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Jung's Conceptualization of Synchronicity Theory and the Role of Astrology

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Abstract

Jung's conceptualization of synchronicity has a relation to his engagement in astrology began in roughly 1906. Jung's conceptualization of varieties of synchronistic experiences can be divided into non-divinatory and divinatory experiences. Among the divinatory sources, he overlooked the differences between I-Ching divination and astrology. His neglect caused a logical discrepancy in his early synchronicity theory. Forty-six years after his first engagement in astrology, his essay on synchronicity (1952) possesses a long section for his astrological experiment. In his astrological experiment, his problematic understanding of metaphysical and methodological issues behind the experiment led to the failure of his statistical part of the experiment. The case study part of it turns to support his meaningful chance version of synchronicity theory and leads to the acknowledgement of the standard version of synchronicity theory: meaningful chances.

Keywords

Jung – synchronicity – astrology – astrological experiment

1 Introduction

1.1 *Background of the Scholarship*

In 1985, in Andrew Samuel's book *Jung and the Post-Jungians*, Samuels (1985) declares that: "astrology, whatever else it may be, cannot be claimed to be acausal!" (p. 80). Twenty-three years later, another scholar in religious studies Robert A. Segal makes a similar conclusion from another perspective, in which he suggests that: "Synchronicity is not like astrology, in which the planets determine personality. The patient's conscious attitude, which dismisses the notion of an unconscious, is 'out of sync' with the world" (Segal, 2008, p. 101). For Samuels and Segal, astrology is itself causal and hence cannot be put into the frame of synchronicity.

However, there are different standpoints regarding this issue, and it seems as if the issue hidden inside the relations between astrology and synchronicity is much more complicated. Astrologer and scholar in divination Maggie Hyde (1992, pp. 121–139) after analyzing Jung's astrological experiment concludes that there are two types of synchronicities and astrology may work as a form of divination that she defines as 'Synchronicity II' (synchronicity as a type of subjective experience which requires the psychic participation of the astrologer).¹ Another scholar Vitor Mansfield (2002, pp. 151–152) has a very similar view on differentiating two kinds of synchronicity based on his examination of Jung's experiment, although he suggests synchronicity should be understood on the level of containing meaning for an individual.²

Therefore, synchronicity and its relation to astrology has been a very complicated issue in Jungian studies. It has been explored in the past few decades but is still considered controversial, complex and with certain confusions inside. The opinion can be held that there are certain values behind these issues and revealing them in depth might be helpful to understand synchronicity and the hypothetical basis of astrology better.

1.2 *A Review of Current Material*

1.2.1 Studies in Synchronicity Theory

There is a large number of post-Jungian publications concerning the different contexts of Jung's synchronicity theory which have been issued (Aziz, 1990; Bishop, 2000; Main [Ed], 1997; Main, 2004, 2007; Cambray, 2002, 2009; Ko, 2011; de Moura, 2019; Atmanspacher & Rickles, 2022). Robert Aziz's book, published

¹ There might be some issues in her model.

² The complexity of synchronicity and its relations to Jung's conceptualization of both astrology and synchronicity will be covered in Part 2.

in 1990, aims to provide a framework concerning Jung's model of religion and synchronicity and suggests that the connection between synchronicity theory and the individuation process is a part of Jung's psychology of religion (Aziz, 1990, p. 217). Paul Bishop's (2000) *Synchronicity and Intellectual Intuition in Kant, Swedenborg, and Jung* is one of the pioneering works on the intersection between Romantic philosophy and synchronicity theory. He reveals the significance of synchronicity as a category on an epistemological level in Jung's statement and believes that it has a connection with the concept of intellectual intuition in Fichte and Schelling, and is more generally connected with the post-Kantian current (ibid., 2000, p. 17; CW8: 968). Roderick Main published synthetic research which systematically investigates the theory and context of synchronicity, with his applied critiques of western culture based on Jung's synchronicity theory (Main, 2004). In addition, Main published a selection of Jung regarding the paranormal and synchronicity, and another book called *The Relevance of Chance* considers synchronicity as a type of spiritual experience 2007 (Main [Ed], 1997; Main, 2007).

Jungian analyst and scholar Joseph Cambay promotes the idea of concerning synchronistic experience as a type of psychological emergence in the case of the psyche's attempt to link to the external world to reconnect to life (Cambay, 2002, p. 431). He explores this idea further in his book published in 2009, in which he suggests that synchronistic experience can be understood as "complex adaptive systems with their capacity for self-organization and emergence" (ibid., 2009, pp. 2–3). Nevertheless, he also explores the importance of the Pauli-Jung relationship, physics, resonant phenomena, and synchronicity that occurs on a cultural level (ibid., 2009). However, some hypothetical issues exist in Cambay's theory, and Main (2010, p. 169) points out "if the psychoid archetype is such an originary point, it cannot itself be emergent".

American Korean scholar Young Woon Ko (2011) published critical research regarding the cultural and philosophical issues between Jung's synchronicity and Eastern Asian culture. He clearly notices the fact that Jung credits the *I-Ching* as the source of his synchronicity theory, but that he adapts an 'etic' view of the *I-Ching*, i.e. outsider's approach to the cultural system (CW8: 866, note.59; Ko, 2011, p. 107). Furthermore, this potentially leads to the difference between "Jung's own understanding of *Yijing* for the synchronistic principle and the textual meaning of *Yijing* with its cultural and historical background" (ibid., 2011, p. 107).³ His work is the first and thus far, the only one that focuses on the dis-

3 The *I-Ching* and *Yijing* are different translations of the pronunciation of the Chinese ancient book 《易经》, the two words mean the same in English.

inction between the original context of the *I-Ching*, and Jung's understanding of the *I-Ching* while he was conceptualizing his theory of synchronicity.

More latterly, de Moura (2019) published a historical study on Jung's case of the Scarab Beetle in his Synchronicity essay in 1952 and his Eranos conference talk a year before (CW8: 843, 982). She discovers that this case arises from a dream of Jung's patient named Maggy Reichstein (de Moura, 2019, pp. 158–159). The correlational appearance of the golden scarab in Reichstein's dream and the beetle that occurred in her meeting with Jung is considered by Jung as a meaningful synchronistic event in her individuation process.

Scholars in physics and philosophy Atmanspacher & Rickles (2022) in their book *Dual-Aspect Monism and the Deeper Structure of Meaning*, suggest that Jung is one of the originators of the idea of *dual-aspect monism*: the mental and the physical are the two aspects of one substance (p. i). They discuss Wolfgang Pauli and Jung's model of synchronicity with substantial consideration of physics (ibid., 2022, p. 50). Notably, they attempt to understand the experiential and metaphysical aspects of synchronicity within the frame of dual-aspect monism: the subjective level of experienced meaning is the manifestation of the psychophysically neutral, archetypal and symbolic level of meaning that is not random (ibid., 2022, p. 51). Another factor is, the number of publications in synchronicity has risen significantly over the past few decades, reaching the number of more than 10000 from 2010 to 2020 (Sacco, 2021, p. 42). The given focus for this paper as partially demonstrated above, is those who are associated with Jung's theoretical and historical context of synchronicity theory.

1.2.2 Studies in Jung and Astrology

Compared to the huge number of publications in synchronicity, studies in Jung and astrology are a much smaller area. The first book published in this specialized field is Maggie Hyde's (1992) pioneering work *Jung and Astrology* which was published in 1992. In this book, Hyde (1992) discusses Jung's *Aion* and its relations to astrology in chapter one (pp. 13–26); Focusing on Jung's engagement in mysterious subjects historically alongside an interpretation of his natal horoscope in chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 27–66); she then moves to the practical insights that Jungian psychology may offer to astrology namely the symbolic attitude in chapter 4 (pp. 67–80); and lastly a sharp criticism of Liz Greene and Hamaker-Zondag's *psychological astrology* in chapter 5 and 6 (pp. 81–120).

The most significant contribution of her study is the classification of two types of synchronicity in chapter 7 based on an analysis of Jung's astrological experiment. She suggests that 'Synchronicity I' signifies there is an objective observer and objectively observed synchronistic events and 'Synchronicity II' acknowledges the effect of subjective participation of the observer onto the

observed synchronistic events (ibid., 1992, p. 128). The following chapters of this book are focused at length on the issue of reframing astrological practice based on Jung's theory of synchronicity which are sometimes considered to support Hyde's colleague Geoffrey Cornelius' work which claims that astrology is a type of divination (ibid., 1992, pp. 140–209; Cornelius, 1994/2003; Li, 2021).

A professor in physics and astronomy, Vitor Mansfield (2002) has a slightly different view to Hyde in terms of classifying two types of synchronicity. He engages with Jung's astrological experiment through comprehensive discussions of physics and with less concern with the practice of astrology compared to Hyde (ibid., 2002, pp. 137–161). Nevertheless, his theoretical discussion of Jung's theory is closer to Jung's original context. Issues regarding Jung's astrological experiment will be reviewed in detail in section 2.3.

British Jungian analyst, astrologer and scholar in history Liz Greene has published two books regarding Jung's engagement in astrology (2018a) and the relations between astrology and the figures and images in *The Red Book* (2018b). In her first book, Greene (2018a) first points out that Jung's practical engagement in astrology began in approximately 1906 (p. 41); secondly, Jung's understanding of astrology and its potential impacts and connections on his theory of psychological types, complex, libido, alchemy, and individuation (pp. 15–36); thirdly, an archival study of Jung's astrologers (pp. 37–72); fourthly, the similarity between Neoplatonic theurgy and active imagination (pp. 73–88); fifthly, daimonic magic in Neoplatonism and its connection with Jung's theory of symbol and synchronicity, as well as his natal horoscope (pp. 89–116), sixthly, Jung's understanding of the ancient concept *Heimarmene* (astral fate) in different contexts (pp. 117–150); and lastly Jung's understanding and conceptualization of the prophecy of the new Aquarian age (pp. 151–176). The second book mainly discusses astrological symbols and the potential connections between important figures in *The Red Book* and Jung's understanding of astrology (ibid., 2018b).

Scholar in philosophy and astrologer Richard Tarnas (2006) also discusses synchronicity in his book *Cosmos and Psyche*. He affirms that Jung's focus on synchronicity theory first began with his engagement in the *I-Ching* and astrology, and that the idea of *qualitative time* can be considered the first version of his synchronicity theory (ibid., 2006, pp. 498–499). In addition, he also challenges the definition of synchronicity as an acausal connection as too broad and that synchronicity may indicate causal relationships in an Aristotelian sense of *formal cause* and *final cause* (ibid., 2006, pp. 498–499).

Another scholar and astrologer Kerion Le Grice (2010) in his book *The Archetypal Cosmos: Rediscovering the Gods in Myth, Science and Astrology*, meticulously discusses the acausal connections behind astrology and its rela-

tionships with synchronicity theory. He also recognises the differences between different understandings of synchronicity and relevant thoughts in Jung, which to a certain extent is similar to Mansfield and Hyde (Hyde, 1992, pp. 121–139; Mansfield, 2002, 151–152; Le Grice, 2010, pp. 121–125). There is also a new selection of Jung’s work on astrology released recently (Le Grice & Rossi [Eds], 2018). In this book, Le Grice (2018) further gives a detailed introduction to Jung’s 7 understandings of astrology (pp. 141–152).

1.2.3 A Glossary of Astrological Terms

1.2.3.1 *Natal Astrology*

Natal astrology, according to Brennan (2007), is also known as genethliology. This is the astrological practice of “casting and interpreting astrological charts for the moment of the birth of an individual in the attempt to ascertain specific information about the nature and course of their life” (p. 2). For Jung, natal astrology is the form of astrology that he practised at the beginning of his interest in astrology (Greene, 2018a, p. 41). It is now believed that Jung used the ephemeris of 1906 to calculate his daughter Gret’s natal horoscope.

1.2.3.2 *Transit*

Transit is a kind of astrological technique that concerns the results of “a planet’s passage over another” (Ebertin, 1971, p. 9). It is usually based on a comparison of a birth chart, and the chart of another moment after the birth moment of a person or thing. But since the stars are moving and the aspects between them are changing, it can be used to predict the general potential of the future without a birth chart.

1.3 *Existing Issues and Resolutions*

Although there are many publications in synchronicity theory, Jung and astrology, and minor crossovers in studies in this field, there is not yet any synthetic study concerned with the complexity of the following issue: the actual relation and potential co-creation of Jung’s understanding of astrology and his conceptualization of synchronicity. The complexity of this realm and the role of astrology in Jung’s conceptualization of synchronicity is not yet discussed thoroughly.

With clear comprehension of the research gap, this paper aims to investigate this specialized field by elucidating Jung’s conceptualization of synchronistic experiences, his understanding of astrology, and his astrological experiment. The core objective of this research is to clarify the theoretical issues behind synchronicity theory and astrology within the co-creation of Jung’s understanding of these two subjects and post-Jungian development.

Jung's conceptualization of varieties of synchronistic experiences will be discussed in 2.1, I categorize them as non-divinatory and divinatory experiences. Among the divinatory aspect, I emphasize the difference between Jung's experiences of practising different divinatory techniques, especially the *I-Ching* and astrology. I then move to an elaboration of Jung's understanding of the underlying principles of astrology. In later passages, I will promote the assumption of Jung's understanding of synchronicity which involves both I-Ching divination and astrology had caused a discrepancy in his early synchronicity theory. Two versions of synchronicity emerged in Jung's early conceptualization, synchronicity as qualitative time and synchronicity as meaningful chance. The previous model is pseudo-acausal and the latter one is authentically acausal.

Based on Keiron Le Grice's settlement of Jung's seven understandings of principles behind astrology (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, pp. 141–196). Further exploration leads to Jung's synchronicity essay and his astrological experiment included in that essay. In his experiment Jung tried to prove synchronicity as a form of acausal connection by using statistics and case studies. His problematic understanding of metaphysical and methodological issues behind the experiment led to the failure of his statistical research, which disproved the qualitative time version of synchronicity. Nevertheless, his case studies turn to support his meaningful chance version of synchronicity theory. This version was the one eventually acknowledged by Jung as synchronicity.

2 The Relations between Jung's Conceptualization of Synchronicity Theory and His Understanding of Natal Astrology

This part involves three different aspects: firstly, what Jung defined as synchronistic experiences. Secondly, Jung's understanding of astrology. Thirdly, Jung's astrological experiment which included in his synchronicity essay in the early 1950s.

2.1 *Jung's Conceptualization of Varieties of Synchronistic Experiences*

Generally, as Jung acknowledges, the first time he used the idea of synchronicity was when he was discussing the Chinese ancient book of divination—the *I-Ching* back in Richard Wilhelm's memorial speech in May 1930 (CWS: 866, note.59; CW15: 81). The acknowledgement of the *I-Ching* in Jung's synchronicity theory, may have a connection with the historical fact that he started practising I-Ching divination since December 1921 (Tarnas, 2006, p. 498; Shamdasani, as cited in Jung, 2020, p. 204, note.148; Zeng, 2022). However, there might have

been other previous experiences Jung had before he started to conceptualize this category of experiences that can be considered synchronistic. For example, some of his fantasies since the winter of 1913 were considered precognitions of World War I (Shamdasani, 2011, p. vii). In one of these events, Jung (2009) perceived:

a terrible flood that covered all the northern and low-lying lands between the North Sea and the Alps. It reached from England up to Russia, and from the coast of the North Sea right up to the Alps. I saw yellow waves, swimming rubble and the death of countless thousands.

p. 231

After the outbreak of World War I, in July 1914 Jung understood that he was not under the attack of schizophrenia (Shamdasani, 2011, p. vii). The vision was precognition of the collective unconscious (ibid, 2011, p. vii). But there is no direct confirmation of Jung viewing these events as synchronistic events. Since they happened earlier in Jung's life, is unsure of their importance in Jung's conceptualization of synchronicity. Thus in this section, Jung's conceptualization of different categories of experiences that he confirmed as synchronistic events will be focused on.

It is now believed that the earlier version of the idea may have already occurred 7 years after his I-Ching divinatory experiment started (Bair, 2003, p. 771; Ko, 2011, p. 18). In a passage in *Dream Analysis* (delivered on 28th November 1928), he uses the word *synchronism* to describe the principle of "the oldest Chinese scientific book" in a way that is similar to his later definition of synchronicity as meaningful coincidence (rather than *qualitative time*) (Jung, 1984, pp. 44–45). In addition, he discusses I-Ching divination, both theoretically and practically in various writings, including in the collected works, *Visions, ETH lectures, Dream Analysis*, and two volumes of *Jung Letters, Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra, 1925 Seminars* (Shen & Gao, 2018, pp. 93–154).

Notably, he started to integrate his earlier idea of the qualitative time version of synchronicity theory from natal astrology to interpret I-Ching divination and natal astrology⁴ in 1930, in which he makes three equations between I-Ching divination and natal astrology: the process of I-Ching divination (casting coins) performs the same as the birth moment in natal astrology; hexagrams play the same role as constellations; the text assigned to the hexagram corresponds

4 The qualitative time version of natal astrology will be discussed in more detail in 2.2.

to astrological interpretation (CW15: 81–84). Additionally, the qualitative time model suggests that a particular moment has a particular quality (CW15: 82).

By making the three equations between natal astrology and I-Ching divination, Jung aligns two types of divinatory experiences from two divinatory techniques into the theoretical frame of qualitative time (version of synchronicity) which possibly derived from his understanding of the psychodynamics in natal astrology in 1911 (Greene, 2018a, p. 19). Jung suggests the way natal astrology works acausally might be different from the *I-Ching*. It seems to Jung, that the *I-Ching* relies on the idea of coincidence more than natal astrology, the birth moment in natal astrology is not as random as casting coins in I-Ching divination. Considering the potential differences between the two, Jung cautiously declares that “natal astrology would be an example of synchronicity on a grand scale” but needs test and scientific investigation (CW15: 81).⁵ Therefore, an important part of Jung’s conceptualization of synchronicity theory is the different divinatory experiences from his practice of the *I-Ching* and natal astrology. Furthermore, it seems as if the ‘causal versus acausal’ issue inside synchronicity was unclear for Jung in 1930.

In addition to his conceptualization of divinatory experiences, he started noticing more synchronistic events in his life and clinical practice during the same period. I suggest the conceptualization of this type of synchronistic experience is following the idea of meaningful coincidence which was derived from his understanding of the I-Ching, as discussed previously in his 1928 seminar. According to Deidre Bair’s (2003) biography of Jung, von Franz asserts that the first time she heard Jung talking about his synchronistic experience was approximately in 1933 (p. 370). In the early case that Jung told von Franz, Jung was confused by an analysand who dreamt “he was an eagle that ate his feathers”. On the next day he found the alchemical manuscript Ripley Scroll with “an alchemical representation of an eagle eating his own feathers” in the British Museum (ibid., 2003, p. 370). Another notable case of synchronicity happens in the clinical setting in the late 1940s, in Jung’s analysis of Maggie Reichstein, also presented in Jung’s Earnos talk in 1951 and the subsequent synchronicity essay (CW8: 843, 982; de Moura, 2019, pp. 158–159). In this case:

A young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly I hear a noise behind me,

5 But if we follow the logic of qualitative time, we will notice that it is causal as it believes the quality of time has an impact on reality. Jung realized this in 1954 as well (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, p. 183).

like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the window-pane from outside. I opened the window and caught the creature in the air as it flew in.

CWS: 843

Another case that Jung noticed as a series of potential synchronistic events is Jung's encounter with the symbols of fish when he was writing a book with thorough consideration on the symbolism of fish in 1949 (CWS: 826–827, 970). Overall, these materials show that, since his conceptualization of divinatory experiences in natal astrology (1911) and I-Ching divination (1930), progressively more ranges of meaningful coincidental experiences are starting to increasingly become a part of what Jung conceptualized as synchronistic experiences during the 1930s and the 1940s (CW15: 81, 84; Bair, 2003, p. 370; Greene, 2018a, p. 19; de Moura, 2019, pp. 158–159). Meanwhile, he has very limited awareness of the potential differences and similarities between two types of divinatory experiences and non-divinatory synchronistic experiences, which may cause issues when he eventually moves to test synchronicity in his astrological experiment (this will be discussed further in 2.3).

2.2 *Jung's Understanding of the Principles behind Natal Astrology*

Jung's conceptualization of synchronicity is constituted of three major aspects as discussed previously in 2.1. Nevertheless, Jung's understanding of the principles that enable natal astrology work is another complex topic as complex as his conceptualization of varieties of synchronistic experiences. As Le Grice (2018) notes, the possible explanations Jung gives are "some overlapping and some contradictory" (p. 141). In this section, all the seven versions of Jung's understanding contextually will be discussed to provide the basis for discussing the intersection of synchronicity and natal astrology in his synchronicity essay further.

Jung's first explanation is that which he took from ancient western thinkers related to the 'sympathy of all things'. Jung first mentioned this type of connection in the context of discussing the concept of libido in his *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (Jung, 1916/1949, pp. 147–148⁶) in 1911–1912. He only gives a comprehensive discussion of sympathetic connections in ancient times in 1952, in which he claims this type of idea has a continuous development through Greek philosophical tradition, Neoplatonism, Renaissance, medieval natural

6 The quoted version is the English edition of this book which was published in 1916 titled *The Psychology of the Unconscious*. The version in the collected work is the revised 1952 version, though most relevant contents remain (CW5: 198).

philosophy and Kepler in the early modern period, as the forerunners of the idea of synchronicity (CWS: 924–936; Le Grice, 2018, p. 141). In 1954, he aligns synchronicity, and sympathy, as the principle behind natal astrology in a letter to French astrologer André Barbault (Jung, 1976/1990, p. 175; Greene, 2018a, p. 84).

The second explanation is profoundly connected with Jung's understanding of the collective unconscious and fascination with mythological materials according to his correspondence with Freud (Freud & Jung, pp. 252, 483; Main, 2020). Le Grice (2018) summarizes "astrology is a projection of the collective unconscious into the heavens. The practice of natal astrology might be understood as a symbolic system or perspective in which the planets represent the "gods," that is, the archetypes of the collective unconscious" (p. 142). This idea has a comparatively long history in Jung's writing, the first version in which he created the term astro-mythology in 1913 is even earlier than that used the early version of the term collective unconscious in 1916 (CW4: 477; Shamdasani, as cited in Jung, 2009, p. 208). The idea is further developed in 1929 in Jung's commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower* and then continues to flourish in many facets of his writings since then (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, pp. 161–166).

The third interpretation is natal astrology as a mantic method or intuitive method, similar to the *I-Ching* and western aspectry (Jung, 1976/1990, p. 463). Natal astrology works under the hypopaper of "presupposes a meaningful coincidence of planetary aspects and positions with the character or the existing psychic state of the questioner" (CWS: 987). This idea is partially due to the results of Jung's reflection on his astrological experiment as Le Grice (2018) pointed out (his reflections will be elaborated on further in 2.3) (pp. 143–144). Slightly different from Le Grice's perspective, it can be assumed this idea can be traced back to 1928 when he uses synchronism as an earlier version of synchronicity and discussed the principle of the *I-Ching* in a seminar. In this seminar, he claims that "The East bases much of its science on this irregularity and considers coincidences as the reliable basis of the world rather than causality" (Jung, 1984, p. 44). Under this perspective, three divinatory techniques can be explained in one frame based on Jung's synpaper.

The fourth explication is inspired by German physicist Max Knoll, specifically in his Eranos talk in 1951 (Knoll, 1958, pp. 285–302). The theory suggests that natal astrology works because there is "a physical mechanism ... in the form of photon radiation emitted by the sun impacting the Earth's magnetic field" (Le Grice, 2018, p. 144). Jung immediately took this idea from Knoll during the Eranos conference and further considers the possibility of natal astrology may work causally in his synchronicity essay which was published the year after (CWS: 875–876, 987–988). It only appears in some of Jung's letters after-

wards as an alternative theory that understands the principles behind natal astrology scientifically and causally contradicts his synchronicity theory. In 1951 he believes that it challenges synchronicity theory, but in 1958 he tends to accept both as potential explanations of natal astrology (Jung, 1976/1990, pp. 23–24, 428–430). He accepts causal scientific explanations based on empirical research and receives natal astrology as a mantic method on account of his experiences in his letter to Hans Bender (*ibid.*, 1976/1990, pp. 428–430).

The Fifth explanation is the qualitative time which is briefly discussed in 2.1. According to Liz Greene (2018a), this idea started with Jung's investigation into mythology and in using natal astrology privately (pp. 18–23). In a letter to Freud dated 1911, he claims that in an astrological context “libido symbols which depict the typical qualities of the libido at a given moment” (Freud & Jung, 1974, p. 427). This idea means a certain moment has a determined quality, and the connotation of the quality can be revealed by natal astrology because the birth moment which determines the horoscope reveals the quality of the birth moment⁷ (Jung, 1976/1990, pp. 353–354; *CWS*: 82). Qualitative time does not reappear in current publications until *Dream Analysis* in 1929, it was officially claimed to be abolished as an unnecessary causal hypopaper and later replaced by synchronicity in 1954⁸ (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, pp. 177–183). Nevertheless, he still uses this idea three years after his claim of abolishment (Jung, 1976/1990, pp. 353–354). Thereby it is worth considering Jung's theoretical ambivalence and flexibility.

The sixth hypopaper is similar to the Pythagorean and Platonic understanding of transcendental numerical patterns, in which the meaning of astrological symbols is derived from the qualitative significance of numerical psychoid archetypes (Le Grice, 2018, p. 146). It seems that Jung mentioned similar ideas regarding the qualities of numerical psychoid archetypes during the 1950s, but the acknowledgement of this could apply to astrological symbols only once in the condensed version of his astrological experiment in 1958⁹ (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, pp. 185–189).

The last elucidation is astrological archetypes operate under *acausal orderedness* in the *unus mundus* (one world) nature of the dual-aspect monism worldview (Le Grice, 2018, pp. 147–149). It suggests the “acausal parallelism or correspondence between planetary positions and experiences in human life”

7 Though this idea can be adapted to the wider range of astrological approaches beyond natal astrology, Jung only discusses it in a natal way (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, pp. 177–183).

8 Though Jung once believed that qualitative time was the same idea which represents acausal connections as synchronicity in 1930 (*CWS*: 81–82).

9 For the time he applies the idea to natal astrology, sees *CW18*: 1182–1183.

(Le Grice, 2018, p. 147). This idea is widely discussed in various later writings in Jung's life, e.g. *Synchronicity*, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, and letters since 1946 (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], pp. 190–196). However, as with the previous explanation of numerical patterns, current materials show that Jung only adapted it to natal astrology explicitly once in a letter to Enrique Butelman, dated July 1956 (Jung, 1976/1990, p. 318).

2.3 *Jung's Astrological Experiment*

After outlining Jung's conceptualization of synchronicity and Jung's various understanding of natal astrology separately, the intersection of these two subjects will be discussed—Jung's astrological experiment in 2.3. To summarize this experiment in brief, in the statistical part Jung attempted to prove the acausal orderedness version of synchronicity but the data is not probable, thereby he opts for Rhine's experiment for support (CWS: 901, 965). Elucidation will be provided as to why his statistical experiment is not able to verify the acausal orderedness version of synchronicity in 2.3.1. Furthermore, based on his qualitative experiment, synchronicity as meaningful coincidences has considerable and coincidental meanings for individuals (CWS: 896–900). Thus, acausal orderedness can be considered as the orders behind synchronistic events.

The statistical part of this experiment shows Jung's unsuccessful effort to provide a perspective for further reflection that is different from theoretical discussions and direct experiences. In Contrast, the qualitative part illustrates that the experiential basis of synchronicity is one of the most vital groundings. As the meaning of the experiment itself is complicated, there will be discussion of this experiment by firstly investigating its issues in the statistical part (2.3.1), the qualitative experiment (2.3.2) and their theoretical impact (2.4) afterwards.

2.3.1 Issues in the Statistical Part

Several influences from science determine the way Jung conducted the statistical part of the experiment and his hypopaper: Kammerer's law of seriality, Einstein's theory of relativity, Wolfgang Pauli's correspondence and insights into physics, J.B. Rhine's experiments in parapsychology, and Ptolemy's definition of marriage placements¹⁰ in natal astrology (Main, 2004, pp. 58, 86, 105–106; Schmidt & Townley, n.d.; CWS: 875–915). At the beginning of his synchronicity essay, he claims the law of causality is not absolute as modern physics has discovered, hence it can only be used on a relative level (CWS: 818–819).

¹⁰ Ptolemy considers natal astrology a science (Phillipson, 2019; Fraikin, 2021).

As a supplement to the limited causality, he suggests that acausal connections should be tested seriously by statistics (CW8: 823). In addition, Jung believed that if statistics show that these phenomena are significant, then there should to some extent be an acausal connection that exists, otherwise, they are simply “lucky hits” (CW8: 827). The idea of acausal orderedness is exactly what he tried to prove in the essay, but he believed the insignificant statistical data does not support it (CW8: 901). It will be explained that the data cannot provide an examination for acausal orderedness in later passages.

Notwithstanding, Jung was considerably wrong about statistics regarding what they can prove, and this led to wrong conclusions based on his statistical data. Statistics are not able to substantiate direct causal relations or acausal orderedness by only showing correlations. Due to the effect of natural statistical variation, illogical correlations may appear frequently (S. Myers, personal communication, August 4, 2022). Constructing an inductive hypopaper as Jung made regarding ‘there are acausal connections behind’ is not acceptable by science (ibid., personal communication, August 4, 2022). That means even if the results are significant, it would still be far from proving Jung’s hypopaper of acausal orderedness. In fact, it shows that using statistics might be an unwise decision for Jung because he was plainly unclear about what he was expecting from the data and what the results might mean to his synchronicity theory (Main, 2004, p. 59).

He probably decided to use statistics after he found Paul Kammerer’s study of coincidental events lacks quantitative research, along with impressed by Rhine’s quantitative research (ibid, 2004, p. 85). Thereby he “attempted to emulate this in his own astrological experiment” to use astrological statements from Ptolemy to examine the probability of astrological placements (Main, 2004, pp. 58; CW8: 825). Jung seems to search for the statistical frequency of acausal orderedness hoping it would be significant in natal astrology through Ptolemy’s astrological statements. This leads to the second problem of his experiment.

Jung transferred natal astrology into statistical statements in an approach that exactly matches his idea of qualitative time (version of synchronicity), in which natal astrology works under the frame of the birth moment, astrological constellations and corresponded interpretations (CW15: 84). The issues here are firstly the model of qualitative time is causal and a type of tautology, as Jung himself is aware afterwards in 1954 (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, p. 183). However, in this experiment, Jung problematically believes that this causal model can verify if there is acausal orderedness linked to natal astrology. Secondly, Ptolemy’s model of natal astrology is causal and Ptolemy believes that natal astrology is a form of causal science (Long, 2008, pp. 179–183; Fraikin, 2021,

p. 87). Jung's qualitative time model can be considered an enlarged version of Ptolemy's model, since Ptolemy only claimed the significance of the birth moment but Jung claimed that every moment has a certain quality (Long, 2008, p. 182; CW15: 82). This may show that Jung was also unclear about the context of the creator of the statements he used in his experiment.

In this case, it would be clearer if this part of the experiment was considered as a causal examination of natal astrology since both Jung's version of synchronicity adopted here and the technical model of natal astrology here can be considered causal (CWS: 869, 878). Qualitative time and the three relevant astrological factors have proposed a chain of causal relations. In these relations, the birth moment determines astrological placements, and the placements determine astrological interpretations, eventually, interpretations impact human life. However, Jung was problematically convinced that it may reveal the acausal order behind synchronistic experiences.

Thereby Jung's statistical research eventually seems to be examining if natal astrology functions following Ptolemy's model and as a narrower version of his model of qualitative time rather than the idea of acausal orderedness. Only if the result is insignificant may it disprove Ptolemy's causal model of natal astrology and Jung's qualitative time model as it will show natal astrology does not work causally. However, this result would have no connection with Jung's attempt to suggest acausal orderedness as the principle behind natal astrology if synchronistic events behind natal astrology were considered might be random (Mansfield, 2002, p. 155). It does not prove or disprove acausal orderedness directly. If the result is significant, then it will show natal astrology works causally thereby it would be a form of causal science as Ptolemy suggested. Acausal orderedness behind would be a compatible hypopaper but not able to be verified through the significant result. Thus, the acausal orderedness on a transcendental level cannot be verified by any causal relations between the stars and the mundane world on a physical level. This again shows Jung's decision of using statistics is meaningless and whether acausal orderedness exists or not is not able to be directly proven in this experiment.

This further means the statistical result has no direct connection with what Jung tried to investigate, but the result Jung attained is insignificant which indicates that natal astrology may not work causally (CWS: 901). This would be the conclusion of Jung's statistical research.

There is another supplemental statistical experiment in Jung's synchronicity essay that can be considered purely statistical and has no connection with any of his ideas regarding synchronicity or natal astrology (CWS: 896). This aspect will not be discussed in this paper.

2.3.2 The Qualitative Experiment

After the ‘failure’ of his statistical research, Jung tried to use a qualitative way to examine synchronicity, but on a level of ‘lucky hits’ or meaningful coincidence (CWS: 897–900). He qualitatively conducted further experiment, in which he worked with three “psychological status was accurately known” testees (CWS: 897). This experiment was conducted in the following way:

taking 400 marriage horoscopes at random and providing 200 of them with numbers. Twenty of these were then drawn by lot by the subject. These twenty married pairs were examined statistically for our fifty marriage characteristics.

CWS: 897

The first subject was a woman who “found herself in a state of intense emotional excitement” during the experiment (CWS: 897). In the marriage horoscopes that she opted for, Mars aspects appeared most frequently (CWS: 897). Jung suggests the “classical significance of Mars lies in his emotionality” matches the psychological status of this testee accurately (CWS: 897). The second subject was a woman patient whose “main problem was to realize and assert her personality in the face of her self-suppressive tendencies” (CWS: 898). In this case, Jung discovered that “the axial aspects (Asc. Desc), which are supposed to be characteristic of the personality” are the most eminent aspects, which indicates her psychological situation correctly was in “full agreement with the subject’s actual problems” (CWS: 898). The last case shows a higher frequency of sun and moon aspects, which corresponds with her problem of “strong inner oppositions whose union and reconciliation constituted her main problem” since the sun and the moon are the symbolic pair of the union of opposites (CWS: 899).

This part of the research shows that, though the coincidental meaning revealed here is based on the interpreter, i.e. Jung’s interpretation of the psychological status and astrological symbols. Nevertheless, the qualitative part of his experiment shows that synchronicity as meaningful coincidence may exist in similarity with other experientially synchronistic events.

2.4 Discussion: Implications of the Complex Intersection

To summarize, Jung’s engagement with the *I-Ching* provided him with the name of the idea of synchronicity. It first appears in currently accessible materials in November 1928 as synchronism, a term Jung used to conceptualize the principle of ancient Chinese science from the *I-Ching* (Jung, 1984, pp. 44–45). It is notable that this very first version of synchronicity is connected with mean-

ingful coincidence. However, when it appears again as synchronicity for the first time, it became a version of qualitative time (CW15: 81–84).

Jung started to construct a more synthetic and modern version of *unus mundus* that is compatible with his psychology started in the 1940s (Le Grice, 2018, pp. 147–149). This is the period which potentially made Jung's synchronicity essay and astrological experiment complicated. It is suggested that Jung's theoretical development eventually leads to a new hypothetical version of synchronicity that Jung defined as acausal orderedness in his synchronicity essay (Jung, 1976/1990, p. 318; CWS: 959, 965). This idea was also considerably influenced by Rhine's experiment and his relationship with Albert Einstein, Jung's collaboration with Wolfgang Pauli, and theoretical thinkers previously (Main, 2004, pp. 88, 105–106; CWS: 916–946, 961–967). It can be also treated as an integrated explanation of version 1 (sympathetic connections in all things) and 7 (connections based on psychoid archetypal nature) of Jung's astrological explanations based on the previous exploration in 2.2 and 2.3.

As a result, acausal orderedness seems to be a grander theoretical frame Jung used synthetically from different sources. Furthermore, he ambitiously attempted to incorporate this frame into two versions of synchronicity which derived from one version of his understanding of natal astrology (qualitative time), and the *I-Ching* (meaningful coincidence) (Jung, 1984, pp. 44–45; Greene, 2018a, p. 19). He partially failed due to his misunderstanding of statistics and unclear differentiation of issues hidden in his statistical experiment in natal astrology. He problematically believed the statistics can verify the existence of acausal orderedness.

However, his qualitative experiment which is considerably inspired by Hellmut Wilhelm's approach to *I-Ching* divination in his 1951 Eranos talk brought his hypopaper back to the experiential basis of meaningful coincidence (CWS: 986). It eventually leads to the acknowledgement of the 'final' version of synchronicity (as meaningful coincidence), the abandonment of the causal version of qualitative time, and acausal orderedness becomes a conjecture that might be implied by the experiential basis of meaningful coincidence in human experiences (Le Grice & Rossi [Ed], 2018, p. 183; CW18: 1175). Therefore, natal astrology plays an essential role in the whole process of Jung's conceptualization of synchronicity, though it confused Jung. His conceptualization of synchronicity is profoundly connected with his understanding of natal astrology, both practically and theoretically. It further led to complicated problems in his astrological experiment and his later theoretical construction.

The two components of Jung's astrological experiment highlight not only the experimental basis of synchronicity but also demonstrate how the different versions of his synchronicity problematically intersect with his understand-

ing of natal astrology. There are three versions of synchronicity that appear in his whole experiment: acausal orderedness, meaningful coincidence and qualitative time. If this is compared with his understanding of natal astrology, it is clear that these three versions of synchronicity are what Jung used for explaining natal astrology. Acausal orderedness of psychoid archetypes corresponds with the first and the seventh interpretation; natal astrology works as meaningful coincidence matches the third model; and natal astrology operates under the principle of qualitative time is the fifth one (Le Grice, 2018, pp. 143–149).

It is notable that from the beginning to the end, the idea of acausal orderedness is never tested directly in Jung's experiment. It can be only treated as a synchronistic conjecture derived from other parts of his theory.¹¹ In the statistical part, the causal model of synchronicity (qualitative time) was examined, and the result is not significant (CWS: 901). That may indicate that natal astrology does not work causally.¹² However, it seems Jung did not understand the meaning of this result and was confused by his problematic premise of statistics can verify if acausal orderedness exists in natal astrology (CWS: 823). It might be true that he never understood he actually examined the causal version of synchronicity (qualitative time) here and seemed to prove it is invalid.

After the insignificant result of the statistical research, he turned to test the alternative version or what he termed the narrower version of synchronicity—meaningful coincidence (CWS: 965). However, the qualitative experiment shows that at least in those three cases Jung tested, synchronicity as a meaningful coincidence might be true. It further leads to an inference of the archetypal meaning of astrological placements is meaningfully corresponding with the testees' psychological status (CWS: 900). By connecting the discovery of meaning in the qualitative experiment, Jung managed to connect the idea of synchronicity as a meaningful coincidence to support the acausal orderedness that may exist (CWS: 900). Thereby, this self-consistent version of synchronicity, i.e. the discovery of meaning in coincidental events becomes the version that is acknowledged by Jung in 1958 (CW18: 1175). In this model, acausal orderedness

11 For instance, it might be affected by the Pauli-Jung conjecture and the idea of *unus mundus* in medieval alchemy (Atmanspacher, H., & Fuchs, C.A. (Eds), 2014; Le Grice, 2018, p. 147).

12 This inference based on Jung's statistical research I made may not be exact, the reasons could be Jung's data has some problems and the statistical experiment itself is not able to conclude if natal astrology works (Samuels, 1985, p. 80; S. Myers, personal communication, August 4, 2022).

is no longer connected with causal relations problematically but rather relies on the discovery of meaning and further conjecture of a deeper structure of meaning.

3 Conclusion

In this paper, it can be postulated that the conceptualization of synchronicity is profoundly connected with Jung's understanding of astrology, and that Jung's engagement is very complicated and eventually confused him. It seems as if the problematic undifferentiation between the physical realm and the metaphysical realm brought the most significant issue in his astrological experiment. He used the causal model of qualitative time which derived from his understanding of natal astrology to verify the acausal orderedness beyond time (Greene, 2018a, pp. 18–23). Additionally, Jung was inclined to believe that the insignificant data indicates there is no acausal orderedness in natal astrology in his synchronicity essay (CWS: 827, 901). In fact, there is no connection between acausal orderedness and astrological order in time (qualitative time). Thereby synchronicity is: “the forms of psychic orderedness are *acts of creation in time*” rather than forms of physical orderedness (CWS:965). Thus the authentic significance of Jung's synchronicity for astrology is, that such transcendental order does not require any physical causality but does not reject it at the same time.

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