsequent to these events I experienced a number of curious coincidences too numerous to mention, which remained a mystery for some length of time. Each of these apparently unrelated odd coincidences added to my curiosity and prompted me to delve more deeply into the work of Jung and his interest in astrology. This research led me to learn more about synchronicity, that is, to expand my consciousness, and finally to discover the pattern forming in my life, yet another expansion of consciousness. I see now that the synchronicity revolving around sculpting was intended to prepare me for being laid off and to assist me in assuming my new identity. Being laid off was intended to push me out my comfortable, rational life and point me in the direction of my destiny as spelled out in my astrological chart. I believe these synchronicities served as compensation for my overly rational ego consciousness

attitude. Certainly these events seemed utterly irrational at the time but in hindsight I realize they aided the transrational intentions of the Self to further my individuation and so served a teleological purpose. Each synchronicity subsequent to these two led to an increase in consciousness which led to another synchronicity and another increment in consciousness in a repeating cycle. This scenario may help to explain why synchronicities are sometimes reported to happen in clusters. As Le Grice has noted, “synchronicities often manifest in sequences or clusters” (2013, DJA855, module 1 Lecture Notes). This possibility would add a sense of participation and anticipation in the modern myth for humanity evolving here, since it is *as if* one synchronicity sets off another in a reverberating cycle. This possibility, couched in mythological terms, lends an inducement to those seeking to follow synchronicity as a spiritual path. It is *as if* the universe is not just guiding one’s spiritual growth, but is also reinforcing and rewarding one’s efforts to grow with additional opportunities for spiritual development.

**The collective unconscious.** The next point to recall is the foundational role of the collective unconscious in Jung’s psychology. As Le Grice (2010) has articulated:

The collective unconscious extends from the farthest reaches of the psyche to the transcendent background of reality. As the matrix of experience, the collective unconscious, at its deepest level, merges seamlessly into what might be called the dynamic ground - the creative source, the generating and sustaining matrix of being from which all life springs. (p. 179)

I believe this resonates clearly with Jung’s (McGuire & Hull, 1980) description of the collective unconscious from Chapter 3: “the collective unconscious...it’s the invisible world, it’s the great spirit. It makes little difference what I call it: God, Tao, The great

Voice, The Great Spirit....God is the most comprehensible name with which to designate the Power beyond us” (p. 375). While Le Grice (2010) refers to “the sustaining matrix of being from which all life springs” and Jung (McGuire & Hull, 1980) speaks of “the Power beyond us,” I believe both descriptions point to the great mystery, the unknown Void which stretches before humankind both inwardly to the psyche and outwardly to the cosmos as described in Chapter 3.

However, continued spatial references to inward and outward perpetuate the dualism with which I believe Jung and Pauli were committed to overcoming in their joint proposal of the principle of synchronicity, which dispels the illusion of the duality of physis and psyche through their union in the *unus mundus*. As Le Grice (2010) affirmed previously, Jung was in general agreement with an “underlying psyche-cosmos identity” (pp. 170-171) at the level of the *unus mundus*. I believe that a serious consideration of the implications of the principle of synchronicity as the fourth law of nature will yield a deeper appreciation for the fundamental identity of psyche and cosmos, so that the cosmos can once again become a “single great holy picture” (p. 53). But as Le Grice (2010) has made clear, what Jung termed the collective unconscious “merges seamlessly into...the sustaining matrix of being from which all life springs” that is, the *unus mundus*. From these descriptions it is evident that at the level of “the dynamic ground” (p. 179), the terms collective unconscious, psyche, *cosmos*, and even *God* become blurred and lose their distinction; the reference to God is understood to be a neutral term for the unknown and ultimately unknowable, although some aspects become conscious in the process of individuation.

This point is of paramount importance to this work, which focuses on the scientific, religious, and spiritual implications of synchronicity as a path forward in the unification of these otherwise fragmented human endeavors. As Jaffé (1984) recounted, Jung believed that “all religious assertions, revelations and dogmas had to be understood as ordered patternings of that boundless paradoxical background...called the collective unconscious” (p. 132). However, while psyche and cosmos, or mind and matter, both stem from a common ground, the *unus mundus*, they are essentially distinct aspects of that common ground as previously described by Atmanspacher and Fach (2013, pp. 223-229) in Chapter 1.

**The effect of consciousness on the *unus mundus*.** To briefly review, Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) refer to the *unus mundus* as an ontic state, “a psychophysically neutral domain” (p. 228), which cannot be observed or measured directly without disturbing its unified, homogeneous neutrality. Through the process of observation or measurement, which in the case of psychology is consciousness, the *unus mundus* becomes linked to local reality. Local reality consists of numerous correlations of the local objects of mind and matter which have become epistemic states accessible to measurements by physicists and psychologists. That is, the act of measurement or observation of the *unus mundus* results in splitting which generates the (almost) distinct local objects of mind and matter comprising a local reality. However, the resulting various correlations between mind and matter are not the result of any efficient cause; if this is the case the correlations must be synchronistic. Pauli (as cited in Jung, 1954/1969b) explained that “from the standpoint of the psychologist, the ‘observed system’ would consist not of physical objects only, but would also include the unconscious, while

consciousness would be assigned the role of ‘observing medium’” (pp. 229-230 [CW 8, para. 439, footnote 130]). Regarding Pauli and Jung’s hypothesis of the effect of consciousness on the *unus mundus*, Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) state that “the role which measurement [i.e. consciousness] plays as a link between local and holistic realities in physics is mirrored by the act in which subjects become consciously aware of ‘local mental objects’...arising from holistic unconscious contents” (p. 224).

## Chapter 5

### **Taoism, Kairos, and Jung's Near-Death Experience**

Throughout this chapter, many references to Taoist philosophy will be made to illustrate its influence on Jung's psychology specifically as it pertains to synchronicity. Of course, the major Eastern religions and philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism also had a place in constructing Jung's psychology, but Taoism has come forward in my awareness as the Eastern spiritual tradition most closely aligned with, and making the greatest contribution to this work, and, I believe, to Jung's psychology as it relates to synchronicity particularly. Pointing to Jung's late major works, Stein (2014) is of the opinion that "Jung proposes a view of psychic reality that bridges between European scientific thinking and Chinese Taoist thinking" (p. 110). This is not to say that Jung's psychology, as it expanded in his later years to include synchronicity, is merely Taoism with a different name. I believe the philosophy of Taoism illustrates the breadth and depth of Jung's philosophical reach in drawing on the parallels between his own theory of synchronicity and the perennial philosophy of an ancient spiritual tradition, which is today beginning to make inroads into the so-called new paradigm sciences and beyond. I believe Jung's introduction of synchronicity to analytical psychology, as reflected in his major essay "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," demonstrates his resonance with aspects of this venerable spiritual tradition in which the principle of synchronicity assumes a vital role.

Jung's efforts to solve the riddle of synchronicity was influenced not only by the West's world view dominated by rationality and causality, but also by the East's perspective of the world grounded in intuition and acausality, thus setting up a need to

find a balance between the two apparently conflicting worldviews, which are actually complementary.

### **The Influence of Eastern Philosophy on Jung's Theory of Synchronicity**

As discussed in Chapter 1, I maintain that Eastern philosophy had a strong influence on Jung's psychology and his evolving thoughts on synchronicity. Jung's interest was drawn to Eastern philosophy through the writings of key figures in Western and Eastern philosophy, notably Schopenhauer and Wilhelm. Clarke (1994) believes that Schopenhauer (1883-86/2016) and his *World as Will and Idea*, had "one of the most important influences in the shaping of Jung's interest in Eastern philosophy" (p. 59). As Jung (1921/1976a) affirmed, "we cannot pass over Schopenhauer without paying tribute to the way in which he gave reality to those dawning rays of Oriental wisdom....Schopenhauer's doctrine of deliverance is seen to be essentially Buddhist. He was captivated by the East" (p. 136 [CW 6, para. 223]). In assessing the influence of Eastern philosophy on Jung's psychology it must be noted that Jung (1931/1962a) praised Wilhelm for his masterful translation of the I Ching, through which he created "a bridge between East and West and gave to the Occident the precious heritage of a culture thousands of years old" (p. 138). Of particular significance, it was Jung's (1961/1989) reading of Wilhelm's manuscript *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, which served as a major influence on Jung's gestating theory of synchronicity, and drew Jung's singular attention to Taoist philosophy. Jung (1961/1989) emphasized "the text gave me undreamed-of confirmation of my ideas....I became aware of an affinity; I could establish ties with something and someone" (p. 197). As Cambray (2009) notes, "from Jung's foreword to Richard Wilhelm's translation of the I Ching we know that he saw



this oracular text as based on the principle that he termed synchronicity” (p. 69). It is important here to note that it is the principle of synchronicity upon which the I Ching is based. As Jung (1951/1969b) noted, “the *I Ching* presupposes that there is a synchronistic correspondence between the psychic state of the questioner and the answering hexagram” (p. 527 [CW 8, para. 986]).

### **Taoist Philosophy and Jung’s Theory of Synchronicity**

In a 7 September 1935 letter to Pastor Jahn, Jung (1973) indicated that although he did not necessarily ground his psychology “on Tao or any Yoga techniques,” he concluded, “I have found that Taoist philosophy as well as Yoga have very many parallels with the psychic processes we can observe in Western man”<sup>63</sup> (p. 195). As Clarke (1994) notes, in this respect “the East offered him a serviceable substitute for the unattainable Archimedean fulcrum” (p. 65) with which to examine, from a completely contrasting perspective, his psychology and the assumptions of the European culture in which he had become accustomed. Jung drew many parallels between his psychology and the Tao as described previously. Jung (as cited in Coward, 1996) found “Taoism ... to offer a better clue to the self” (p. 484) because the Taoist teaching of the Middle Way between opposites meant “that within the personality the two sides are always seeking to

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<sup>63</sup> Jung wrote during a colonial period, and so it is natural that some of the scholarship of the time reflects colonialist attitudes. Wright (1998) discusses the problems created by the primacy of male-centered or *androcentric* views of human evolution and spirituality in both Eastern and Western spiritual, philosophical, and psychological traditions. This issue is especially evident in Jung’s work which was mostly written in the Eurocentric, colonial period emphasizing androcentric views.

be in balance” (p. 484) in which the Tao formed the uniting symbol (Jung, 1921/1976e, p. 214 [CW 6, para. 358]).

As discussed in chapters 1 and 3 of this work, it is suggested here that the influence of Taoist philosophy, as illuminated by the *Tao The Ching*, had significantly more influence than Western thought on Jung’s theory of synchronicity. Similarly, Mansfield (1995) emphasized that Jung’s (1952/1969b) major essay on synchronicity “had three primary inspirations: clinical experience, quantum physics and Eastern thought, primarily the *Tao Tê Ching* and the *I Ching*” (p. 10). In fact, the following brief discussion of some of the more pertinent features of Taoism and Chinese philosophy as they pertain to synchronicity, in conjunction with the topics already discussed, will serve from this point forward as a framework within which to elaborate the modern myth for humanity unfolding here. This is not to say, however, that Chinese philosophy alone, embraces eternal truths, for truth can never be held captive by a single religion or philosophy. Rather, the appearance of these truths in other philosophies is testimony to the pervasiveness of the perennial philosophy of modern spirituality which maintains that all religious and spiritual traditions share knowledge and truths which spring from a common source and whose authenticity is founded on knowledge gained by direct mystical experience.

Aziz (1990) remarks that “there can be little doubt that the traditional Chinese worldview does considerable justice to the ideas associated with the synchronistic perspective” (p. 134). According to Cheng (2009), the origins of Chinese philosophy “as deep thinking on the nature of the world and the nature of human self can be said to have begun with the formation of the text of *Yi-Jing* [I Ching]...in the early twelfth century

BCE” (p. 71), thus significantly predating Greek philosophy. Liu (2009) explains that the *Tao Teh Ching*, also named the *Dao-De-Jing*, is traditionally referred to as “Daoism’s earliest scripture” (p. 209) attributed to Lao-Zi (or Lao-Tzu/Tzo), between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Liu further explains that “*Dao* comes from the path, road, or Way and was used by Lao Zi as a symbol for the ultimate origin and grounds of the universe” while “*De*...generally indicates the embodiment and function of *Dao* in individual things” and “*Jing* suggests a classic or scripture” (p. 209).

In Chapter 1 of this work, I noted how Henderson (1984) described the Taoist tenet of “correlative thinking” (p. xv) as foundational to Chinese philosophy, a principle that can be directly linked to Jung’s formulation of synchronicity. According to Henderson (1984), correlative thinking systematically links orders of existence such as human, divine, and nature through correspondences and “assumes that these related orders as a whole are homologous, that they correspond with one another in some basic respect, even in some cases that their identities are contained one within the other” (p. 1). Correlative thinking gives birth to the cosmological principle of *kan-ying*, in which a mutual sympathy or resonance is responsible for harmonizing the various parts of the Universe, such as man and nature, into an ordered whole. The pervasive organizing principle of *kan-ying*, as a chief attribute of the Tao, or Self, is responsible for the mutual resonance of cosmic and psychic principles in synchronistic events.

Jung (1952/1969b) argued “that causality does not explain a certain class of events and that in this case we have to consider a formal factor, namely synchronicity as a principle of explanation” (pp. 502-503 [CW 8, para. 944]). It is the principle of synchronicity, as demonstrated in the I Ching, which resonates with the Taoist principle

of correlative thinking. In Jung's (1975b) psychology, the "'psychoid' and essentially transcendental nature of the archetype as an 'arranger' of psychic forms inside and outside the psyche" (p. 22) is the formal cause of the phenomenon of synchronicity. In Taoist philosophy, it is the organizing principle of *kan-ying* which is responsible for the mutual resonance of cosmic and psychic principles in synchronistic events. As Coward (1996) explained, "as is the case in Chinese thought, this notion of Jung's [synchronicity] is not allegorical or prelogical, but is based on the idea of an ordered universe into which everything fits harmoniously" (p. 481).

With regard to Chinese philosophy, Jung (1952/1969b) maintained that "the idea of synchronicity and of a self-subsistent meaning...forms the basis of classical Chinese thinking" (p. 502 [CW 8, para. 944]). To review from Chapter 1 of this work, Jung (1952/1969b) described self-subsistent meaning as "*a fore-knowledge of some kind. It is...a self-subsistent 'unconscious' knowledge which I would prefer to call 'absolute knowledge'*" (p. 493 [CW 8, para. 931]), where "the 'absolute knowledge' which is characteristic of synchronistic phenomena...supports the hypothesis of a self-subsistent meaning, or even expresses its existence. Such a form of existence can only be transcendental" (p. 506 [CW 8, para. 948]).

### **The Tao as the Middle Way**

As Aziz (1990) notes, "above all else, the emphasis in Chinese philosophy is on 'synthesis'" (p. 134). Synthesis finds expression, as Jung (1921/1976e) explained, in "the aim of Taoist ethics...to find deliverance from the cosmic tension of opposites by a return to *tao*" (p. 217 [CW 6, para. 370]). The Tao is "the idea of a middle way between the opposites" (p. 214 [CW 6, para. 358]), which Clarke (1994) proposes was "a conception

which clearly anticipated his own key idea of ‘individuation’” (p. 80). In individuation, Jung (1921/1976d) elucidated the meaning of the middle way of the Tao.

The purpose of life is to travel this middle road and never to deviate towards the opposites. The ecstatic element is entirely absent in Lao-tzu; its place is *taken* by sublime philosophic lucidity, an intellectual and intuitive wisdom obscured by no mystical haze—a wisdom that represents what is probably the highest attainable degree of spiritual superiority, as far removed from chaos as the stars from the disorder of the actual world. It tames all that is wild, without denaturing it and turning it into something higher. (p. 120 [CW 6, para. 920])

As an example of how the Taoist seeks the middle way, Jung (1952/1969b) cites Taoist philosopher Chuang-tzu: “you use your inner eye, your inner ear, to pierce to the heart of things, and have no need of intellectual knowledge” (p. 489 [CW 8, para. 923]). That is to say, intuition informs the seeker of the Tao, in a way that is foreign to most Westerners accustomed to rational methods of problem solving involving the thinking function. Recall that intuition is the function which serves as the vessel of knowledge between the unconscious and consciousness.

In this passage from Chuang-tzu, Jung (1952/1969b) discerns “an allusion to the presence in the microcosm of macrocosmic events” (p. 489 [CW 8, para. 923]). That is, within the microcosm of the individual resides a macrocosmic principle or knowledge which Jung took to be the “absolute knowledge of the unconscious” (p. 489 [CW 8, para. 923]). In my opinion, this kernel of ancient wisdom, which Jung tapped into, holds the key to unraveling the symbolic messages from the unconscious wrapped synchronistically in the dress of the material world. Whether by careful introspection of

dreams, synchronicities, or the spontaneous upwelling of autochthonic images into consciousness, the perceptive observer may gain knowledge and insights into present and future events of the material world, not through the senses, but originating from a source of self-subsistent or absolute knowledge, the unconscious. This follows, as Aziz (1990) notes, from the basic tenet of Jung's theory of synchronicity "the individual is, through the unconscious, coextensive with the totality" (p. 111). To illustrate this concept, consider the wisdom of the *Tao Teh Ching Chapter XLVII*:

Without leaving his door

He knows everything under heaven.

Without looking out of his window

He knows all the ways of heaven.

For the further one travels

The less one knows.

Therefore the Sage arrives without going,

Sees all without looking,

Does nothing, yet achieves everything. (Waley, 1958, p. 200)

In summary, Jung (1952/1969b) remarked, "this Taoistic view is typical of Chinese thinking. It is, whenever possible, *a thinking in terms of the whole* [original italics]" (p. 489 [CW 8, para. 924]). As Aziz (1990) explains, the Taoist believes "that the activity of nature as a whole, visible and invisible, is governed by a single principle....the Tao.... nature does indeed constitute a dynamic, organic whole" (p. 134) in which the individual not only participates but is also governed by "nature in its entirety in accordance with the more comprehensive unitary pattern of Tao" (p. 135). Rather than

events being caused according to the prevailing Western mechanistic worldview embracing causality exclusively, events are the inevitable result of the mutual interdependence of each part within the organic whole of nature. Events depend on the “simultaneous resonance between categorically related physical entities” (p. 135). Within the Chinese worldview the ideas of order, and especially pattern,<sup>64</sup> are key. Thus, when seeking to understand how events are related or ordered, the Chinese seek to “to identify the relatedness or orderedness of events through the observation of their qualities....to classify the activity of nature in terms of patterns” (p. 136).

### **Equivalence of Meaning as the Taoist Connection Between Events**

Of pivotal importance to the Taoist way of thinking and to Jung’s theory of synchronicity, was the fact that these patterns were founded on the equivalence of meaning of events. As Coward (1996) explains, “the Taoist approach is the synchronistic way. As in the I Ching, it involves the study and classification of events wherein meaningful interdependence transcends space, time, and causality as the determining factor” (p. 483). To illustrate the concept of meaningful interdependence, Jung (1975a) recounts the following story:

I walk with a woman patient in a wood. She tells me about the first dream in her life that had made an everlasting impression upon her. She had seen a spectral fox coming down the stairs in her parental home. At this moment a real fox comes out of the trees not 40 yards away and walks quietly on the path ahead of us for several minutes. The animal behaves as if it were a partner in the human situation.

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<sup>64</sup> For a more detailed description of the central importance of pattern, especially in astrology, see Le Grice (2010) *The Archetypal Cosmos*, pp. 97-129.

(p. 395)

In Chinese philosophy, explains Aziz (1990), everything that happens in the cosmos does so because it was given an inherent nature, or quality, based on its “position in the ever-moving cyclical universe” (p. 135), which makes it inevitable for it to behave in the way that it does. Referring to the ever-moving cyclical universe, or Tao, Aziz explains, “the Tao...is perhaps best characterized as the path along which all things in nature travel. It is that which, though unchanging itself, gives rise to all things in nature” (p. 134). As Coward (1996) affirms, each person “participates in the whole in accordance with its comprehensive pattern (the Tao)” (p. 482). Thus, all parts of the cosmos are intrinsically interdependent with the Tao and consequently “in existential dependence upon the whole world-organism” (p. 135). Of great consequence, this intrinsic interdependence is not due to an efficient cause but a synchronistic one.

If something deviates from its natural position in the universe as given by the Tao, it loses its intrinsic nature, that is, its symbolic correlation or correspondence in the world-organism, and becomes something quite different. Coward (1996) elucidates: “one who is not in tune with the harmonics of reality ‘becomes a slave of passion and his nature will be distorted by externalities’ (Chung-yuan, 1963)” (p. 483). Jung (1952/1969b) believed that events are encompassed within this worldview that seem to have no apparent connection and happen by coincidence “whose meaningfulness appears altogether arbitrary. This is where the theory of *correspondentia* comes in, which was propounded by the natural philosophers of the Middle Ages, and particularly the classical idea of the *sympathy of all things*” (p. 489 [CW 8, para. 924]).



### **The Role of the Psychoid Archetype in Taoism**

Coward (1996) maintains that the Chinese teaching of “*T’ien-jen chih chi* (‘the interrelation of heaven and man’)” (p. 481) is the principle exemplified by the psychophysical qualities of the psychoid archetype, which can manifest psychically and physically. The shared psychic and physical meaning in a synchronicity highlights the interrelation of a person with the universe according to the principle of *T’ien-jen chih chi*. As the domain of the psychoid archetype, the *unus mundus* is the well-spring of archetypal patterning permeating the entire cosmos in a psychophysical continuum enveloping all of nature. From the foregoing discussion I suggest that the archetypes, functioning as the psychophysical pattern operating throughout the universe according to the organizing principle of *kan-ying*, or the Self which Jung equated with the Tao, could serve as a framework for Jung's vision of synchronicity.

### **The Tao as a Synthesis of Opposites**

If so, the archetypal meaning conveyed in a meaningful coincidence may effect a synthesis of opposites which can guide an individual to a more balanced ego-consciousness typical of the Middle Way called the Tao. This synthesis may result in an increase in consciousness, or in Jung's terminology, in individuation. As an individual gains knowledge of their true nature or identity through successive meaningful coincidences, the individual becomes progressively more aware of their vital interconnectedness and natural place in the world-organism, and increasingly careful to notice patterns in their environment which may be conveying a meaningful message. From another perspective Coward (1996) submits that the notion of synchronicity

proposed by Jung “is the idea that a person is a participant in and meaningfully related to the acausal patterning of events in nature” (p. 482).

Aziz (1990) affirms that “for Jung the *unus mundus* is not...a mere metaphor; it is a very real world which subsumes the world of our everyday experience....the unitary world whose tangible presence is the synchronistic patterning of events in nature” (p. 133). Through his personal experiences and study of synchronistic events the *unus mundus* “became a living reality for Jung. What before were incommensurable opposites now linked” (p. 133). Jung’s apparent resonance with Chinese philosophy might be said to be a result of his assuming his natural position in the universe, an organic universe with a unifying meaning or Way, the Tao. As well, a Taoist worldview might have led Jung to propose the transcendent function in which a holding of the tension of apparently irreconcilable opposites could lead to a more balanced third, or Middle Way.

**The rainmaker story.** There is a story Jung loved to recite as often as possible about a rainmaker in the Chinese province of Kiau Tschou. It illustrates what Sabini (2008) believes was Jung’s “deep resonance with Taoism” (p. 211). According to Zeller (as cited in Sabini, 2008), “if a group were gathered for dinner, Jung would say ‘Did you ever hear the story of the rainmaker?’ And everyone would shout, ‘No! We never heard it!’ And Jung would again tell the story” (p. 211). I believe this story is a clear illustration of Jung’s vision of the place of synchronicity in the West.

There was a great drought in a province in China; for months there had not been a drop of rain and the situation became catastrophic. The Catholics made processions, the Protestants made prayers, and the Chinese burned joss sticks and shot off guns to frighten away the demons of the drought, but with no result.

Finally the Chinese said: We will fetch the rain maker. And from another province, a dried up old man appeared. The only thing he asked for was a quiet little house somewhere, and there he locked himself in for three days. On the fourth day clouds gathered and there was a great snowstorm at the time of the year when no snow was expected, an unusual amount, and the town was so full of rumors about the wonderful rain maker that Wilhelm went to ask the man how he did it. In true European fashion he said: "They call you the rain maker, will you tell me how you made the snow?" And the little Chinaman said: "I did not make the snow, I am not responsible." "But what have you done these three days?" "Oh, I can explain that. I come from another country where things are in order. Here they are out of order, they are not as they should be by the ordnance of heaven. Therefore the whole country is not in Tao, and I am also not in the natural order of things because I am in a disordered country. So I had to wait three days until I was back in Tao, and then naturally the rain came." (pp. 211-212)

**The rainmaker story and resonance with the Tao.** Jung (as cited in Sabini, 2008) said this story illustrates how the East explains events in terms of resonance with the Tao, and not causality as in the West. In order for the rain to come, the rainmaker "had to experience the order in that chaos, in that disharmony of heaven and earth; if he had not experienced the harmony, it would not have been well" (Sabini, 2008, pp. 213-214). Stein (2014) explains that the core message of the story illustrates that "the individual (especially the extraordinary or the enlightened individual) has the capacity to affect society and the physical world (for good or ill) because the individual, society, and the natural world are intimately connected parts of a single reality" (p. 93). Jung, (as cited

in Sabini, 2008), explained that when he felt the atmosphere surrounding a gathering of people was wrong, he restored “a little bit of Tao” (p. 212). As if watching the energy of the Tao resonate with all present he said “it spreads like a quick-growing tree, with branches extending everywhere. Tao is in the room and nothing wrong can happen. This is the idea of what I call synchronicity” (p. 212). I believe Jung’s (1954/1969a) alignment with the Tao, as illustrated in the rainmaker story, prompted him to observe “in all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order...for everything that works is grounded on its opposite. It takes man’s discriminating understanding, which breaks everything down into antinomial judgements, to recognize this” (p. 32 [CW 9i, para. 66]). For Jung, the assumption of causality in the West, according to which one event causes another event to happen “is in itself a magic idea.... In reality we see only regular sequences and make the hypothesis of causality; we explain the regular series of events by that magic hypothesis” (as cited in Sabini, 2008, p. 212).

### **Jung’s Personal Commitment to Understanding Chinese Doctrine**

Chinese philosophy made gradual but deep and lasting inroads in Jung’s psychology early in his career. I believe a discussion of Jung’s personal commitment to understanding and integrating Chinese doctrine, especially the Tao, regarding his life and work, will shed light on the reasons why he felt so compelled to adhere to certain major features of his psychology. The following brief discussion is also intended to highlight the reasons why I have chosen to focus on Chinese philosophy and Taoism in particular as major molders of the modern myth for humanity. The purpose here is to formulate answers to the anticipated questions of those who are curious as to how and why they might benefit from learning more about synchronicity as a spiritual path.

Coward (1996) has noted that Jung encountered Taoism and Hindu philosophy while he was researching *Psychological Types* from about 1918 to 1920. From his research Jung (1961/1989) realized that a person's judgments are informed by their "personality type and that every point of view is necessarily relative. This raised the question of the unity which must compensate this diversity, and it led me directly to the Chinese concept of Tao" (pp. 207-208). For as Wilhelm (1931/1962) explained, "the Tao, the undivided, great One, gives rise to two opposite reality principles, the dark and the light, yin and yang" (p. 64).

**Jung's collaboration with Wilhelm.** In the autumn of 1929, Jung (1929/1967) collaborated with his friend Wilhelm, to publish the first German edition of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, to which Jung added his commentary. In this edition Wilhelm (1931/1962) explained that in Chinese philosophy, "the psyche and the cosmos are to each other like the inner world and the outer world. Therefore man participates by nature in all cosmic events, and is inwardly as well as outwardly interwoven with them" (p. 11). One may discern from this short passage the intimate interweaving of the psyche and the cosmos as in the Tao that so richly informed Jung's psychology.

Just a few months after Jung's (1961/1989) final collaboration with Wilhelm, he learned that his close friend was gravely ill. However, weeks before Wilhelm's passing, Jung recounted that he was awakened by an extraordinarily striking vision of "a Chinese in a dark blue gown, hands crossed in the sleeves. He bowed low before me, as if he wished to give me a message. I knew what it signified" (p. 377). On March 1, 1930, within 6 months of the publishing of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, Wilhelm died. For Jung, this vision of Wilhelm's impending death was undoubtedly synchronistic.

However, I believe it would be classified by Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) as a precognitive event belonging to the extrasensory perception type of coincidence phenomena where the shared content, or meaning, of the experiences was Wilhelm's death. As noted previously, in his May 10, 1930 memorial address to Wilhelm, Jung (1931/1962a) spoke of his research and personal experience with "the psychology of unconscious processes long ago" necessitating a search for an explanation for the remarkable phenomena he had encountered. He recalled his experiences of the I Ching with Wilhelm in his memorial address:

Anyone who, like myself, has had the rare good fortune to experience in a spiritual exchange with Wilhelm the divinatory power of the *I Ching*, cannot for long remain ignorant of the fact that we have touched here an Archimedean point from which our Western attitude of mind could be shaken to its foundations.

(p. 140)

From this, one could perhaps discern the import to Jung of the I Ching and its potentially momentous implications for the Western world. Main (2007) believes that if Jung's claim that the I Ching is based essentially on the principle of synchronicity "is justified, it means that, in spite of the highly diverse and radically unpredictable nature of synchronicity, the phenomenon can nevertheless be systematized and put to orderly use" (p. 142).

**Analogies between the science of the I Ching and Jung's psychology.** Jung (1931/1962a) believed there was a connection between "the science of The I Ching" and the psychology of the unconscious he was developing. In his study of the unconscious and the readings of the I Ching there were "psychic parallelisms which cannot be related

to each other causally, but which must stand in another sort of connectedness” (p. 141). He proposed a new principle “tentatively called the synchronistic principle” upon which the I Ching is based and which he suggested could also explain “certain remarkable phenomena of the unconscious” (p. 141). Chapter 3 discussed some representative examples of the remarkable phenomena Jung (1961/1989) had personally experienced including his “confrontation with the unconscious” (pp. 170-199) between 1913 and 1917. That Jung would so publicly announce the synchronistic principle in conjunction with the publishing of *The Secret of the Golden Flower* is an indication to me of the profound influence Chinese philosophy had on Jung’s thinking from very early beginnings. Regarding Jung’s (1929/1967) essay “Commentary on the Secret of the Golden Flower,” Stein (2014) remarks, “Jung’s essay is a *tour de force* and must be ranked as one of his most brilliant and inspired works” (p. 108). This short review of the ideas taken from Chinese philosophy regarding the relationship of psyche and cosmos, synchronistic events, and qualitative time is intended to provide an orientation to this work.

### **Taoism and the Cosmological Function of Myth**

The foregoing overview is intended to be one step in the second stage of the depth psychological development of a modern myth for humanity. As Le Grice (2010) has presciently remarked, the second stage must enable “us to connect the powers within us in the unconscious psyche to the powers of nature without. We need some way to relate and reconnect the order of realities of the psyche to the order of the cosmos” (p. 53). In this regard Adler (1992), for example, believes the “[I Ching] reveals an interdependence of subject and object, it stands against the accepted Western dogma of the division

between the two, dictated by a limited ego-consciousness, and it reveals a profound correspondence between within and without” (p. 11). I believe it also demonstrates the key role that synchronicity can play in the formulation of a modern myth for humanity.

Le Grice (2010) maintains that “a new world view must allow for the unprecedented diversity, plurality, eclecticism, and religious syncretism of the contemporary world” (p. 54). At the same time this new world view also has to offer “a single unifying perspective for the global community that can contain within its scope all these mythic forms....To find a supporting context we must look...to the ground from which all these spring. We must look to the cosmos itself” (p. 54). I believe the Chinese philosophy of the Tao, clothed in the language of Jung’s psychology, is a candidate for a role in such a supporting context in consideration of Jung’s (1984) assertion that the Chinese “have a far more complete understanding of the role of man in the cosmos” (p. 417). As will be discussed presently, I believe the findings of the new paradigm sciences closely parallel the basic philosophical principles of Taoism, thus supporting the myth developing here.

**The birth of a new cosmology in the West.** Previously it was noted that the rise of the ideology of materialism followed the decline of the animistic stage about 500 years ago. As Tarnas (2006) has written, “the modern self began to emerge, with astonishing force and speed, just over five hundred years ago” (p. 3). Tarnas suggests that this transition can be broadly framed by two major events; Pico della Mirandola’s humanistic proclamation in 1486 titled *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, and Newton’s *Principia* published in 1687. In the transition from the animistic stage of consciousness to the modern Western stage of consciousness, as described previously, individuals did indeed



gain a much more pronounced sense of individuality, instilling in them a sense of separation from others and the world which did not exist before then.

Tarnas (2006) explains that the dawn of the transition from the animistic stage to the modern Western stage arose with Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* which declared the birth of the freedom of individuals from the bonds of Christian scripture. Tarnas (2006) quotes Mirandola as proclaiming, "with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer" (p. 4). Mirandola's proclamation declared that people were no longer bound to the "old cosmology" (p. 4) of a universe conceived as a completed and "good" creation of God as dictated by the religious dogma of the Christian Church. Tarnas describes this Judeo-Christian myth as "humanity's gradual but radical fall and separation from an original state of oneness with nature and an encompassing spiritual dimension of being" (p. 13). To mark the end of the transition Tarnas chose Newton's definitive *Principia* with its mathematically precise laws describing the predictable operation of the universe as a giant mechanism in which individuals were utterly disconnected from the Christian myth defining their spiritual significance in which "humankind had possessed an instinctive knowledge of the profound sacred unity and interconnectedness of the world" (p. 13). In the transition between these events, those living in the West lost their sense of oneness with the universe and their sense of interconnectedness.

**Taoist philosophy and the new paradigm sciences.** Chinese philosophy is uninterested in splitting the universe through analysis and decomposition, and then reconstructing the findings into facts or theories. Their lack of interest in understanding the universe in terms of facts and details, so familiar to the Western mind, has been

greeted with skepticism at the least, or considered irrelevant by many. This skepticism might have been valid until the advent of quantum physics and the new paradigm sciences in the early part of the 20th century. Le Grice (2010) presents two key observations drawn from the developing new paradigm sciences. The first points to a holistic view of the cosmos, a paradigm called *holism*, described as a “fundamental unity between all existent things in the universe. All apparently separate...entities are situated within a larger undivided whole...within a single, unified energy field” (p. 98). Secondly, from systems theory emerged the paradigm of *organicism*, which visualizes the universe as “as being fundamentally alive” (p. 99) and “a vast living system” (p. 101) of dynamically interconnected phenomena which can be studied and explained through the methods of systems theory. As Le Grice notes, “Chinese thought, with its supposition that the universe is permeated by a vast hidden order through which all things are meaningfully correlated, was very influential on Jung” (p. 125). Thus, I believe the suppositions of holism and organicism, fundamental to both Chinese philosophy and the new paradigm sciences, support the cosmological function of the new myth for humanity unfolding here.

### **Kairos, Synchronicity, and Jung’s Near-Death Experience**

Perhaps Jung guarded his speculations on Chinese philosophy waiting for the presence of a divine guest ushering in a magical time when a synchronicity might occur to offer guidance and support. As discussed previously, there are synchronistic moments in the life of an individual when it is as if he or she is living a personal myth which gives them the opportunity to integrate unconscious contents into consciousness. This moment, or *kairos*, is gifted, as Schweizer (2009) explained, “as myth would formulate it, if a

messenger calls on us” (p. 92). I propose that the following illustration of kairos in Jung’s life, is an example of the power of myth to propel individuation at such a magical moment. I believe this divine presence made itself known in a series of synchronicities during Jung’s (1961/1989) near-death experience in 1944 following his heart attack, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (pp. 289-298). Jung’s attending nurse said after he recovered “it was as if you were surrounded by a bright glow” (p. 289). While on the brink of death, Jung had a vision from a cosmic vantage point in which he could see himself floating high above the earth. I believe this perspective revealed to him the identity of psyche and cosmos as maintained by the I Ching. Jung remarked, “The sight of the earth from this height was the most glorious thing I had ever seen” (p. 290).

**Kairos and the appearance of a divine guest.** In the vision just described in which he was near death, Jung (1961/1989) was visited by his doctor who now appeared as “a *basileus* [prince or King] of Kos<sup>65</sup>....an avatar of this *basileus*, the temporal embodiment of the primal form, which has existed from the beginning” (p. 292). That is to say, in this synchronistic vision Jung was visited by an avatar, the incarnation in human form of a divine being announcing it was the right time, or kairos, for him to return to the world of the living. In his vision, Jung presumed he was also in his primal form, an important term requiring further clarification. As Jung explained subsequently, “when anybody attains this [primal] form it means he is going to die, for already he belongs to the ‘greater company!’” (p. 293). However, Jung did not die, for his doctor

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<sup>65</sup> The Greek island of Kos was the mythic home of Asclepius the Greek god of medicine and healing.

told him the earth had delegated him to inform Jung that he did not have the right to die and was being ordered to return to the earth.

Sometime after Jung (1961/1989) was beginning to recover, he informed his doctor that he was in grave danger and would die in Jung's stead, but the doctor would not listen. Indeed Jung became angry with the doctor for pretending not to know "he has already assumed his primal form" (p. 293). Shortly after April 4, 1944, the day Jung was able to sit upright by himself, Jung's doctor succumbed to septicemia.

**Jung's near-death experience as myth.** Although Jung's vision and subsequent events could be simply explained as delusions and coincidences, they take on a very different significance when viewed as elements in a myth. In Jung's vision, he realized that he had been visited by a divine guest, the Self, as an avatar who announced to Jung that even though in his primal form and on the brink of death, he was not being allowed to die because what was revealed to him in his vision, in particular the identity of cosmos and psyche, was too important to die with him. As Aziz (1990) says, "Jung witnessed the synchronistic 'sacrifice' of the man who had literally saved his life" (p.118). It is apparent from Jung's (1961/1989) subsequent remarks that he "felt violent resistance" to his doctor "because he had brought me back to life" (p. 293). He regretted his return to the world of the living, lamenting that "life and the whole world struck me as a prison, and it bothered me beyond measure that I should again be finding all that quite in order" (p. 292). Now in a despondent yet more lucid state of mind, Jung realized the doctor "would have to die in my stead" (p. 293). Why would the doctor have to die in Jung's place, and what would be the purpose of this?

The doctor appeared to Jung in his vision as the basileus, or King of the Greek island of Kos which was the mythic home of Asclepius, the son of Apollo, and the Greek demi-god of medicine and healing. Jung (1948/1969d) noted that “the self is met with everywhere in mythology as well as in the products of individual fantasy” (p. 317 [CW 8, para. 599]) so the appearance of the Self as his doctor in a vision was not unexpected by Jung. Thus, if cast in a myth, the role of the doctor would not simply be that of an extraordinarily powerful healer in the mold of Asclepius, but bestowed with the regal powers of a King, perhaps better rendered as a Healer of healers, that is, the Self. The doctor, symbolizing the Self, valued the truths Jung acquired from his near death experience so greatly, the doctor, as the Self, was willing to sacrifice his existence in order that they could be brought into the world. Why the doctor, or Self, had to die will be explored later in this chapter. Of course, the Self cannot die, but another mythic figure from Christian history, very important to Jung as a symbol of the Self, was the Christ figure as mentioned in chapter 1.

***The Self as the Christ figure.*** Jung himself endeavored for much of his life to reconcile Christianity with his analytical psychology. As Jung (1961/1989) explained, “it is only natural that I should constantly have revolved in my mind the question of the relationship of the symbolism of the unconscious to Christianity....I consider it of central importance for Western man.” However, he believed Christianity needs “to be seen in a new light” to align it more closely with the current spirit. His efforts “to bring analytical psychology into relation with Christianity ultimately led to the question of Christ as a psychological figure” (p. 210). In *Aion*, Jung (1951/1969c) stated that “Christ...is the still living myth of our culture. He is our culture hero, who regardless of his historical

existence, embodies the myth of the divine Primordial Man, the mystic Adam” (p. 36 [CW 9ii, para. 69]). Here Jung uses the phrase “divine Primordial Man,” another term for the figure that appeared in his vision as an avatar. Jung made his “psychological position of the Christ symbol quite clear. *Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self*<sup>65</sup> [original italics]. He represents a totality of a divine or heavenly kind, a glorified man, a son of God *sine macula peccati*, unspotted by sin” (p. 37 [CW 9ii, para. 70]). Whereas all persons have a shadow, Jung (1948/1969c) explained, “Christ...cast off the shadow he was born with and remained without sin” (p. 177 [CW 11, para. 263]).

According to the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, Christ was without sin: “He [Christ] committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). Christ thus became the perfect sacrifice to atone for sin as described in the verse which says, “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith” (Romans 3:25). Christ died as an atonement, or substitute sacrifice, for the sins of human beings otherwise judged by God to be guilty and responsible for their sins and thus liable to receive a punishment of no less than eternal damnation. As Corbett (1996) explains, “within classical, dogmatic Christian theology, redemption is tied to the sacrifice of Jesus, and it is held that we can only be in relationship with God by means of this sacrifice” (p. 108). Those accepting Christ’s sacrifice would receive salvation from the judgment of God and therefore not die but have eternal life.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever should believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

***Jung's Doctor as the Christ figure.*** Viewed mythologically, if the doctor were cast as the Christ figure, the otherwise unfortunate and perhaps pointless death of the doctor could perhaps then be reframed as a noble and divine sacrifice to save Jung's life. In this myth, the doctor, as Christ, was destined to die a noble death to save Jung, who was chosen to deliver to humanity a modern myth, the myth of the creation of consciousness in which synchronicity came to play a significant role. Indeed, in a mythical sense, the doctor's untimely passing in itself was, I believe, a synchronicity underlining the importance of Jung's new myth. Through this synchronicity Jung gained direct experience of knowledge of fundamental importance to him personally and to his contribution to humanity in two respects.

***The purpose of the sacrifice of the Self/Doctor.*** First, according to Aziz (1990), through this synchronicity Jung gained direct experience in the physical world of "the sacrifice that the self willingly undergoes...to bring about its incarnation in the life of an individual. Through its sacrifice, the self empowers the personal and transpersonal meanings that make up one's destiny to intersect and flow into reality" (p. 118). That is, as a sacrifice to further the individuation of each human being and of humanity itself, the Self, through incarnation in an individual, voluntarily assumes the pain and suffering of the strictures and strife of the human condition (p. 115). Jung (1954/1969d) maintained that "human nature has an invincible dread of becoming more conscious of itself. What nevertheless drives us to it is the self, which demands sacrifice by sacrificing itself to us" (p. 263 [CW 11, para. 400]). To understand the significance of the sacrifice of the Self, Aziz (1990) first explains that the ego sacrifices its sense of independence and total psychic control as it integrates contents of the unconscious in the process of

individuation. However, as Aziz (1990) notes, “the self too is making a sacrifice as it works, through the symbol, to express itself in the more limiting world of the ego” (p. 21). As Aziz (1990) points out, there had “to be a sacrifice carried out on...[Jung’s] behalf, if he were to be empowered to fulfil his destiny on this earth” (p. 118). Jung personally experienced the enormous sacrifice the Self makes to spur individuation “through both his ecstatic elevation to, and painful fall from, the archetypal world of the self” (p. 117). As an individual treads the path laid out by synchronicity, the realization of the enormity of this sacrifice may eventually become apparent, as it did for Jung, with life-changing implications.

**Jung’s synchronistic vision as confirmation of absolute knowledge.** Aziz (1990) adds that Jung also experienced “an inner synchronistic vision” confirming what Jung called “the ‘absolute knowledge’ of the unconscious” (pp. 114-115) in the appearance in his delirious state of the doctor in his primal form, a form meaning he was about to die. In my opinion, Jung’s certain knowledge that the doctor must die indicates that Jung knew that the sacrificial role the doctor was playing mirrored the myth of Christ as a sacrifice to save the spiritual lives of individuals. Watching this myth enacted before him in his life, aroused Jung’s anger and frustration resulting from the doctor’s denial of his warning when he tried to alert him of his impending death. Aziz (1990) relates that the sacrifice of one person’s life to save another leaves the surviving person with a sense that their life is no longer their own. As a result Jung acquiesced to the power of the unconscious to guide his thoughts instead of asserting his own opinions. This was certainly a major step forward in his individuation.



### **Kairos and Jung's Encounter with Pauli**

Or perhaps the concept of the right time in Jung's formal presentation of the theory of synchronicity could be illustrated through Jung's encounter with the Zurich intellectual, Pauli, whose brilliant career in physics, was overshadowed by a troubled personal life. Stein (2009b) describes Pauli as "brilliantly successful in his academic life but a miserable failure in his personal and intimate life" (p. 10). Pauli's contribution to Jung's evolving theory of synchronicity has been described in Chapter 3 as essential to Jung's decision to actually write "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle" (1952). How did such a brilliant physicist, whom Jung (1940/1969b) said was "neurotic and was seeking my help because he felt that his neurosis had become overpowering and was slowly but surely undermining his morale" (p. 23 [CW 11, para. 38]), become an inspiration for Jung?

**Pauli's dreams.** In the midst of an emotional crisis in 1932, Pauli sought out Jung's counsel (Lindorff, 2004, p. 26). In Pauli, Jung (1940/1969b) recognized an exceptional combination of "remarkable intelligence" (p. 23 [CW 11, para. 38]) and, as stated by Lindorff (2004), "remarkable insight into his dreams" (p. 27) which he was able to recount in exceptional detail. Most importantly, Jung recognized that Pauli's dreams were archetypal. As compensation for Pauli's singularly rational conscious orientation, the unconscious presented him with archetypal dream images which exposed him to an irrational psychic reality that Pauli neither willed into being nor understood in any rational sense. In some of his dreams "an inner voice" (Lindorff, 2004, p. 29) challenged him, which, if ignored, could result in considerable disturbance. However, as Jung (1940/1969b) noted, Pauli "had the *great advantage of being neurotic* [italics original]"

(p. 43 [CW 11, para. 74]) so that his neurotic condition returned immediately if he tried to disavow his experience or refused to obey the direction of the inner voice.

**Kairos, Pauli's dreams, and the Self.** In this brief summary, one can begin to discern the guidance of the spiritus rector of Pauli's destiny, the Self or Tao; as Jung (1940/1969b) commented, "finally he had to admit the incomprehensibly numinous character of his experience" (p. 43 [CW 11, para. 74]). Pauli experienced the numinous leading of the Self, which gave him the strength and insight to confront those aspects of himself which lay in his shadow, and to integrate them into consciousness in order to become a more whole person. However, through the dreams which brought him to Jung, the Self also led Pauli to embark on a larger work, his great life work of co-parenting the birth of Jung's reluctant child named synchronicity born at the right time.

## Chapter 6

### The Self and Individuation

Although the Self is known in many world religions by other names, such as the Atman, or Tao, the concept always retains a paradoxical quality describing the nature of the individual and the cosmos, as well as their relationship. Referring to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, Coward (1996) notes, “the Golden Flower, symbolizes the self in which the unconscious has become conscious in a harmonious union with all of life” (p. 486). For Jung (1929/1967) the Self is “the source and goal of the psyche and contains the unity of life and consciousness....The unity of the two, life and consciousness, is the Tao” (p. 25 [CW 13, para. 37]). Since the Self is the goal of individuation, it is helpful for an individual embarking on synchronicity as a spiritual path to understand from a psychological perspective the possible experience of the Self which Coward (1996) describes as “a harmonious union with all of life” (p. 486). As this union may be described as an alchemical process, it is appropriate that the Self should also be described using an alchemical analogy, the Philosophers’ Stone, explored in some detail here. This alchemical process involves a psychically disorienting period termed regression of the libido, which is eventually resolved by the Self as the restorer of psychic wholeness. Other aspects of the Self and individuation are also investigated.

### The Self in World Religions

The Self may be called by many names throughout the world’s religions and spiritual traditions. It is not my intention here to promote one spiritual practice or religious tradition over another but to draw attention to the universality of the major themes referenced in various descriptions of the Self, Tao, God, or other name ascribed to

the unknown which stretches before humanity and which captivates the imagination of perennial philosophers. To be clear, Taoist philosophy and the I Ching are of primary interest here because Jung viewed them as spiritual practices based on the principle of synchronicity, and hence of pivotal importance to this work. As a philosophy that has its roots in the origins of civilization some 3500 years ago, the spiritual tradition of the Tao is surely a relatively unspoiled example of a manifestation of the unconscious in human history.

Jung (1951/1969a), affirmed that the Self appears in various religious contexts, one of which appears in medieval European alchemy as the Philosophers' Stone, *lapis* or *filius philosophorum* (p. 167 [CW 9ii, para. 257]) or one of a number of other forms. A brief list of other religious traditions in which Jung drew analogies to the Self include the following: Christianity, where “*Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self*” [original italics]” (Jung, 1951/1969c, p. 37 [CW 9ii, para. 69]); “the *imago Dei* embodied in Christ” (Jung, 1951/1969c, p. 41 [CW 9ii, para. 74]); the Chinese *Tao* (Jung, 1951/1969c, p. 69 [CW 9ii, para. 123]); the Gnostic *Anthropos* (Jung, 1951/1969e, p. 189 [CW 9ii, para. 296]); and from Hindu philosophy the *Brahman-Atman* identity (Jung, 1921/1976d, pp. 118-120 [CW 6, paras.189-192]).

Jung (1959/1970) described the paradoxical nature of the Self, the Atman, and the Tao as “the one who is in me.... speaks through me....What is meant by the self is not only in me but in all beings, like the Atman, like Tao. It is psychic totality” (p. 463 [CW 10, para. 873]). Thus, as Jung (1948/1969c) explained, just as the Self can simultaneously be perceived as God and the Christ within, similarly, “the atman appears as the individualized self and at the same time as the animating principle of the cosmos, and

Tao as a condition of mind and at the same time as the correct behaviour of cosmic events” (p. 156 [CW 11, para. 231]).

In the final analysis, I believe the paradoxical split in Jung’s theories mirrors his view that all psychic states must be held as a tension of opposites, reflecting the paradox which is life itself, as expressed in the *Tao Teh Ching* Ch. XXXVII:

Tao never does;

Yet through it all things are done. (Waley, 1958, p. 188)

As well the *Tao Teh Ching* says in Ch. XXI:

Incommensurable, impalpable,

Yet latent in it are forms;

Impalpable, incommensurable,

Yet within it are entities.

Shadowy it is and dim. (Waley, 1958, p. 170)

### **The Self, Individuation, and the Philosophers’ Stone**

Since the realization of the Self in the process of individuation is of major interest to this work, it is appropriate to expound in more detail on the nature of the Self. According to Edinger (1972), “a rich and complex symbol of the Self is found in the alchemist’s idea of the Philosophers’ Stone—the ultimate goal of the alchemical process” (p. 260). Just as the objective of individuation is the development of a relationship with the Self, the aim of alchemy was symbolized by the realization of the Philosophers’ Stone, or *lapis philosophorum*, a symbol of the Self. As Jung (1955-56/1970d) said, “just as the lapis [philosophorum] unites the opposites so the self assimilates contents of consciousness and the unconscious” (p. 118 [CW 14, para. 141]).

Edinger (1972) obtained his description of the Philosophers' Stone from a single English text<sup>67</sup> on alchemy published in 1652, which he believes is "fairly full and detailed" (p. 261). Previous discussions of the Self have mainly focused on its theoretical aspects. In this discussion the focus will be on the phenomenology of the Self, that is, what it is like to have an experience of the Self. As explained earlier, the phrase 'what it is like' refers to the phenomenological experience of a particular event, which forms the essential core of the phenomenon of meaning. Those who would pursue the spiritual leading of synchronicities will want to know what it is like to do so.

**The Self as the Philosophers' Stone.** In the following discussion, all references to the Self apply equally to the Tao. This description includes my interpretation of Edinger's (1972, pp. 260-291) compilation of potential phenomenological experiences of the Self and their possible psychological and spiritual impact on a person on the journey of individuation. These findings will also serve as motifs in the modern myth for humanity developing here. All quotes are from Edinger (1972):

2. The Self's "revelatory capacity....reveals the connecting links between the personal and transpersonal (earth and heaven) dimensions of the psyche, and makes evident that one's personal ego has a 'metaphysical' foundation and hence an undeniable right to exist in all its uniqueness" (pp. 269-270). This characteristic is consistent with Taoist principles, particularly the wholeness and interconnectedness of nature and the person, of heaven and earth. It is *as if* those

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<sup>67</sup> For a further discussion of the origins of this text and its content, see Edinger (1972), "The Philosophers' Stone," pp. 260-291.

who choose to follow the path of synchronicity have a spiritual guide reassuring them that they have a right to exist.

3. The Self's timeless quality instills in an individual a sense of a cosmic transcendent process at work in their life, *as if* there were a divine plan mapped out specifically for them, which places an individual's everyday experiences in the perspective of eternity.

4. The Self is also the source and origin of psychic life experienced as growth, abundance, fertility, sexuality, and the vitality of life itself (p. 274), *as if* the Self were the creator of the cosmos and life itself.

5. The Self as a union of opposites can be symbolized as sun and moon portrayed as a "hot, masculine, solar part and a cold feminine, lunar part" (p. 275) or in Taoist literature as yin and yang, female and male. An individual yielding to the process of individuation may experience a union of opposites and a resolution of conflicts within themselves, *as if* being healed by an omniscient spiritual power. There are positive and negative aspects to each of the solar and lunar parts of the Self. It is critically important to understand "the negative and dangerous qualities which each of these parts can have when it operates alone" (p. 276) or operates without some mitigation to regulate its intensity. Unregulated, the solar component operating alone can be destructive, for example, through either external or internal projection. The psychologically scorching effects of projective identification can result from intense affect originating externally from another, or internally from within oneself (p. 277). In a similar manner, the lunar aspect of the Self operating without the balancing effect of the solar part can also be

destructive because of a lack of heat, that is, numbing cold. An excessively spiritual pursuit of the ego can be brought crashing down to the concreteness of reality by the numbing cold and freezing effect of unmitigated lunar energy. All those on the path of individuation will “be a victim of one of its [the Self’s] partial aspects” (p. 278) on many occasions; exposure to the unbalanced solar and lunar aspects of the Self are necessary trials of the journey. However, despite the challenges of adopting synchronicity as a spiritual path “it is immensely helpful to know that they are part of a larger, meaningful process” (p. 278). It is *as if* there is a spiritual comforter accompanying the individual to support them through their trials.

6. The Self’s solar and lunar aspects can also be experienced in a positive way. For example the “moderate or mitigated quantities of solar libido are creative, fructifying and life-promoting” (p. 277). As well, through “the solar principle of masculine, spiritual consciousness...everything becomes clear, shining and transparent....this aspect of the Self may carry considerable numinosity” (pp. 278-279). The creative lunar aspect of the Self is perhaps most effectively described poetically: “it is...in the cool reflected light of the moon, when the darkness of consciousness is at the full, that the creative process fulfills itself; the night, not the day, is the time of procreation” (p. 279). Appropriately, it is the feminine lunar facet of the Self that gives birth to “the *realization* of the psyche as a concrete entity” (p. 281).

7. The Self is all-knowing and is therefore the “equivalent to the all-seeing eye of God” (p. 282). It is the Self, not the ego, which portrays unconscious material in



the images and symbols appearing in consciousness. Therefore, when an individual experiences “the image-making power of the unconscious in context with an understanding of the archetypal dimension of the psyche” it is *as if* the person gains access to “ego-transcending wisdom” (p. 286).

8. The Self, as “the center and totality of the psyche” (p. 286), is as paradoxical as the psyche: both are intangible to the senses yet as real and solid as stone, as amply shown by their effects in the process of individuation. The Self is a quintessence, or “fifth unified substance that....corresponds to the unified personality which gives equal consideration to all four functions” (p. 287) as described previously. However, it is possible that an autonomous complex will attempt to intrude on this quintessence by taking over partial control of the ego, in which case the ego can choose not to accept and integrate the complex in order to restore wholeness to the personality. Although this situation represents a block to further individuation, it is possible to overcome it by acknowledging and accepting that the Self, as the quintessence of the unified personality, is the goal of individuation. One can consciously choose to stay blocked by the complex or to yield to the goal of wholeness. Nonetheless, the Self will continue to present situations, perhaps in the form of synchronistic experiences, which will strongly challenge the individual’s choice to stay imprisoned by the complex. It is *as if* the universe itself was alive and knows the needs of the individual at such a deep personal level that it arranges synchronistic events specifically suited to guiding them to wholeness.

9. The Self is the ultimate objective of psychic evolution. At birth, the embryonic ego of each individual “is contained in the state of unconscious Selfhood, the primordial condition of totality.” As people develop ego consciousness, they separate from their original state of unconscious wholeness, leading to a yearning to recover “the lost state of original wholeness, this time on the level of conscious realization” (p. 290). It is *as if* each soul has an ultimate mission in life to return to its origin state of wholeness, the Self.

10. The Self possesses the ability to foretell future events. This means that “it is connected with a transconscious reality” not governed by the normal limitations of space and time. These circumstances correspond to Jung’s description of precognitive synchronicity. The Self “transmits knowledge of a suprapersonal structure or ordering of things which is inherent in the universe itself” (pp. 292-293) similar to Jung’s notion of “self-subsistent meaning” (p. 293). The existence of the phenomenon of precognitive synchronicity, in addition to other synchronistic phenomena, suggest “that predetermined order, meaning and consciousness itself are built into the universe. Once this idea is grasped, the phenomenon of synchronicity is no longer astonishing” (p. 293). That the Self has knowledge of the future and of the innate structure of the cosmos not known to individuals, suggests that the cosmos is ordered *as if* synchronicity is a law of nature throughout the universe.

11. The Self is also the *prima materia*, “the original first matter,” which must undergo many procedures in order to become the Self, the goal of individuation. This paradoxical outcome is a restatement of the process discussed in Chapter 3.

The Self “has the same multiplicity in unity as does the original stuff at the beginning. The difference is that it is now a...concrete, indestructible reality” (p. 294). Psychologically, this means an individual is faced with integrating split-off parts of their personality in order to reexperience “the lost state of original wholeness” (p. 290) which has always existed. As before, this cycle repeats throughout the life of the individual. It is *as if* the individual can choose whether or not to contribute their life-energy to the eternal cosmic cycle of the expansion of consciousness.

12. The Self, although not necessarily recognized as such in childhood, is often a haven of safety and protection of a child’s identity and self-esteem. (Edinger, 1972, pp. 260-291)

**A personal phenomenological experience of the Self.** The alchemical text under examination here addresses the mysteries of the Self, according to Edinger (1972), as “mysteries incommunicable to any but the adepts, and those that have been devoted even from their cradles to serve and wait at this altar” (p. 294). Because of my childhood experiences, I can relate to the suggestion that those who pursue the path of individuation most ardently are often those who have had “a decisive experience of the unconscious in childhood” (p. 295). Lacking the emotional and spiritual support and guidance I needed in childhood, I turned to the world of imagination as an escape from my “loneliness and dissatisfaction” (p. 295) with my unpredictable environment. I created secret hideaways and ceremonies to strengthen my sense of self-worth and personal safety. Apparently, this was also Jung’s experience, as described in Chapter 3. Unrecognized by me in childhood was the quiet but steady presence of “a transpersonal source of support” (p. 295)

undergirding my need to belong to something greater than myself, showing me my place, my personal identity and importance in the universe. For those *adepti* seeking the goal of wholeness, I would offer that it is necessary to act beforehand *as if* they already possessed this treasure. In so doing, the gifts of the Self will appear because they carefully observe, acknowledge, and resonate with the harmony and order extant in the universe that surrounds and supports humanity through the Tao.

### **Individuation as an Alchemical Process**

It will be recalled that Jung (1951/1969g) referred to the individuation process in alchemical terms as a fourfold “continual process of transformation of one and the same substance [the Self]” (p. 257 [CW 9ii, para. 408]). Although this fourfold process constitutes a quaternity, Jung argued “our scientific understanding today is not based on a quaternity but on a trinity of principles (space, time, causality)” (p. 258 [CW 9ii, para. 409]). In order to retain the original state of wholeness of the Self Jung asserted that it is necessary to adopt a “classical and medieval view of the world” based on “the principle of *correspondence*<sup>68</sup>” (p. 258 [CW 9ii, para. 409]) which Jung called synchronicity. That is, the principle of synchronicity, as the fourth principle of nature, is the primary and

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<sup>68</sup> By the term correspondence Jung (1952/1969b) referred to the “pre-established harmony” (p. 498 [CW 8, para. 937]) of Leibniz, a 17th-century philosopher, who proposed a divinely ordained harmony between body and soul, which Jung called the “absolute synchronism of psychic and physical events” (p. 498 [CW 8, para. 937]). This principle of harmony or synchronism is comparable to the cosmological principle of *kan-ying*.

indispensable principle driving the individuation process. I must agree with Jung on this point as will become clearer in the discussion of consciousness to follow presently.

**The challenge of individuation.** Synchronicity as a spiritual path is one possible path of individuation. Those who choose to walk this path will want to understand what this choice entails in order to be prepared for the challenges and rewards of undertaking this journey. Jung (1954/1969b) admitted, “I doubt my ability to give a proper account of the change that comes over the subject under the influence of the individuation process; it is a relatively rare occurrence” (p. 223 [CW 8, para. 430]). Thus, individuation is not for the faint of heart—a caution to those who would follow the spiritual path traced by synchronicity to assess their readiness and resolve.

As an individual gains increasing appreciation and awareness of the stability and reliability of a transpersonal relationship to the Self, they may potentially be less susceptible to what Edinger (1972) referred to as “regressive decomposition” (p. 266). The following explanation of the consequences of regressive decomposition, or regression of the libido, is somewhat detailed and theoretical but necessary to understand the role of the Self in the process of individuation as well as the nature of individuation. To explain, Jung (1952/1967c) described the libido as “by nature daemonic: it is both God and devil” (p. 112 [CW 5, para. 170]). In the libido’s role as God, the term *progression of the libido*, according to Jung, (1928/1969) means “the daily advance of the process of psychological adaptation” (p. 32 [CW 8, para. 60]) by which “pairs of opposites are united in the coordinated flow of psychic processes” (p. 32 [CW 8, para. 61]) resulting in the continuous, successful adaptation to the vicissitudes of life.

**Individuation experienced as a conflict of opposites.** Successful adaptations, of course, are not always the case. An individual may encounter a life situation requiring an unfamiliar approach or attitude that is not the individual's dominant approach. For example, my dominant function is thinking, but I may encounter a situation that would be best resolved using my least-developed feeling function. According to Jung (1928/1969), failure of my attempts to bring my feeling function to bear on the resolution of the situation may mean that "subjective contents and reactions press to the fore and the situation becomes full of affect and ripe for explosions" (p. 32 [CW 8, para. 61]). This scenario likely indicates a blockage of libido and a splitting into pairs of opposites. In the case in which psychic opposites have equal value, no flow of libido is possible, meaning that "positive and negative can no longer unite in coordinated action" (p. 33 [CW 8, para. 61]).

**Regression of the libido during individuation.** In an attempt to resolve the conflict between the opposites, Jung (1928/1969) explains that one of them is often effectively repressed so that "a dissociation ensues, a splitting of the personality, or disunion with oneself" (p. 33 [CW 8, para. 61]). When libido plays the devil, libido is blocked causing regression of the libido. This blockage results in the withdrawal of libido from the opposites and their perceived weakening in consciousness. But the withdrawal of libido from consciousness opens the gate for the flow of libido into the unconscious. As Edinger (1972) remarked, "libido must be poured into the unconscious in order to activate it" (p. 288). Therefore with regression, Jung hypothesized that unconscious contents begin to rise to consciousness influencing the individual's consciousness.

The appearance in consciousness of unconscious contents is not accidental or coincidental, it is a purposeful and teleological mechanism driven by the Self to achieve a psychic balance of opposites. As Jung (1928/1969) explained, this unconscious material consists of “altogether incompatible contents and tendencies, partly immoral, partly unaesthetic, partly again of an irrational, imaginary nature.... slime from the depths” (p. 34 [CW 8, para. 63]). However, Jung also postulated that regression of the libido is a precedent to individuation (pp. 34-35 [CW 8, paras. 63-64]). Those who persevere in moving through and adapting to this “slime” may be rewarded with “germs of new life and vital possibilities for the future.... that lie in the repressed contents” (p. 35 [CW 8, para. 63]).

Jung (1928/1969) explained that the adaptation of consciousness to contents of the unconscious requires an individual to consciously employ only one function, such as thinking, in my case. However, the opposite of thinking, my least-used feeling function, must necessarily be excluded from the process of adaptation because the contribution of feeling is not compatible with thinking. As a result of the dominance of my thinking function, when faced with an apparently insoluble problem, I would withdraw a significant measure of libido from my feeling function causing it to slip into the unconscious. At this point my feelings, as well as intuitions and sensations, would become linked to unconscious contents of, as Jung (1928/1969) described them, “inferior and incompatible quality,” and then surface in consciousness “in a somewhat incompatible form, disguised and covered up with the slime of the deep” (p. 35 [CW 8, para. 64]).

Like a fishing net that hauls up a variety of types of sea life, some of which are considered edible and some of which are considered garbage, my consciousness may become aware of my repressed functions as well as the unconscious material associated with them. These rejected and disguised creatures of the deep, otherwise considered garbage, are in fact treasures, because they have the potential, as Jung (1928/1969) said, of “effectively complementing or even of replacing the inadequate conscious attitude” (p. 36 [CW 8, para. 65]). If the thinking function fails to resolve an issue “because it is dealing with a situation to which one can adapt only by feeling, then the unconscious material activated by regression will contain the missing feeling function, although still in embryonic form, archaic and undeveloped” (p. 36 [CW 8, para. 65]) as exemplified by my own case. As illustrated in this example, regression of the libido resulted in presenting consciousness with the challenge of adapting to repressed contents of the unconscious, instead of dealing directly with adaptation to the original situation (p. 36 [CW 8, para. 66]). However, it is possible that the rejuvenated consciousness resulting from adaptation to the inferior components of the unconscious will now be capable of dealing with the original challenge.

Jung (1928/1969), on the other hand, commented that “a complete orientation towards the inner world becomes necessary until such time as inner adaptation is attained. Once the adaptation is achieved, progression can begin again” (p. 36 [CW 8, para. 66]). In brief, regression demands acknowledging and adapting to the very real and powerful “slime” of the unconscious. As Edinger (1972) stated, the Self’s control of psychic wholeness and balance through inner adaptation “refers to the ability of the integrated



personality to perceive meaning and value in the most ordinary and even disagreeable of happenings.... Inferior...aspects of oneself will be seen to contain value” (p. 267).

**The Self as restorer of psychic wholeness.** I draw attention here to parallels between this brief description of the consequences of regression, and Jung’s (1951/1969g) “continual process of transformation of one and the same substance [the Self]” (p. 257 [CW 9ii, para. 408]). In the previous example, the Self, or Tao, seeks to restore psychic wholeness and balance with the teleological goal being the spiritual growth of the individual resulting from a relationship with and adaptation to nature. Similarly, Coward (1996) explained, “the Taoist insistence on a balance between inner and outer, between yin and yang, confirmed in Jung’s mind that both sides were essential for the development of the self” (p. 484). Regarding the place of humanity in this balance Jung (1921/1976e) explained “man as a microcosm uniting the world of opposites is the equivalent of an irrational symbol that unites the psychological opposites” (p. 217 [CW 6, para. 367]).

**The numinous Self and the archetypes.** Main (2006) notes that in Jung’s work the powerful effects of the numinous quality of the archetypes, especially of the Self, began to appear about “the mid to late 1930s” (p. 158). So much emphasis has been placed on the experience of the numinous charge associated with the phenomenon of synchronicity that the numinous has been suggested as a qualifying feature defining a synchronicity. I must offer a counter-balancing argument to this suggestion to place Jung’s use of the numinous in context.

As described in Chapter 1, Jung appropriated the term *numinous* used by Otto (1923/1958), who explained that “the nature of the numinous can only be suggested by

means of the special way in which it is reflected in the mind in terms of feeling” (p. 12). Jung (1954/1969b) applied the term *numinous* to the emotion felt by an individual experiencing the constellation of an archetype, deeming this numinous affect to be “of the utmost significance for the psychology of religion” (p. 205 [CW 8, para. 405]). As Main (2006) notes, Jung “names the numinous as one of the defining characteristics of archetypes” (p. 158). Jung (1955-56/1970c) emphasized that “what counts in religious experience is not how explicitly an archetype can be formulated but how much I am gripped by it. The least important thing is what I think about it” (p. 524 [CW 14, para. 745]). Those who would take up the challenge of individuation must understand, as Donati (2004) emphasizes, that “knowledge is valid *only if* it is lived *both* intellectually *and* emotionally” (p. 712). Jung was keenly aware of the critical role of emotions such as those experienced in a synchronicity “because they represent the only way to acquire some sort of knowledge of the transcendental psycho-physical reality that is supposed to exist beyond them” (p. 712) as presented in both the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity.

In regard to the term *numinous*, Main (2006) explains that “for Otto, who introduced the term specifically as a religious concept, the numinous refers to the irreducible nonrational and nonethical aspect in the idea of God or ‘the holy’” (p. 157) reserved for God in a theological sense, not a psychological one. Although Main agrees that Jung’s characterization of the numinous agrees in large part with Otto’s, he also points out that by appropriating “Otto’s concept of the numinous, Jung modifies it in a number of ways that connect it more closely to the human and empirical....in presenting the *numinous* as an experience of the unconscious....he relates the numinous to the

human psyche” (p. 157). Nonetheless, Jung did remain “genuinely open to the possible transcendent reality of the religious object” (p. 159). How, then, can Jung’s dual application of the term *numinous* be reconciled?

Main’s theory echoes my observation in Chapter 3 that Jung’s theories often reflect a Cartesian duality. Main (2006) believes that Jung experienced a personal tension between the competing beliefs of his Christian heritage and his scientific proclivity, as well as a cultural tension between mainstream religion, particularly Christianity, and modern secular trends. As a result, Main suggests that “analytical psychology was forged out of this struggle and as a historical consequence embeds assumptions of both a secular and a religious nature” (p. 156). Main observes that the “dual sacred and secular character of analytical psychology” permeates Jung’s theory of the archetypes, such as their psychoid and numinous nature, and extends to “the collective unconscious, individuation, the self, and synchronicity” (p. 156).

For example, Card (1991) contrasts the changing character of the archetype to the unchanging nature of Plato’s Ideas. Card explains that the Idea in Plato’s philosophy “is conceived as transcendent and immutable, whereas the archetype has an inherent dynamism. The Idea is a model of ‘supreme perfection in the luminous sense’, whereas the archetype is ‘bipolar, embodying the dark side as well as the light’” (Card 1991, p. 22). Main (2006) believes that Jung’s formulation of the dual nature of these concepts derives not only from firsthand observation and scientific conventions, but also from the presumption of “a dimension of reality that is intelligent, purposeful, and irreducible to material, social, or cultural terms” (p. 156). As Corbett (1996) observed “paradox comes with this territory” (p. 44).

**Possible origins of duality in Jung's psychology.** The importance of dualism appears very early in Jung's writings. For example, in his 1898 lecture to the Zofingia fraternity at Basel University at the age of 23, Jung (1983/1983) argued for the necessity of suffering in life "on the basis of the elementary perception that no diversity can develop without the existence of an opposite, and thus that the suffering resulting from dualism is absolutely essential to the development of a differentiated personality" (p. 86, para. 227]). Such dualism and concomitant suffering are essential to the phenomenon of psychological growth Jung called individuation. The balancing of the tension of opposites and the subsequent unavoidable suffering is especially apparent in the dynamics of the transcendent function leading to psychological growth, which those tracing the spiritual path indicated by synchronicity must endure.

Regardless of its dual nature, Jung maintained that the phenomenological experience of the numinous is the same whether the experience is attributed to the Self or to God. As Jung (1955-56/1970c) explained, "the self can be distinguished only conceptually from what has always been referred to as 'God,' but not practically. Both concepts apparently rest on an identical numinous factor which is a condition of reality" (p. 546 [CW 14, para. 778]). One could even speculate that the split in Jung's thinking could be traced back to his childhood realization of two personalities competing for attention, Personality No. 1 and No. 2, which could perhaps be described as the scientist and the poet. I believe an appreciation of this dichotomy in Jung's thinking is key to approaching the subject of synchronicity.

It is an especially important perspective, I believe, for those who seek to see the world symbolically, and who are willing to open themselves to the possibility of a direct

experience of the sacred in all of nature. The point is not to become Jung, but to imagine what the world would look like if seen through his eyes. Imagination is key in noticing and adhering to the spiritual path traced out by synchronicity. Of the notion of synchronicity, von Franz (1988/1992) remarked, “this new concept is so mind-blowing that it has mostly provoked consternation” (p. 185).

It is a bit like riding a bicycle. The idea of balancing on a bicycle can provoke great feelings of consternation. At first someone will probably need to steady the apprehensive new rider to give them a feel of what it is like to be upright on the bicycle. With time, courage, and patience, that will be followed by the first rush of exhilaration of success on balancing themselves. No longer will the earth gliding beneath their body seem so foreboding; eventually rider, bicycle, and earth will simply flow as one in a magical dance bringing with it a sense of unity and participation with all of nature. So it will be for those entering the sacred circle of life revealed by the imagination.

## Chapter 7

### Symbolism and the Transcendent Function

Whereas the concept of symbols plays an important part in Jungian depth psychology, the interpretation of symbols assumes a central role in the development of synchronicity as a spiritual practice, thus meriting further elaboration. For Jung (1921/1976d) “the symbol has the quality of being related to all psychic functions without being a specific object for any single one” (p. 118 [CW 6, para. 187]). Myths and symbols share a commonality “myths and symbols,...can arise autochthonously in every corner of the earth and yet are identical, because they are fashioned out of the same worldwide human unconscious” (pp. 120-121 [CW 6, para. 193]).

In the following quotation cited previously on the phenomenon of synchronicity, Tarnas (2006) has succinctly and eloquently combined many of the key topics discussed in this chapter:

The occurrence of synchronicities is seen as permitting a continuing dialogue with the unconscious and with the larger whole of life while also calling forth an aesthetic and spiritual appreciation of life’s powers of symbolically resonant complex patterning. (p. 57)

Here, I believe, Tarnas describes the recurrence of the phenomenon of synchronicity as evidence of the possibility of dialoguing symbolically with the whole of nature. It is *as if* Life itself speaks in manifold patterns in such a way as to appeal, through symbols, to the archetypally informed perception of beauty and spirit in nature. The recognition of the *as if* quality of Life to speak in symbols is key to understanding and appreciating both the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity.

### **On the Loss of Nature's Aura in the West**

However, in the modern Western era, people have lost touch with this vital quality of nature. This loss is acknowledged, I believe, by Benjamin (1939) (as cited in Donati, 2004), who visualized “the withdrawal of the *aura*” (pp. 707-708) as a consequence of the shadow cast by the spirit of the times. The current religion of materialism has banished the aura, or the “magic outline” (p. 707) illuminating the whole of nature, in favor of a scientifically accurate but lifeless replica of things. The aura is normally felt between people who exchange glances; when one person’s glance is reciprocated by another, there is a feeling of being seen and known. By endowing something with the ability to return a glance, as it were, we can potentially feel its aura, thus allowing an ongoing dialogue with life. This potential was central to Jung’s conception of the phenomenon of synchronicity. As Donati notes, “Jung suggested a form of psychological animism in which we might treat objects in a different way, taking special care of them almost as if they were alive” (p. 708).

### **The Meaning of a Symbol**

What, then, is a symbol? As opposed to a sign that portrays something commonly known, such as a red traffic light commanding vehicles to stop, Jung (1916/1966) explained that a symbol’s “meaning resides in the fact that it is an attempt to elucidate, by a more or less apt analogy, something that is still entirely unknown or still in the process of formation” (p. 291 [CW 7, para. 492]). Very importantly, to reduce a symbol by analysis or rationalization to a sign annuls its real value; to give it hermeneutic or explanatory significance maintains its inherent worth and meaning. As Jung (1921/1976f) proposed, “the symbol is alive only so long as it is pregnant with meaning” (p. 474 [CW

6, para. 816]). However, after a symbol has become rationally understood and has served its purpose, it then becomes a sign or perhaps a metaphor. In this way a symbol serves as a sort of midwife in the process of birthing a content of the unconscious into consciousness. Jung (1921/1976a) explained that a symbol possesses aspects that are both rational and irrational at the same time: “the profundity and pregnant significance of the symbol appeal just as strongly to *thinking* as to *feeling*, while its peculiar plastic imagery, when shaped into sensuous form, stimulates *sensation* as much as *intuition*” (p. 478 [CW 6, para. 823]).

**Symbol as symptom.** To explain by example, a patient with low self-esteem may claim to a doctor to also have a serious illness with no medically determinable cause for such an illness. Jung (1921/1976a) advised that “it is left to our discretion and our critical judgment to decide whether the thing we are dealing with is a symptom or a symbol” (p. 478 [CW 6, para. 822]). In the *finalist* view, to be discussed in the next section, there is a possibility that the imagined physical illness is a symbol pointing to something totally unknown and important to the delusional patient who cannot find words to describe the deep suffering.

Stein (2009b) explains that what a symbol appears to be “communicating or presenting to consciousness is utterly untranslatable into any other terms, at least for the time being....a symbol presents an unconscious content making its way towards consciousness. As an analogy, it presents something that is otherwise completely unconscious” (pp. 3-4). The purpose of gathering as much information about the patient as possible is to gain insight into what the symbol may be signifying. The ultimate objective is turning symbols into signs and thereby releasing the patient’s blocked libido



so that it can be used more constructively. To begin to offer a fuller explanation of the origin and nature of symbols, it will be instructive to discuss the contrasting psychological perspectives of Jung and Freud which entails further discussion of libido.

**Causalist and finalist perspectives of symbols.** Jung made clear that the psychological development of a person is only possible if that individual is willing to acknowledge the value and meaning of a symbol by adopting the finalist perspective, a term requiring further explanation. The idea of development, central to Jung's psychology of individuation, is key to the finalist perspective of psychological development towards a final goal. As Jung (1928/1969) asserted, "the theory of development cannot do without the final point of view" (p. 23 [CW 8, para. 42]). The finalist perspective can be contrasted to the causalist-mechanistic view: "the mechanistic view is purely causal; it conceives an event as the effect of a cause" (pp. 3-4 [CW 8, para. 2]). Jung spoke of "the defect of the Freudian view," which represented such a perspective leading to a "one sidedness to which the mechanistic-causal standpoint always inclines...in the all-simplifying *reductio ad causam*" (p. 19 [CW 8, para. 35]) or reduction to a cause. Such a view is incompatible with the finalist perspective, given that it does not acknowledge the possibility of development towards a goal. In the causalist view, any change in a particular condition is merely a different form of that condition and is therefore "a masked expression of the same old thing" (p. 22 [CW 8, para. 40]) with no attendant increased, psychological self-understanding of the person.

Jung (1928/1969) emphasized that "since the psyche also possesses the final point of view, it is psychologically inadmissible to adopt the purely causal attitude to psychic phenomena" (p. 24 [CW 8, para. 45]), because in the finalist's view, "causes are

understood as means to an end” (p. 23 [CW 8, para. 43]). The end or goal to which Jung referred is the psychological development he called individuation, in which symbols serve a key role, as they do in the phenomenon of synchronicity. Referring to the psyche, Jung (1952/1956) maintained that “the symbols it [the psyche] creates are always grounded in the unconscious archetype, but their manifest forms are moulded by the ideas acquired by the conscious mind” (p. 232 [CW 5, para. 344]). Thus, although symbols arise from an archetype, the form they take in the physical world is determined by an individual’s experience.

*Symbols as transformers from the finalist perspective.* In addition, explained Jung (1952/1967d), the function of symbols is to “act as *transformers*, their function being to convert libido from a ‘lower’ into a ‘higher’ form” (p. 232 [CW 5, para. 344]). In this way symbols act as transformers of psychic energy and “collect, hold, and channel psychic energy, for good or ill” (p. 2). Jung (1921/1976e) equated libido with soul, whose common language is symbols. He claimed that soul, as “the organ of perception...apprehends the contents of the unconscious, and, as the creative function, gives birth to its *dynamis* in the form of a symbol” (p. 251 [CW 6, para. 426]), thus bridging the divide between consciousness and the unconscious. Although the *dynamis* Jung (1921/1976e) referred to manifests in intentional conscious activity, such as art, philosophy, and science, these images “from the rational standpoint of consciousness are assumed to be worthless” (p. 251 [CW 6, para. 426]). However, Stein (2009b) stresses the crucial role of symbols, which in the case of the patient with a serious illness, might be to transform the lower form of libido of low self-esteem into a higher form of “more complex and filled-out-motivations, activities, attitudes, and states of consciousness” (p.

7). Stein (2009b) emphasizes that “for Jung the human capacity to receive symbols and to do something with them belongs to the very definition of what it means to be human. Symbols shape and reshape matter” (p. 7).

***Regression of libido from causalist and finalist perspectives.*** An example of regression of the libido can be used to illustrate the difference between the causalist and finalist perspectives and the pivotal role of the symbol in psychological development. In the case of the patient with low self-esteem and the claim of a serious illness, it is apparent that the symbol taking the form of a claimed illness is not necessarily a literal image, as in the form of a picture, as one might imagine. From the perspective of causality, Jung (1928/1969) explained that regression is a “defense mechanism leading to the temporary or long-term reversion of the ego to an earlier stage of development” (p. 23 [CW 8, para. 43]). The causalist perspective of Freud might point to a focus on the mother as the cause of regression of the individual’s beliefs and behaviors to a much younger age. In childhood, the patient’s mother may have been unduly critical resulting in feelings of low self-esteem. These feelings might be surfacing again from a debilitating sense of chronic belittlement by an internalized mother harbored in the patient’s personal shadow. However, since the patient’s claimed illness has no medical cause it is assumed to be unassociated with low self-esteem and therefore can be disregarded.

The finalist perspective might argue that the regression of the libido to the image of the mother took the symbolic form of an illness to promote individuation. I believe Jung (1928/1969) would explain that regression to the image of the mother occurred “in order to find there the memory associations by means of which further development can take place” (p. 23 [CW 8, para. 43]). Recall that in regression of the libido, when the flow

of libido is directed to the unconscious, complementary or compensatory unconscious material in the form of images may enter consciousness, in this case the image-symbol took the form of an imagined illness. Since the patient had no way of knowing or expressing what was happening, the unconscious presented a symbol in the form of a delusional illness. Instead of ignoring this symptom because it had no apparent medical cause from the causalist perspective, the finalist could diagnose the unsubstantiated claim of the patient as an illness in the psyche requiring further exploration. Certainly the causalist view of the patient's current psychological condition could be correct, but the diagnosis in itself does not necessarily alleviate the patient's suffering because what is needed is a transformation of the mother image, not a psychological diagnosis. However, the symptom of illness treated as a symbol may shed further light on the hidden complexes, activities, and conflicts in the unconscious. Jung (1928/1969) suggested that "further development can take place, for instance from a sexual system into an intellectual or spiritual system" (p. 23 [CW 8, para. 43]). Left unacknowledged and unintegrated, such a psychic illness can lead to a life of psychic stagnation and a psychic state equivalent to physical death.

From the finalist perspective, such images are symbols pointing to an underlying unconscious content represented symbolically by the image. Jung (1928/1969) explained that "what to the causal view is *fact* to the final view is *symbol*, and vice versa. Everything that is real and essential to the one is unreal and inessential to the other" (p. 24 [CW 8, para. 45]). Thus, from the causalist perspective it is a fact that the cause of a person's behavior is a mother fixation. However, through this analysis the value and meaning of the symbol is ignored and thereby rendered meaningless, whereas from the

finalist perspective the mother fixation is a symbol bringing attention to an unconscious and unresolved issue requiring further investigation. One might say that from the Freudian perspective, a symbol conceals an underlying condition, whereas from the Jungian point of view, a symbol reveals a path to healing. In the final analysis, however, it is the patient who holds the key to the ultimate wisdom of the unconscious. These statements will acquire more significance when the role of the symbol is considered in the process of understanding the meaning of a synchronicity to an individual.

**A causalist perspective dominates the current worldview.** From this brief overview, perhaps it is possible to recognize the causalist-mechanist perspective as not only the prevailing view in the current age of materialism but also the block to the adoption of the finalist perspective by individuals. As Le Grice (2009) has offered, “with regard to entire civilizations, a collective world view, at its deepest level, determines the prevailing understanding of the nature of reality itself” (p. 26). By definition the causal perspective excludes the possibility of acausal events such as the phenomena of synchronicity or the manifestation of the principle of synchronicity in nature. Whereas the finalist perspective recognizes the fundamental characteristics of synchronicities regarding meaning and purpose, which respectively represent the formal and final causes of Aristotle, the causalist perspective acknowledges only material and efficient causes.

One response that depth psychology can offer to this impasse is the possibility of a radical shift in worldview, such as the one experienced by Jung’s recalcitrant female patient. The unexpected appearance in an individual’s life of a source of knowledge and wisdom that is personally meaningful and that cannot be attributed to any natural cause can potentially begin to deconstruct the psychological block erected by the ego and the

collective worldview, and gradually begin to move the individual and the collective from a causalist to a finalist perspective. Such is the possibility described here of synchronicity as a spiritual path. Stein (as cited in Colman, 2011) views the externally perceived component in the phenomenon of synchronicity as a “symbol that transcends the psyche...It reaches out beyond the psyche, and through its synchronistically orchestrated presence it implies the movement of a transcendent factor breaking into the time-space-causality framework. It brings one to a belief in objective meaning” (p. 476).

### **The Symbolic Life**

In 1939 Jung (1939/1976a) addressed the Guild of Pastoral Psychology in London on the subject of the symbolic life. He began by describing the results of a survey he had conducted in Switzerland that asked whether someone experiencing psychological problems would they rather go to a doctor or to a priest or parson. Jung was not surprised to learn that most Catholics would prefer to talk to a priest, whereas most Protestants indicated a preference for a doctor, a finding similar to a survey in America. As well, in his 40 years of practice Jung had learned that, among practicing Catholics, no more than six Catholics had come to him for consultation, whereas the number of Protestant patients was much higher (p. 267 [CW 18, para. 609]). Searching into the reasons for these results, Jung discovered that at the heart of a Catholic rite such as the Mass, for example, is “a living mystery that is the thing that works.... a mystery that reaches down into the history of the human mind” (p. 270 [CW 18, paras. 615-616]).

Jung (1939/1976a) traced the roots of some Catholic rituals back to the Eleusinian Mysteries, others to traditions predating Christianity by hundreds of years. He explained that humanity has expressed the “most fundamental and most important psychological

conditions in this ritual, this magic....And the ritual is the cult performance of these basic psychological facts” (pp. 270-271 [CW 18, para. 617]). Jung explained that rituals in the Catholic Church were symbolic of the deep psychological and spiritual needs of human beings, whereas the Swiss Protestant Church lacked a “ritual, symbolic life” (p. 273 [CW 18, para. 625]). Restrained to the causalist position, adherents to the religion of materialism utterly lack any sense of a symbolic life, offering them a bleak and spiritually empty existence. As Jung (1952/1967b) said, “science therefore puts in place of the certainty of faith, the uncertainty of human knowledge” (p. 62 [CW 5, para. 95]). Jung (1939/1976a) stressed that the modern Western individual is in need of “a symbolic life - badly in need. We only live banal, ordinary, rational, or irrational things....But we have no symbolic life. Where do we live symbolically? Nowhere, except where we participate in the ritual of life” (p. 273 [CW 18, para. 625]). Stein (2009a) affirms that Jung sought “to live a symbolic life outside of the containment provided by a religious tradition” (p. vii), a symbolic life that acknowledges the possibility of synchronicity in the ritual of life.

**Religious rituals as a shield to direct religious experience.** Aziz (1990)

describes ritual as “that within which and through which one achieves communion with one’s desired religious goal” (p. 9). In his 1937 Terry Lectures, Jung (1940/1969b) assigned the declining spiritual meaning of Judeo-Christian rituals to the stringent control and limitation of their few remaining approved symbols derived from time-honored creeds focusing on the message of salvation in Christ. He explained that this strategy has resulted in the substitution of mechanical, organized rituals that shield an individual from “immediate religious experience” (p. 43 [CW 11, para. 75]). However, at the time of the Reformation, Protestantism tore down the Catholic Church’s edifice of protective ritual

rendering it ineffective. In this period, Jung commented, “man had to face his inner experience without the protection and guidance of dogma and ritual, which are the very quintessence of Christian as well as of pagan religious experience” (p. 21 [CW 11, para. 33]). As described in Chapter 1 of this work, Jung affirmed that “creeds are codified and dogmatized forms of original religious experience. The contents of the experience have become sanctified and are usually congealed in a rigid, often elaborate, structure of ideas” (p. 9 [CW 11, para. 10]).

Since the Reformation, the Protestant Christian Church has largely rebuilt the edifice barring the way to direct spiritual experience, and once again has used codified dogma and ritual to protect individuals against the unruly forces of the unconscious. Jung (1939/1976a) strongly advised those people who were comfortable with their particular form of religious tradition to take their dogma and ritual seriously (p. 271 [CW 18, para. 618]). Like the moderns discussed in Chapter 3 of this work, these people may be seeking the safety of ready-made traditional religions appearing as fortresses of hope and meaning in an otherwise meaningless world offering no hope of personal meaning.

**Encounters with the unconscious as the center of religious ritual.** However, Jung sought to place direct, spontaneous encounters with the unconscious at the center of religious ritual leading ultimately to a uniquely personal sense of wholeness. As Jung (1952/1969a) said, “the religious need longs for wholeness, and therefore lays hold of the images of wholeness offered by the unconscious, which, independently of the conscious mind, rise up from the depths of our psychic nature” (p. 469 [CW 11, para. 757]). In effect, Jung was describing the fundamental need of contemporaries, as discussed in Chapter 3, seeking meaning through a sense of personal connection as opposed to



collective communion with the divine mediated by a ritual of life offering direct spiritual experience. I believe this fundamental need is addressed in a unique and meaningful manner if the cosmic dimension of synchronicity is acknowledged and integrated into the myth evolving here. In this modern myth for humanity it is *as if* the consciousness of a Divine Mind pervades the cosmos infusing nature itself with life and spiritual significance for all those willing to open the doors of perception. The core of the myth evolving in this work is the expansion of consciousness driven by the interpretation and integration of personal and collective symbols presented through both the phenomenon and the principle of synchronicity. It is *as if* a Divine Consciousness or the Tao directs and propels the growth of humanity's consciousness. In this way individuals and the collective may choose to participate in the myth which Jung believed was the definitive purpose of human existence—the creation of consciousness.

**Synchronicity and the Jungian ritual enacted in all of nature.** At the Yale University Terry Lectures of 1937, Jung (1940/1969b) invited the attendees to seriously entertain the possibility of “immediate religious experience” (p. 43 [CW 11, para. 75]) through a direct experience of the unconscious envisioned as an intrapsychic ritual. As examined in chapters 1 and 3, with the introduction into Jung's psychology of the concept of synchronicity, Jung's intrapsychic ritual became, as Aziz (1990) explained, “a direct encounter with nature in its entirety. The Jungian ritual...is now a ritual which is to be enacted within the sacred circle of nature as a whole” (p. 167). As well, unlike Jung's intrapsychic model of the psychology of religion “wherein the search for spiritual wholeness is largely to be pursued in relationship to the inner world, with the synchronistic model, nature as a whole has become the sacred retort of the work” p. 216)

of individuation. Jung (1939/1976a) had asked, Where do we live symbolically? (p. 273 [CW 18, para. 625]). The response to Jung was the ritual of life, entered into by carefully observing events patterned symbolically and synchronistically in nature, a ritual which Aziz (1990) termed “the distinctive ritual of the Jungian worldview” (p. 168). This view is the same as the attitude assumed in religious ritual as discussed in chapters 1 and 3. As Jung (1975b) proposed, “religion means a watchful, wary, thoughtful, careful, prudent, expedient and calculated attitude towards the powers-that-be” (p. 483).

**The symbolic life as ritual.** The ritual of the symbolic life begins with the attitude one must have towards not only dreams, for example, but also the whole spectrum of life which presents, as Tarnas (2006) says, “symbolically resonant complex patterning” (p. 57). The symbolic attitude, like the finalist view, attaches meaning to events no matter how seemingly insignificant, rather than viewing them from the causalist perspective as merely facts (Jung, 1921/1976a, p. 476 [CW 6, para. 819]). The symbolic perspective resembles in some ways what has been described as participation mystique, consciousness at the animistic stage, with the vitally important distinction of a reflecting consciousness. Aziz (1990) points out that the distinction between participation mystique as a rather harmless, temporary, and controlled state of mind as opposed to a pathology manifesting as an essentially permanent experience of identification of subject and object, is one of degree (p. 186).

Von Franz (1980b) commented that “religion means never acting only in accordance with conscious reasoning, but with constant attention and consideration of the unknown participating factors” (p. 95). She recounted an example of this idea in which someone might ask to have a coffee with her when she was done with her lecture.

Logically she knows she has the time, but instead she also consults her feelings to see what her instincts are telling her. If her instincts advise against the meeting or if some curious physical event occurs such as a door banging closed she might decide not to go. In the ritual of life, Von Franz advised to “concentrate and try to get some sign from the Self, or from inside oneself....it is tantamount to paying constant attention to Tao, whether what I am now doing is right, in Tao” (p. 95).

There is an important distinction regarding the approach to a symbolic life from the viewpoint of traditional religion as opposed to Jung’s psychological approach. As noted previously, Jung (1940/1969b) explained that the creeds and symbol systems of a religion stem from unquestioned, formalized dogma founded on “original religious experience” (p. 9 [CW 11, para. 10]). A practitioner of a religion may accept these creeds and symbols on faith and not attempt to change or judge their content in any way, or else reject them altogether. However, Jung’s psychological interpretation of symbols understands them as temporary God-images that can be used or discarded when their intellectual or emotional utility has expired depending on the prerogative of the individual. Symbols may even be revisited after being set aside for some time to once again serve as a focal point of orientation and perhaps go on to become a major symbol in the life of an individual. As Stein (2009a) has said, “an attitude of respect for the numinous presence of the Divine, akin to worship, belongs inherently to the symbolic life” (p. vii). Living the symbolic life means to renew the energy of symbols by returning to them, and to be reenergized by those symbols which return one to the ultimate wellspring of meaning and purpose, the Self (Stein, 2009a, p. vii).

The Self is the prime creator of the symbols which enter one's life and around which one's life revolves; they are not chosen by an individual out of curiosity or aesthetic appeal, rather they are imposed by the Self to propel psychological and spiritual growth towards the goal of wholeness (Stein, 2009a, p. viii). Jung (1921/1976e) compared this idea to "the stirrings of the collective unconscious" and "in the language of the Old Testament, 'the will of God'" (p. 190 [CW 6, para. 321]). If one were to ask why certain symbols enter a person's life, or what meaning they could possibly have for that person, the answer Jung's psychology offers is to further the individuation process in some way that may be inscrutable or even unthinkable at the moment. Some symbols come and go whereas others remain relevant for a lifetime, so that living a symbolic life means one will be constantly influenced by a changing kaleidoscope of symbols emerging and evolving in one's life (Stein, 2009a, pp. vii-viii). Stein (2009a) likens the symbolic life to wading "into the stream of psychic life as it flows into conscious life and offers channels of expression and directions for movement that cannot be predicted. It is to be part of an eternal process of creation, destruction, re-creation" (p. viii).

### **The Transcendent Function**

An understanding of the transcendent function is essential to the interpretation of the meaning of symbols as they may appear in both the phenomenon and the principle of synchronicity. It was in his 1913 essay "On Psychic Energy," which was not published until 1928, that Jung first described the unconscious as a guide directing individuals to a more meaningful life (Miller, 2004, p. 2). His short essay called "The Transcendent Function" was written in 1916 to support his theory. He proposed what he called the *transcendent function*, through which innovative and meaningful guidance could emerge

from a dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious. Jung (1957/1969) maintained that the natural role of the psyche was to bring together the opposites of conscious and unconscious in a confrontation for the purpose of synthesizing a “living, third thing....a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation. The transcendent function manifests itself as a quality of conjoined opposites” (p. 90 [CW 8, para. 189]).

Miller (2004) suggests that the transcendent function, which Jung (1943/1966) also called the synthetic or constructive method,<sup>69</sup> is fundamental to Jung’s theories of “the role of symbol and fantasy, individuation, the archetypes, the Self” (p. 3). It became the core dynamic in Jung’s psychology through which individual transformation was possible. Jung believed individuation was only possible through dialogue and reconciliation with contents of the unconscious for which the transcendent function provided the bridge. Thus, it was of great importance to Jung to determine the most effective method, described next, for summoning and assimilating the contents of the unconscious.

As already discussed, in the period between 1913 and 1917 Jung (1961/1989) underwent a life-altering “confrontation with the unconscious” (pp. 170-199) as a result of which Jung (2009) revealed his “entire life consisted in elaborating what had burst forth from the unconscious” (p. vii). During Jung’s (1961/1989) period of disorientation

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<sup>69</sup> For a further description of the synthetic or constructive method, see Jung (1943/1966), pp. 80-89. Essentially Jung described the transcendent function, or synthetic or constructive method, as a natural process described as the emergence of psychic energy resulting from the holding in tension of the opposites of conscious and unconscious.

he attempted but failed to rationally discern the reason for his disturbance using the psychoanalytic methods of Freud. Not knowing what to do, he decided to follow whatever impulse occurred to him, leading him to consciously submit himself “to the impulses of the unconscious” (p. 173). I agree with Miller (2004) that this was a turning point in Jung’s psychology “because it acknowledged for the first time the purposive, teleological nature of the unconscious” and likely represented “the birth of the transcendent function in Jung’s thinking” (p. 10). Thus, it is perhaps understandable that following this critical period Jung (1957/1969) wrote his seminal work “The Transcendent Function” in 1916 although it was not published until 1956 in revised form. In *The Red Book* Jung (2009) records the many dialogues he had with figures of the unconscious through active imagination. Shamdasani (2009) notes that *The Red Book* or “*Liber Novus* thus presents a series of active imaginations together with Jung’s attempt to understand their significance” (p. 207). Jung (1957/1969) affirms that active imagination, as one stage of the individuation process, “is the most important auxiliary for the production of those contents of the unconscious which lie, as it were, immediately below the threshold of consciousness” (p. 68). According to Homans (1995), Jung’s analytical psychology “defines its core process in the most general sense as the process of individuation” (p. 24).

**The effects of confrontation with the unconscious.** For those who would undertake synchronicity as a spiritual path, Jung (1928/1966) issued a note of caution. In summoning up the contents of the unconscious “the forces that burst out of the collective psyche have a confusing and blinding effect” (p. 160 [CW 7, para. 251]). The path of individuation requires an individual to forfeit much if not most of their personal identity

in deference to a superior intelligence, the Self, which ultimately succeeds in pushing the ego off center stage as lead actor or actress of a person's life. As Jung (1955-56/1970c) remarked "*the experience of the self, is always a defeat for the ego*" (p. 546 [CW 14, para. 778]). The ego's capitulation includes the image a person had of themselves which Jung (1928/1966) called the persona. Jung explained that the term *persona* "originally...meant the mask once worn by actors to indicate the role they played" (p. 157 [CW 7, para. 245]). The persona is not real; rather "it is a compromise between individual and society" developed by a person to fit the particular role or roles that person is expected to play in the world.

Like Jung's confrontation with the unconscious, a person moving through the process of active imagination will be challenged by surreal contents of the unconscious never previously imagined. These contents gradually weaken the ego's control of consciousness until figures of the unconscious take full control (Jung, 1928/1966, pp. 160-161 [CW 7, para. 251]). Under the pressure of the influx of images of the unconscious the persona will realize it is no longer in control and will effectively dissolve. Homans (1995) has termed this capitulation of the ego, or collapse of the persona, the "typically Jungian moment" (p. 166), signifying a critical breakthrough heralding the onset of spiritual growth of an individual Jung called individuation. Such is not always the case, however.<sup>70</sup> As Jung (1928/1966) explained, "the predominance of

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<sup>70</sup> Le Grice (2013) has explored four scenarios following the breakdown of the ego such as occurs in the Jungian moment. The first response is schizophrenic disintegration of the individual's personality; the second is a dissociation whereby contents of the unconscious inundate the conscious personality resulting in its assumption of god-like powers; the

unconscious influences, together with the associated disintegration of the persona and the deposition of the conscious mind from power, constitute a state of psychic disequilibrium” (p. 161 [*CW* 7, para. 252]).

This state of disequilibrium forces the struggling ego to make sense of the barrage of bizarre unconscious material, out of which the individual will begin to achieve, as Homans (1995) said, “a coming to selfhood or self-realization in which one achieved a definite sense of one’s innermost, incomparable uniqueness. This profound sense of oneself as distinct from every other person in one’s life is therefore a transformation of the persona” (p. 103). The symbols which present themselves to consciousness must be then be analyzed and allowed to develop a central theme. The development of a central theme signals the completion of the first phase of the transcendent function. As a result of this encounter with the unconscious Jung (1928/1966) explains “there arises a consciousness which is no longer imprisoned in the petty, oversensitive, personal world of the ego....instead it is a function of relationship in the world of objects, bringing the

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third response was described by Jung as “regressive restoration of the persona” resulting in reversion to an earlier stage of development; the fourth response is the most valuable. In this case the ego, as hero, faces and controls the unruly and potentially dangerous instinctual forces lurking in the unconscious. However, the heroic ego alone cannot tame the unpredictable powers of the unconscious by repressive willpower. It must develop a relationship with the feminine principle, that is, the anima (pp. 168-173). This scenario is similar to my own story in which the unruly Unicorn (Capricorn) is tamed by the feminine principle symbolized by the Virgin (Virgo), which is emphasized by the placement of the ascendant and the moon in Virgo on my chart.



individual into absolute, binding, and indissoluble communion with the world at large” (p. 178 [CW 7, para. 275]). Active imagination has launched the person on a lifelong journey of individuation.

According to Jung’s description, this transformed consciousness brings it into “indissoluble communion with the world at large” which I interpret as an openness to the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity as one would expect in a universe governed by Tao. Jung (1928/1966) added “the plunge into this process becomes unavoidable whenever the necessity arises of overcoming an apparently insuperable difficulty” (p. 161 [CW 7, para. 252]). This necessity will be further explored in the discussion on synchronicity and meaning.

**The dynamics of the transcendent function.** To explain how it is possible to bring contents of the unconscious into dialogue with the ego, Jung (1957/1969) replied, “it is exactly as if a dialogue were taking place between two human beings with equal rights, each of whom gives the other credit for a valid argument” (p. 89 [CW 8, para. 186]). Jung described the dynamics of the transcendent function in the following way:

The shuttling to and fro of arguments and affects represents the transcendent function of opposites. The confrontation of the two positions generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living, third thing—not a logical stillbirth in accordance with the principle *tertium non datur* [a third possibility is not given] but a movement out of the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation. The transcendent function manifests itself as a quality of conjoined opposites. (p. 90 [CW 8, para. 189])

Miller (2004) explains that the living third thing to which Jung refers results from the holding in tension of the opposites of rational and irrational so that what emerges “is neither a combination of nor a rejection of the two” (p. 5). Foundational to the transcendent function is the emergence of a symbol stemming from “the fantasy-producing activity of the psyche” (p. 4) which bridges the opposites. The symbol, acting as midwife, produces a “living, third thing” such as the patient’s unsupported certainty of a serious illness. So long as this symbol remains undiagnosed, it carries meaning. In this case, the patient’s imagined illness was a metaphor because the language of a physical symptom was being applied poetically to the psyche. It was *as if* the psyche was metaphorically demonstrating its illness because the patient did not possess the ability to understand the psychic root of low self-esteem.

In a letter to Schmid on 6 November 1915 Jung (1973) advised that mere understanding can sometimes be “a veritable murder of the soul....The core of the individual is a mystery of life, which is snuffed out when it is ‘grasped.’ That is why symbols want to be mysterious....The symbol wants to guard against Freudian interpretations” (p. 31) which provide only causal explanations. Given this proviso, once the symbol is interpreted as symbolizing the patient’s internalized mother, the patient may be able to refer to their symptom as a metaphor in which they were psychically ill *as if* they had a physical illness. Importantly, this symbol chose the patient, rather than the patient choosing the symbol. Thus, through the symbol, the transcendent function facilitated a transformation of libido, or attitude, from a lower to a higher degree of consciousness, thereby illustrating the process of individuation. Jung (1957/1969) delineates three stages in the effective use of the transcendent function. The first is the

accumulation of unconscious material, the second is the psyche's production of a symbol, and the third is the dialogue between the ego and the unconscious in which the ego must maintain control while still allowing the unconscious to be an equal partner in the dialogue which contributes without overpowering (pp. 67-91 [CW 8, paras. 131-193]).

**The symbolic process.** As opposed to understanding only the meaning of symbols, Stein (2009b) highlights the importance of the “*symbolic process* that reveals an invisible and hard to discern but all important and life-giving tendency in the psyche that is intent on creating *meaning* in the large spiritual sense of that word” (p. 9). Through the symbolic process only symbols, created by the Self, can express and present to consciousness the sense of an emerging spiritual meaning. An example of the symbolic process is the transformation of the Self, as previously described in Chapter 3. Jung (1951/1969g) explained the emergence of the Self as the “continual process of transformation of one and the same substance” (p. 257 [(CW 9ii, para. 408]) leading to “the restoration of an original state of wholeness” (p. 259 [(CW 9ii, para. 410)]) but at a higher level of consciousness. Each stage within the four-fold cycle of transformation can be described as a type of enatiodromia in which there is a rhythmic alternation between opposites.

In Jung's (1951/1969g) model of the transformation of the Self the opposites are unconscious and conscious “corresponding to the complementary or compensatory changes in the psyche as a whole” (p. 260 [CW 9ii, para. 410]). Each stage in the transformation of the Self results in an increase in consciousness, thereby illustrating the process of individuation. However, as was shown earlier, synchronicity is an integral part of the individuation process. According to Jung, it follows that the growth of

consciousness itself must be dependent on the principle of synchronicity as will be discussed presently. It is *as if* synchronicity, as phenomenon or principle, is the loom with which an invisible weaver creates a complex tapestry of events and experiences which reveal, as Stein (2009b) maintains, “an invisible and hard to discern but all important and life-giving tendency in the psyche that is intent on creating *meaning*” (p. 9).

Miller (2004) notes that in treating the abstraction of the Self as if it has real existence, the Self may actually be a reification of the transcendent function (p. 71). Since the transcendent function represented Jung’s initial response in 1913 to the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious, it is possible that other basic components in his psychology, such as the Self, introduced after his conception of the transcendent function “may very well be further refinements or explanations of the core process he called the transcendent function” (p. 71). In a letter dated 10 April 1954 to father Victor White, Jung (1975b) said “the opposites are united by a neutral or ambivalent bridge, a symbol expressing either side in such a way that they can function together” (p. 166). Then in a footnote, Jung explained that “the bridge is the ‘uniting symbol,’ which represents psychic totality, the self” (footnote 11, p. 166) thus essentially revealing that the Self and the transcendent function are different reflections of the same concept. I believe it would be reasonable to suggest that the transcendent function is actually a precursor to Jung’s elaboration of the Self.

## Chapter 8

### On Consciousness

One of the key questions addressed in this chapter is: How do contents of the unconscious emerge into consciousness? One conceivable answer to this question, to be discussed presently, points to the possibility that the principle of synchronicity may be implicated in this process. In terms of the modern myth for humanity unfolding here, it is *as if* synchronicity is a possible mechanism by which the well spring of creativity residing in the unconscious blossoms into the symbolic language of myth in consciousness. A brief examination of theories of consciousness will raise the possibility that synchronicity may be intimately involved in the mysterious phenomena of consciousness and creativity, which point to a dialogue with the unconscious. The findings of this examination will structure the core of the myth under development here.

Jung described consciousness as an individual's awareness of being a subject separate from other people, objects in the world, and the unconscious. As Jung (1928/1966) asserted "differentiation is the essence, the *sine qua non* of consciousness. Everything unconscious is undifferentiated, and everything that happens unconsciously proceeds on the basis of non-differentiation...there is no determining whether it belongs or does not belong to oneself" (p. 206 [CW 7, para. 329]).

As explained in Chapter 4 of this work, in his early thoughts on consciousness Jung (1921/1976f) proposed that consciousness revolves around the relationship between the ego and conscious contents. It is both the relationship itself, as far as the ego recognizes it, and also the process that sustains the relationship (pp. 421-422 [CW 6, para. 700]). Main (2004) explains that the principal role of this process for Jung "is to

discriminate among objects, qualities and states that originally are psychically undifferentiated” (p. 15). In regard to the ego’s recognition of conscious contents, those at the animistic stage of consciousness, for example, lack an observing ego and therefore cannot make a distinction between the ego and conscious contents. At this stage, inner and outer realities cannot be distinguished, but blur together as if in a dream-like vision.

However, this short description is only a starting point to be developed further. The unique identity, which an individual experiences as “I,” is also called the ego and may be said to be the core of consciousness, so that the growth of consciousness implies ego development (Segal, 1992, p. 12). Jung (1961/1989) placed extraordinary emphasis on the development of consciousness: “but man’s task is...to become conscious of the contents that press upward from the unconscious. Neither should he persist in his unconsciousness...thus evading his destiny, which is to create more and more consciousness” (p. 326).

### **Jung’s Stages of Consciousness**

As will become evident, the transformation of consciousness of the Western psyche over the last two millennia has been profound, and superbly explicated by Jung. Edinger (1995) lauded Jung’s contribution to the understanding of the transformation of the Western mind, declaring that “Jungian psychology has a crucial role to play in this transformation process, for it is the only formalized body of knowledge that understands what’s going on in any depth and breadth” (p. 220). Jung (1957/1970) declared that “we are living in what the Greeks called the *καιρός*—the right moment—for a ‘metamorphosis of the gods’ of the fundamental principles and symbols” (p. 304 [CW 10, para. 585]), that is, of the unconscious itself. For it is not only consciousness that is

undergoing transformation but also the unconscious, as Jung pointed out, it is “the expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing” (p. 304 [CW 10, para. 585]), which fortunately, can be fostered through human introspection and insight.

Jung (as cited in Segal, 1992) distinguished four incremental stages in the psychological development of humanity: “primitive, ancient, modern, and contemporary” (p. 11), with each stage characterized by increasing consciousness. However, Jung (1931/1970b) made it clear that all four levels of consciousness remained intact in the psyche, and are still capable of functioning “even in a civilized community” (p. 75 [CW 10, para. 150]).<sup>71</sup> Moreover, these stages do not necessarily progress either linearly or chronologically, as, for example, Neumann (1949/1970)<sup>72</sup> portrays, but instead proceed in a spiral-like fashion as Jung portrayed. Because all the levels of consciousness Jung described continue to function today, Jung (1936/1969) issued a strong caution:

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<sup>71</sup> Thus, Jung does not advocate the position of evolutionary theorists such as Wilber (1993; 1995; 2001), who propose a linear progression of social or psychological evolution which naturally divides people into so-called “lower” and “higher” stages of consciousness. The linear model of social evolution can lead to the belief in a utopian future featuring more conscious or actualized people. Such a belief can vindicate the oppression or extermination of “so-called” inferior peoples, as noted by Kremer (1998).

<sup>72</sup> For example, Neumann (1949/1970) posited that consciousness proceeds from matriarchy to patriarchy, and tended to downplay the role of the feminine over the masculine based on his study of transpersonal mythological motifs. See also Johnston (1996) *The Evolution of Consciousness and the Individuation Process*.

Western man has no need of more superiority over nature whether outside or inside. He has both in an almost devilish perfection. What he lacks is conscious recognition of his inferiority to the nature around him and within him. He must learn that he may not do exactly as he wills. If he does not learn this, his own nature will destroy him. He does not know that his own soul is rebelling against him in a suicidal way. (p. 535 [CW 11, para. 870])

I agree with Aziz (1990, p. 64) that an individual's particular level of consciousness has a profound influence on the psychological effect of a synchronistic experience. Therefore, an examination of the characteristics of each stage of consciousness may help an individual to reflect on and identify their specific thought patterns before embarking any further on the spiritual path described here.

**Animistic consciousness.** Some of the characteristics of animistic<sup>73</sup> consciousness were mentioned earlier. It is proposed here that those living at this stage of consciousness be called “animists” in order to circumvent the controversial term

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<sup>73</sup> As discussed previously, Jung used the term primitive as an adjective/noun. This has been replaced here by the adjective animistic and the noun animist. For further reading on animistic psychology see Jung (1931/1970a), “Archaic Man,” in *Civilization in Transition* (pp. 50-73); Jung (1964), “Approaching the Unconscious,” in *Man and His Symbols* (pp. 18-103); Jung (1940/1969a), “The Psychology of the Child Archetype” in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (pp. 149-181); Jung (1939/1976b), “Symbols and the Interpretation of Dreams,” in *The Symbolic Life* (pp. 183-264). Refer also to Segal (1992), *The Gnostic Jung* pp. 11-18.



*primitive* often used by Jung. It will be recalled that the unconscious of animists is projected onto nature thereby creating a world ruled by gods who intentionally cause events to happen through “the arbitrary power of chance” (Jung, 1931/1970a, p. 66 [CW 10, para. 135]). Animists are therefore constantly on guard since it was believed chance events occurred in sequences. Jung (1940/1969b) explained that the world of animists living in a state of participation mystique “is filled with constant regard for the ever-lurking possibility of psychic danger, and the procedures employed to diminish the risks are very numerous” (p. 17 [CW 11, para. 30]). Lacking a strong ego, animists cannot distinguish between themselves, the world, and the gods animating all of creation.

Edinger (1996) explained that psychosis may be viewed as resulting from the activation of animistic consciousness, as seen, for example, in the psychotic symptom termed ideas of reference, described as the delusional thinking of an individual who is convinced that objects and activities in the environment are communicating a message intended for them (p. xvii). If such a person cannot distinguish these delusions from physical reality they could be described as psychotic. There is a major difference, however, between a momentary lapse into the animistic state of consciousness, and an essentially permanent one. When Jung was alone at his Bollingen sanctuary, Edinger (1996) said that Jung “would talk to his pots and pans; they were animated. He was in touch with the animistic level of the psyche along with all the other levels at the same time. He also encountered, in more conscious and differentiated form, the raw, animistic layer of the psyche activated in overt psychosis” (p. xvii).

Jung (1931/1970a) explained that projection results in a blurred vision of reality in which “all unconscious psychic life is concrete and objective” (p. 66 [CW 10, para.

133]), and the animist “is completely contained psychically as well as physically” (p. 66 [CW 10, para. 134]). In the animistic stage of consciousness all of nature is alive with the projections of the unconscious. Without the ability to distinguish subject and object, animists lack individual identity, so that the animist experiences a “purely animal *participation mystique* with the herd” (p. 75 [CW 10, para. 150]). Consciousness at this stage does not consist in thinking but rather perception. As described by Jung (1954/1969a), thoughts, as such, were “objects of inner perception, not thought at all, but sensed as external phenomena” (p. 33 [CW 9i, para. 69]). “Thought” of this kind comes with the force of a revelation convicting the animist because of its immediacy and certainty. The experience of the animistic state of consciousness has similarities to the numinous experience of an individual during some synchronistic events, to be discussed presently.

**Ancient consciousness.** As the evolution of consciousness progresses, an individual not only becomes increasingly cognizant of phenomena in the physical world, but also begins to relate these phenomena to corresponding psychic images associated with the emergence of the Self (Johnston, 1996, p. 37). Accordingly, as consciousness evolves, while ancients, exemplified by the Greeks and Romans,<sup>74</sup> may have somewhat stronger egos than primitives, they still project contents of the unconscious as gods and goddesses onto the world, although they do not identify with them (Segal, 1992, p. 13).

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<sup>74</sup> Aristotle’s animistic philosophy actually closely parallels Jung’s psychological animism described previously. Jung did not include mystics, either Western or Eastern, in the category of ancients, since he considered them to be at another stage of consciousness.

Significantly, their nascent sense of self continues to attempt to free itself from the grip of the unconscious through which they partially interact with their environment, and which therefore continue to manifest in their religions. Significantly, despite an emerging ego, they simultaneously are able to honor the influence of the unconscious in religious rites and ceremonies. As Jung (1931/1970b) remarked, as long as a religion expresses in some visibly manifest ritual or creed “all the yearnings and hopes of the soul...—as for instance in a living religion—then we may say that the psyche is outside and that there is no psychic problem” (p. 79 [CW 10, para. 159]). I believe the most profound leap in the stages of human consciousness occurred in the transition between ancients and moderns, which therefore merits more extensive discussion.

**Modern consciousness.** Citing Jung’s findings, Edinger (1996) declared that “human subjectivity, the beginning of modern consciousness, began about the year 1500” when “the ego took a giant leap forward in its hubristic efforts, and the God-image fell out of heaven and into the psyche of man” (p. 3). The major difference between ancients and moderns is the moderns’ essentially sovereign ego which moderns identify as their true self, and which is believed to be able to control everything in the environment. Through their withdrawal of projections from the environment, myth and the spirit realm have been depotentiated, eliminating the influence of the unconscious in their interactions with the world, and establishing a psychic distance between both. In so doing, they make the claim of having transcended the superstitious beliefs of religion with its dependence on a divine figure to guide and protect.

*Astrology and modern consciousness.* The power of the human intellect unleashed in the advent of the modern<sup>75</sup> stage of consciousness some five centuries ago erupted in world-shattering upheavals in religion, science, cosmology, and eventually psychology, flooding the Western world with revelations of monumental importance still swirling today. From carefully considered astrological calculations, Jung (1951/1969f) determined that the birth of the “spirit which culminates in the modern age” (pp. 93-94, [CW 9ii, para. 149]) occurred around the beginning of the 16th century, embracing the Renaissance, the Reformation, and of seminal importance—the world-transforming Copernican-Kepler revolution<sup>76</sup>—inaugurating the Scientific Revolution and subsequently ushering in the Enlightenment (Tarnas, 2006, pp. 3-10). Tarnas (2006) has meticulously chronicled not only the birth of the modern self and its consequences, but also the cosmic role of synchronicity operating silently in the history of human affairs as evidenced in prescient astrological correlations between world transits and collective cultural events such as occurred at the inception of the modern age. I believe Tarnas has demonstrated that synchronicity has played a definitive role in human history at the collective level as well as the personal.

As mentioned in Chapter 5 of this work, according to Tarnas (2006), the emergence of the modern self could be said to begin about 1486 with “Pico della

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<sup>75</sup> For further reading on moderns, see Jung (1940/1969b), “Psychology and Religion,” in *Psychology and Religion* (pp. 3-105); Jung (1957/1970), “The Undiscovered Self,” in *Civilization in Transition* (pp. 247-305).

<sup>76</sup> For a further description of the astrological and psychological import of the Copernican Revolution, see Tarnas (2006), *Psyche and Cosmos* (pp. 3-138).

Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*" (p. 3). From this Renaissance manifesto Tarnas distilled the essence of being a modern self.

A new form of human being announces itself: dynamic, creative, multidimensional, protean, unfinished, self-defining and self-creating, infinitely aspiring, set apart from the whole, overseeing the rest of the world with unique sovereignty, centrally poised in the last moments of the old cosmology to bring forth and enter into the new. (p. 4)

***The Copernican revolution as a spiritual revelation.*** In the old cosmology according to Holy Scripture, the Christian God had ordained the natural order of the universe, dictating the movement of the sun around the stationary Earth, and the ultimate destiny of humanity, all of which God had created in six days. After hesitating for over thirty years to present his theory of a heliocentric, or sun-centered planetary system, Copernicus finally published his major work in 1543, perhaps inspired by predecessors such as the Pythagoreans who, 2000 years earlier, also believed that the earth moved. Perhaps more importantly, as a result of the birth of the modern self and the subsequent emancipation of the individual from the bounds of subjectivity, Edinger (1996) postulates that Copernicus was empowered to step out of the subjective mode of human perception dictated by the Church, and put himself in a position to objectively evaluate what he saw. This shift in perspective may be said to epitomize the attitude of the modern Western era, an attitude no one ventured to adopt before this. Tarnas (2006) remarks that, despised as it was by the most elite scientists, thinkers, and religious figures of his day for its collision with known physics, the medieval worldview, and the cosmology of Holy Scripture, still, "a new universe had dawned, and the Sun, whose luminous centrality

Copernicus and Kepler perceived as the very image of the Godhead, seemed to shine on the world a new light of divine intelligibility” (p. 7).

For the Copernican revelation not only overturned the existing scientific mindset and ignited a desire to comprehend the true nature of the visible universe, more importantly, Tarnas (2006) indicates that it signaled a spiritual revolution in which the human intellect was freed to experience “divine illuminations, spiritual awakenings to the true structural grandeur and intellectual beauty of the cosmic order....through the grace of a sovereign Deity whose glory was now dramatically unveiled” (pp. 5-6).

Michelangelo’s *Creation of Adam* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel depicts Adam reaching for the outstretched hand of God who offers to Adam the breath of life and the gift of human reason. In a similar fashion, God now also granted divine access to ultimate cosmological truths, allowing humanity to know the mind of the divine. It was this newly acquired access to divine truths “that made the Copernican revolution so revolutionary, so emancipatory, as the very paradigm of modern humanity’s new power of self-definition and cosmic illumination through reason” (p. 6). But as Tarnas remarked, “it was of course no accident that the birth of the modern self and the birth of the modern cosmos took place at the same historical moment” (p. 4), since astrology had proclaimed this birth in a cosmic synchronicity revealed in the constellations of the stars and the aspects of the planets.

Tarnas (2006) asserts that the major distinguishing feature of modern consciousness separating it from other views discussed so far, is the radical division between the individual and the environment (p. 16). As a consequence of this epochal shift in human consciousness, moderns possess a relatively autonomous ego which has

demythologized the world by withdrawing most projections. In rejecting both the unconscious and religion as irrational and unscientific delusions, moderns view themselves as unemotional, atheistic, and totally in control. In the process of granting ultimate power to the ego, however, moderns have activated opposing forces in the unconscious, mainly in an upwelling of neurosis (Segal, 1992, p. 15). As Jung (1940/1969b) explained, “nature escaped and came back with a vengeance in the form of” neurosis. The modern’s belief in the omnipotence of human intellect is being met by “the clever device of the unconscious to keep him on a merciless and cruel leash” (p. 16 [CW 11, para. 27]) in the form of senseless and empty lives which Jung (1933/1933) described as “the general neurosis of our age” (p. 61).

**Contemporary consciousness.** As noted in Chapter 3, contemporaries<sup>77</sup> reject current religious practices and the ultrarational worldview of moderns, but share some similarities with intellectuals of the twentieth century (Segal, 1992, p. 16). Contemporaries realize that the symbols of Western Christian Churches have been emptied of personal meaning through projection. For example, the image of Christ on the cross has become a projection of an individual’s shadow. Instead of taking personal responsibility for their unacknowledged shadow, individuals can unburden themselves of their shadow, or sins, by allowing a God-image, such as Christ, to carry them. However, as Aziz (1990) points out, “within the Jungian model the idea of vicarious atonement gives way to the belief that the individual must consciously take upon himself the suffering that will invariably be part of his individuation journey” (p. 173).

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<sup>77</sup> On contemporaries, see Jung (1931/1970b), “The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man,” in *Civilization in Transition* pp. 74-94.

The onset of the Protestant Reformation ushered in the destruction or devaluation of the sacred symbols of the Catholic Church in which dogma, expressed in the symbolism of creeds, doctrines and ceremonies, had previously carried the underlying powerful and disturbing images of the collective unconscious. Jung (1954/1969a) asked “why have we not long since discovered the unconscious and raised up its treasure-house of eternal images? Simply because we had a religious formula for everything psychic—and one that is far more beautiful and comprehensive than immediate experience” (p. 7 [CW 9i, para. 11]). By the term *religious formula*, Jung meant that the Christian Church has from its early days employed a “dogmatic symbol” to depotentiate “a tremendous and dangerously decisive psychic experience” exemplifying an experience of God, into something more amenable to human comprehension “without either limiting the scope of the experience or doing damage to its overwhelming significance” (p. 11 [CW 9i, para. 18]). Dogma had served to universalize the powerful archetypal images of the collective unconscious and thus soften their impact on the Catholic mind by setting them against a cosmic background.

Jung (1954/1969a) emphasized that the steady erosion of the symbolism of the Catholic Church explained “how the alarming poverty of symbols that is now the condition of our life came about” (p. 13 [CW 9i, para. 23]). Identifying himself with contemporaries, Jung (1929/1961) remarked “we...are faced with the necessity of rediscovering the life of the spirit; we must experience it anew for ourselves” (p. 339 [CW 4, para. 780]). Thus denied the vital, relevant symbols they seek, contemporaries have turned away from the Western Christian Churches to create new symbols in an effort to revitalize their spiritual life through direct contact with the numinosum. Despite



the difficulties and dangers of dealing with the psychically activating material of the unconscious, contemporaries must be willing to accept the challenges involved in living in a world *as if* it were alive with symbolically resonant meaning.

### **Consciousness and Myth in Jung's Psychology**

While in Africa in 1925, a vision of Jung's personal myth and that of humanity's, slowly emerged from the mists of his imagination as he stood in solitary silence gazing from a small hilltop over the timeless, primordial scene spread out below him. As far as he could see, enormous herds of grazing wild beasts, heads nodding, flowed slowly across the plains like aimless, ancient rivers of unconscious life. In his mind's eye, he saw "the stillness of the eternal beginning, the world as it had always been, in the state of non-being" waiting to become known through the gaze of a conscious being.<sup>78</sup>

As Jung (1961/1989) described this vision:

There I was now, the first human being to recognize that this was the world, but who did not know that in this moment he had first really created it. There the cosmic meaning of consciousness became overwhelmingly clear to me. Man, I, in an invisible act of creation put the stamp of perfection on the world by giving it objective existence. I...had been looking about without hope for a myth of my own. Now I knew what it was, and knew even more: that man is indispensable for the completion of creation; that, in fact, he himself is the second creator of the world, who alone has given to the world its Objective existence....Human

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<sup>78</sup> Evolutionary biologists Bekoff (2012), Gallup, and Jordan (as cited in Preston, 2018) argue that self-awareness is not limited to humans. There is evidence that chimpanzees, orangutans, and a type of fish called a cleaner wrasse also possess self-awareness.

consciousness created objective existence and meaning, and man found his indispensable place in the great process of being. (Jung, 1961/1989, pp. 255-256)

By 1920 Jung had formulated, according to Homans (1995), “the basic ideas of his unique system of psychological thought” (p. 91) which he called individuation and which Homans called his “core process” (p. 24). Jung’s (1961/1989) mythic vision in Africa captures a critical insight influencing his formulation of individuation as a myth describing the growth of consciousness, “which fits man meaningfully into the scheme of creation, and at the same time confers meaning upon it” (p. 338). Jung unveiled the basic tenets of his modern myth for humanity in two letters late in his life. In a 3 May 1958 letter to Rev. Kelsey, Jung (1975b) revealed that “*the creator sees himself through the eyes of man’s consciousness* and this is the reason why God had to become man, and why man is progressively gifted with the dangerous prerogative of the divine ‘mind’” (p. 436). Then in a 12 February 1959 letter to Pastor Tanner, Jung asserted that “nobody seems to have noticed that without a reflecting psyche the world might as well not exist, and that, in consequence, consciousness is a second world-creator” (p. 487).

Edinger (1996) agreed that the two statements “the creator sees himself through the eyes of man’s consciousness” (p. 89) and “consciousness is a second world-creator” (p. 89) comprise the essential elements that describe Jung’s myth for humanity. These elements fuse in the act of individuation, when the apparently irreconcilable opposites within the Self, the God-image, are made conscious and reconciled through individual consciousness. Jung (1961/1989) declared, “that is the meaning of divine service, of the service which man can render to God, that light may emerge from the darkness, that the Creator may become conscious of His creation, and man conscious of himself” (p. 338).

**Jung's mythological perspective and synchronicity.** Jung's mythological perspective, evident in this example and so prevalent in his work, originated, like so many of his other fundamental concepts, from a series of serendipitous events interpreted symbolically, which some might call a series of synchronicities. Campbell (1971) records the beginning, in 1909, of Jung's interest in mythology while preparing to write *Symbols of Transformation* for which "he worked like mad through a mountain of mythological material" (p. xx) only to become totally confused. Fortunately, he happened by chance upon a collection of fantasies<sup>79</sup> written by a Miss Miller and was gripped by their mythological nature, which he discovered acted as a catalyst to liberate all the ideas he had kept in check while constrained by Freud's strict dogma. The resulting explosion of psychic material which engulfed Jung (1952/1967a) "like a landslide that cannot be stopped" (p. xxiii), totally transformed his understanding of psychological symbols and resulted in *Symbols of Transformation*, a work of pivotal significance to his nascent psychology and his own individuation. Jung (1952/1967a) revealed "hardly had I finished the manuscript when it struck me what it means to live with a myth, and what it means to live without one" (p. xxiv).

**Jung's shift from a biographical to a mythological approach to symbolism.**

From his research for *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung realized that individual consciousness sprang from a psyche in which history stretched back into the mists of time. As Jung (1912/2002) noted, "man in his phantastic thinking has kept a condensation of the psychic history of his development" (p. 36). Thus enriched, the psyche became the

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<sup>79</sup> See Jung (1912/2002, pp. 42-126) regarding the Miller Phantasies. Campbell (1971, pp. xx-xxiii) also provides further details on this encounter in *The Portable Jung*.

fertile ground from which consciousness arose and from which it derives its life-sustaining nourishment in the form of symbols, appearing for example, in myth as well as dreams and poetry. Myth, clothed in symbolic language, is able to connect the individual consciousness with its roots in antiquity, with the ancient life still residing within, and with contemporary culture. Campbell (1971) described Jung's reaction to his recognition of the deep history of the psyche as a shift from a "subjective and personalistic, essentially *biographical* approach to the reading of symbolism of the psyche, to a larger, culture-historical, *mythological* orientation, that then became the characteristic of Jung's psychology" (p. xxi).

As previously discussed, seen from the poetic perspective, much of Jung's work may be said to employ the symbolic language of myth, poetry, religion, and depth psychology, captured in the language of metaphor, the natural language of myth. As Jung (1940/1969a) said "psychology therefore translates the archaic speech of myth into a modern mythologem—not yet, of course, recognized as such" (p. 179 [CW 9i, para. 302]). Convinced that myth held meaning for him which he would not learn from a biographical approach, Jung (1912/2002) asked himself, "what is the myth you are living?" (p. xxiv). When he had to admit he did not know "what sort of myth was ordering my life without my knowledge" (p. xxv), he resolved "to get to know 'my' myth," which he regarded "as the task of tasks" (p. xxv). Jung was driven "to know what unconscious or preconscious myth was forming me" and led him "to devote many years...to investigating the subjective contents which are the products of unconscious processes" (p. xxv).

Tarnas (2006) comments that the depth psychology of Jung and others strove “to combine the intellectual rigor of scientific observation with the intuitive insight of the poetic and spiritual imagination,...[and] attempted to bring the light of reason to the deep mysteries of human interiority” (p. 46). Given Jung’s poetic basis of mind and his mythological orientation to symbolic interpretation, the methodology of existential phenomenology would seem to be most naturally suited to interpreting those parts of his psychology which attempt to encompass the breadth and depth of human existence and to reawaken in humanity a poetic sensibility which sees the divine in all things. As Le Grice (2016) has pointed out, these particular themes also resonate strongly with “the concerns of the Romantics, which include our primordial nature and the irrational instincts lurking behind the veneer of civilization,” thus making Jung’s psychology “more readily embraced by those of a Romantic sensibility” (p. 3).

**Synchronicity and the myth of consciousness.** The relationship between the myth of consciousness unfolding here, and the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity will be explored presently using the myth of the hero’s journey as a template. Synchronistic experiences appearing as a meaningful coincidence of physical and psychic events can be deeply personal, offering an invitation to deeper introspection potentially leading to revelation and increased consciousness. Similarly, synchronistic experiences accompanied by numinous effects may induce an altered state of consciousness<sup>80</sup> perceived by an individual as a suspension of their usual orientation in

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<sup>80</sup> See Jung (1952/1969b, p. 436 [CW 8, para 841]), and (p. 446 [CW 8, para. 856]) for further description of the alteration of consciousness called *abaissement du niveau mental* in which consciousness is dimmed and the unconscious strengthened allowing

time and space and the unmistakable sense of a divine presence imparting a personal revelation, although not all synchronicities induce a numinous charge in this way.

However, the principle of synchronicity will be shown to form the core of this myth within which is embedded all of the distinctive features discussed so far. The phenomena of synchronicity may be pictured as radiating outward from this core, as a natural emanation emerging from the symbol-making core, the Self, or Tao. Of course this analogy is only intended to act as a visual aid in understanding the process in human terms framed by finite time and space, whereas the actual situation, if that is an accurate term, is not bound by either time or space.

### **The Hard Problem of Consciousness**

Individuation, the cornerstone of Jung's psychology, has been described as the growth of consciousness, thus underscoring the need to better understand this pivotal concept. Edinger (1984) summarized the key message of Jung's psychology: "*the purpose of human life is the creation of consciousness*" (p. 57). To date, there has been much discovered as to what consciousness *does*, but no comprehensive, generally agreed upon theory of consciousness has been presented to explain precisely what consciousness *is*. There have been many theories presented in the literature, however, which merit some discussion in order to put into context, any contribution depth psychology may have to offer. In 1995 philosopher Chalmers presented a decisive challenge to researchers in

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unconscious contents to manifest in consciousness. This may occur when a constellated archetype arouses strong emotions as in a numinous synchronistic experience resulting in the suspension of "consciously controlled psychic activity" (Jung, 1975b, p.543).

consciousness studies. Chalmers (1995) posed the following hard question regarding consciousness:

Consciousness poses the most baffling problems in the science of the mind. There is nothing that we know more intimately than conscious experience, but there is nothing that is harder to explain.... Some have been led to suppose that the problem is intractable, and that no good explanation can be given.... It is widely agreed that experience arises from a physical basis, but we have no good explanation of why and how it so arises. Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all? It seems objectively unreasonable that it should, and yet it does.... If any problem qualifies as *the* problem of consciousness, it is this one. (p. 201)

### **Consciousness Understood as What It Is Like to Be Something**

For Chalmers (1995) the hard problem of consciousness<sup>81</sup> is “the problem of *experience*” (p. 201) arising from physical processes. Accompanying the relatively understandable acts of perceiving and information-processing there is the subjective aspect to consciousness called experience. Metzinger (2003) has succinctly observed that consciousness is “what it is like to be something” (p. 232), to have the experience of being, to be conscious of being some identifiable thing rather than another. Chalmers (1995) argues that “in this central sense of ‘consciousness’, an organism is conscious if there is something it is like to be that organism” (p. 201). Specifically, in human beings,

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<sup>81</sup> For further reading on the hard problem of consciousness see Dorsey (2015), “Four Conceptions of the Hard Problem of Consciousness,” regarding four plausible ways to view the hard problem.

sensations from the five senses, mental images, emotions, feelings, and thoughts are all states of experience combining to produce a sense of what it is like to be a human being, and not just any human being but a specific human being.

For example, what could account for the felt-quality of a specific shade of red which arouses, in a particular person, a host of vivid images, feelings, and memories? From a depth psychological perspective, is there an explanation for the experience of numinosity? Regarding the hard problem, Chalmers (1995) notes that “most existing theories of consciousness either deny the phenomenon, explain something else, or elevate the problem to an eternal mystery” (p. 217). Velmans (2009) contends that there is no universally adopted essential meaning for the term consciousness, which may connote something very different depending on the individual. He adds “this is odd, as we each have ‘psychological data’ about what it is like to be conscious or to have consciousness to serve as the basis for an agreed definition” (p. 7). However, Velmans (2009) does offer his own theory of consciousness to be discussed shortly.

### **Theories of Consciousness**

I propose that depth psychology can offer at least one answer to this problem which will be shown to place synchronicity in a central role. But before entering into a discussion of that possibility, I believe it is useful to take at least a brief look at a few of the theories of consciousness currently available in order to contrast them to a depth psychological response. No attempt will be made to explore these theories in any depth considering the extraordinary complexities and ambiguities which a study of consciousness poses for the science of mind. This survey is merely to provide some



context within which to understand why the explanations offered by current theories of consciousness remains so elusive.

**Consciousness and philosophies of form.** The starting point for categorizing theories of consciousness begins with a basic understanding of types of philosophies of form, which attempt to answer Sheldrake's (2009) question, What are the "elusive principles of organization that are manifested in organisms or systems at all levels of complexity?" (p. 66). The answer to this question colors every aspect of the remainder of this work and therefore requires careful examination. The universe presents this question in the form of a nesting of complex systems within systems organized at scales which span the extent of the known universe, to the smallest conceivable systems at the quantum level. According to Sheldrake, Western philosophers have formulated three major theories not based on evolution, namely: Platonic, Aristotelean, and nominalist-materialist (p. 69).

***Plato's theory of form.*** Conviction of the transcendent truth of mathematical laws as propounded by Pythagoras, convinced Plato that knowledge must be fundamentally invariable, whole and undivided, and real. However, given that the material world is replete with changing forms Plato reasoned that the physical manifestations of earthly objects must be merely reflections of, as Jung (1954/1969b) said, "Forms 'stored up in a supracelestial place'" (p. 191 (CW 8, para. 388]), existing in a realm dissociated from earthly measures of space and time and thus existing at the birth of the universe, although obviously, as a metaphysical concept, Plato's theory of forms cannot be either proved or disproved. Furthermore, Plato's Forms, which Jung called archetypes, are not evident to any of the five senses. However, they can be comprehended through what Jung termed

the *intuitive process*. As Jung (1931/1969c) explained, “the *intuitive process* is neither one of sense-perception, nor of thinking, nor yet of feeling” (p. 141 [CW 8, para. 292]). Through intuition one may comprehend “the *a priori*, inborn forms of ‘intuition,’ namely the *archetypes* of perception and apprehension, which are the necessary *a priori* determinants of all psychic processes” (p. 133 [CW 8, para. 270]).

**Jung’s theory of form.** Thus, Plato’s theory of forms reached across two millennia to provide Jung (1954/1969a) with the primary constituent of the unconscious, Plato’s *εἶδος*, or archetypes, “primordial images stored up (in a supracelestial place) as eternal, transcendent forms” (p. 33 [CW 9i, para. 68]). Given Jung’s ethereal type, as mentioned previously, combining a powerful intellect and uncanny intuition, he was ideally suited, as Sheldrake (2009) said, through “intellectual intuition” (p. 27) to grasp the significance of the archetypes. If, in addition, one recognizes a mystical side to his personality, as myself and others do, based on factors previously mentioned including his resonance with Romantic philosophy, Plato’s theory of forms appears to be a fitting choice as the principle of organization to inform his psychology. Importantly, however, I agree with Le Grice (2016), “Jung was able to draw on both the Enlightenment and Romantic perspectives to formulate his analytical psychology applying empirical rigor and reason to try to better understand the dimensions of experience that were the concerns of the Romantics” (p. 3).

The psychoid nature of the *unus mundus*, a supracelestial place, became the natural ground out of which the archetypes could manifest in a synchronicity. Again, these metaphysical concepts can neither be proved nor disproved. As a result, it has been argued that Jung’s psychology, as opposed to being built principally on scientific

principles, may be viewed as partially derived from Plato's metaphysics.<sup>82</sup> Sheldrake (2009) has argued that the very concept of the laws of nature is anthropocentric<sup>83</sup> and implies an order conceived in the mind of God as Plato had assumed (p. xiii). However, with the diminishing influence of the omnipotent God of Christianity in the West, Sheldrake contends, "the Laws of Nature now float in a metaphysical void" (p. xiv).

*Aristotle's theory of form.* Sheldrake (2009) explains that Aristotle postulated that forms were immanent in things as opposed to transcendent. His theory of forms assumed that "specific forms were inherent in the souls of living beings and actually *caused* them to take up their characteristic forms" (p. 47). According to Aristotle's animistic philosophy, all living things had souls that inherently carried in their being nonmaterial principles of organization, thus imparting a purpose or goal to growth and behavior, and breathing life into all of nature through participation in the achievement of a unique, God-given purpose (Sheldrake, 2012, p. 69). But these purposes and forms were fixed and unchanging, so that the nature of souls did not change or evolve, with the exception of the souls of human beings, which could evolve (p. 28). This theory of form was synthesized with Christian theology predominantly in medieval Europe, but lingers today in Western Christianity.

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<sup>82</sup> For further reading on the metaphysical basis of Jung's psychology see Weldon (2004), *The Platonic Roots of Analytic Psychology*. It should be noted, however, that Jung adapted Plato's ideas to suit his own sacred and secular agenda.

<sup>83</sup> For further reading on the anthropocentric principle see, for example, Barrow and Tipler (1988), *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, in which they argue that the universe appears to have been designed to accommodate human life.

***Pauli's postulate of a cosmic order.*** However, with the rise of science as the new God, Aristotelean influence waned and was replaced by Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy. Jung was apparently also swept up in this wave of inspiration, embedding modified Platonic ideas throughout his psychology that were suited to his ends. The influence of Plato's theory of form spread to Jung's collaborator Pauli while they were developing the theory of synchronicity. Noting the emphasis by many physicists on looking beyond experiences of the physical world, and instead examining the possible role of intuition and directed attention, that is, active imagination, as sources of ideas to formulate a more robust system of laws of nature, Pauli (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955) remarked, "it seems most satisfactory to introduce at this point the postulate of a cosmic order independent of our choice and distinct from the world of phenomena" (p. 152). Pauli's description of a cosmic order reflects Plato's transcendent world of Ideas and Forms structuring a cosmic order.

***The nominalist-materialist theory of form.*** The nominalist position, spawned in medieval Europe, eschewed Plato's Ideas and Aristotle's soul-forms, claiming that because all forms and concepts were merely products of the mind, we cannot know if they actually objectively exist in the world of material objects (Sheldrake, 2012, pp. 69-70). In the 17th century, the philosophical merger of nominalism and materialism began to influence scientific worldviews. In addition to the nominalist role of the mind as the sole source of ideas and concepts, the belief arose that the mind itself would ultimately be explained as arising from products of physical processes in the body. The nominalist-materialist position creates a paradox, in which the mind, which depends for its existence

on material processes, is more real than the material from which it arises.<sup>84</sup> The materialist position holds that even though science seeks to gather objective data from observations and measurements, these are influenced by the conscious activity of the mind of the person participating in the observation or measurement, and so are not truly objective. This position leads to the conclusion, as Sheldrake (2012) states, “for the solipsist, everything is in one's own mind; for the idealist, everything is in a universal, or Absolute, mind” (p. 71). However, the nominalist-materialist theory of form appears to be compromised by the fact that the mind ostensibly hosts profoundly complex “principles of order that have a curious, objective, and timeless quality” (p. 71) resembling Platonic Ideas and Forms.

**The influence of dualism on theories of consciousness.** Velmans (2009) explains that part of the uncertainty surrounding an accepted definition of consciousness has been shaped by the intrusion of the mind-matter split, advocated in the philosophies of Plato and Descartes for example, into modern theories of consciousness, resulting in theories based on “substance dualism” (p. 7). Descartes’ dualist view divided the substance of consciousness “*res cogitans*, a substance that thinks” from the substance of the material world, “*res extensa*, a substance that has extension and location in space” (p. 124). Thus, dualists differentiate between matter, *res extensa*, and consciousness, *res cogitans*, which also encompasses mind, soul, and spirit. However, in terms of experience, Descartes assigned all experiences to *res cogitans* (p. 308), an example of the

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<sup>84</sup> Further discussion of the nominalist-materialist position can be found in Sheldrake, (2012), *Morphic Resonance and the Presence of the Past* pp. 69-71.

nominal-materialist theory of form. The *res cogitans* of consciousness is also referred to as “immaterial ‘qualia’” (p. 121).

***Interactionist dualism.*** According to Sheldrake (2012), interactionism or dualism postulates “the mind—or ego, soul, psyche, spirit, or conscious self—somehow interacts with the body through the brain” (p. 258), but fails to explain how this interaction is possible. An example of dualism is “interactionist dualism” in which two substances interact within the human brain. Velmans (2008) notes one form of interactionist dualism, “property dualism” or “emergent materialism” (p. 7) advocated by Sperry (1984) and Libet (1994; 2003). Sperry and Libet view consciousness as a separate type of nonphysical property, capable of emerging from a physical structure, like the brain, after it has reached a critical degree of complexity (Velmans, 2009, p. 6, note 2). Embedded in this proposed model, I believe, is the assumption of Aristotle’s animistic philosophy, in which the souls of living things naturally carry a nonphysical blueprint of organization.

***Consciousness and complex adaptive systems.*** For Libet (1994), “the unitary and integrated nature of conscious experience” (p. 119) is the mysterious and apparently unsolvable paradox presented by the relationship of mind and brain. To solve this problem, Libet proposes that “the emergent conscious experience be represented in a field, the *conscious mental field* (CMF)” (p. 27), which would unite various experiences resulting from processes in the brain. However, Libet (2003) contends that his *conscious mental field* model is not a form of property dualism in the sense described by Descartes (p. 28) because “the CMF would unify conscious experience (that is based on an immense number of different neural events)” (p. 26). He also maintains that such a field would interact with the brain in such a way as to “form a basis for conscious will” (p. 27).

It will be recalled that a complex adaptive system<sup>85</sup> is capable of manifesting spontaneous, adaptive responses which result in complex systems with increasingly higher levels of functioning. Libet's (2003) model of a CMF is an example of a complex adaptive system in which the CMF is an emergent property of the living brain and is dependent upon the brain for its existence. The CMF is theorized to be a nonphysical field which cannot be directly measured and can only be accessed by an individual undergoing an experience. Libet (1994) proposed that the CMF model represents a radical departure from other models of consciousness in that communication throughout the brain becomes possible without physical, that is, neural connections. Notably, the nonphysical nature of this model begins to shift conscious experience closer to the psychophysical realm of synchronicity, although Libet does not explicitly say that nonphysical communication occurs acausally. There are also reductive explanations of consciousness, which have attracted much attention and speculation. Given the intensity of research into this approach to understanding consciousness, it is important to understand why reductive explanations are ultimately incapable of addressing Chalmers's hard question of consciousness.

**Reductive explanations of consciousness.** Velmans (2009) also refers to reductive explanations of consciousness such as "physicalism" and "functionalism" which attempt to overcome the mind-matter split (p. 327). Physicalists describe consciousness as brain states, whereas functionalists maintain that consciousness can be viewed as a collection of causal relationships in the brain (p. 121). Reductionists such as

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<sup>85</sup> For further reading on complex adaptive systems see Cambray, (2009), *Synchronicity* pp. 45-67.

Crick (1994) and Dennett (1991) assert, in Velmans's (2009) opinion, "that soul, mind and consciousness are nothing more than states or functions of the brain" (p. 327).

However, as Velmans notes, no scientific research has as yet demonstrated that consciousness is merely a state or function of causal relationships of the brain (p. 302).

For example, in the cognitive and behavioral sciences, Crick and Dennett reduce phenomena such as learning and language to the activity of certain functions based in neuroscience. Further, as Libet (2003) notes, so-called physicalists are confident that it will be possible someday to correlate subjective experience with brain activity given enough time and measurement capability (p. 26). But this is a formidable challenge, as Velmans (2009) cautions, because "formally, one must establish that, despite appearances, conscious experiences are *ontologically identical* to brain states" (p. 303). Whereas reductionists maintain that their goal of finding the "neural causes and correlates of consciousness" (p. 303) would make the case that consciousness is identical to brain states or functions, Velmans counters that "causation and correlation are not ontological identity" (p. 303). In determining ontological identity, the basic problem reductionist theories face is the fact that the only evidence regarding the phenomenological experience of consciousness originates from personal accounts, which regularly point to consciousness as something more than or other than states of the brain. Given that reductionist theorists have only neurophysiological information about brain states or function, they can never fully establish ontological identity. Remarkably, in their effort to bridge a dualistic split, the theories of physicalism and functionalism introduce a split between conscious experience and the physical world, whereby conscious experiences are located either nowhere or in the brain (p. 327). In any case, reductive explanations fail



to account for conscious experience because they do not address Chalmers's (1995) hard question "*Why is the performance of these functions accompanied by experience?*" (p. 203).

**Consciousness as a fundamental feature of the world.** Chalmers (1995) is forthright in claiming that any purely physical explanation of consciousness invoking functions and processes is destined to leave the hard question unaddressed, including quantum theories of consciousness<sup>86</sup> (pp. 207-208), regardless of the amount of neuroscientific research (p. 209). However, instead of abandoning the search for a theory of consciousness, Chalmers instead turns from a reductive approach to a nonreductive approach. He suggests that "a theory of consciousness should take [conscious] experience itself....as a fundamental feature of the world, alongside mass, charge, and space-time" (p. 210).

Chalmers (2010) reported that he had not seen any progress in determining how consciousness could arise from brain processes. He added, "there is nothing even approaching an orthodox theory of why there is consciousness in the first place" (p. 43). Chalmers (1995) explained that this impasse requires a fundamentally different ontology with "some entirely new nonphysical feature...but it is hard to see what that feature might be" (p. 210). This nonreductive theory of conscious experience would need to be based on fundamental psychophysical principles which would not be incompatible with existing physical laws but rather supplement or complement them. In particular, these

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<sup>86</sup> For further reading on quantum theories of consciousness see Tarlaci (2010), "Quantum Mechanics and the Brain" and Vimal, (2010a, 2010b, 2010c), "Towards a Theory of Everything" Parts I, II, and III.

principles would need to explain how conscious experience correlates with the physical world by offering an explanation that builds a bridge across the mind-matter gap. For, although we know that conscious experience is in some way related to physical processes, this relationship must necessarily not depend solely on physical principles (p. 210). I believe the horizon Chalmers is opening up and moving towards in his search for a fundamentally different psychophysical ontology to bridge the mind-matter divide, can be found in the fourth principle of nature, synchronicity. As Cambray (2009) has pointed out, “uncovering and articulating details of the mind-body relationship is currently the subject of much intense research. An overlooked aspect of this relationship is the possible synchronistic dimension” (p. 72). Already noted is Jung’s (1952/1969b) comment, “I must again stress the possibility that the relation between body and soul may yet be understood as a synchronistic one” (footnote 70, p. 500 [CW 8, para. 938]). This possibility will be considered after a discussion of Velmans’s reflexive model of consciousness.

**Consciousness in Velmans’s reflexive model.** Velmans (2009) provides a starting point for understanding consciousness by considering the phenomenology of consciousness (p. 7). His explanation appears to apply exclusively to human beings, who, arguably, are not the only sentient beings on the planet; however, that possibility is not the focus here. He begins by observing that when we are awake, we form memories that convince us we are conscious, as contrasted to dreamless sleep, when we form no memories that are so convincing, and therefore cannot remember being conscious. However, whether in a state of wakefulness or dream-filled sleep, we can report being conscious of something, regardless of whether it is something material or psychic. That

is, Velmans's criterion of consciousness is the presence of phenomenal content, so that phenomenal consciousness is what Velmans means when he uses the terms *consciousness* or *conscious experience* (p. 8).

Velmans (2009) then asks a simple question. If one experiences a phenomenon such as the pain of a pin prick in one's finger he asks, Where is the pain located? Velmans notes that a dualist would say the thought of the pain is an example of the substance *res cogitans* and therefore is not specifically located anywhere, whereas a reductionist would reason that the pain is really spread throughout the brain in the form of functions or neural states (p. 127). But from the viewpoint of an individual experiencing the pain, the most obvious response would be to say that the pain is located in their finger. As he suggests, anyone in doubt on this point might want to try the experiment. Phenomenologically, the pain is located in one's finger and not somewhere else (p. 128).

In other words, Velmans (2009) asserts that the only experience an individual has of a sensory phenomenon such as the pin prick, is the one happening "*out in the world*" (p. 129). In the case of the pin prick, the sequence of events from the stimulus of the pin prick to the identification of the location of the pain, can be described as *reflexive*. This is an example of what Velmans calls the *reflexive model* because the experience of pain begins with the pin prick, is consciously registered as a feeling of pain by the individual, and is reflexively attributed back to the painful finger. To further explain, the brain processes stimuli from nerve receptors in the finger as the feeling of pain in the finger; the pain is not felt in the associated neural processing circuitry in the brain (p. 127). These phenomena cannot be the same since they are located in different sites.

Although this explanation is potentially useful and at least approximates human experience, Velmans (2009) is rather vague, as indeed he must be, in assigning to the “mind/brain” (p. 129) the origin of those cognitive processes that lead to thoughts and “feelings of knowing” (p. 129), which Jung called intuition. He conjectures that these cognitive processes “are reflexively experienced to be roughly *where they are* (in the head or brain)” (p. 129). At this point I believe Velmans is making the assumption, argued against previously, that the human psyche or mind is coextensive with the brain. This assumption will be addressed shortly from the viewpoint of depth psychology since Velmans’s (2009) explanation is somewhat inconclusive.

Velmans’s (2009) reflexive model supports a phenomenology that dissolves the distinction not only between one’s perceived body and bodily experiences but also between one’s perception of the universe and conscious experience of the universe (p. 129). He adds, of course, that the everyday physical world we consider to be reality is filtered by limited human perception so that we perceive only an extraordinarily restricted and crude approximation of the physical world, which physics on both an astronomical and quantum scale are only beginning to penetrate (p. 295). The reflexive model implies that the contents of phenomenal consciousness consist of all phenomena gathered by the five senses within an individual’s “perceptual horizon” (p. 295) which, when synthesized, give the appearance of a three-dimensional universe (pp. 293-298). This appearance “results from a reflexive interaction of entities, events and processes with our perceptual and cognitive systems which, in turn, *represent* those entities, events and processes” (p. 298). Velmans emphasizes, as Kant maintained, that these conscious appearances are not the “thing-in-itself” (p. 298). As well, Jung (1954/1969b) agreed and added that “matter

and spirit both appear in the psychic realm as distinctive qualities of conscious contents. The ultimate nature of both is transcendental, that is, irrepresentable, given that the psyche and its contents are the only reality which is given to us *without a medium*” (p. 216 [CW 8, para. 420]).

This expanded vision of human consciousness coexisting with and sustained by the universe leads to Velmans’s (2009) conclusion that “the contents of human consciousness are also a natural *expression or manifestation* of the embedding universe (original italics)” (p. 295). This conclusion raises the possibility that the individual consciousness of each human being, possessed with a unique perspective of the universe and of him or herself, contributes to the universe becoming more conscious of itself in as many unique ways as there are humans. Again, the possibility of forms of consciousness other than human interaction, as in this scenario, is open to discussion. This circular process is reflexive because it results in an increase in consciousness through the movement of consciousness from the universe to humans and back to the universe. I believe this reflexive process is mirrored in Jung’s (1952/1969a) conjecture concerning God’s need for the consciousness of humanity: “[God’s power] needs conscious reflection in order to exist in reality. Existence is only real when it is conscious to somebody. That is why the Creator needs conscious man” (p. 373 [CW 11, para. 575]). This conjecture underscores Jung’s belief “*the purpose of human life is the creation of consciousness*” (Edinger, 1984, p. 17).

***Reflexive monism.*** The reflexive model is an example of a theory called *reflexive monism*. Velmans (2008) explains that *reflexive monism* is actually a modern form of an ancient theory of the relationship between consciousness and the material world (p. 5).

As noted in Chapter 1, Atmanspacher (2012) described Spinoza's monism, "in which mind and matter are related to a 'unity of essence'" (p. 97), like the unitary domain of the *unus mundus*, and fundamental to the theory proposed by Jung and Pauli of the psychoid realm based on Spinoza's theory of dual-aspect monism.<sup>87</sup> A version of monism called dual-aspect monism considers mind and matter to be "two basic and irreducible aspects of that underlying [unitary] domain" (p. 97). Velmans's nonreductive reflexive monism is a type of dual-aspect monism that combines ontological monism and epistemological dualism so that both philosophers and scientists are able to dialogue on mutual ground (Atmanspacher, 2012, p. 97). In that both Velmans and Jung and Pauli utilize comparable metaphysics to support their arguments, it is conceivable that their theories can be merged in such a way as to bridge the gap between consciousness and the brain.

However, to be clear, I believe that human consciousness is not solely dependent on or limited to either the human brain, as current theories suggest, or to the composite of the brain and body. I share the view of Grof and Bennett (1992), which proposes that each person is a source of consciousness radiating throughout the universe. This accords with Velmans's reflexive model of consciousness describing a circular process in which each person's consciousness increases the consciousness of the universe and vice versa.

***Reflexive monism and the explanatory gap.*** The unexplained relationship between consciousness and the brain is sometimes referred to as the "explanatory gap," which Velmans (2002) believes can be bridged by the theory of reflexive monism, in which "consciousness and brain can be seen to be dual aspects of a unifying,

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<sup>87</sup> Of note, neither Pauli nor Jung directly referred to Spinoza or the terminology *dual-aspect monism*.

psychophysical mind” (p. 69). The theory does not assume that the universe is composed of two totally different substances or that consciousness is either some ethereal essence or some activity far removed from the phenomenal realm of human life (Velmans, 2009, p. 303). However a weakness in Velmans’s theory is that it does not offer a mechanism by which the dual aspects of the unitary psychophysical mind interact to create consciousness.

**Consciousness and synchronicity.** I suggest a plausible response to Chalmers’s hard question of consciousness, and the weakness in Velmans’s theory, may emerge from examining the role of synchronicity in conscious experience. The various theories of consciousness discussed so far have been reductive, or found it necessary to invoke a nonphysical property, such as a conscious mental field arising as an emergent property of the brain, or an unspecified process, such as communication throughout the brain without physical connections. However, none of these theories has been able to offer a solution to the hard problem as posed by Chalmers of how conscious experience, that is, psyche, can arise from physical processes, that is, from physis or matter. Chalmers (1995) maintains that a radically different ontology with “some entirely new nonphysical feature” (p. 210) based on psychophysical principles is necessary. This different ontology has already been mentioned by Atmanspacher (2012) as Spinoza’s monism, “in which mind and matter are related to a ‘unity of essence’” (p. 97). In their appeal to Spinoza’s dual-aspect monism, Velmans’s reflexive monism shares common ground with Jung’s theory of synchronicity, which is also based on dual-aspect monism with the addition of Pauli’s (Jung & Pauli, 1952/1955) criterion that matter and psyche are conceived as complementary aspects of the same reality (p. 164).

Velmans's (2002) description of the relationship between consciousness and brain as "dual aspects of a unifying, psychophysical mind" (p. 69) parallels the unitary psychophysical reality termed the *unus mundus* which Jung (1955-56/1970c) introduced to provide an ontological ground for the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity. As described previously, the *unus mundus* is an undifferentiated "potential world, the eternal Ground of all empirical being" (p. 534 [CW 14, para. 760]). Although this dimension of reality is not directly available to experience, Jung maintained that synchronicity offered evidence for "an interconnection or unity of causally unrelated events, and thus postulates a unitary aspect of being" (pp. 464-465 [CW 14, para. 662]), that is, the *unus mundus*. I suggest this unitary aspect of being, the *unus mundus*, is the unifying psychophysical Mind of Velmans's reflexive model. Further, the *unus mundus* is the ground from which consciousness emerges into the universe. Thus, human consciousness may be said to be a natural expression of the surrounding universe, as Velmans suggests.

Recalling Corbett's (1996) description of the Self emerging from the *unus mundus* as a "supraordinate information source...which informs the structure and function of both psyche and body, thought of not as separate but as an indivisible continuum. This continuum is everywhere permeated and organized by consciousness" (p. 58). From another perspective Chalmers (2010) maintains that "a theory of consciousness should take [conscious] experience itself...as a fundamental feature of the world" (p. 210). Chalmers is apparently suggesting that one must simply accept consciousness as an a priori given, leaving unanswered the hard question of consciousness. There are many other theories of consciousness, but none that I have



examined to date can point to a foundational principle undergirding the phenomenon of conscious experience.

Given this background, I suggest that the principle of synchronicity is able to provide the underlying link between consciousness and the brain. I believe this is a plausible suggestion because, for example, Jungian psychology holds that although dreams originate in the unconscious, they are experienced as psychically real as any physical event. It follows that an acausal link must exist to explain this. I believe the principle of synchronicity is the missing link that has eluded the search for a fundamental psychophysical principle that complements current physical principles. As Chalmers (1995) specified, the principle of synchronicity introduces a radically unique ontology with “some entirely new nonphysical feature” (p. 210) founded on psychophysical principles.

**Synchronicity and the explanatory gap.** As seen so far, all of the theories of consciousness reviewed have revolved around the role of the human brain in consciousness, but an understanding of the explanatory gap between the brain and conscious experience has eluded explanation. As Velmans (2009) noted, correlation is not to be conflated with causation (p. 303). Also previously noted, Corbett (1996) postulates that the psyche and therefore consciousness are not created by the brain but instead work “through the brain” and seem “to be mediated by means of the brain” (p. 137), in accord with Jung’s belief that consciousness and the psyche are not localized in space or time. Corbett’s (1996) proposal does not localize the psyche and consciousness within the brain as physicalists and functionalists have done, but instead attributes to the

brain the ability to act as intermediary in bridging the explanatory gap between psyche and the brain.

Instead of finding a causal principle to bridge the explanatory gap, I am suggesting that an acausal psychophysical principle may be more appropriate. I will explore the possibility that this principle may also prove to be the fundamental principle supporting the experience of consciousness. As explained previously, Chalmers (1995) has suggested that an ontology that could conceivably bridge the explanatory gap would need to be fundamentally different from anything considered previously, and would need to utilize a totally new nonphysical attribute (p. 210). It will be recalled that Velmans, Jung, and Pauli called on an ontology based on a version of dual-aspect monism to advance their theories. I propose Jung and Pauli's principle of synchronicity as a logical candidate to bridge the explanatory gap evident in Velmans's (2009) principle of a unifying, psychophysical mind, Libet's (1994) conscious mental field, and Chalmers's (1995) entirely new psychophysical laws. To understand how this may be possible, I first offer Jung's (1952/1969b) hypothesis:

synchronicity....ascribes to the moving body a certain psychoid property which, like space, time, and causality, forms a criterion of its behavior....we must ask ourselves... whether the co-ordination of psychic and physical processes in a living organism can be understood as a synchronistic phenomenon rather than as a causal relation. (p. 505 [CW 8, para. 948])

I interpret Jung's quote as suggesting the possibility that a depth psychological solution to the explanatory gap posed by so many researchers of the science of mind, could be based on the principle of synchronicity. It was Jung and Pauli who ascribed to

the archetypes the ability to manifest both physically and psychically from their undifferentiated state in the psychoid realm, an ability attributable to Jung and Pauli's version of Spinoza's dual-aspect monism. As Corbett (1996) noted, "the archetype is not simply in the body, it includes the body in its larger field of action" (p. 113).

The synchronistic organization of psychic and physical processes in the body is actually a natural outcome of Jung and Pauli's introduction of synchronicity as the fourth fundamental principle of nature operating throughout the universe, as challenging as this concept is to accept by those accustomed to exclusively causal processes. As previously mentioned, in his 10 March 1959 letter to Neumann, Jung (1975b) speculated that synchronistic phenomena were involved in human evolution, and hence human consciousness, starting with the "early, 'irrepresentable,' psychoid stage of conscious development" (p. 495). Jung (1952/1969b) believed that it was obvious "that for the primitive mind synchronicity is a self-evident fact;...there is no such thing as chance.... synchronicity does not appear as an idea by itself, but as 'magical' causality" (p. 501 [CW 8, para. 941]).

The synchronistic organization of psychic and physical processes is in alignment with Jung's (1975b) other views on what he deemed to be synchronistic phenomena. In a 29 February 1952 letter to Dr. Smythies in regard to (psi)  $\psi$  phenomena such as telepathy and precognition, he explained that in his major essay on synchronicity he was proposing "a new (really a very old) principle of explanation, viz. synchronicity, which is a new term for the time-hallowed *συμπάθεια* [sympathy of all things] or *correspondentia* [correspondence]" (p. 45) of Leibniz, as previously mentioned.

To emphasize his confidence in synchronicity as an acausal connecting principle, Jung (1975b) asserted, “I hold that *there is no causal explanation for  $\psi$ -phenomena* [italics original]....How can one imagine a causal explanation for a case of precognition?” (p. 45). Jung (1952/1969b) argued that the assumption of causality in such cases where there appears to be some type of relationship between psyche and matter invites very challenging conclusions: “either there are physical processes which cause psychic happenings, or there is a preexistent psyche which organizes matter” (p. 506 [CW 8, para. 948]).

Jung’s contribution to an explanation of the relationship of mind and matter is obviously metaphysical in nature and certainly does not preclude the possibility of other theories, for example, Sheldrake’s (2009; 2012) theory based on evolution involving *morphogenetic fields*<sup>88</sup> and *morphic resonance*.<sup>89</sup> Sheldrake (2009) suggests that “our own memories depend on morphic resonance rather than on material memory traces

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<sup>88</sup> As opposed to being preexistent in a *transcendent realm* in the Platonic sense, Sheldrake (2012) in *The Presence of the Past* proposes that information regarding the form of an organism is transmitted in so-called “*morphogenetic fields*, inherited by organisms from their predecessors” (pp. 99-119).

<sup>89</sup> In *Morphic Resonance* Sheldrake (2009) explains that although a morphogenetic field conveys information influencing form, it is only one type of the larger class of morphic fields which possess an intrinsic memory. Information stored in memory in a morphic field evolves over time within the universe and the resulting accumulated memory is transmitted in social or behavioral morphic fields, for example, through morphic resonance (pp. xi-xxxii).

stored in our brains” (p. xxii). However, Sheldrake does not explain how these fields came into existence, whereas Jung and Pauli posit the a priori existence of the unus mundus, from which the psychoid archetypes emerge in synchronistic events.

### **The Unconscious Basis of Consciousness**

Jung (1954/1969b) described the complex relationship between unconscious processes and conscious contents in the following quote:

Psychology investigates the bases of consciousness by pursuing the conscious processes until they lose themselves in darkness and unintelligibility, and nothing more can be seen but effects which have an organizing influence on the contents of consciousness. Investigation of these effects yields the singular fact that they proceed from the unconscious, i.e., objective, reality which behaves at the same time like a subjective one, in other words, like a consciousness. Hence the reality underlying the unconscious effects includes the observing subject and is therefore constituted in a way that we cannot conceive. (p. 229 [CW 8, para. 439])

Jung (1954/1969b) explained that “consciousness...embraces not only consciousness as such, but a whole scale of intensities of consciousness....there is no conscious content which is not in some other respect unconscious” (pp. 187-188 [CW 8, para. 385]). Thus, the seemingly clear-cut distinction between conscious and unconscious becomes blurred the further one pursues conscious processes until only the organizing effects of the archetypes on conscious contents can be distinguished. I believe that Jung did not explicitly describe the manner in which the archetypes organize conscious contents aside from citing a synchronistic process.

In a 27 June 1947 letter to Boss, Jung (1975b) made it clear to him, “You are utterly mistaken in saying that I have described the archetypes as given with the brain structure” (p. xl). Jung emphasizes in this letter that the archetypes are specifically not anatomically a part of the human brain or of any brain functions. Therefore, I suggest adopting Corbett’s (1996) view that conscious contents are not products of the brain but instead seem “to be mediated by means of the brain” (p. 137). It is thus speculated here that the influence of the unconscious is mediated by the brain and the body through a synchronistic process resulting in a conscious content. This tentative conclusion places the principle of synchronicity at the heart of Jung’s psychology. It is suggested here that unconscious contents rise to the level of consciousness through a synchronistic process, resulting in an increase in consciousness Jung called individuation. There is no intent here to speculate any further on possible processes or functions within the brain or body to explain how this mediation may result in the phenomenon of consciousness as this would far exceed the scope and competence of this work. As Jung (1952/1969b) said, “synchronicity is a phenomenon that seems to be primarily connected with psychic conditions, that is to say with processes in the unconscious” (p. 511 [CW 8, para. 958]).

In proposing “nothing more can be seen but effects which have an organizing influence on the contents of consciousness” I submit that Jung was saying that a synchronistic process is fundamental to bridging the mind-brain explanatory gap. He was only too well aware of the extraordinarily abstract nature of synchronicity. The archetypes are the major constituents of the unconscious, in which Jung (1954/1969b) has demonstrated “the existence of highly complex, quasi-conscious processes” (p. 189 [CW 8, para. 387]) discovered through his research on psychopathology and dreams. In other

words, the unconscious, or what he calls objective reality, demonstrates a subjective quality, that is, a consciousness or observing subject. From Jung's point of view, this feature of the unconscious is a category of reality which, at present, we are unable to conceive.

Jung (2009) had personally experienced the subjective nature of the unconscious during the writing of the *Red Book*, when he heard a feminine voice he identified as his anima. He speculated at the time "perhaps my unconscious is forming a personality that is not I, but which is insisting on coming through to expression" and which is a "part of myself with a different viewpoint from my own" (p. 199). During the practice of active imagination, I have also had dialogues with various voices much wiser than my accumulated experience, one called the Inner Counselor, which have convinced me of the reality to which Jung referred.

The significance of the synchronicities experienced by Jung that led to this and other insights is critically important and merits further exploration. In order to gain a perspective on the relation of these synchronicities to Jung's psychology I will need to return briefly to Jung's near-death experience in early 1944 referenced in both this chapter and Chapter 3. As related previously, in a delirious state Jung (1961/1989) had a series of visions,<sup>90</sup> which must be accorded as synchronicities, in which he found himself floating, weightless, high in space above the earth where he was not subject to the weight of the concerns of his life on earth (pp. 292-293). His return to consciousness and "this drab world" (p. 293) was an extreme disappointment, as he said, "life and the whole

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<sup>90</sup> For further details on Jung's near-death experience see Jung (1961/1989) *Memories Dreams Reflections* pp. 289-298.

world struck me as a prison” (p. 292) which he would be obliged to accept. However, even after he had recovered from the delirium, his visions persisted during a period of altered sleep rhythm when he would awaken around midnight and find himself in “an utterly transformed state.... as if I were in an ecstasy....floating in space....safe in the womb of the universe...filled with the highest possible feeling of happiness” (p. 293). In one vision he was attending a wedding when he realized that he himself was actually the marriage. In the wedding room, he breathed the “‘sweet smell’ of....a *pneuma* of inexpressible sanctity in the room, whose manifestation was the *mysterium coniunctionis*” (p. 295) or mysterious union of opposites, as occurs in the course of individuation.

It was during these visions that Jung (1961/1989) experienced “ineffable states of joy” (p. 294), as he realized in one vision he once again had become “the ‘Marriage of the Lamb,’” and in another, a celebrant of the *hieros gamos*, the holy marriage which is another symbolic representation of individuation (p. 294). Jung professed that his visions were not subjective but “all had a quality of absolute objectivity....I can describe the experience only as the ecstasy of a non-temporal state in which present, past, and future are one” (pp. 295-296). Continuing the themes of unity and objectivity, he said that “one is interwoven into an indescribable whole and yet observes it with complete objectivity” (p. 296). Jung considered it “impossible to convey the beauty and intensity of emotion during those visions. They were the most tremendous things I have ever experienced” (p. 295). From these experiences Jung learned that one must withdraw projections in order to be freed from the emotions naturally accompanying projections and so enable one to achieve what he termed “objective cognition” (p. 297). I believe this is a critical insight



sometimes overlooked in examining Jung's thoughts on individuation. From his visions, Jung realized that detachment from judgments, valuations, and emotional connections was essential to complete objectivity and therefore to the ultimate completion of individuation, although this is not humanly possible in this life. He explained that "objective cognition lies hidden behind the attraction of the emotional relationship; it seems to be the central secret. Only through objective cognition is the real *coniunctio* possible" (p. 297). Only through objective reflection on conscious contents is individuation possible.

Jung's visions during his illness spurred a period of extraordinary creativity including "On the Nature of the Psyche,"<sup>91</sup> first published in 1947, in which he introduced the critically important psychoid nature of the archetypes<sup>92</sup> essential to his forthcoming essays on the theory of synchronicity. However, as Charet (1993) has noted, the introduction of the psychoid archetype positioned "Jung beyond the limits of empirical science and involved his psychology in metapsychological questions that are fundamentally religious in nature" (p. 293), a view I strongly endorse. For example, in his late thoughts Jung (1961/1989) speculated that archetypes may be established on a "psychoid base, that is, upon an only partially psychic and possibly altogether different form of being. For lack of empirical data, I have neither knowledge nor understanding of

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<sup>91</sup> "On the Nature of the Psyche" was originally presented as a lecture titled "The Spirit of Psychology" at Eranos in 1946. It was revised and updated in 1954.

<sup>92</sup> See Jung (1954/1969b, p. 215 [CW 8, para. 420]) "the archetype...with its psychoid nature, forms the bridge to matter in general."

such forms of being, which are commonly called spiritual” (p. 351). Here, Jung the scientist conceded that he had no further grounds to support speculation, that the trail of his investigations of archetypes had reached an end when it crossed over into the realm of spiritual beings. The archetype, once described as a bipolar construction of instinct and spirit, now paradoxically not only embraced matter and spirit but also transcended them. “On the Nature of the Psyche” was followed in 1951 and 1952 by his major essays on synchronicity in *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* and also in 1951 by the original composition of *Aion*. His magnum opus, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, begun in 1941 and completed in 1955, was inspired by his visions of the coniunctio as just described.

One might say that Jung’s near-death synchronicity was his ultimate revelation of the unconscious, unleashing a torrent of creativity in his final years. As Jung (1961/1989) put it, “the insight I had had, or the vision of the end of all things, gave me the courage to undertake new formulations” (p. 297). No longer did he place his ego on the throne of consciousness but surrendered himself to the flow of his thoughts streaming from the basis of consciousness, the unconscious. In all of these visions, it was *as if* Jung’s near-death synchronicity was an unmistakable wakeup call from the universe to pour out the full measure of the final years of his physical existence into the task of awakening humanity to the utterly crucial work of individuation, the increase of consciousness. Jung (1964) finished his final essay “Approaching the Unconscious” in *Man and His Symbols* a mere 10 days before he passed in 1961.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Synchronicity, Individuation, and Myth**

Here a modern myth for humanity is developed that describes how the journey of synchronicity as a spiritual path might be experienced by a contemporary individual, both psychologically and spiritually, and how it might serve the spiritual needs of other contemporaries. Those principles of Taoism that undergird the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity are described as the cosmic cords binding together the essential elements of this myth. The issue of the interpretation of possible meaning in relation to an experience of the phenomenon of synchronicity is explored in the case of Jung's dogmatically logical female patient and the scarab beetle. This involves a description of six proposed stages of spiritual consciousness and their application to this case. Discussed also are synchronicity and the functions of myth; the myth of the hero's journey as a mythic parallel to the journey of those following synchronicity as a spiritual path; and finally how synchronicity as a spiritual path may fulfill the needs of those seeking a contemporary spirituality.

#### **Narcissism as the Spirit of the Age**

The central importance of individuation as a spiritual journey contrasts with the spirit of the age of the modern West, which has been characterized by Kohut (1993) as extreme narcissism. Todd (2012) notes that narcissism promotes "arrogant self-entitlement, ruthlessness, and exploitativeness. Conversely, overcoming the narcissistic predicament requires becoming capable of empathy, creativity, humor, and wisdom" (p. 54). Todd explains that the pathology of narcissism eclipses an individual's capacity to experience transcendence because in these cases the ego has assumed the role of God (p.

55). I believe that until an individual has reached the stage of consciousness in which he or she experiences the Jungian moment as described previously, any form of transcendence will be summarily dismissed or demeaned. Jung saw this narcissism in his female patient described in Chapter 1, a case which will be discussed in this chapter in relation to synchronicity and meaning.

The intervention of the Self in the form of an especially thought-provoking, emotionally intense, or numinous synchronicity may, at least momentarily, divert an individual's attention away from narcissistic pursuits. The need for Jung's narcissistic female patient to control was temporarily interrupted by the unexpected appearance of a scarab-like beetle, prompting her to consider the possibility of a source of intelligence superior to the ego. This momentary interruption of the ego's authority instigated by an invasion of consciousness by the Self may draw the individual's attention to the possibility that there is a hidden part of themselves acting out in certain situations not controlled by the ego. If the invading shadow material can be made conscious and integrated into consciousness, a part of the shadow long forgotten or deemed undesirable may be redeemed and thus become the subject of conscious contents. For example, the patient's need to rationalize all behaviors and decisions may stem from a need to compensate for unconscious poor self-esteem. Thus, synchronicities can increase consciousness, that is, promote individuation by revealing the association of consciousness to both the unconscious and the material world.

### **Synchronicity, Myth, and the Tao**

I wish now to develop the relationship between the phenomenon of synchronicity and the principle of synchronicity assumed in Taoism, and the parts they play in the

modern myth for humanity. In keeping with the mythological motif being developed here, Le Grice (2010) discusses an individual's experience of an especially meaningful synchronicity:

it is as if the extraordinary coincidence of certain events, or the uncanny correlation between something external that happens to us with our own internal states of consciousness, is actually attempting to convey a meaningful message of great personal significance. This is why instances of synchronicity are so perplexing, for it is as if the cosmos knows what we are thinking and feeling, that the cosmos itself is aware of our personal situation, and seeks, through a symbolic line of communication, to convey a message to us about our life.... Moments of synchronicity are pregnant with meaning and with mystery, evoking a sense of a barely conceivable order connecting the events of life. (p. 126)

At such moments, perhaps accompanied by a numinous feeling, one may experience a sense of oneness with the universe, *as if* one's life was not as dismal and meaningless as one had imagined, but was actually an integral part of a greater whole, in which one's participation or proper functioning is critically important to maintaining the natural order of the cosmos. In these moments one may perceive the "barely conceivable order connecting the events of life" (p. 126) which are synchronistically interdependent, as in the Tao. In these moments it is *as if* an individual's life is lifted out of the context of a mundane world and placed by wise and benevolent hands into a welcoming universe not just permeated with meaning and purpose for all of humanity, but conveying an unmistakable meaning and purpose that is so precisely tailored to the individual that it leaves the impression that it was intended for him or her.

As described previously, Taoism teaches that each individual is given a natural place or function in the universe that resonates with the overall pattern of the Tao. In such a universe, each person is an indispensable participant in the proper functioning of the world-organism, and therefore, existentially dependent on the whole to fulfill their natural function. Thus, in this scenario, it is *as if* the value of each human life in the universe governed by the principle of the Tao, is inestimable.

Indeed, each aspect of the universe is fundamentally interwoven synchronistically with the Tao, and thus interdependent with all other aspects in an ordered whole. Jung (1954/1969a) conveyed this sense of order, exemplified by the Tao, when he supposed that “in all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order, in all caprice a fixed law, for everything that works is grounded on its opposite” (p. 32 [CW 9i, para. 66]). Jung (1921/1976d) explained that the middle way sought by the Taoist is “as far removed from chaos as the stars from the disorder of the actual world” (p. 120 [CW 6 para. 920]). In restoring the principle of synchronicity to its natural place in the universe, mirrored for millennia in the ancient principle of the Tao, I believe Jung introduced an old principle and clothed it in the language of analytical psychology. For those seeking a spiritual life beyond the narcissistic spirit of the age, Jung constructed in his psychology a vision of a transcendent realm beyond the profane world holding out the hope of purpose and meaning for the individual and the collective, which now becomes the next topic for discussion.

### **Synchronicity and Meaning**

In considering the issue of synchronicity and meaning, I refer once more to Jung’s (1951/1969b) example of the synchronicity involving a scarab beetle and a female patient

whose ego was guarded by “a highly polished Cartesian rationalism with an impeccably ‘geometrical’ idea of reality” (p. 525 [CW 8, para. 982]). Jung had reached an impasse in trying to connect with her on any level other than thinking and had resigned himself “to the hope that something unexpected and irrational would turn up” (p. 525 [CW 8, para. 982]) that would break through her rationalistic defenses. Jung was therefore at least somewhat prepared for this possibility in whatever form it might take. Given the context of the case as offered by Jung, it must be assumed that the patient knew nothing of the theory of compensatory images or synchronicity, nor was she in a position to ascertain any mythological or symbolic meaning implied in the paralleling of her dream of the gift of an item of jewelry in the form of a golden scarab with the appearance of an actual beetle captured by Jung. Nonetheless, as Main (2004) notes in regard to this synchronicity, the “acausal connection of events is both symbolically informative...and has a deeply emotive and transforming impact on the patient and in these senses is clearly *meaningful* [italics original]” (p. 15).

At this point it is appropriate to ask For whom was this event a synchronicity? As explained in Chapter 1, Jung was versed in Egyptian mythology<sup>93</sup> and was also alert to the possible symbolic linking of compensatory psychic and physical events as in a synchronicity. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this work, Jung’s NT “Ethereal” type was ideally suited to perceiving and understanding the psychological and mythological significance of the synchronicity unfolding in the therapy room. I believe his strong intuitive capability allowed him to experience the event as if it was as real for himself as

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<sup>93</sup> Schweizer (1994/2010) explains the profound impact of Egyptian mythology, particularly the netherworld, on Jung’s psychology and alchemy.

it was for his patient. This capacity coupled with his formidable intellect and thinking function led to a depth of understanding which reinforced his strong conviction in announcing with authority “here is your scarab” thus bringing the synchronicity to life for his patient.

Thus, what was for Jung a synchronicity, was perhaps merely a coincidence for his patient, albeit an emotionally transformative one. On this distinction Tarnas (2006, p. 56) brings to light a point which I believe illustrates how, as opposed to Jung’s patient, the phenomenon of synchronicity can become the expected norm for those, such as Jung (1940/1969b), who through “careful and scrupulous observation” (p. 7 [CW 11, para. 6]) naturally expect to observe the principle of synchronicity manifesting in nature as part of their daily life. Tarnas (2006) further remarks that Jung’s symbolic approach to synchronicity is very similar to the typical “primal and shamanic alertness to nature’s symbolically significant patterning, as well as ancient Chinese Taoist philosophy, in which the dominant principles are pattern, order, symbolic correlations, the unity of human and cosmos, and the interdependence of all things” (footnote 4, p. 56) as previously noted. Thus, as Tarnas notes, Jung was attuned to such natural phenomena as the unusual gathering of flocks of birds or animals, to unexpected storms stirring the waters of a lake, and to sudden gusts of wind seeming to usher in a message paralleling an inner reflection or state of mind (p. 56).

**Consciousness and meaning in a synchronicity.** Main (2004) actually refers to the story of the scarab as “the scarab coincidence” (p. 15). Main then explains a point around which the discussion of meaning must revolve: “any synchronicity that comes to be recognised as such clearly must involve consciousness” (p. 15). The question that



must then be asked is How is consciousness involved in the recognition of a synchronicity? What I believe is important to realize in this example is that although the patient did not possess the knowledge to intellectually recognize the events unfolding before her as a synchronicity, nonetheless she did respond to the events in such a way as to allow her treatment to continue successfully. If she did not intellectually grasp the significance and meaning of this synchronicity, she must have internalized the message being conveyed in some other way involving consciousness.

Main (2004) agrees that the consciousness of individuals varies depending on not only their life experiences “but also according to their *psychological type*” (p. 16). Without explaining in detail the dynamics of psychological types, it is perhaps sufficient to understand two primary postulates. The first is that there are four functions and two attitudes which, when combined, describe someone’s psychological type. The four functions, as mentioned previously, are thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition, which together with the two attitudes of introversion and extraversion, describe one’s *mode of consciousness*, or primary way of experiencing and being in the world. The second postulate describes the concept of hierarchy in the relationship between the functions. In this hierarchy, thinking and feeling may be pictured as paired but separated on opposite ends of an axis. If thinking is the *dominant function*, or strongest and most adapted as it was for Jung’s patient, then feeling, on the opposite end from thinking on the thinking-feeling axis, would be the *inferior function*. It is the least exercised and therefore the weakest and least conscious function of all the four functions.

**Synchronicity and the scarab beetle.** The following discussion is a hypothetical rendering of the events surrounding the scarab synchronicity intended to illustrate the

complexity of the interpretation of the meaning of synchronicities and the importance of understanding the context in which they occur. I propose that Jung's patient did not need to intellectually grasp the significance of the events which unfolded in session to comprehend the core of the message in the events, because the Self tailored events in such a way as to speak symbolically to her least conscious and therefore weakest and least defended functions, in particular her inferior feeling function. The following scenario is speculative, but I believe useful in illustrating one possible way in which meaning for the patient might be conveyed from the events which Jung called a synchronicity. Certainly her exaggerated emphasis on thinking created an imbalance in her psyche because the balancing function of feeling was effectively not present, thus blocking or at least seriously impeding the normal progression of the libido. Jung (1928/1969) has outlined the psychic steps, documented earlier, leading to "a splitting of the personality, or disunion with oneself when libido is blocked. The acts that follow from such a condition are uncoordinated, sometimes pathological, having the appearance of symptomatic actions" (pp. 31-37 [CW 8, paras. 61-66]).

Although we do not know the background of the patient's life experiences or psychological state when the patient entered analysis with Jung, we do know he could make no progress in view of her formidable psychic defenses. I speculate that in the moment in which these events occurred, she experienced a regression of the libido as described previously, but which requires further explanation. I also propose that the inability of the patient's thinking function to resolve the irrational appearance of a beetle at the same time as she was describing her dream of a beetle, resulted in withdrawal of libido from her feeling function as well as her intuition and sensation functions. The

libido of these less developed functions then descended into the unconscious and became associated with unconscious material, which Jung (1928/1969) referred to as of “inferior and incompatible quality” (p. 35 [CW 8, para. 64]).

However, regression actually presages individuation, as unconscious material is activated and emerges into consciousness for processing. The appearance of unconscious material described by Jung (1928/1969) as “slime from the depths” (p. 34 [CW 8, para. 63]) is part of a purposeful movement by the Self to drive individuation and psychic balance. As discussed previously, consciousness is then challenged with adapting to this unfamiliar, repressed material from the unconscious, which in the case of Jung’s patient, could very well lead to the dissolving of her rationalization and intellectualization defenses. It will be noted that instead of dealing directly with her presenting condition, regression of the libido resulted instead in her contending with repressed unconscious material in her shadow.

The resulting unconscious material that might surface in the scenario just described could potentially yield an increase in consciousness and thus strengthen and rebalance her ego sufficiently to enable her to deal with the original situation. As Jung (1928/1969) said, the surfacing unconscious material could have the effect of “complementing or even of replacing the inadequate conscious attitude” (p. 36 [CW 8 para. 65]). As explained formerly by Jung (1928/1969), when thinking does not resolve a condition because it requires a person to adapt through the feeling function, “then the unconscious material activated by regression will contain the missing feeling function” (p. 36 [CW 8 para. 65]), as proposed in the scenario just offered.

I believe Jung's patient did not need to analyze the events of her experience to understand their mythological significance or to speculate on possible personal or collective meanings in order for her to understand on the emotional, physical, and intuitive levels the message conveyed in the events. It is interesting to note that her feeling, sensation, and intuitive functions were enlisted in the synchronistic event, but not her thinking function. I believe the Self can communicate through many means to convincingly convey a message intended to promote healing. As Main (2004) remarks, the events had "a deeply emotive and transforming impact on the patient and in these senses is clearly *meaningful* [*italics original*]" (p. 15).

This is not to say that there is no value in enlisting the thinking function in understanding a synchronicity. If Jung were to decide that it might be helpful to explore the mythological or other aspects of the experience, such a discussion might enrich and strengthen her consciousness. It should be noted that intellectualization and rationalization are the preferred analytical tools of the West championed by the spirit of the age, evincing a one-sided approach similar to the patient's approach to life. As just demonstrated, an understanding of one's psychological type can be valuable in determining how to approach the interpretation of symbolic messages from the unconscious in the form of synchronicities.

To ascertain whether the patient's experience of the events described by Jung was actually a synchronicity for the patient or merely a coincidence, I propose reexamining the criteria previously specified by Atmanspacher and Fach (2013). The criteria are:

1. Each pair of synchronistic events includes an internally conceived and an externally perceived component.

According to Main (2007) the externally perceived, or physical, component is the appearance of a live beetle similar to the one in the patient's dream, whereas the internally conceived, or psychic, component was the decision by the patient to relate her dream of a golden beetle (p. 15).

2. Any presumption of a direct causal relationship between the events is absurd or even inconceivable.

I concur with Main that the events of this experience, as described by Jung, fulfill this criterion.

3. The events correspond with one another by a common meaning, often expressed symbolically.

Atmanspacher and Fach (2013) do not specify a particular type or level of meaning. In Chapter 1 of this work, Main (2014) described four levels of meaning. It is helpful to recall from Chapter 1 Aziz's (1990) assertion that "the depth of one's experience of the synchronistic event grows in proportion to the ability of the individual, to assimilate consciously these various levels of meaning" (p. 64).

1. The first level is the shared content or meaning of parallel events.

The parallel events share the specific content of a beetle, one being an actual beetle with the other being a beetle in a dream.

2. The second is the nonrational or prepsychological meaning arising from the emotional effect of numinosity resulting from an activated archetype in some synchronicities.

This second level of meaning, I believe, is the one experienced by the patient. The meaning conveyed was both nonrational and prepsychological and had, according to Main (2007), “a deeply emotive and transforming impact on the patient” (p. 15).

Such events are illuminated by the insights of Le Grice (2010): “Synchronicities often serve a compensatory function...they counterbalance the partial, onesided perspective of the subjective ego. Through synchronicity it is as if the universe itself were seeking to make the individual conscious of the deeper meaning of their life situation” (p. 127). In the case of Jung’s female patient, I concur with Colman (2011, p. 478), who pointed out that Jung’s participation in this experience was a critical factor in its becoming a synchronicity. It was Jung who turned around to investigate the tapping on his window, and who subsequently opened the window, caught the insect, and presented it with authority saying “here is your scarab” (p. 525 [CW 8, para. 982]). I believe it was Jung’s interpretation of this beetle as a parallel to her dream beetle at the moment she was describing the dream, which struck in her a chord of disbelief, fascination, and awe. Without Jung’s intervention and interpretation I believe she would not have made any connection. Why is Jung’s intervention critical to this story? A possible answer to this question begins to draw some parallels between Jung’s analytic process and the ancient practice of shamanism.

Recall that Tarnas (2006) described Jung’s symbolic approach to synchronicity as typical of the “primal and shamanic alertness to nature’s symbolically significant patterning” (footnote 4, p. 56). Speaking of how Jung dealt with his patients, von Franz (1972/1975) explained that Jung first and foremost focused on assisting his patients to make peace with themselves “by mediating the messages sent by the patient’s own

unconscious. He felt that his was the role of ... midwife, assisting in bringing into the light of day a natural inner process, the process of coming into one's self" (p. 65).

According to von Franz, Jung saw himself as an interpreter of the symbols of his patients' dreams, such as the scarab beetle of his female patient, similar to the work of "old shamans and medicine men" (p. 65) who seek to discover what the spirits, or unconscious, need from the suffering individual.

Eliade (1951/2004, pp. 326-332) clarified that the shaman does not heal, but only mediates or acts as midwife in the healing that occurs between the confrontation of the patient with spiritual powers much as Jung did with his patient. In the role of mediator or psychopomp, Eliade explained, "the shaman, is the great specialist in the human soul; he alone 'sees' it, for he knows it's 'form' and its destiny" (p. 8). I believe Jung was initiated as a shaman as a result of his own severe initiation during his confrontation with the unconscious from 1913 to 1917. As Aziz (1990) explained, "it is through such direct and personal experience that one acquires the insight and skills that are needed to heal others" (p. 13). In the words of Eliade (1951/2004), "they are separated from the rest of the community by the intensity of their own religious experience" (p. 8).

Aziz (1990) explained that analytical psychology "is concerned, like shamanism, with the direction and transformation of the soul" (p. 11), and in the case of Jung's patient, I believe he understood that the severity of her self-alienation indicated that her soul was in danger and in need of reorientation through means far-exceeding "less comprehensive spiritual or psychological interventions" (pp. 11-12). Jung was prepared for an intervention, but like the shaman he realized he was not the healer, only the psychopomp. His role was to seize the opportunity afforded by the unconscious in the

form of a beetle, and like a midwife, present the birth of a new life, her new spiritual life, to his startled patient. However, as Le Grice (2010) said, “if modern individuals were to preserve the integrity of the conscious self...then at a certain point in their psychological development they too, like the shaman or mystic, would have to establish a vital, living relationship to the divine” (p. 52). Jung’s patient was given the gift of the opportunity to do so through a synchronicity he mediated, but did not conceive. I believe there are many on the planet who act as midwives of synchronicity in service to those in need of healing.

In that moment, I believe the patient was overwhelmed by the uncanny and otherwise inexplicable mystery unfolding before her in real time. She was unable to resolve this mysterious coincidence through thinking and was forced to fall back on her least used functions all of which failed to provide an intellectual answer. She may, indeed, have felt personally addressed by the universe, by an unknown source of intelligence far surpassing her own, personally conveying a nonverbal message of life-altering importance to her.

Perhaps the term *nonverbal* is too neutral a term to use in this case. I believe it would be more accurate to describe this as a numinous feeling experienced throughout her body. As Donati (2004) explained previously, Jung stressed that “knowledge is valid *only if* it is lived *both* intellectually *and* emotionally” because emotions are “the only way to acquire some sort of knowledge of the transcendental psycho-physical reality that is supposed to exist beyond them” (p. 712). It could be said that this direct spiritual experience, the nontraditional approach to religion contemporaries seek, was a soul-making event transforming her entire worldview. Corbett (1996) explains that “when spirit or archetype embodies, it takes on a personally meaningful quality which we call



soul, so that soul is synonymous with that level of spirit which is experienced as ‘something happening to me’” (p. 16). Until spirit is embodied as soul, an experience of spirit will not produce an emotion felt in the body of an individual. Soul may be thought of as an “organ” capable of receiving spirit and transforming it into an experience comprehensible to consciousness, such as an image in the mind or an emotion in the body. The interplay of soul and spirit can potentially result in a numinous experience allowing a part of the Self, that is, an archetype, to become embodied as soul. Thus, what may have at first appeared to be a coincidence, was in fact, a synchronicity, albeit an unconscious synchronicity, as Jung (1975b, p. 495) termed it, because the patient did not consciously intellectualize it as such at the time. It may be that Jung, some time afterward, explained to her the reasons their mutual experience qualified as a synchronicity, and perhaps also explained the mythological significance of her specific experience.

Regardless of her intellectual understanding of her experience as a synchronicity, I speculate that the process of individuation had begun with the typically Jungian moment when her ego yielded its role as governor of her life to the superior intelligence and wisdom of the Self. This was the meaning of the message delivered to her in the synchronicity, which she apparently understood, although no words were employed to convey it. For it was the Self that had designed this event with the specific purpose of relativizing her ego in order to spur her spiritual growth. I can relate well to this situation, because it is essentially identical to my own experience of an unconscious synchronicity as described in Chapter 1. I did not intellectually understand the events unfolding before me and within me as synchronicities, and yet they acted to propel my spiritual growth in

a direction I would never have freely or consciously chosen. Indeed, I'm sure I have experienced other unconscious synchronicities which have spurred my spiritual growth, but which have not as yet risen to the level of conscious awareness. I believe it would be accurate to assume this must be the experience of others.

As Edinger (1996) explained, "epistemology refers to the nature and function of consciousness" (p. 3). As the nature and function of the dominant mode of consciousness varies between individuals, so will the method of knowing or epistemology. However, as Jung (1931/1970b) established previously, all modes of consciousness remain intact although latent in both an individual and in the collective "even in a civilized community" (p. 75 [CW 10, para. 150]). In the case of Jung's patient, one aspect of her dominant mode of consciousness was thinking, a mode which apparently colored many parts of her life. However, at the moment of the synchronicity, I submit that her thinking function was incapacitated. One may then ask, What mode or stage of consciousness was functioning in Jung's patient at the time of the event in question?

I believe the answer must be animistic consciousness, for in this stage it is *as if* all creation is animated by a transcendent power. In the momentary absence of a discerning ego, I submit that the patient's perception of the world suddenly plunged into a state of participation mystique in which her existence became indistinguishable from her environment. Jung (1952/1969b) referred to this phenomenon as an "*abaissement du niveau mental*" (p. 436 [CW 8, para. 841]) resulting from the numinous effect of the presence of an archetype manifesting as an affect in her body. In this state, conscious contents fade and eventually slip into the unconscious resulting in a state of disorientation. However, as in the case of regression of the libido, the unconscious is

thereby activated so that “otherwise inhibited unconscious contents break through and find expression in the affect” (p. 436 [CW 8, para. 841]).

3. The third level of meaning results from the awareness of the personal significance of a subjective interpretation of a synchronicity from the perspective of an individual’s conscious as well as unconscious developmental requirements and objectives, that is, their individuation.
4. The fourth and final meaning is the objective significance of a synchronicity resulting from what Aziz (1990) called archetypal meaning transcendent to individual consciousness.

There is no indication, given the facts provided, that the patient ever reached the third or fourth levels of discernment of meaning, although it is a possibility. Those on the spiritual path illuminated by synchronicity will want to closely examine the meanings seen through the lenses of all of these levels of increasing consciousness. In fact, the four levels of meaning described by Main (2014) could be helpful in estimating an individual’s current stage of spiritual maturity.

### **Stages of Spiritual Consciousness**

As noted in Chapter 1 of this work, Edinger (1996) credited Jung with elucidating the stages of Western spiritual evolution as a series of transformations of the collective God-image leading to the current stage, which Edinger termed the stage of individuation. This stage may also be called the psychological stage, given that modern consciousness possesses the ability to recognize that religious images arise from the unconscious, as opposed to the magical world of those at the animistic stage of consciousness, in which inner and outer images are not differentiated. He also explained that the collective God-

image is essentially synonymous with the idea of a collective Self, as distinguished from the individual Self. Humanity's current stage of psychological development makes it possible to understand that "all manifestations of the God-image as descriptive stages of humanity's experience of the autonomous aspect of the psyche" (p. xv), that is, the collective unconscious. Regarding the God-image, Jung (1952/1969a) clarified that "strictly speaking, the God image does not coincide with the unconscious as such, but with a special content of it, namely the archetype of the self" (p. 469 [CW 11 para. 757]). Importantly, all six stages described by Edinger are embedded within the collective unconscious and therefore within each individual psyche. The challenge, as I see it, is to translate the psychological significance of these evolving collective Western God-images into psychological descriptions of the stages of spiritual growth of an individual.

**Six stages of spiritual consciousness.** What I believe would be more helpful to those seeking a nontraditional spiritual path is a brief psychological description of each stage, so that individuals can more accurately assess their current stage of spiritual growth as well as determine future expectations. It is my premise that each stage of spiritual evolution can be described by a particular mode of consciousness that defines an epistemology specific to that stage. Thus, each person will perceive and interpret experiences through a different epistemological "lens" or mode of consciousness. For example, it may be possible for someone to grasp the personal significance of a synchronicity but not the collective significance of the same event because the epistemological lens they are using does not give them the capacity to comprehend the collective meaning.

It is understood that the stages of Jung's model of psychological development described previously as animistic, ancient, modern, and contemporary, apply to collective humanity. However, I believe that the psychological features of these stages can be transferred to the psychological development of an individual as well. It is readily acknowledged that there are many more models of the stages of consciousness that cannot be discussed here for reasons of space, but that are valuable and worthy of consideration.

***Stage 1: Animistic consciousness.*** Peck (1998) has suggested a four stage model of spiritual growth that essentially duplicates two stages in Jung's model, and adds two stages, fundamentalist and mystical consciousness, to augment Jung's model. Again, the following stages are not to be conceived as evolving in a linear fashion. Stage 1 of the combined model is animistic consciousness, in which the individual is in a state of participation mystique with the environment, as already described in some detail.

***Stage 2: Ancient consciousness.*** Stage 2, ancient consciousness, includes all individuals between the animistic and modern stages of consciousness. They inhabit what might be termed a "twilight zone" of consciousness between a fully independent ego and submersion of their identity in the unconscious. In their attempt to form an ego, ancients create an ego-unconscious split which serves to nurture rather than hinder the development of the nascent ego. As mentioned previously, their vital connection with the unconscious can foster, in Jung's (1931/1970b) terms, "a living religion" (p. 79 [CW 10, para. 159]), through symbols and rituals. I posit that such individuals might be drawn to churches or spiritual movements essentially free of dogma and embracing still living symbols and rituals.

**Stage 3: Fundamentalist consciousness.** Stage 3 describes the fundamentalist approach to religion and spirituality which seeks protection from inner experience through multiple layers of dogma and ritual. Those at this stage of spiritual growth tend to be legalistic, one-sided, and dogmatic, preferring simple, rational answers to complex spiritual questions. The fundamentalists' fear of the unknown mysteries of life drive them to the safety of a belief in an all-good, Father-protector God or to a Church professing to preach the one, true faith based on a literal interpretation of sacred scriptures. Fundamentalists are offered protection from their fears on the condition that they forfeit their intellectual integrity, and their freedom to choose beliefs. Those who do not submit to the narrow ideological or theological views of their religion are considered lost nonbelievers, or worse, mortal enemies deserving of punishment. It must be noted that fundamentalism is a mindset that can apply to many other disciplines and areas of life, such as science, academics, politics, and philosophy.

**Stage 4: Modern/narcissistic consciousness.** Stage 4 can be seen in the typical narcissistic attitude of the modern individual in the West who cannot experience the divine because their ego has usurped the role of God. This stage essentially describes Jung's modern consciousness, as previously discussed, with the addition of Kohut's (1993) characterization of the West's prevailing psychological attitude of extreme narcissism. As Kohut (as cited in Todd, 2012) explained, "narcissism is the enemy of creativity, just as it precludes awareness of a cosmic evolutionary process in which the individual can participate" (p. 55). Such extreme estrangement from and disparagement of the wellspring of creativity, the unconscious, runs rampant in the modern West, cutting off most traditional avenues connecting the West to the domain of the spiritual. Although

it may be assumed by some that a revival of a mutually rewarding relationship is impossible under these circumstances, I believe that Jung's mature thought has created an opening, a spiritual fissure, in the cosmos for the intervention of the psyche as mediator through both the phenomenon of synchronicity and the principle of synchronicity.

***Stage 5: Contemporary consciousness.*** Stage 5, contemporary consciousness, was discussed at some length in Chapter 3. These persons are nonconformists who question the authority of current forms of religion in seeking out spiritual truth independent of collective influence.

***Stage 6: Mystical consciousness.*** Importantly, Peck (1998) adds Stage 6, the mystical stage of consciousness, which is conspicuously absent, for good reason, in Jung's stages of psychological development of humanity. I believe Jung wanted to avoid the label of mystic to circumvent criticism of his work as unscientific and therefore not to be taken seriously. As previously described, however, Jung experienced a series of mystical states in visions as a result of his near-death experience in 1944. Recall that in these visions Jung (1961/1989) experienced a feeling of freedom from earthly cares, of ecstasy, of safety as if in the womb of the universe, and of eternal bliss (pp. 293-294). As well, Jung experienced the sanctity of individuation symbolized in the *mysterium coniunctionis*, and the ineffable joy of individuation as a celebrant of the Marriage of the Lamb. His experiences of ecstasy in a state outside of time, of unity with "an indescribable whole...and...complete objectivity" (pp. 295-296), were as real as any physical experience, and had a far-reaching effect on his life work, as previously described.

Such profound experiences as these, so far removed from the everyday life of the profane world, are experiences of an individual at the mystical stage of consciousness. Peck (1998) elucidates a few of the immediate spiritual manifestations flowing out of this stage, the most important of which is a love that transcends all cultural, political, and religious boundaries to embrace all of humanity. Such individuals seek an open and genuine dialogue deepening into the mysteries of life but that ultimately must remain mysteries. This involves the honest and respectful sharing not only of intellectual views but also of treasured stories carrying the heritage of the ancestors held sacred by peoples around the world. Such individuals seek to unite, to knit together, to make whole, to synthesize, to hold sacred every thought regardless of its origin or character, to revere the holy web of life that unites all things in the universe and through which all things resonate with each other as in the Tao, understanding that each part has a vital role to play.

As mentioned previously, Chang Yeh-Yuan stressed that the central theme of the I Ching was resonance or *kan* with the Tao. The Taoist principle of correlative thinking synthesizes all manifestations of existence in a homologous unity, which, through the principle of *kan*, resonate in unison with the Tao. Such resonance is only possible if an individual possesses a mind freed of passing thoughts such as projections and emotional ties connecting them with objects in the environment. Those at the mystical stage of consciousness have cleared their minds of shallow attachments and can therefore resonate with the Tao. This is in accord with Jung's (1961/1989) conclusion that, in order to have objective cognition, one must detach from judgments and emotional chords (p. 297). As Cambray (2009) so aptly phrased it previously, an empty mind is "not a dull blankness



but a receptivity marked by nonattachment, with the releasing of prejudices and preconceptions, becoming open to archetypal possibilities” (p. 69).

**The relationship between meaning and stages of spiritual consciousness.**

Returning to the example of the synchronicity with Jung’s patient, I would ask, What is the significance of these stages when considering the meaning of this synchronicity? It has been established that individuation is driven by the Self’s inherent striving for wholeness operating through the process of compensation. The patient’s extreme rationalism and recalcitrant attitude required a decisive counter-balancing event to overcome her resistance and restore psychic equilibrium, an event that Jung realized was necessary to move her case forward. This is the theoretical description of the psychological dynamics that I believe Jung would argue. However, I propose that the patient was, in some respects, functioning at Stage 3, the fundamentalist mode of consciousness, which perhaps served to protect her from the inner experience of the unpredictable, irrational, and uncontrollable forces of the unconscious, that is, from a direct experience of God. Thus, when the numinosum constellated in the therapy room in the archetypal form of a symbol of rebirth, I postulate that she suddenly faced simultaneously her greatest fear, a punitive God-image, and her salvation from her greatest fear, a direct experience of the numinosum.

Having experienced what I imagine was the electrifying power of the numinosum surging through her body, and having survived, she was psychically and spiritually reborn. This possibility requires further elaboration. Referring to Egyptian mythology, Le Grice (2010) has explained the significance of the scarab beetle to Jung’s patient as a “symbol of rebirth, a motif that directly related to his client’s personal situation, to her

own impending psychological transformation and her rebirth into a world of greater meaning from her former intellectual defensiveness and resistance to the therapeutic process” (pp. 130-131).

Main (2006), following Otto (1923/1958), described the numinous feeling one may experience in a synchronicity as a “*mysterium tremendum* (tremendous mystery)” (p. 157) already mentioned in Chapter 1. Mysterium implies a reality that is “wholly other,” beyond any anything familiar to humans. Main then explores Otto’s (1923/1958) sense of the meaning of *tremendum* using Otto’s qualities: “‘awefulness’, ‘overpoweringness’, and ‘urgency’” (p. 157). I believe these terms capture the patient’s emotions stemming from her relationship with her God-image before her encounter with Jung. Awefulness implies “‘daemonic dread’...prompting a sense of ‘terror’”; overpoweringness points to “‘a consciousness of the absolute superiority or supremacy of a power other than myself’”; and “urgency implies ‘a force that knows not stint nor stay, which is urgent, active, compelling, and alive’” (p. 157).

As well, Otto (1923/1958) includes the element of fascination, *fascinans*, as a feature of the numinous. Main adds that “fascination, for Otto, encompasses ‘a bliss which embraces all those blessings that are indicated or suggested in positive fashion by any ‘doctrine of salvation’” (p. 157). I submit that, in the moment of this synchronicity, she first experienced the overwhelming realization of her fear of her *mysterium tremendum* God-image, followed by *fascinans*, the blessing of being reborn through salvation from the judgment of that same God-image. Psychologically, salvation as understood in Christian theology may be equated with Jung’s (1954/1969d) concept of individuation (p. 292 [CW 11, para. 445]). In this moment she had begun the spiritual

journey of individuation. As well, it is altogether possible for one's God-image to be based on an earthly father-figure which can be either positive or negative. If the patient had introspected a negative father image, that same image could then have been transferred onto her God-image. All of this is understood to be hypothetical, given that no corroborative evidence is available from Jung's account. And yet, the scenario is, in my mind, indelibly marked by the experience of rebirth, of being born again in a spiritual sense. I can personally attest to the overwhelming power of the numinosum at the moment of spiritual rebirth, having lived through this experience some forty years ago.

Thus, as Main (2007) relates, as a result of this synchronicity, her individuation had begun, as inferred by Jung's (1951/1969b) comment that "the treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results" (p. 525 [CW 8, para. 982]). Main (2007) has suggested interpretations for the third and fourth levels of meaning, to which I concur (p. 16). The third level of meaning, the personal significance of this synchronicity for the patient, was the beginning of a shift of attitude in order to restore psychic stability and flexibility. The fourth level of meaning, the archetypal meaning transcendent to her consciousness, was spiritual rebirth, designed and instigated by the Self through one manifestation of the archetype of rebirth, the scarab beetle.

### **Synchronicity and the Archetype of Meaning**

Main (2014) has reported finding no method in the literature to aid in interpreting the meaning of a synchronicity. However, in a moment of reflection, Jung (1954/1969a) conjectured on the formulation of any meaning in life:

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. There is then little sense and little nonsense either.

When you come to think about it, nothing has any meaning, for when there was nobody to think, there was nobody to interpret what happened. 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. (p. 31 [CW 9i, para. 65])

In order to understand what Jung (1954/1969a) was intending in this profound quote, it is helpful to know that he believed there is an “*archetype of meaning*,” that is, spirit, alongside the “*archetype of life itself*” (p. 32 [CW 9i, para. 66]), the anima. Jung began his explanation with one of the most profound realizations I believe one can have about synchronicity or life itself. Jung said that “man woke up in a world he did not understand, and that is why he tries to interpret it. Thus the anima and life itself are meaningless in so far as they offer no interpretation” (pp. 31-32 [CW 9i, paras. 65-66]). In and of itself, life yields no interpretation, yet, Jung believes, “they have a nature that can be interpreted, for in all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order, in all caprice a fixed law, for everything that works is grounded on its opposite” (p. 32 [CW 9i, para. 66]).

It is thus left to humanity, through discriminating judgments, to conjecture on the possibility of a hidden order in the cosmos. However, even with the aid of rational reflection, science, philosophy, and traditional religion, Jung (1954/1969a) believed that “human interpretation fails, for a turbulent life-situation has arisen that refuses to fit any of the traditional meanings assigned to it” (p. 32 [CW 9i, para. 66]). Out of this failure and surrender of the ego is born the recognition of “an archetype that up till then had lain hidden behind the meaningful nonsense played out by the anima. This is the “*archetype*

*of meaning,”* or spirit, just as the anima is the “*archetype of life itself*” (p. 32 [CW 9i, para. 66]).

In the final analysis, said Jung (1954/1969a), humanity derives meaning from primordial images, that is, from the archetypes, explaining that “from whatever side we approach this question, everywhere we find ourselves confronted with the history of language, with images and motifs that lead straight back to the primitive wonder-world” (p. 33 [CW 9i, para. 67]). Humanity is still unaware that it has yet to free itself from pre-existing modes of consciousness supported by the symbolic language of the unconscious. Subsequent to this passage, Jung gave “an example of how the unconscious ‘thinks’ and paves the way for solutions” (p. 33 [CW 9i, para. 70]). Thus, I believe what Jung is saying is that if one wishes to explore the meaning of a synchronicity, for example, one must yield to the ultimate authority and guidance of the Self.

Nonetheless, I believe that a knowledge of an individual’s stage of consciousness and psychological type, may be helpful in ascertaining meaning on all levels. If Jung’s patient was at a stage 3 level of spiritual consciousness, one might assume that she would be incapable of deriving meaning from a synchronicity. Yet I concur that her experience was, in Main’s (2004) words “clearly *meaningful*” (p. 13). Whether the patient ever climbed through higher levels of consciousness is not known, yet it is possible that, given sufficient application of intelligence and resolve, she may have finally come to a place where she could introspect deeply enough into her shadow to allow her to retract projections, or delve more deeply into mythology to see her own individuation reflected in all of humanity’s myths of heroes, in order to tease out more fully the subjective and

objective meaning of events in her life. For there is no absolute end to individuation, only a heroic striving to reach one's destiny in this lifetime.

**Accessing the unconscious.** How does one access the unconscious? As I explained in Chapter 1, I sculpted a mandala in clay in the form of an astrological chart about a year prior to my major vocational upheaval. In allowing my hands to freely form whatever image they were guided to bring to life in clay without the intervention of thought, I believe I directly accessed the creative energy of the unconscious. For me, there is something about my hands making physical contact with a pliable earthy substance that connects me with autochthonic energy.

Jung (1955/1969a) noted that “as a rule a mandala occurs in conditions of psychic dissociation or disorientation” (p. 387 [CW 9i, para. 714]) and can appear spontaneously in individuals as in my case. Although not so apparent at the time, the unconscious was preparing me for an epic life transition by guiding me to sculpt a mandala, which Jung said “could even be called the *archetype of wholeness*” (p. 388 [CW 9i, para. 715]), and which can be “drawn, painted, modelled, or danced” (p. 387 [CW 9i, para. 713]). For no apparent conscious reason, I chose to sculpt a mandala in clay for the unsuspected purpose of making contact with the unconscious—a process that yielded unusual and unpredictable images that appeared on my sculpture, but each of which had deep meaning for me. In particular, I discovered, according to Spring (2009), that my North node in the twelfth house is “a summons to explore all that is beyond the purely rational and to seek the spiritual call towards Self awareness” (pp. 264-265), a summons that came directly from the unconscious, and that still holds sway.

In addition I learned, afterwards, the significance of my sun sign Capricorn. In esoteric terms, Capricorn is known as the doorway out of life, opening to the exploration of other dimensions of which the everyday world is only a small fragment, a sliver in a much larger context. As a Capricorn I possess an ability to withstand aloneness, to leave the crowd behind and strike out on my own. Born at the time of the winter solstice, as a Capricorn I began a terrific ascent out of the darkness, out of the depths of heaviness and realized there is still a link to Spirit. I learned that Capricorn is about building a bridge from the depths of the material world to the absolute heights of the spirit world, the light world. As an engineer and depth psychologist, I am fulfilling the predetermined path of Capricorn driving from the material world to the realm of spirit, something I would never have known about myself had I not been led by the Self.

In addition to sculpting and active imagination, apparently many art forms can help one to access the unconscious to gain insights into the meaning of a synchronicity. While such a complex subject can only be briefly outlined here, I believe Jung's message is clear—the unconscious is the ultimate guide to interpretation of meaning. This is not to say that knowledge of many related topics is not useful or unnecessary. Only that this knowledge must ultimately be in service to the wisdom of the unconscious, as challenging as this view may be to those who would place their confidence in the human intellect. However, as Jung (1952/1969b) admitted, “the great difficulty is that we have absolutely no scientific means of proving the existence of an objective meaning which is not just a psychic product” (pp. 482-483 [CW 8, para. 915]).

However, as Jung (1975b) explained in a 10 March 1959 letter to Neumann:

Meaningfulness always appears to be unconscious at first, and can therefore only be discovered post hoc; hence there is always the danger that meaning will be read into things where actually there is nothing of the sort. Synchronistic experiences serve our turn here. They point to a latent meaning which is independent of consciousness. (p. 495)

**Synchronicity and objective meaning.** An objective observer must ask how one can know if meaning is present *before* an event if one can only discern it *after* the event. The normal methods of epistemology point to meaning being assigned by humans after an event, not before, thus providing the basis of scientific materialism and existentialism. Tacey (2013) comments, “Jung recognizes that there is meaning in the world beyond that which might be projected into it, but lacks the science to be able to tackle this problem” (p. 122). If not causality, what principle could account for the existence of objective or absolute meaning? Jung regarded philosophy’s principle of “meaningful connection between natural events” as a principle that did not conflict with the principle of causality but rather complemented it. Of course, he was speaking of the principle of synchronicity, which “is another factor in nature which expresses itself in the arrangement of events and appears to us as meaning” (p. 485 [CW 8, para. 916]).

I note that it is the arrangement of events that bears meaning in the phenomenon of synchronicity, and not some logical conclusion arising solely from human reasoning. As well, the events are not random but arranged, that is, there is the implication of foreknowledge of some factor, which Jung referred to as the archetypes, which ultimately provide the patterns of arrangement of events conveying meaning to the alert individual. As Tarnas (2006) explains, the aware individual will detect “a more subtly ordered



whole, a larger pattern of meaning...discernible to the prepared mind—even if that meaning” (p. 54) challenges the individual’s conscious attitude. Affirming the idea of a larger pattern of meaning, Jung (1936/1968) said it is through individuation that one discovers it is the Self that bestows “an individual destiny and destination, and the realization of these alone makes sense of life” (p. 222 [CW 12, para. 330]).

However, reason alone may not be able to illuminate the personal meaning of a synchronicity because the conscious attitude may reject that meaning for various reasons too extensive to discuss here. This is not to reject subjective interpretation, but, as Aziz (1990) says, to recognize “inner image and...outer event are distinct aspects of the same compensatory pattern, and accordingly, are to be treated as parts of a unified whole, which as a total phenomenon requires interpretation on the subjective level” (p. 81). The unified whole is the Self, the archetype of wholeness, which unites inner image and out event. As Edinger (1972) explained previously, the Self’s “revelatory capacity....reveals the connecting links between the personal and transpersonal (earth and heaven) dimensions of the psyche” (p. 269). However, ultimately it is the individual, perhaps with the assistance of an intermediary such as a therapist or shaman, who must bear the burden of interpretation and integration of immediate religious experiences such as the phenomena of synchronicity (Aziz, 1990, p. 169).

Jung advocated for the finalist perspective, leading to the goal of psychological wholeness directed by the spiritus rector of the unconscious, the Self. Inescapably, the finalist position must, according to Jung, assume a foreknowledge not inherent to nor derivable from the causalist position. As Jung (1952/1969b) proposed in 1952: “the ‘absolute knowledge’ which is characteristic of synchronistic phenomena, a knowledge

not mediated by the sense organs, supports the hypothesis of a self-subsistent meaning, or even expresses its existence. Such a form of existence can only be transcendental” (p. 506 [CW 8, para. 948]). Such unconscious knowledge is “absolute knowledge,” (p. 493 [CW 8, para. 931]) empowering all the *as if* allusions to myth cited in this work. As Le Grice (2010) has said, in a synchronicity it is as if “one has broken through into a world of greater meaning, and one is filled with a feeling that one is participating in a larger, deeper dimension of reality... intimately related to one’s personal situation” (pp. 129-130). As is evident in the Taoist worldview, this world of greater meaning and the source of consciousness, through the principle of synchronicity, must ultimately direct the growth of consciousness Jung termed individuation.

### **Synchronicity and the Functions of Myth**

The functions of myth previously described as the metaphysical and cosmological functions<sup>94</sup> must be meaningfully addressed and integrated into the myth of synchronicity as a spiritual practice evolving in this work. The first function of myth, discussed in Chapter 3 of this work is, according to Le Grice (2010), “the *mystical* or *metaphysical* function” (p. 40). Campbell (1976) explains that the metaphysical function of myth is “to reconcile the waking consciousness to the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* of this universe as it is” (p. 4). Whereas the mystical function is to direct humanity to the “awesome ultimate mystery which is both beyond and within himself and all things” (p.

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<sup>94</sup> Campbell (1976, pp. 621-624) also includes social and psychological aspects as functions of myth. The social function will not be discussed here. See also Campbell (2007, pp. 219-227). and Campbell (1976, pp. 4-9) for further exploration of the four functions of myth.

6). As well, according to Campbell (2007), the mystical function facilitates “the reconciliation of consciousness with the pre-conditions of its own existence” (p. 219). In addition to framing a picture of the universe consistent with the current findings of science, Campbell (2007) maintained that the cosmological function of myth, the second function, serves to render an image in which “all things should be recognized as parts of a single great holy picture, an icon as it were; the trees, the rocks, the animals, sun, moon, stars, all opening back to mystery” (p. 220). These descriptions of the cosmological and metaphysical functions of myth appear to have features similar to the tenets of Taoist philosophy and to Jung’s theory of synchronicity which will be argued presently. But first I wish to illustrate, by example, the cosmological function of myth.

**Ancient myths illustrating the cosmological function of myth.** The following is an ancient myth exemplifying the cosmological function of myth intended to illustrate the relation between a culture’s scientific understanding of the cosmos and the spiritual significance of that understanding. Campbell (1976) related that, Circa 8000 BCE, the earth was imagined to be “a flat revolving plate, covered by a dome through which a golden gate, the sun door, leads to eternity” (p. 614). Campbell stated that this image was determined empirically by direct observation as a modern scientist might do, rather than reliance on stories or superstitions. The image derived its spiritual value “from its power to suggest and support a sense in man of accord with the universe” (p. 614).

Jeremias (1929, as cited in Campbell, 1981), explained that the accord just mentioned is reflected also in the ancient Mesopotamian worldview of the relationship between humanity and the universe according to the dictum ““what is above is below”” (p. 87). Further, in Mesopotamian cosmology “the whole cosmos is regarded as pervaded

by a single life, in such a way that there is a harmony recognized between the upper and lower modes of Being and Becoming....All human Being and Becoming is guided from on high” (p. 87). I would suggest that this cosmological image implies that there is a unifying life infusing and animating the cosmos *as if* it were a living being, an organism embracing all forms of existence and functioning as a harmonious whole under the aegis of a transcendent authority. I believe the primal nature of the cosmological images of fourth millennium BCE Mesopotamia lends credence to their inherent spiritual resonance with the deep spiritual need of humanity to be related to the transcendent described by Le Grice (2010) as “the human religious instinct...to seek relationship to the deeper ground of being” (p. 33). Therefore, in this work, the cosmological concept of a natural and sacred harmony between humanity and the cosmos informed from on high, that is, from a transcendent source, must be a central theme of the myth supporting synchronicity as a spiritual path.

**The modern view of the universe as an organism.** Perhaps a way of viewing one aspect of the intent of the cosmological function of myth for humanity has been to instill a sense of meaning and purpose by bringing humanity into harmony with the universe viewed as a single life or organism. I believe this view also reflects the Taoist cosmological principle of *kan-ying*, by which all aspects of the universe resonate in unison with the Tao thereby creating an ordered whole. However, as Campbell (1976) explained, with the advent of the Copernican-Kepler revolution, the ancient myths of the harmony of humanity at the “macro-meso-microcosmic” (p. 613) levels were swept away from the Western landscape, as well as “those structuring forms by which all things are

held in place” (p. 613). Le Grice (2013) has aptly described the spiritual state of the modern Western self.

The modern self, in claiming its autonomy and freedom, has rejected all forms of external spiritual authority, rejected the previously dominant myths and religions; the culture itself... provides no vital living myths or intrinsic spiritual orientation for its people. Consequently, new forms of mythic expression and individual spirituality have arisen, compensating, to an extent, for the cultural decline of myth. (p. 67)

However, Le Grice (2010) argues, and I agree, that despite the technological prowess and cultural accomplishments that have blossomed in the modern era, “we retain a sense of this primordial intuition of our deep mystical identity and mythic relationship with the universe” (p. 18). This, I believe, is a consequence of the layering in the psyche of the stages of consciousness already discussed, all of which are still accessible, although this possibility is not generally recognized. As mentioned previously, Jung (1957/1970) believed that the time, or *kairos*, was ripe for a ‘metamorphosis of the gods’ of the fundamental principles and symbols” (p. 304 [CW 10, para. 585]). He envisaged such a transformation resulting in an upheaval of the foundations of current epistemological and ontological perspectives. As von Franz (1988/1992) affirmed “*Kairos* means a magical moment in which synchronistic events happen” (p. 146).

**A modern cosmology shaped by new paradigm scientists.** Just as the “scientist” from ten thousand years ago empirically observed the image of the earth described previously in the ancient myth imagined around 8,000 BCE, Campbell (1976) believed that “our own incredibly wonderful scientists today are the ones to teach us how

to see” (p. 614). It is the scientists of today who have the ability and imagination to offer us those images which could potentially provide the material to shape a myth fulfilling the spiritual needs of the modern Western self. As explained by Le Grice (2010), those spiritual needs are driven by “the human religious instinct...to seek relationship to the deeper ground of being” (p. 33). Such an endeavor is of the utmost importance, for, as Campbell (1976) said,

The rise and fall of civilisations in the long, broad course of history can be seen largely to be a function of the integrity and cogency of their supporting canons of myth; for not authority but aspiration is the motivator, builder, and transformer of civilisation. A mythological canon is an organisation of symbols, ineffable in import, by which the energies of aspiration are evoked and gathered toward a focus. (p. 5)

Le Grice (2010) has called attention to the radical transformation in physics from Newtonian models of the universe based on mechanistic determinism, to models based on Einstein’s theory of relativity and quantum mechanics (p. 35). This Copernican-like shift in worldview has resulted in a universe “conceived as a complex, intricately interconnected and interdependent whole” (p. 36). These discoveries have served to facilitate the appearance of concepts in the so-called new paradigm sciences similar to those found in ancient wisdom traditions. Concepts emerging from the new paradigm sciences such as holism and organicism are especially relevant here (p. 36). The new paradigm sciences also include, according to Le Grice, such areas as “complex causality, field theories, nonlocal connections, and the participatory role of the scientific observer in shaping the phenomena under investigation” (p. 36). It is the discoveries of those new

paradigm scientists spearheading the current revolution in understanding of the universe which are shaping new myths for the modern Western self, much as the science of some ten millennia ago shaped the myths of that day.

As Le Grice (2010) has pointed out, the principle unifying the perspectives of the new paradigm sciences is the rejection of mechanistic determinism (p. 98). Two worldviews, discussed previously, emerging from the new paradigm sciences are holism and organicism. It is suggested here that the understanding of the universe as a unified, living organism leads to the supposition of some type of consciousness informing it, as opposed to the mechanistic-deterministic view which, as Le Grice (2010) explains, holds “the universe...is a soulless functional machine, comprised only of inert matter moved mechanistically by external forces” (p. 41).

**Consciousness as a unified energy field in a modern cosmology.** Of course, one could also postulate that consciousness itself *is* the fundamental, unified energy field that manifests in every aspect of the universe, visible or invisible as proposed in Chapter 1 of this work by Grof and Bennett (1992, p. 18), for example. I believe the following passage from Lao-tzu (as cited in Waley, 1958, p. 174) describing the Tao, gives voice to this consciousness.

There was something formless yet complete,  
That existed before heaven and earth;  
Without sound, without substance,  
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,  
All pervading, unfailing.  
One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven.

Its true name we do not know;

‘Way’ is the by-name that we give it.

If I were forced to say to what class of things it belongs I should call it Great. (*ta*)

(p. 174)

Of significance here, in place of “Way,” Jung (1952/1969b) substituted Wilhelm’s translation of “Way” as “Meaning.” Hence, Jung’s translation reads:

I do not know its name,

But I call it “Meaning.” (p. 486 [CW 8, para. 918])

While Lao-tzu (as cited in Waley, 1958) says:

Its true name we do not know;

‘Way’ is the by-name that we give it. (p. 174)

Thus, Jung and Lao-tzu are of one voice in saying that the ultimate nature of the consciousness infusing the universe, whether it is called Way or Meaning, is beyond human comprehension. The significance of this statement could be highlighted by many voices, but I have chosen only two examples.

### **Predetermined order, meaning, and consciousness in a modern cosmology.**

As noted previously, Edinger (1972) postulated “that predetermined order, meaning and consciousness itself are built into the universe. Once this idea is grasped, the phenomenon of synchronicity is no longer astonishing” (p. 293). I believe this view parallels the position of Le Grice (2010), who says that synchronicity suggests “meaning is in some sense present throughout nature—that meaning is inherent in the cosmos” (p. 127). He further states that “the principles of the *Tao* in Chinese philosophy...point to some form of universal intelligence or ordering mind present throughout all levels of



reality” (p. 134). Thus, I am in full accord with Le Grice, who believes the modern view “that the individual human mind is radically separate from its environment, wholly autonomous, and merely a function of brain activity seems to be an anthropocentric, materialistic assumption, peculiar to the modern era” (p. 137). If I may paraphrase, I believe that the human mind, at the level of the *unus mundus*, is coextensive with the universe, not in any spatial or material sense, but in the sense which I believe Le Grice suggests when he says “mind is not exclusively located within the human being, but is in fact the ‘within’ of the entire universe” (p. 149). As a corollary, “it is far less surprising that we can encounter meaningful coincidences and symbolic correspondences outside of us, in the external world, that are related to our own subjective experience of meaning” (p. 149). The positions of Edinger (1972) and Le Grice (2010) both underscore the basic tenet of Taoist philosophy, which postulates the existence of a pervasive order, intelligence, and meaning constituting the consciousness that infuses the cosmos.

**Pattern as a fundamental attribute of nature in a modern cosmology.** New paradigm scientists have also revealed, according to Le Grice (2010), “an underlying level of reality, a deeper supersensible order, permeated by patterns of interconnection. Pattern, in this sense, is now considered to be a fundamental attribute of the nature of the universe” (p. 102) in alignment with Taoist philosophy, as previously discussed. As Aziz (1990) explains, because all of nature is governed “in accordance with the more comprehensive unitary pattern of Tao” (p. 135), Taoism seeks “to identify the relatedness or orderedness of events through the observation of their qualities....to classify the activity of nature in terms of patterns” (136).

**The role of Jung's synchronistic model in a modern cosmology.** Depth psychology, as Le Grice (2010) has summarized, addresses only the psychological function of myth, and represents what he calls the first stage in the development of a perspective on myth capable of addressing the spiritual needs of the modern Western self. As was noted previously also, he explained that the second stage of development must in some way bring the order of the psychic world into a meaningful relationship with the order of nature (p. 53). Jung's strictly intrapsychic model of the psychology of religion, as described by Aziz (1990), may be said to address the first or psychological function of myth (pp. 9-49). However, with the introduction of the dual role of the psychoid archetype in the phenomenon of synchronicity, Jung's intrapsychic model was absorbed into Jung's synchronistic model of the psychology of religion, which I believe lays the foundation for Jung's response to the cosmological function of myth (pp. 51-90). I agree with Aziz (1990) that Jung's synchronistic model effectively annuls the charge of psychologism levelled against his intrapsychic model, although, as Aziz (1990) notes, some critics apparently still refer to this as his only model (p. 49).

### **The Cosmos as a Foundation for a Galaxy of Mythologies**

I agree with Le Grice (2010) who emphasizes "we must look to the cosmos itself" (p. 54) to discover a foundation which is capable of supporting, as Campbell (1976) said, the "galaxy of mythologies...of our own titanic age" (p. 3). As described previously, the Self, the Atman, and the Tao are concepts which symbolize the paradox of the individual self as the mystery of the cosmos within as well as the ordering principles of the cosmos without, keeping in mind the identity of psyche and cosmos as Jung ultimately envisaged.

Thus, when looking to the cosmos itself for a foundation for a galaxy of mythologies, one must consider both aspects of this paradox.

**The individual as a center for the origin of myth.** The declining influence of traditional forms of religion in the West, especially the waning of the Christian myth, has fostered the birth of a new center for the origin of myth to fill the West's mythless void, a center Campbell (1976) has termed the *mythogenetic zone* centered on the individual. As Campbell described it, "*the mythogenetic zone of today is the individual in contact with his own interior life, communicating through his art with those 'out there'*" (p. 93).

Campbell's reference to interior life is, of course, the collective unconscious. As Jung (1922/1966) noted "analysis of artists consistently shows...the strength of the creative impulse arising from the unconscious,...The creative urge lives and grows in him like a tree in the earth from which it draws its nourishment" (pp. 74-75 [CW 15, para. 115]).

The dynamis referenced previously, which acts as the bridge between consciousness and the unconscious, is reflected symbolically in art and other creative modalities, resulting from a dialogue between the ego and the Self facilitated by soul, thus emphasizing, as Le Grice (2010) says, "the psychological meaning of myth" (p. 45). Those symbols thought by consciousness to be worthless "slime" are potentially the priceless seeds of a new myth. As Campbell (1976) described this process "the individual has had an experience of his own...which he seeks to communicate through signs; and if his realization has been of a certain depth and import, his communication will have the value and force of living myth" (p. 4). The shift in mythogenetic zone from a culture or a country to the individual is, as Le Grice (2010) observes, in part a natural consequence of the radical shift in consciousness from an individual's identification with a group as in

animistic consciousness, to an individual's distinct identity apart from the group as in modern consciousness (pp. 45-47), a shift that may have begun almost three thousand years ago (p. 46), leading the modern self to what I would term a spiritual crisis.

**The challenge of Jungian depth psychology to the modern Western self.** With the sloughing off of traditional forms of religion providing the psychological anchors of purpose and identity, the modern Western self is confronted with the naked truth of existence in a universe seemingly ambivalent to human existence, devoid of the assurance, safety, and comfort of a Father-God, and apparently offering no hint of an existential handhold by which to grasp a meaning for life. As Le Grice (2010) observes, the sharp knife of consciousness has severed the connection of the modern Western ego from a sense of participation mystique with nature which once provided a connection to the spiritual, the instincts, feelings, and the body (p. 138).

However, depth psychology, and in particular the psychospiritual framework erected by Jung on the foundation of the unconscious, has identified the unconscious as the origin of mythic and psychological principles, and the myths of ancient gods and goddesses personifying these principles. Instead of looking to outward forms of divinity for existential answers, the modern Western self is now challenged by Jungian depth psychology to look inwards for immediate and direct spiritual experience of the energies and images emanating from the unconscious, which, through the process of individuation, can lead to the growth of consciousness and consequently, a meaning for life. As Le Grice states, the modern Western ego must "descend into its own depths and confront that which has been repressed. Dying to its former narrow egocentric identity, it must

engage with, overcome, and transform the hitherto neglected emotional-instinctual realm” (p. 138) of the unconscious.

### **Synchronicity and the Hero’s Journey**

Such a scenario describes stages in a myth of the modern Western self, especially a contemporary, as a hero embarking on the journey of individuation.<sup>95</sup> It is understood that the contemporary individual, described previously, is the hero in this adventure since they are most likely, as Le Grice (2013) describes, “approaching the endpoint of ego development, possessing a highly developed intellect often coupled with a sensitive temperament, but with no apparent way out of the prison of the ego personality” (p. 128), and are thus most likely to be at the tipping point of an existential crisis. They are also “steadfastly faithful to their own deeper calling...true individuals who can resist the overwhelming pressure to conform to mass-mindedness, state power, and cultural conditioning” (pp. 133-134). This is not to exclude the possibility that someone operating at a different stage of consciousness cannot begin individuation, but that the likelihood of a contemporary embarking on the path of individuation is, I believe, substantially higher. Campbell (1968) describes a particular mythic pattern or model common to all hero myths having three main stages, the call/separation/departure, initiation/transformation, and return/communication, with each stage having a number of sub-stages (pp. 245-246). The role of synchronicity in the modern myth for humanity, seen as a version of the hero’s myth for the contemporary individual, will be discussed next.

**Synchronicity and the modern myth for humanity.** Several facets of the modern myth for humanity that have been portrayed up to this point must now be drawn

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<sup>95</sup> Described in detail by Le Grice (2013) in *Rebirth of the Hero*.

together to form the modern mythic pattern. I am proposing that the principle of synchronicity is at the core of the modern myth for humanity providing the foundation for the unfolding of the Self into consciousness and for the phenomenon of consciousness itself. In regard to the revelation of the Self in the process of individuation, recall that Jung (1951/1969g) invoked the principle of correspondence, that is, synchronicity, in order to sustain the Self's fundamental state of wholeness (p. 258 [CW 9ii, para. 409]). In the same way, I am proposing that synchronicity is the principle underlying the hitherto unidentified link between the unconscious and consciousness making consciousness itself possible. These two proposals become foundational to the modern myth for humanity and the threads that tie together the mythic images developed so far. Because the final goal of individuation is central to this myth, it is important to understand that the final home for the soul is its original state of wholeness, the Self, the ultimate goal of psychic evolution.

**The initial stage of the hero's journey: The call to adventure.** Campbell (1968) articulates the model common to all hero myths, which will be augmented to include the role of synchronicity. At this point it is critical to understand that the psychospiritual transformations portrayed in each stage of this myth are not accomplished in a linear, once-and-for-all manner, but rather are repeated throughout the life of a person on the spiral path of individuation. Each pass through the stages of this myth results in the elevation of consciousness to a higher level, as if the consciousness of an individual is spiraling upwards. The initial stage, the call to adventure, is a spiritual call to embark on the adventure of self-discovery, the spiritual journey of transformation called individuation as discussed previously. The call heralds the beginning of "a mystery of transfiguration—a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which...signifies that destiny has

summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown” (pp. 51-58). One is called to detach psychologically from previous value systems associated with one’s culture, as contemporaries have done. As previously noted, the call to adventure just described may, in fact, begin as nothing more notable than the recognition of a curious coincidence, or as Campbell described, “the merest chance” (p. 51).

But if a string of unlikely coincidences sufficiently arouses the curiosity of an individual, closer investigation may begin to reveal, in Campbell’s (1968) words, “an unsuspected world, and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood” (p. 51). It is also possible that someone with the required spiritual insight, such as a shaman, may draw an individual’s attention to some incident that appears at first to be inconsequential, and is therefore categorized, as Campbell suggests, as an accident or a “blunder” (p. 51). Then again, the call may be a singularly momentous event, such as a near-death experience, or a rapid sequence of events that seems to convey an intention, a hidden message, that becomes a clandestine summons to heed the silent voice that appears to be speaking directly to the individual, *as if*, in the words of Le Grice (2009), “the cosmos itself is aware of...[his or her] personal situation” (p. 131). As well, Le Grice (2013) notes that a synchronistic event or events can open one’s eyes to “the revelation of a deeper spiritual identity, transcending the ego, when the dividing walls between normal waking consciousness and the divine are temporarily removed, and one attains a glimpse into the numinous” (p. 109). In any case, the mythological hero, upon hearing the call to adventure, is plunged into an adventure that he or she did not

intend but must chose to either refuse<sup>96</sup> or accept. The anticipation of starting on an intriguing and mysterious new adventure may at first elicit feelings of elation and excitement.

As the hero turns to heed the call, he or she is first greeted by what Campbell (1968) refers to as a “supernatural aid...a protective figure...who provides the adventurer” (p. 69) with the spiritual defenses needed to successfully repel the powerful, bestial forces of the unconscious, which, paradoxically, is also the ground of the supernatural aids in the form of divinities, guides, and magical charms. I believe those contemporaries with the courage to embark on the journey of individuation, and who have had, in Le Grice’s (2013) phrase, “a glimpse into the numinous” (p. 109) through the phenomenon of synchronicity, are better prepared to receive the spiritual knowledge they will need to deal with the unpredictable influences of the unconscious. This knowledge, in my opinion, is not communicated intellectually in thought but through intuition engaging the whole body at the level of soul, much as Jung’s female patient intuited the presence of a power greater than her ego when presented with the beetle. It is through this level that the hero can be equipped with essential spiritual aids offered by the

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<sup>96</sup> Both Le Grice (2013, pp. 118-127) and Campbell (1968, pp. 59-68) discuss possible reasons for refusal of the call including rationalization of the call as impractical, fear of upsetting people, fear of the unknown, stress created by a perceived conflict of the call with other obligations, and the unwillingness to take on the responsibility and stress of undertaking the call. The results of refusal can be for a person to abdicate their personal power and adopt a victim attitude thereby abandoning, as Le Grice (2013) says, “an authentic existence” (p. 125) and creating more stress in one’s life (p. 126).



protective figure of the Self. However, it is not necessarily true that all of the following aids will be assimilated before an individual starts the adventure. Some may become apparent during the initiation phase of the hero's journey or at some point after.

The numinous, timeless quality of the Self infuses the hero with a sense of participation in a transcendent cosmic process. From the perspective of eternity, the life of the hero becomes an indispensable and integral part of a divine pattern creating a unity between all things in the cosmos, so that individuals are not separate but are actually one with the universe. This unity can give rise to the spiritual knowledge that the cosmos is essentially a living organism in which the natural function of the whole is dependent on each part fulfilling its proper function. As the hero embarks on the journey of individuation into the chaos of the unconscious, they are given a spiritual compass to guide them on the difficult road ahead in the words of Jung (1954/1969a): "in all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order" (p. 32 [CW 9i, para. 66]).

***The first threshold of the adventure.*** As the hero approaches the first threshold of the adventure, the ego, still believing it is in control, may feel elated from the initial surge of excitement of a sense of a spiritual awakening. However, at the threshold the hero is met, as Campbell (1968) explains, by the "threshold guardian" (p. 77), which could be a menacing guard thwarting entry, a vicious beast that cannot be slain, an impenetrable obstacle, or an impossible task that must be completed in order to gain entry. This foreboding encounter with the guardian is actually the hero's first encounter with the constrictions of the Self. Facing insuperable circumstances that cannot be overcome by pure will, the now deflated ego must acknowledge the existence of a power greater than

itself. The barriers to the hero's advance symbolize the untamed passions and instinctual energies of the unconscious that must be mastered over the course of the adventure.

The guardian thus forces a descent from the comfortable world controlled by the ego into what Campbell (1968) describes as the "darkness, the unknown, and danger" (p. 77) of the chaos of the unconscious, and an impending and unexpected psychological transformation of monumental proportions. The crossing of the threshold is an irreversible decision with no possibility of turning back. According to Campbell (1968), as the hero journeys further into the darkness of the unknown, instead of celebrating the vanquishing of the guardian of the threshold, the individual enters "a sphere of rebirth...symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero...is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died" (p. 90) in the depths of the unconscious. The motif of the belly of the whale serves as a metaphor for the alchemist's alembic, or cooking pot to contain the ingredients undergoing psychological transformation. The hero's descent into the unconscious leads, as Jung (1928/1969) described, to the "slime from the depths" (p. 34 [CW 8, para. 63]) and ushers the adventurer into what Le Grice (2013) describes as "a harsher reality, in which the full horrors of *samsara* are revealed" (p. 143). *Samsara*, as understood by Clarke (1994), is the suffering resulting from bondage to "the cycle of rebirth" and "to illusions and desires" (p. 76), as well as "the dynamic interplay of opposites that is the very driving force of life, and...also the source of suffering" (pp. 76-77).

Life and death, for example, are experienced by the ego as opposites, but attainment of the state of *mokṣa* could free the hero from the tension of pairs of opposites experienced in this existence. In Hindu philosophy, as explained by Clarke (1994), *mokṣa*

“means the final liberation from all worldly bonds, from death and the cycle of rebirth through union with *Brahman*” (p. 76). Especially in Hindu Advaita Vedanta philosophy, “*mokṣa* is understood not just as a higher state of consciousness...but as a condition known as *samādhi*, in which the individual conscious ego is to all intents and purposes dissolved” (p. 77). Jung (1939/1969a), at this point in his life, disagreed, stating that “in *samādhi*...the unconscious has swallowed up ego-consciousness. They [Vedantists] do not realize that a ‘universal consciousness’ is a contradiction in terms, since exclusion, selection, and discrimination are the root and essence of...‘consciousness.’.... ‘Universal consciousness’ is logically identical with unconsciousness” (pp. 287-288 [CW 9i, para. 520]). For Jung, individuation was a life path, a way to endure suffering, rather than the attainment of ultimate perfection in this life through release from the bondage of suffering, a state he deemed impossible. In a letter dated 16 September 1937 to Subrahmanya Iyer, Jung (1973) wrote that “man has to cope with the problem of suffering. The Oriental wants to get rid of suffering by casting it off.... But suffering has to be overcome, and the only way to overcome it is to endure it” (footnote 1, p. 236).

As Le Grice (2013) points out, whereas the Romantic response of the West to existential questions has emphasized the conscious affirmation and transformation of the instincts and passions of the unconscious, the East has chosen to adopt a spiritual approach that rises above and disengages the passions and instincts by emphasizing “meditative consciousness that stands outside of the passions.... adopting a life philosophy of self and world abnegation, obliterating individual selfhood through the realization of *nirvana*, extinguishing all the desires and fears associated with being a separate distinct human being” (p. 173). I believe Clarke (1994) can provide some insight

as to the underlying reason for this difference in approach. He observes that whereas the West emphasizes “the world of consciousness,” the East emphasizes “the world of the One Mind” (p. 68). As well, the Western approach stresses the extraverted and rational, whereas the Eastern stresses the introverted and intuitive (p. 67). In consideration of these differences, Clarke maintains that Jung believed “the differences between East and West are...to be understood in terms of...*complementary opposites* [italics original]” (p. 66), a position that I believe could help to explain the basic difference in spiritual approaches to what might be termed the existential crisis facing humanity.

I suggest that the psychological impact of the synchronicities surrounding Jung’s (1975b) near death experience was such that his resistance to a universal consciousness apparently yielded to the acknowledgement of a “world-system of the collective psyche” (p. 399), that is, the *unus mundus*, in which all psyches function in unison to form the *anima mundi* (world-soul) or the *psyche tou kosmou* (cosmic psyche). To attain to this state of oneness with the cosmos the hero must, in the words of Le Grice (2013), let go of “rational control and tune into a transrational source of guidance” and seek “harmony with the greater wisdom of the Tao, the Logos, the Will of God” (p. 159). I also suggest that it is possible to see in Jung’s position, a desire to honor and integrate both Eastern and Western spiritual paths. In Jung’s (1949/1976) opinion, because experience with the unconscious had demonstrated “that the biological role which the unconscious plays in the psychic economy is compensatory to consciousness, one can venture the hypothesis that the mind of the Far East is related to our Western consciousness as the unconscious is” (p. 655 [CW 18, para. 1484]). As paradoxical as it may seem, I believe this represents, in Clarke’s (1994) words, Jung’s attempt at “psychic integration, the ideal of the

reconciliation of the conscious and unconscious elements in the life of the psyche into a balanced and harmonious whole” (p. 66). Furthermore, I posit that this reconciliation would not have happened had it not been for the spiritual insights Jung gained from the synchronicities occurring during his near-death experience.

Individuation as a life path acknowledging the influence of the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity does not seek to disengage from suffering but rather to embrace it as a necessity for spiritual growth. In this scenario the cosmos, as if it were alive, reaches out to offer support and guidance not only in the form of personal synchronicities but also to offer the promise of a universe structured through the principle of synchronicity in such a way that each individual is an indispensable and invaluable part of a sacred pattern of wholeness. Of paramount importance, that wholeness is only maintained through the harmony achieved by the individual’s assumption of their natural place in the cosmos, when each individual is in resonance with the Self, the Tao, the spiritus rector of their destiny. This is one of the rewards accrued by the hero following synchronicity as a spiritual path, echoing a fundamental tenet of Taoism and this work. It is fitting that Jung himself demonstrated the momentous influence of synchronicity in his life and work, thus lighting the way for others to follow the path of individuation illuminated by synchronicity.

***The emergence of the Self.*** The struggle for freedom from the tension of opposites is the task the hero will face throughout life, but it begins upon crossing the threshold. To accomplish this, the hero must die to former conceptions of values and goals in the material world and yield to the leading of the Self, the voice of the divine. In so doing, as Le Grice (2013) explains “the greater figure, which one always was but

which remained invisible, appears to the lesser personality with the force of a revelation” (p. 144). This, for the hero, is the Jungian moment on the path of individuation leading to the synthesis of an incomprehensibly greater unity with the cosmos itself. The hero is thus launched on a trajectory culminating in, as Le Grice says, “the conscious realization of the immensity of a spiritual selfhood that transcends space and time” (p. 147).

At the moment of revelation of the greater figure, the Self, the ego is torn from its original state of unity with the psyche and set adrift in the bewildering chaos of the unconscious. In this way the ego, along with its supporting psychological framework, must disintegrate and die in order for a new self, centered on the Self, to be born, echoing the Biblical passage in John 3:3 stating that unless one is born again one cannot see the kingdom of God. The passage of the hero from the old life to the new leads through many pairs of opposites that must be navigated and integrated into consciousness as the Self emerges into existence. This is an extraordinarily painful process but must be endured repeatedly throughout life as the pain of all births must be endured if new life is to emerge, and if the chasm between ego consciousness and the Self is to be bridged. In the clash between the ego and the forces of the unconscious, there ensues a fierce struggle between the instincts blocked by the ego in the unconscious for so long, and the ego, which, driven by fear of losing control, attempts to continue to repress the instincts, an attempt which only makes the instincts grow stronger.

Psychologically, the battle for control between the ego and the unconscious can feel to the hero, as described by Le Grice (2013), like being “subject to a titanic crushing pressure.... characteristic of the process of deep psychological transformation” (p. 151) and not unlike the extreme physical and psychological pressure of giving birth. Le Grice

compares this process to the psychological pressure one feels during a session of “holotropic breathwork”<sup>97</sup> (p. 151) such as rebirthing during which “the old structure of the ego is effectively destroyed by the extremity of pressure exerted on it from the repressed instincts” (p. 151). I can personally attest to experiencing this unmitigated and unrelenting psychological pressure crushing and dissolving my ego during several sessions of the rebirthing method, which simulated a psychospiritual death-rebirth experience. This type of experience forces the hero-ego through the narrow passage in the psyche between the opposites, weakening and eventually destroying the structure propping up the ego with each passage. As it enters the birth canal of consciousness, the greater figure, the Self, pushes through the constricted opening of the dying ego’s outmoded structure, on its way to birth as the new center of consciousness.

Le Grice (2013, pp. 150-153) cites the myth of Jason and the Argonauts to illustrate the deep, psycho spiritual struggle that occurs in the clash between the ego and the repressed instincts of the unconscious. In the myth, Jason as the hero-ego, and his crew as other psychic forces needing to be controlled, embark on the ship *Argo*, representing consciousness, in search of the Golden Fleece, the Self, which promises happiness and prosperity. To attain this treasure, the *Argo* must navigate between the cliffs of a perilous narrows of colliding rocks, representing pairs of opposites such as good and evil. Falling rocks, symbolic of the ego’s crumbling superstructure, can crush ships attempting the passage, and create huge waves representing the violent release of

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<sup>97</sup> Stanislav Grof (1992) is a pioneer in the technique of Holotropic Breathwork, which, under controlled supervision, induces nonordinary states of consciousness allowing access to the unconscious and thus facilitating psychospiritual transformation.

repressed instincts. Fearing the loss of ship and crew, Jason appealed to the gods for deliverance. The god Triton, symbolic of the divine aid of the Self, entered the realm of the human drama of Jason and his crew, and guided them safely through the menacing opposites to the treasure of the Golden Fleece, that is, the wholeness of the Self. As Le Grice says, “amidst the intense psychological and physical pressures and agonies of rebirth, one is eased through the opposites, as the inner being [the Self] moves into the foreground of conscious experience” (p. 153). This drama is repeated many times throughout life.

**The second stage: Initiation and transformation.** However, in the second stage of the hero’s adventure, that of initiation and transformation, two major centers of psychic power now vie for dominance. On the one hand the weakening of the hero-ego which has up to this point repressed the pent-up contents of the unconscious, may allow the powers of the unconscious to sweep over ego-consciousness in a rush of instincts and emotions that are experienced as either a surge of creativity or as dangerous and destructive invaders. In the case of dissolution of the persona, ego-consciousness is swamped by a bewildering wave of instincts and complexes as discussed previously. The optimum response to the engulfment of ego-consciousness is the maintenance of a position of some objectivity and integrity from which to engage the unconscious in a constructive and reasoned way with the goal of eventually controlling and harnessing its energy in a productive and creative manner. However, ego-consciousness alone cannot master the powers of the unconscious. An appreciation of and relationship with the anima, the feminine principle, is needed to master instincts and emotions which must be experienced in full, restrained, and then slowly transformed.



On the other hand, the hero-ego is still capable of exerting dictatorial control experienced as the heavy hand of an ogre or giant of monstrous proportions, bullying, controlling, and judging everything an individual does, feels, or thinks. One way to counter the control of the ego is through engaging and transforming the shadow because the ego has little or no control over the shadow—the source of the most severe psychic pain in the form of shame or guilt as well as other buried personal qualities the hero does not want to bring to the light of consciousness. But these shadow qualities must be brought to consciousness to be faced, embraced, and integrated into the personality in order to grow in psychological wholeness. As the fortress of the ego is breached, the opening created permits entry down into the dark abyss of the unconscious. The light of consciousness, as feeble as it may be at first, reveals the outlines of archetypes lurking in the shadows.

Le Grice (2013) recounts some of the major archetypes to be encountered in the unconscious such as “the anima and animus, the mana personality, the wise old man, the trickster, the great mother, the child, and the Self” (p. 193). However, it is the anima as the feminine principle of emotional insight, and the animus as the masculine principle of rational analysis, that serve to guide the hero on the journey of transformation through encounters first with the shadow and eventually with the Self. In particular, it is the anima which empowers and guides consciousness as it encounters the tumultuous inner realm of emotions and instincts. As Le Grice (2013) explains, “the anima is the source of emotional wisdom and intuitive guidance that must be coupled with the faculty of rational-critical evaluation to guide the hero on his or her journey through the

unconscious” (p. 196). The hero’s initial feeling of dread at the thought of descending into the underworld will gradually pass as the old hero-ego structure disintegrates.

***The road of trials.*** Those guided by synchronicity as a sacred path will recognize the struggle to free themselves from domination by the dual forces of the ego and the instincts as necessary on the road of trials along the Way, to strengthen their resolve to serve the Tao, the Self, which leads to harmony with all of nature and the reuniting of opposites. In regard to the hero’s instinctual nature, Le Grice (2013) maintains that “individuation requires the sacrifice of the natural instinctual state of being, the death of our animal nature, the sacrifice even of our ordinary humanness that we might realize a state of higher-than human godlikeness, and realize our inherent divinity” (p. 191). Likewise, the hero must suffer the death of the tyrannical-ego and rebirth of a servant-ego that understands it is subservient to the ends of the divine source that gave birth to it. To attain to this state of being, the hero’s consciousness must distance itself from the control of the instincts and the ego, and relate to them objectively, as one would watch clouds drift by in the sky, accepting life unconditionally as it is, rather than trying to control it. In the Romantic approach to life one needs to strive for a dynamic balance or harmony between ego control and instinctual control that does not totally ignore one’s engagement with the deepest instincts and emotions but also does not allow them to gain mastery.

***The heiros gamos.*** Just as the splitting of opposites was necessary for the inception and growth of consciousness, so too is their reunion or marriage the necessary culmination of individuation, which is a mystical marriage termed the *hieros gamos* between male and female, king and queen, or consciousness and the unconscious, among others (Le Grice, 2013, p. 99). This sacred marriage, which Jung called the *mysterium*

coniunctionis, is forged by the healing dialogue between the hero-ego and the unconscious. Jung (1955-56/1970c) explained that the concept of the *mysterium coniunctionis* is “a restoration of the original state of the cosmos and the divine unconsciousness of the world....It is the Western equivalent of the fundamental principle of classical Chinese philosophy, namely the union of *yang* and *yin* in *tao*” (pp. 463-464 [CW 14, para. 662]). However, the third and final stage of the *coniunctio*, which represents a consummation of the marriage of the *mysterium coniunctionis*, “can be expected only when the unity of spirit, soul, and body is made one with the original *unus mundus*” (p. 465 [CW 14, para. 664]). This may be said to be the end goal of individuation and thus the final home of the soul.

**The third stage: Crossing the return threshold and disclosing of spiritual knowledge.** The hero’s return to the society that he or she had originally rejected as a spiritual wasteland, is difficult at best. As with other phases of the hero’s journey, the hero will return multiple times in the course of individuation. I see the major challenge facing the hero being the difficulty of communicating the monumentally important spiritual insights gained through arduous trials and labors, to those who have essentially no comparable experience with which to evaluate them, and even less inclination to understand or even listen. As Campbell (1968) said, “the returning hero, to complete his adventure, must survive the impact of the world” (p. 226). Perhaps the most profound truth of the hero’s adventure, articulated by Campbell, is simply that “the realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero” (p. 217). Jung (1929/1967) echoed this truth: “we think we can congratulate ourselves on

having reached such a pinnacle of clarity, imagining that we have left all these phantasmal gods far behind. But what we have left behind are only verbal spectres....The gods have become diseases” (p. 37 [CW 13, para. 54]).

Time and again the hero in many forms has brought forth, as Campbell (1968) lamented, “the boon from the transcendent deep” only to see it “quickly rationalized into nonentity” (p. 218). The ultimate challenge of the hero is to respond in a meaningful way to such questions as how does one “communicate to people who insist on the exclusive evidence of their senses the message of the all-generating void?” (p. 218) and “why attempt to make plausible, or even interesting, to men and women consumed with passion, the experience of transcendental bliss?” (p. 218). Indeed, as Le Grice (2013) advises, “there can be a tragic ending to the grand adventure. The spirit of the times can react with cold ignorance against the man or woman attuned to the spirit of the depths” (p. 228).

The ability to move with grace between the two worlds of consciousness and the unconscious can prove to be an effective remedy for this ignorance, but, I believe, one must keep in mind the stage of consciousness of those attending to the spiritual messages being conveyed. Certainly, one of the reasons Jesus taught in parables was to cloak deep spiritual truths in the garment of the more acceptable everyday language of stories. In this way, the hero can be an ambassador and servant for the divine in the profane world, expressing the healing power and natural creativity of the sacred depths of the unconscious. I would submit that those who follow the way of synchronicity as a spiritual path, have experienced firsthand a profound unity and harmony with the living cosmos. This form of direct spiritual experience provides the firm foundation and personal

knowledge needed to weave compelling stories of the hero who sacrifices his or her ego identity only to be reborn for the greater good of humanity as the Self. It also provides a basis for examining how synchronicity as a spiritual practice, as a form of contemporary spirituality, can fill the spiritual vacuum of those seeking a direct experience of the sacred so lacking in the modern West.

### **Synchronicity and Contemporary Spirituality**

In August of 1956, Jung (1975b) answered a question from Dr. Murray, who asked what distinguished an individuated person. Jung explained that he had never described an individuated person because “most of my readers would be bored to tears” (p. 323). He said that such a person “will be all right if he can fulfill himself as he was from the beginning. He will have no need to be exaggerated, hypocritical, neurotic, or any other nuisance. He will be ‘in modest harmony with nature’” (p. 324). Those contemporaries seeking the adventure of a transcendent spiritual revelation or ascension to a state of glorified apotheosis will be solely disappointed, because, as Jung said, “the individuated human being is just ordinary and therefore almost invisible” (p. 324).

From the objective viewpoint of science the individual is insignificant. However, Jung (1975b) explained, the individual has an entirely different subjective opinion because “the individual...is the carrier of life, and his development and fulfillment are of paramount significance. It is vital for each living being to become its own *entelechia* and to grow into that which it was from the very beginning” (p. 323). As was recounted in the hero’s journey, the individual may be elated at first but soon learns that the hero’s adventure is an arduous and exhaustive series of trials of will and courage that is repeated a great many times over a lifetime. Stein (2014) describes the end stages of individuation

as “the progressive initiation and entry into a state of consciousness that is utterly grounded in the self, embodied and without remainder....which elevates the personality as a whole to the role of free participant in the world” (p. 121). In the final stage of individuation, the individuated person experiences “a vision of fullness within the emptiness, of subtle and hidden unity.... an experience of the infinite without boundaries of any sort....a moment of transcendence over the artificial divisions between self and other and between body and mind” (p. 123). Through service to the Self, the individual is liberated to serve much as the Rainmaker in Jung’s story about the Rainmaker in chapter 5, as a kind of sage, open to the call of service. The sage “represents a type of consciousness that serves the world and belongs no longer to himself alone, but to humanity and to the world” (p. 124). The hero as sage incarnates completed individuation, which, although unattainable in this life,<sup>98</sup> is nonetheless a noble and fulfilling calling, at least to some.

What is it about the task of individuation itself that a contemporary might find appealing given that it is described as requiring the experience of enormous amounts of psychic pain? An even bigger question might be to ask why an individual would be interested in synchronicity as a spiritual path when the term synchronicity seems to lack not only any kind of scientific foundation but also cannot apparently even be readily defined?

It will be recalled that Jung (1934/1970) presented the idea that the God-image originating in the unconscious was, in Heisig’s (1979) interpretation, “not only a symbol

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<sup>98</sup> Stein (2014) notes that individuation “is never completed” (p. 112) although it continues for life and possibly beyond.

*from* the collective psyche, but also a symbol *for* that deep and mysterious layer of the mind” (p. 31). Although some believe this change relieved Jung of the charge of psychologism, others remained unpersuaded in their opinion that Jung’s psychology remained solely a function of psychological explanations of unconscious processes. Thus, individuation itself remained, for some, a form of psychologism not worthy of exploration, as opposed to the position taken here that individuation is a spiritual journey. For those contemporaries seeking a fresh approach to spirituality, the charge of psychologism might throw doubt on individuation as a spiritual path, which, when coupled with the arduous nature of the process, would make such a decision even more difficult. To add to the burden of a decision, in an August 1956 letter to Murray, Jung (1975b) described the individuated person as “just ordinary and therefore almost invisible” (p. 324). What evidence has the Jungian model to offer that individuation has any merit to the claim of a spiritual path? The answer to this stems from Jung’s vision of an expansion of the process of individuation.

Jung’s intrapsychic model of individuation consisted of bringing unconscious contents to consciousness and integrating them in order to construct a larger view of an individual self called the Self. As Stein (2014) describes, this is a purely psychological model in which the transcendent function as the Self is “a crafted identity formation that gradually comes into being through inner work and integration” (p. 46). However, the objects in the material world constituting the externally perceived component in a synchronistic event have a dual nature in that they are related to the psychic realm and yet “are radically and completely independent of the psychic matrix.... These are objects that

mirror the subject and participate in the psychic realm intimately, but they are not determined, created, or dependent on the subject” (p. 45).

Through the theory of synchronicity, Jung combined the transcendent function with, according to Stein (2014), “a spiritual element, which is and is not psychic, both personal and impersonal, individual soul and soul of the world (*anima mundi*). This would be expressed in symbols that are not limited to the psychic realm, conscious or unconscious” (p. 46). Thus transformed, the transcendent function is no longer strictly psychological, but instead contained “a divine element, which is embedded within the human but is not strictly speaking of the human or limited to the human” (p. 47). It will be recalled that Jung (1975b) explained that “the opposites are united by a neutral or ambivalent bridge, a symbol expressing either side in such a way that they can function together” (p. 166). As well, Jung revealed “the bridge is the ‘uniting symbol,’ which represents psychic totality, the self” (footnote 11, p. 166).

The consequences of the transformation of the transcendent function are highly significant to the contemporary spiritual seeker. Individuation is no longer merely psychological but is now supported by an ontological ground exceeding the human frame and even death itself. Through synchronicity, as Stein (2014) says, “the Divinity, or Ground of Being, is made manifest and becomes incarnated in consciousness, or consciousness in it” (p. 47). Through the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity, humanity is permitted to participate in this objective reality “which extends far beyond the dimensions of a particular human individual into the *unus mundus* and to Divinity itself” (p. 47).



Convinced of the power of synchronistic experiences to effect spiritual transformation, as described, for example, in Jung's near-death experience, Jung was inspired to reveal the harmony, pattern, and meaning extant in the cosmos through the synchronistic model for all to see who would take the time to look. Sceptics claiming that individuation was merely an intrapsychic model without a validating objective marker were challenged to examine and understand the uncanny and inexplicable coincidences materializing in their own lives and the lives of others. Thus, I believe the introduction of Jung's synchronistic model eschewed the charge of psychologism and the doubts surrounding his intrapsychic model. The physical world now offered corroboration of the participation of nature in the individuation process. I submit that the introduction of the synchronistic model, with all of its implications and possibilities, energizes and infuses the process of individuation with the potential for direct, personal spiritual experiences in which an animated nature actively participates. Thus stirred, I believe the inquisitive mind of the contemporary would be curious to look more deeply into what they might learn and experience on the spiritual path illuminated by synchronicity. As a corollary, I believe that individuation, unsupplemented by the phenomenon and principle of synchronicity, may continue to not receive the attention it deserves as a powerful healing modality.

**The role of synchronicity as a spiritual path in contemporary spirituality.**

The spiritual circumstances into which the contemporary has been thrown have been described in my account of contemporary consciousness in this chapter and in Chapter 3. Given the circumstances of contemporary spirituality, what role could synchronicity as a spiritual path play in it? In assessing the spiritual motivations of the contemporary in the

postmodern era of Western culture, Tacey (2008) believes that the “return of the religious has nothing to do with reactionary reassertion of religious truth and doctrine”; rather, it involves the “recovery of our relationship with the sacred after the collapse of positivistic science and after loss of belief in theistic religion and absolute truth” (p. 65). As a result, Tacey (2004) believes a spiritual revolution is underway in both the West and the East to fill the vacuum of meaninglessness left by these breakdowns, conditions with which Jung was all too familiar.

Lynch (2007) however, is of a different opinion, about the United States in particular, asserting “the notion that there is a ‘new spirituality’ replacing institutional religion in America to any significant degree...lacks any real supporting evidence” (p. 4). In particular, he disagrees with Tacey (2004), who “sees a promising upsurge of open-minded, generous mysticism amongst younger people” (p. 7). Similarly, Lynch (2007) disagrees that people are “motivated by religious or spiritual beliefs. On closer scrutiny, there is little evidence that this is the case” (p. 6). Finally, he takes exception to the assumption that religions and traditions can be neatly categorized according to readily determined boundaries. Lynch makes the telling observation that researchers of spirituality often tend to see “a projection of their own values, hopes and concerns” (p. 7) in the religion or tradition they are investigating. What then, if anything, does Lynch conclude about the state of spirituality in the West? He speculates that “the ‘new spirituality’ is one that is happening across and beyond a number of different religious and spiritual groups and traditions” (p. 7). He refers to such spiritual movements as “trans-religious” and believes they are more likely to guide the direction of future developments in spirituality than any one religion or tradition. I believe the practice of

synchronicity as a spiritual path could very well be one of these trans-religious movements.

Stein (2014) discusses two variants of contemporary spirituality representing opposing views. On the one hand there is collective spirituality taught using authorized sacred texts and dogmas prescribing a fixed course of spiritual life. Practitioners share a strictly controlled set of common beliefs, images, and acceptable behaviors, which taken to extreme, can potentially lead to violent fundamentalism. On the other hand there is individual spirituality that does not attempt to control beliefs or dictate content, but rather remains open to the unknown for guidance.

The latter variant of contemporary spirituality focusing on the individual is reflected in the Chinese attitude of *wu-wei*, or action by inaction, which advocates allowing events to unfold naturally in their own time and way. The collective approach to spirituality may be said to be active while the individual approach is passive.

Synchronicity as a spiritual path surely embraces a passive form of spirituality which mirrors, in one aspect, the Chinese attitude of *wu-wei* by permitting nature to speak at the right time to individuals or groups through synchronicities, and by understanding that the life of humanity is seamlessly and synchronistically interwoven into the pattern of the cosmos through the principle of synchronistically as reflected in the Tao. Stein (2014) believes the contemporary must forge “an individual path to spirituality that is grounded in personal experiences and lived by reflecting upon them using a psychological perspective” (p. 4). Such a sentiment closely reflects the premises of the spirituality discussed here emphasizing individuality and psychological reflection. In Tacey’s (2004) opinion, which I believe reflects the passive form of spirituality described in this work,

contemporary spirituality “seeks a sensitive, contemplative, transformative relationship with the sacred, and is able to sustain levels of uncertainty in its guest because respect for mystery is paramount. Spirituality arises from love of and intimacy with the sacred” (p. 10).

***Jung’s psychology of the sacred.*** Tacey (2013) believes the modern West is “in the grip of spiritual longings that we do not understand, and many dare not explore these realms lest they present us with insurmountable risks and dangers” (p. 3). In order for the West to come to grips with the current spiritual impasse, Tacey suggests “the psychology of the sacred offered by Jung” as a possible framework given that “conventional science, religion or theology are unable to comprehend the complexity or urgency of our spiritual situation” (p. 3). What ultimate truth for Jung is at the core of his psychology of the sacred?

To answer this, Stein (2014) returns to Jung’s encounter with Wilhelm and his translation of the definitive text on Chinese alchemy, *The Secret of the Golden Flower* which, with Western alchemical texts, continued to absorb Jung’s attention for essentially the remainder of his life. In this ancient Chinese text “he glimpsed the basic patterns of psychological and spiritual development that constitute the archetypal process of individuation” (p. 105). It was a synchronicity, described previously as the coincidence of Jung’s painting of a golden Chinese castle with the arrival of Wilhelm’s alchemical text describing a yellow castle, which continued to promote the evolving dialogue between Wilhelm and Jung, on the relationship of East and West. Jung foresaw in this dialogue the potential for discovering “a new concept of psychic process and wholeness that applies to all of humanity....and...the possibility of a new global culture in which all of

humanity can participate” (p. 105). For Jung, this dialogue involving an appreciation of Chinese philosophy by the West promised “to shift psychiatry and the mental health professions specifically, away from the dominant materialistic orientation of the medical model to a psychological and spiritual orientation” (p. 106), especially in its treatment of mental illness.

*Achieving a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought.* Jung was convinced that Chinese alchemy contained universal truths about the psyche which could be combined with the discoveries of the West and his own theories, to achieve, as Stein (2014) said, “a more effective approach for eliciting the full potential for human individuation” (p. 106). He believed a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought required him to maintain his focus on the Western psyche while at the same time discovering commonalities with Eastern thought, as revealed in sacred texts. In Jung’s (1929/1967) “Commentary on the Secret of the Golden Flower,” he pointed out that a psychological interpretation of the Eastern text paralleled his own Western process of individuation in that, according to Stein (2014), “the goal of the work is greater consciousness and wholeness” (p. 108). Of key importance, Stein (2014) points out that “Jung puts the emphasis in his commentary decidedly upon living the Tao rather than only speaking about it or studying books about it” (p. 108). This, I maintain, in consideration of the tenets of Taoist philosophy explained in this work, represents the core of Jung’s psychology of the sacred, which I believe could otherwise be known as the practice of synchronicity as a spiritual path. It is not the practice of Taoism, but rather a clothing of major Taoist principles in the language of analytical psychology, offering, as Stein (2014) says, the “possibility of a new global culture in which all of humanity can participate” (p. 105). Jung envisioned Wilhelm as

one support of a bridge spanning East and West, whereas he represented the other, thus creating the structure making a new global culture possible. As Stein (2014) said, in his late major works, “Jung proposes a view of psychic reality that bridges between European scientific thinking and Chinese Taoist thinking” (p. 110).

**Synchronicity as a spiritual path and progressive spirituality.** What spiritual needs of the contemporary does the practice of synchronicity as a spiritual path address? I believe the contemporary is included with those Lynch (2007) describes as identifying with a trans-religious ideology he calls “progressive spirituality” (p. 40). Lynch explains that the ideology of progressive spirituality is guided by four postulates, briefly described in Chapter 1, the first of which maintains the unity of divinity. Lynch explains that “the divine is an ineffable unity, and is both the guiding intelligence behind the evolutionary processes of the universe, and (within) the material form and energy of the universe itself” (pp. 43-44). This postulate describes a holistic universe governed by the principle of synchronicity joining all parts into a unity of being as in the Tao. Thus, as practiced in Eastern religions, mystical union with the Consciousness permeating the cosmos is a natural result of the oneness uniting all opposites in the Tao or Self. As Edinger (1972) explained, “predetermined order, meaning and consciousness itself are built into the universe” (p. 293). Of much significance to the practice of synchronicity as a spiritual path is the tenet, expressed by Lynch, “that we do not inhabit an empty or meaningless universe, but one which is held together by a divine spirit which offers us the prospect of a constructive future” but that also recognizes “the ways in which suffering and death are built into evolution” (p. 44). It also, at least, partially addresses the point raised by Le

Grice (2010), of the necessity of integrating “cosmogenesis” (p. 38) into a modern myth for humanity.

The second postulate of progressive spirituality is the concept of pantheism, which, as Lynch (2007) explains, asserts that “the divine life is bound up with the life of the cosmos” (p. 48) and not separated from it as is the patriarchal, transcendent God of Christianity. Thus, the divine is intrinsically interwoven into all facets of human experience and the material world, as well as providing the structure, pattern, and vitality of all life. This is actually an alternate way of describing the Taoist principle of *kan-ying*, responsible for the interconnectedness and wholeness of the individual and nature. As well, recall that panpsychism undergirds Taoist philosophy. I also believe these tenets reflect Grof and Bennett’s supposition of a cosmic intelligence and Corbett’s proposal of a supraordinate intelligence, both of which inform and structure psyche and body.

The third postulate, according to Lynch (2007), holds that everyone can potentially experience a mystical union with the divine, giving birth to a sense of one’s authentic self and “a profound sense of union and merger with the greater divine ground of all existence” (p. 50). This state is reflected in the final stage of individuation described by Stein (2014) as “an experience of the infinite without boundaries of any sort...a moment of transcendence over the artificial divisions between self and other and between body and mind” (p. 123). In Lynch’s (2014) view, progressive spirituality has also endeavored to distance itself from patriarchal models of divinity, favoring instead the inclusion of “feminine symbols to express the divine mystery” (p. 51).

Finally, the fourth postulate addressed by Lynch (2007) maintains that the sacredness of nature “affirms the material world and sees the spiritual as deeply

embedded within the material” (p. 53). One view holds the belief “nature is the physical manifestation of the divine spirit, and as such is to be treated with the reverence due to the divine” (pp. 53-54), whereas an alternative view makes a distinction between the divine and nature, which nonetheless, is still held sacred for its role as a place of “divine life and activity” (p. 54). Certainly, synchronicity as a spiritual path, recognizes the sacredness of nature as inherent to the cosmos as a divine organism animating all of life with meaning through the principle of synchronicity. Thus, I believe that synchronicity as a spiritual path is compatible with all four of the postulates of progressive spirituality in such a way as to honor the integrity and divinity within each individual and within the cosmos.



## Chapter 10

### Conclusion

Individuation, the core process of Jung's psychology, is still considered by many to be based on an essentially intrapsychic model of Jung's psychology of religion leaving it susceptible to the charge of psychologism. This dissertation has focused on drawing attention to his synchronistic model of the psychology of religion, developed in his later years primarily as a result of his experiences of the phenomenon of synchronicity and the influence of Eastern, and particularly, Chinese philosophy. It is argued that his affirmation of a synchronistic model, encompassing all of nature and not just human experience, repels the charge of psychologism, and raises the possibility of a spiritual practice based on synchronicity, which is available to all of humankind and not only an elite few who feel some affinity for Jung's psychology. Jung's vision of a unified worldview embracing and bringing together the seemingly disparate realms of science and religion, which have divided so many for so long, has the potential for realization in the practice of synchronicity as a spiritual path.

It is argued that Jung's early encounter with the principle of synchronicity in Taoism and the *I Ching* largely shaped his evolving theory of synchronicity, which made a first appearance in his 1930 memorial to Richard Wilhelm, whom he praised as a co-creator with Jung of a bridge between East and West. For Jung, this bridge was of monumental importance, for it promised the possibility of the creation of a global culture united in the belief that the creation of consciousness, or individuation, is the ultimate purpose of human existence, thereby providing the common thread binding together all of humanity. As well, Jung aspired to shift the emphasis of the mental health professions

away from the materialistic medical model to a more psychological and spiritual model, such as the model described in this work of synchronicity as a spiritual path. It has been the goal here to inform those who would embark on this spiritual path of the rigors and rewards of such an undertaking.

Thus, it is asserted here that the focus of this dissertation, and certainly one of the primary results stemming from Jung's synchronistic model of the psychology of religion, is the development of a spiritual path mirrored in a myth in which the creation of consciousness is the ultimate purpose of human existence. However, this stated focus raises two key questions. What is meant by consciousness or being conscious, and what distinguishes a human being from other life forms? Certainly, there are other schools of thought with differing opinions on these two important questions, raising the possibility that unambiguous definitions may be challenging at best. For example, in this work Jung is portrayed as aligning himself with anthropologist Lévy-Bruhl in maintaining that "early humans" could not distinguish themselves from the world, a relationship termed participation mystique. This colonialist 19th and 20th century anthropological theory led Jung to use the term "primitive consciousness," a term this dissertation agrees is colonial, and has replaced with "animistic consciousness."

On the other hand, anthropologist Kremer (1998) cites a massive accumulation of evidence that refutes the characterization of a "primitive" mind. Instead, he posits an indigenous consciousness "in which individuals understand themselves in an ongoing conversation with the surrounding community, in which all local animals, plants, ancestors, and other spirits take as much part as the humans.... This is a world view of total immanence" (p. 242). This world view counters some prevailing opinions that early

humans were not fully conscious. Kremer explains that although such a world view requires cognitive abilities, it is more concerned with having a conversation with nature in order to “to generate and regenerate the world and be generated and regenerated by it in the process” (p. 241).

In this sense, this worldview has some parallels to the discussion in the dissertation on the loss of nature’s aura in the West. If nature is bestowed with the capacity to return a glance, then it becomes possible to feel nature’s aura and develop a dialogue with all of life. This possibility is fundamental to Jung’s conception of the phenomenon of synchronicity, as presented in the discussion on Jung’s form of psychological animism. However, Jung’s psychological animism requires a reflecting ego-consciousness, whereas Kremer does not directly include this point in his description of indigenous consciousness. This distinction is not pursued in this dissertation and could prove fruitful for further discussion.

In Jung’s early formulation of his psychology, consciousness was defined as the relationship between the ego and psychic contents. Without this relationship, all other contents were considered unconscious. Not considered in this work is the possibility that the existence of an ego may not be a defining marker of a human being. For example, although it is commonly believed that human infants are psychically fused with their mothers, this theoretical lack of an ego this does not necessarily mean the fetus is not human, as argued by Irigaray (1993). Not addressed in this dissertation is the potential for nonhuman life forms, which seem to be self-aware, to also be conscious even though they may not possess a self-reflecting ego. Such a conjecture brings into question the assumption that only humans are conscious. As well, are the abilities to make symbols, to

form symbolic relationships, and to create meaning also grouped with the definition of being human? This work does not speculate on these issues which could benefit from future consideration and research.

The interpretation of the significance of time in synchronistic phenomena continues to be debated. In this dissertation, simultaneity in time as an essential determinant of the definition of synchronicity crafted by Jung according to the I Ching's emphasis on a particular point in time, is shown to yield to the preeminence of the archetypes. This distinction is sometimes not made in discussions of synchronicity, leading to some confusion. The difference between synchronicity as an existential phenomenon and as the ontological principle or fourth law of nature is explored, and shown to be compatible with Taoist principles pertaining to synchronicity.

The principle of synchronicity is shown to play an essential role in the process of individuation, a facet of Jung's psychology that has not gained much attention. As well, an examination of the relationship of consciousness to unconscious processes points to the possibility that the principle of synchronicity is a candidate for the psychophysical mechanism by which unconscious contents appear in consciousness.

An example of a synchronicity involving Jung's female patient and a scarab beetle revealed several factors that can influence the significance and meaning of a synchronicity to an individual, which, it is suggested, might well be taken into account before interpretation. Because one of these factors is the current stage of spiritual consciousness of the individual, a hierarchy of six stages is suggested and used to assist in clarifying the significance and meaning of this synchronicity for the patient.

This work describes a myth of the spiritual journey that might be undertaken by someone considering synchronicity as a spiritual path, a journey paralleling the stages of the hero's journey described by Campbell. I argue that this myth reflects, essentially, the elements necessary to support the cosmological and metaphysical functions of myth. Finally, a comparison of the postulates of progressive spirituality with the major tenets of synchronicity as a spiritual path reveals its compatibility on all points, establishing its viability as a candidate trans-religious movement in contemporary spirituality. Thus, it is argued here that meaning, in an otherwise seemingly meaningless universe, may surround and infuse humanity with a common purpose, the creation of consciousness through the practice of synchronicity as a spiritual path.

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