

**Jung and synchronicity: implications for
everyday life and psychotherapy**

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Throughout his life, Jung was led by a curiosity into the irregular occurrence of events which defied the 'natural' laws of science. Towards the latter part of his life, he developed the principle of 'synchronicity' to explain these. According to Jung 'synchronicity' designates the parallelism of time and meaning between psychic and psychophysical events which scientific knowledge had been unable to reduce to a common principle. Whilst the principle did not explain anything, it 'formulates the occurrence of meaningful coincidences which, in themselves are chance happenings, but are so improbable that we must assume them to be based on some kind of principle, or on some property of the empirical world.'

In this talk, I shall explore what inspired Jung to take up this theme which he pursued throughout his life culminating in eventual formulation of the principle of synchronicity. I shall then examine the complexity and profound implications of this notion, to show how findings in modern scientific disciplines support and amplify this pioneering work, which was implicitly pointing to a radically revised metaphysical position.

Practically, synchronistic events former a constant if irregular occurrence in Jung's work which for him were an expression of the individuation process. Recent advances in neuroscience, evolutionary psychology and trauma studies shed more illumination and validation for Jung's hypotheses, and show how, consciously opening to synchronistic appearances may help bring about personal transformation in our troubled age. This could lead to a revised theoretical framework and method for psychotherapists – in an understanding, that like synchronicity, cuts across time and space impelled by a movement towards greater wholeness.

A childhood of synchronicities and a journey towards wholeness

Jung was brought up in an environment conducive to his developing an interest in paranormal phenomenon – paranormal experiences were practically commonplace in his immediate and ancestral family. His mother wrote a diary exclusively dedicated to them. He would hear stories of uncanny happenings, such as dreams which foresaw the death of a certain person, clocks stopping at significant moments such as death, or glasses shattering at a critical moment. He himself underwent several of these experiences such as seeing nocturnal apparitions witnessing, tables cracking, and was greatly influenced by an early vision of seeing God defecate over the church at Basel.

The way he understood these for himself and his mother, was to posit the existence of a dual personality. Personality 1, the normal personality aimed at social integration, while personality 2 was ancient, deeply knowledgeable, and 'close to nature, ... to the night, to dreams, and to whatever "God" worked directly in him' (Main, 1997, p 2). One way of interpreting his life's work can be said to have been directed by the need to be able to integrate the experiences of Personality 2 within Personality 1's work in the theory and method of 20th science – and also some intuitive understanding that the wisdom of personality 2 could aid in the expansion and well-being of personality 1. It was this creative tension that underpinned the later articulation of the world of the archetypes, the existence of complexes, leading to the healing process of individuation: one of the major aims in this process being the bringing together of opposites and holding them within a creative tension in a path towards greater wholeness. Whilst at one level this was a personal exploration, it was symbolic of the path of humanity in the 20th century, as it has struggled to make meaning of the science-dominated world which it had created, and integrate this with earlier subjective/transcendental experiences which had become banished from culture.

These experiences formed a background for his entry into the field of psychiatry and his doctoral thesis 'On the Psychology and Pathology of so-called Occult Phenomena' which consisted of his observations at a series of séances in which he presented his findings in an optimally objective light.

Towards the principle of synchronicity

According to Main (1997), Jung's interest in synchronicity as a possible principle, developed more fully around the middle of the 1920s as he became more aware of meaningful coincidences in his practice, and also began his researches into the I Ching. Jung encountered many synchronistic events throughout his work, and noticed that they almost always accompanied periods of emotional intensity and transformation. The classic example of this is Jung's scarab story. Jung was treating a woman who was strictly stuck in a rational mood. After a number of frustrating sessions, the woman told Jung of a dream involving a scarab beetle. Jung knew that the scarab beetle represented rebirth, and wondered if

this meant she was about to change. He was just about to tell her this when something tapped on his window and he looked up to see a gold-green scarab at the window. This was the first time this had appeared, so he brought it in and showed it to her.

Jung believed that the archetype of rebirth had been activated by the patient's inability to see beyond her rationalism, by her need for psychic renewal. Implicit in his understanding is his understanding of synchronicity as an expression of the process of individuation furthered through compensation from the unconscious. In this case, it was only after the excessive rationalism from the conscious attitude had been compensated by a powerful irrational event of the synchronicity, could her process of transformation at last begin to move.

For Jung, as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, such events were regularly part of human experience, and for him it was imperative that such phenomena were explored:

'For in the last resort it is not so much a question of superstition as of a truth which remained hidden for so long only because it had less to do with the physical side of events than with their psychic aspects. It was modern psychology and parapsychology which proved 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 (Jung, 1955, p.119)

Scattered throughout his works are references to the notion of synchronicity but it was only towards the latter part of his life that he eventually brought his thinking on these issues together in a small book 'Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle'.

The words in the foreword testify to the challenges and difficulties he had in developing the idea:

'In writing this paper I have so to speak, made good a promise which for many years I lacked the courage to fulfill. The difficulties of the problem and its presentation seemed to me to be too great; too great the intellectual responsibility with which such a subject cannot be tackled; too inadequate, in the long run, my scientific training... my experiences of the phenomenon of synchronicity have multiplied themselves over the decades... As a psychiatrist and psychotherapist I have often come up against the phenomena in question and could convince myself how much these inner experiences meant to my patients. In most cases they were things which people do not talk about for fear of exposing themselves to thoughtless ridicule. I was amazed to see how many people have had experiences of this kind and how carefully the secret was guarded.' (Jung, 1950)

He summarises synchronicity as the occurrence of a meaningful coincidence in time which could have three forms:

A The coincidence of a certain psychic content with a corresponding objective process which is perceived to take place simultaneously

B 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

C 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

Whereas in the first place an objective event coincides with a subjective content, the synchronicity in the other two cases can only be verified subsequently, though the synchronistic event as such is formed by the coincidence of a neural psychic state with a phantasm (dream or vision).' (Jung, 1955 pp 144-5).

A collective feature of the events is that they tend to be accompanied by enhanced 'meaning' or affect – although Jung failed to clarify systematically his thoughts on meaning (Main, 1997). He does however state that ' by far the greatest number of synchronistic phenomena that I have had occasion to observe and analyse can easily be shown to have a direct connection with the archetype (Jung, 1955, p.89). Furthermore, someone experiencing a synchronistic event, of making a connection with a coming together of inner perception and outer experience undergoes a felt sense of participating in a 'act of creation' taking place in time – similar to the sensibility of religions based on individual experience of the manifest such as the Native American or ancient Egypt (Meier, 2001).

Towards a revised worldview

Underpinning his definition are the concepts of time, acausality, meaning and probability (Main, 1997). The notion of acausality flew in the face of scientific method. For science, in its 20th century form, had become exclusively the domain of the empiricist. In classic science, causality is the principle by which natural laws are derived, and the aim of scientific method is to remove any possible effects of the observer from the experiment. Natural laws are based upon the statistical probability of these events happening with regularity – they need to be able to be replicated within the bounds of statistical significance. Paranormal events, by their nature, move beyond normal time/space parameters, and are therefore not subject to statistical validation, and thus could not be ‘proved’ using traditional scientific measures. They do not meet the general laws of probability needed for verification in the scientific field.

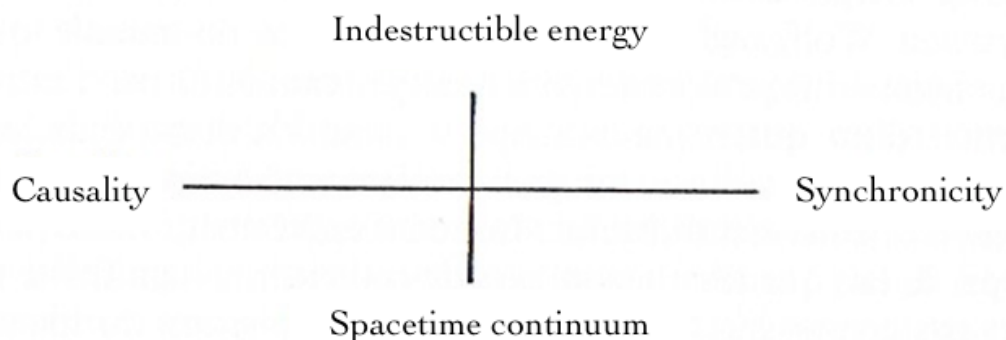
Since these events are characterised by both their psychic and physical aspects, and by their irregular appearance that crossed temporal boundaries, it was difficult to demonstrate their existence, and certainly find explanatory variables for them within the natural physical laws. Jung had discussed some of ideas with Einstein even before World War 1, and the ideas continued during the 20s and 30s through his long correspondence with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli. Throughout this period, discoveries in modern physics were showing that whilst natural physical laws held at the level of human senses, the behaviour of matter at micro levels, indiscernible to the human eye, changed in inexplicable ways – and at the level of the cosmos, space and time appeared to bend. The physical world was not, it seemed, as certain and predictable as Newtonian science would have had us believe.

Thus according to Jung:

‘Synchronicity is no more baffling or mysterious than the discontinuities of physics. It is only ingrained belief in the sovereign power of causality that creates intellectual difficulties and makes it appear unthinkable that causeless events exist or could ever occur ... Meaningful coincidences are thinkable as pure chance. But the more they multiply and the greater and more exact their correspondence, the more their probability sinks and their unthinkability increases, until they can no longer be regarded as pure chance, but, for lack of a causal explanation, have to be (p.141) .

So in order to explain synchronistic events, Jung was moving closer into the territory of physics. Whilst Pauli perceived physical knowledge as the meeting place of inner psychological images and outer facts, Jung extended from his psychic end into the spectrum of matter. The inclusion of subjectivity in quantum observation was seen as complementary to Jung’s assertion of the objective reality of the archetypes’ (Meier, 2001)

The summation of this work for Jung was to propose that synchronistic events were evidence of a basic principle of the same level of causality – and he demonstrated this on the following diagram:



Causality was characterized by constant connection, whilst synchronicity was characterized by inconstant connection through contingency, equivalence or meaning. He and the physicist Pauli, agreed that some additional principle other than causality was necessary to understand the nature of synchronicity – and that the psychic state of the subject was a possibility. Pauli wanted this to be included in the definition of synchronicity, but Jung resisted it, though he did agree that strong emotions played a facilitating role. Even whilst there is no apparent cause (which defies our Newtonian conditioning) the nature of these phenomena is that they do appear with some degree of regularity. If synchronicity is a modality without a cause, then how do we account for it? Jung went on to speak of

'absolute knowledge' as an *a priori* causally inexplicable knowledge of a situation, not mediated by sense organs. According to Haule, he seems to be saying that the unconscious, by its nature, is capable of knowing anything in the universe (Haule, 2011b, p. 74). Jung later accounted for this by saying that synchronicity could be understood both in a narrow and wider sense: 'synchronicity in the narrower sense is only a particular instance of general acausal orderedness – that namely of the equivalence of psychic and physical processes where the observer is in the fortunate position of being able to recognize the *tertium comparationis*' (i.e. the meaning by which the events are related) (Jung, 1955, p. 139)

What the nature of that meaning is open to question. But it does seem that in the registering of that meaning lies the importance of synchronicity, and also the implications for psychotherapy. Whilst synchronicity is always possible, it requires the exited archetypal situation in the observer. Jung was later to differentiate his concept of the archetype as transconscious – that is beyond psychic integration and thus forming the 'psychoid' layer. It is also just as much physical and psychic in nature. It becomes thus the unknowable structuring element in the collective unconscious – and arranges the registering of acausal events (Jaffe, 1968).

Even though, as we have seen, these events flew in the face of the world of scientific laws, Jung pointed out, the rationalistic view of the west is not the only one. Indeed it was only in the past two centuries that causality has occupied its traditional position in the West – the much older civilisation of the Chinese has always thought differently and in this tradition can accommodate the idea of synchronicity – indeed it may even be said to be based upon it. The concept of Tao pervades the whole of philosophical thought of China. As Jung quotes Lao Tsu :

*'There is something formless yet complete
That existed before heaven and earth
How still! How empty!
Dependent on nothing, unchanging
All pervading, unfailing
One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven
I do not know its name,
But I call it "meaning"
If I had to give it a name, I should call it "The Great"'*

In place of Western atomism, the Chinese begin with a holistic assumption. In the West, consciousness is understood as being completely foreign to matter, which is what makes it so impossible to imagine or explain the coincidence of psychic and physical phenomena. In the Chinese view, psychoid potential is latent in all things (Haule, 2011b, p.80) – and this understanding underpins the age-old divination tool, the I Ching. This is founded on the idea that everything that happens in a given moment has the same character, implicit at both a physical and psychical level. The oracle is consulted by carefully composing a question, then throwing either yarrow stalks or coins which produces a 'yin' or 'yang' cipher – a short line that is either continuous or broken. This is repeated six times and the resulting six lines constitute one of 64 hexagrams. One then ponders the commentary and serious practitioners will find that the practice brings new dimensions of the issue to mind. According to the Taoist philosophy that underpins the I Ching, everything that happens in the cosmos is a momentary expression of the ever-changing relation between the Tao's two constituents, yin and yang. At the moment of throwing, the coins represent the issue at hand, but set within a broader context which will help bring to consciousness aspects of a previously unexamined attitude.

Jung shows how, in the West, one would need to go back to Heraclitus to find something similar. Only in astrology, alchemy and the mantic procedures are there no differences of principle between the Western attitude and the Chinese. This is, Jung says, why alchemy is common to both East and West, and strove towards the same goal with more or less identical ideas.

Whilst Jung's work on synchronicity was clearly constantly evolving and somewhat unsystematic in terms of the levels of analysis and various definitions, it was a phenomenon that challenged the assumptions of modern science which has conditioned the Western mind to deny the existence of the so-called paranormal – and at the same time the potential existence of a deeper and more meaningful reality. But it was what lay at the heart of his work. He came to see the psyche as one force containing multiple perspectives, and psychic energy as a large field from one source, with two complementary

but not incompatible channels: the conscious and the unconscious. These exist between the subjective and objective, emerging from a mind-matter continuum that can only partially observe itself – and this Jung came to call ‘psychoid’. Matter and mind are both objective and subjective complementarities, and at the psychoid level are reflective of each other. It is in the flow of these complementarities and achieving balance between these, that can create meaningful and purposeful lives.

A similar move in physics

Whilst Jung was struggling with reconciling his experiences with the tenets of science, at the same time, as we have noted, physics itself was attempting to solve conundrums which at its most radical, was to point to the possibility of the existence of a world of meaning that incorporated both the psychical and the physical. Whilst the Newtonian laws that had created our world held good at a mid-level of inquiry there still existed problems at a macro and a micro level with phenomena which were technically, and interestingly beyond the scope of the human being’s individual senses. The mysteries of a quantum mechanics at a micro level puzzled physicists throughout the 20th century ; subatomic particles pop in and out of existence at lightening speed, whilst ‘paired’ particles at ‘impossible’ distances act as though they are communicating, though no influence can be transmitted fast enough to make communication possible. These were examples of issues of ‘non-locality’ and ‘action at a distance’ characteristics of synchronistic phenomena that Jung was discovering in psychology, but which fell outside the natural laws of physics.

Whilst the ultimate description of the universe had been discovered in the Schrodinger equation, the reality described by this equation was not what was expected: the comforting world of discrete particles vanished overnight into a chaos of disorder. Mainstream quantum physicists such as Neils Bohr accepted Schrodinger’s equation as a useful mathematical formula for predicting experimental results, but denied that this probability actually reflects a quantum reality (Agocs, 2005). This was science’s answer to the classic Zen conundrum: ‘If a tree is falling in a forest and there is no observer to the action – does the tree actually exist?’

This answer did not satisfy entirely the physicist David Bohm who later posited the existence of quantum potential which existed at a level below the quanta, and out of which all forms were to emerge. He felt that physicists went about things the wrong way by trying to fragment reality and saying that one separate thing, consciousness, interacts with another – a subatomic particle. Later this evolved into a radical new idea of wholeness. Rather than being the sum of its parts, the universe was a seamless holographic fabric of what he called an ‘implicate order’ out of which an explicate manifest would arise in one vast ‘holomovement’. Bohm suggested that an implicate (potential) universe is enfolded within the explicate (manifest), and it is only when consciousness (awareness) comes into contact with the implicate that it collapses into form or manifestation. In the explicate universe things seemingly act in a predictable way, but at times this changes, and then everything around it changes. For him the explicate, the implicate, the observer are one and the same: they co-emerge. What Bohm is describing here is a reality of constantly arising conditions where meaning can be found in both the mental and the physical aspects – akin to the universe of the ancient Chinese philosophers. This view is also that of the Buddha’s insight into the nature of reality, variously termed interdependent origination, conditioned co-production or in the Sanskrit *pratitya samutpada* (Rees, 2013). Bohm believes that consciousness is a more subtle form of matter, and is present in various degrees of enfoldment in matter. Animate and inanimate matter are interwoven and life too, is enfolded in the universe (Talbot, 1991).

Underlying Jung’s intuitions around the nature of synchronistic events was the possibility of a psychoid substrate which underlay all phenomena. Thus, Bohm too had arrived through physics at a similar understanding:

‘The notion of soma-significance implies that soma (or the physical) and its significance (which is mental) are not separate in the sense that soma and psyche are generally considered to be; rather they are two aspects of one overall indivisible reality’
(Bohm, quoted in Agocs, 2005).

And Bohm too, was to equate ‘meaning’ to be a critical part of this phenomena: So, just as Jung posited that ‘meaning’ was potentially associated with acausality, Bohm notes that:

Energy enfolds matter and meaning, while matter enfolds energy and meaning. Also, meaning enfolds both matter and energy. For whatever we may see and know of these, this has to be apprehended through its meaning... So, each of these basic notions enfolds the other two. It is through this mutual enfoldment that the whole notion obtains its unity (Bohm, quoted in Agocs, 2005).

Jung's persistence in exploring these phenomena was pointing towards a bridge between psychology and physics – a bridge which reached backwards in time to the reality imputed by ancient wisdom systems:

Jung's intuitions were later backed up by the complexity theorist and Nobel physicist Murray Gell-Mann, discoverer of the quark who wrote that: 'The effective complexity of the universe is... a concise description of its regularities...[It] receives only a small contribution from the fundamental laws. The rest comes from the numerous regularities resulting from "frozen accidents" Those are chance events of a which the particular outcomes have a multiplicity of long-term consequences, all related by their common ancestry' (Gell Mann, quoted in Meier, 2001)

He goes on:

'The consequences of some such accidents can be far-reaching. The character of the whole universe was affected by accidents occurring near the beginning of its expansion... The long-term consequence of such an event may take on the character of a law, at any but the most fundamental level. A law of geology, biology, or human psychology may stem from one or more amplified quantum events, each of which could have turned out differently.'

This feels very much like a deeper, absolute knowledge to which we referred earlier – something which our human minds cannot even begin to grasp. Just as Jung was pointing to a deeper reality, so modern physics is coming to embrace a far deeper and more complex universe, which is far less mechanical than the one which physicists had 'known ' at the end of the 19th century, when they felt that they had more or less mapped it out!

Whilst Pauli felt that Jungian psychology should be transformed into a philosophy, Jung saw his work as related much more to meaning – to mind and the feeling function. This for him was the specific value of psychology – where the meaningful but rather vague language of myth is more appropriate for the whole human being (von Franz, 1992).

For Jung, moving into the physical was a critical part of the psyche, but he constantly avoided the journey into an overriding metaphysics. His work is not the wild and woolly mystic that many scientists assume. The depth and prescience of his work in this area means that we are still unlocking its implications even today. For Peat 'Just as Einstein added time to space to produce the much deeper concept of space-time, so Jung proposed completing causality by adding a non-causal link. Certain patterns, he argued, are linked in non-mechanical ways to form a causeless order... its patterns are meaningful and echoed in both mind and matter' (Peat, 1991. p.17.18)

The individuation process and complexes

The central core of Jung's work lay in the articulation of the 'individuation process', which he considered to be central to human development, and provided a model of working in psychotherapy. For Jung, the psyche itself was not the same as the brain, but could be considered :
'...to be understood as a purposive system, as an arrangement not merely of matter ready for life, but of living matter, or more precisely as living processes which is ... dependent on the nervous system' (Jung, quoted in Haule, 2011a, p.82).

Further, the psyche did not just consist of a personal consciousness, it also contains a second psychic system which Jung labeled the collective unconscious:

'In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche...there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definitive form to certain psychic contents (Jung, 1991, p.43)

The centre of consciousness was an 'ego' with a capacity for overviewing and co-ordinating the different patterns of behavior. In the individuation process, a person works towards finding an authentic relationship with two collectivities: firstly the collective conscious – this is the public world, with all its assumptions and collective trappings –through developing a 'persona' or mask, and secondly with the collective unconsciousness – through the 'anima/animus' (Haule, 2011a , p.89). There is thus a continuous feedback loop between these elements. The anima/animus personifies everything that is not the ego, which is why Jung gave them a contra-sexual name. They can fascinate or terrify, be seductive or repulsive – depending on the family conditions and models into which the child is born.

The ego moves through time constantly mediating these different relationships – however often these archetypes are at odds with the personal consciousness. Early in Jung's career, he developed the concept of the 'complex' – for him a 'complex' meant a personal unconscious, core pattern of emotions, memories, perceptions, and wishes organized around a common theme. When an image arose that constellated the complex, this would take over the ego since it has such a strong degree of autonomy, and is no longer subject to the control of the conscious mind. It then acts like an animated body, within the usual sphere of consciousness.

A complex is an organized automatic response driven by a specific emotional state. It acts like an independent personality that may well be in conflict with the differently organized ego. When constellated it takes over the ego and reduces its critical reflective capabilities so that the person becomes limited to a stereotyped and constantly repeated perspective governed by old memories that have a quasi-traumatic character. This is not a cognitive experience, but can have a disordered feeling quality, and when the body is in the physiological state associated with that feeling a person's consciousness of the world outside and of the within is narrowed, and probably inaccurate – and perceptions of the situation at hand may become distorted. As long as a complex operates unchallenged, each episode of its dominance adds new memories that stabilise its powers and broaden its scope.

Thus a complex is an autonomous behaviour pattern that tended to take over and repeat itself leading to various degrees of dysfunction. When a complex was operating, it was out of relationship with this overall coordinating function, and could jeopardise the person's well-being. Furthermore, they were characterized by a strong emotional element which took over from the conscious functioning of the ego. However, for Jung, these complexes contained the key to healing as they were messages from the unconscious needing to be assimilated into consciousness and integrated with the ego.

In therapy, it is the complexes which will probably arise first as obstacles, but later in the process, this in this on-going relationship with the collective unconscious, the ego's knowledge of itself is gradually being adjusted. As a person takes in experience, through developing a conscious inner dialogue, it will process the experience, and begin to learn its relatively small role in the 'totality of the psyche' which Jung called the 'self' (Jung, quoted in Haule, 2011a, p. 89). So, the 'egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes and ambitions... has to be... corrected by unconscious counter-tendencies. Such a compensation does not follow a deliberate and concerted plan. It is rather a matter of the organic balancing of complementary processes. (Jung, quoted in Haule, 2011a, p. 89).

I have stressed the relatively autonomous nature of the complex in Jung's model, and since this by its nature tends to exist outside of the conscious, then by their nature, will require different methods than just talking in their integration. Again, by their nature, out of the conscious mind, they will often exist out of time, and therefore can potentially only be integrated through the constellation of the archetype. Bearing this in mind, we now turn to the methods developed by Jung in his practice.

Jung's working methods

Jung's early practice was very much guided by the aim of discovering the patient's complexes through talking and recovering the unconscious material. However, he began to realise that this was clearly quite optimistic. He soon began to realise that more than talking was necessary if there was to be real transformation. For real transformation to take place, there had to be a physiological or energetic transformation. He talked about consciousness as moving from one place to another, like a waterfall, or the flow of electrons in a battery. As he noted 'Psychic energy is a very fastidious thing... we cannot

make it serviceable until we have succeeded in finding the right gradient. “ (Jung, quoted in Haule, 2011a, p.145)

The power to find this gradient and effect movement is the archetype with its distinctly numinous character which Jung describes as ‘spiritual’ experience. When an archetype constellates: ‘they have a “specific charge” and develop numinous effects which express themselves as “affects”’. The affect produces a partial *abaissement du niveau mental*, for although it raises a particular content to a supernormal degree of luminosity, it does so by withdrawing so much energy from other possible contents of consciousness that they become darkened and eventually unconscious... thus we find that unexpected or otherwise uninhibited unconscious contents break through and find expression in the affect. Such contents are very often of an inferior or primitive nature and thus betray their archetypal origin. (Jung, 1955, p. 29).

Jung’s way of working with complexes was by use of the ‘active imagination’. In this state, there is an *abaissement du niveau mental* – or lowering of the level of consciousness in which case it is possible for contents of the unconscious to emerge. Jung likened this to yogic concentration. He insisted that this conscious effort was essential since archetypes have the ability to withdraw energy from the contents of consciousness. By working in this way, he actively encourages archetypes to arrive in the consulting room through the patient, or the conversation, but he himself retains what we might call a ‘dual awareness’ which would enable the client to experience and perhaps describe the contents of the archetype without being overwhelmed by them. For Jung, experiencing an archetype is the key to psychological transformation; for only the compellingly emotional downhill flow of instinctual energy is capable of ‘producing extensive alterations in the subject’. (Jung, quoted in Haule, 2011a, p.146).

Once surfaced, the task of the therapist is to guide the patient through this repressed material, so that it becomes more integrated within the ego process. What had played out as a hidden internal conflict is now available for greater freedom. However, these are tricky waters, and it is critical that the client does not identify with the archetype leading to inflation, or become overwhelmed by the archetype, leading to despair. The client learns to hold both opposites in a creative tension – leading to an ultimate change in state or point at which the psychic energy carves out a different channel of expression. This was what was described in alchemy as the ‘marriage of the opposites’.

Jung is at pains to point out that this is not evoked by a conscious act of will. As he says: ‘experience shows that it is activated, independently of the will, in a psychic situation that needs compensating for by an archetype’. (Jung, letter, 1960, quoted in Main, 1997).

Since the client may well refer to events that are out of the current time, Jung would be able to help the client come to a different conscious understanding and retain a real perspective of what is happening in real time. The whole process is one that is consciously creating the conditions in which the archetype may arise. If the event is experienced consciously by the client and registered in memory, then an irreversible change takes place, such that the normal structures of consciousness no longer form the habitual patterns of behavior: transformation has taken place – a new psychic gradient has been created.

Jung’s notion of an individuation process can be considered to be a critical framework for integrating more and more of the unconscious contents so that they become available as and when necessary in a broadened field of presence and awareness. The final outcome of a fully individuated individual would be one where the individual would be living a fully embodied, undivided life. Ego would be watching, experiencing, recording and making all the right decisions because, in some way or another, ego would be in intuitive connection with the wholeness of self. (Haule, 2011a, p.93)

If we take into account Jung’s understanding of the psychoid layer, then we can see that individuation would mean finding greater and greater balance between the energies that make up the psyche. By working explicitly with these energies, synchronistic events are likely to be very much part and parcel of the therapy process. Active imagination, by its nature, takes energy from the conscious and invites in the material from the unconscious, thus providing conditions for a sufficient gradient to arrive for the unexpected revelation that can make sense of a person’s life.

The structures of consciousness

Whilst Jung inferred the existence of complexes, and the mode of their resolution later developments in neuroscience and evolutionary psychology and trauma studies provide supportive data for the physiological counterpart of synchronistic events – and a guide for developing methods in the therapy situation.

Evolutionary psychologists argue that evolutionary mechanisms are visible in the brain anatomy. They proposed that the human brain has an anatomical structure showing it to be the end product of a long evolutionary process of several layers. The 'triune' brain model is based on extensive examination of comparative neuroanatomy across a large number of vertebrate species. The lowest layer contains the brain stem and basal ganglia, structures highly conserved across all vertebrates from reptiles to humans, known as the reptile brain contain basic instinctive tendencies and primitive survival plans. On top of this evolved the 'mammalian brain' conserved in all mammals and conserved to a limited extent in birds which contains the limbic system consisting of functionally related brain structures: it is generally agreed upon that this is the 'emotional brain'. This system processes information from the internal organs and senses and evaluates them for emotional significance. Then it responds with emotional states that influence blood pressure and hormone levels. Evolving still later is the new mammalian brain which consists of the cerebral cortex. This is involved in logic and higher problem solving abilities.

The further one goes down the more closed the processing system, and it is claimed, most of what happens in the brain is unconscious. Thus LeDoux states:

Consciousness... very likely developed in the brain recently in evolutionary history, layered on top of all the other processes that already existed. Unconscious operation of the brain is thus the rule rather than the exception throughout the evolutionary history of the animal kingdom... they include almost everything the brain does from standard body maintenance like regulating heart beat, breathing rhythm, stomach contractions, and posture, to controlling many aspects of seeing, smelling, behaving, feeling, speaking, thinking, evaluation, judging, believing and imagining. (p.18)

Consciousness thus rests upon a mighty edifice of many layers of unconscious processes that minimally depend upon it, meaning they act with relative autonomy. The brain acts as a co-ordinating mechanism sending and receiving messages from the senses through the central nervous system and the endocrine system – most of which happens out of consciousness.

Ruptures in consciousness: trauma patterns

One of the earliest of these autonomic patterns in phylogeny is the fight and flight mechanism. This is the mechanism which shuts down any cognitive reflections, when a person or animal is in a life-threatening situation. This mechanism is not a planned, deliberately thought-out reaction, but a rapid-fire, automatic, total body response. It goes through various stages and, under natural conditions in the animal world, it provides a life-saving, mechanism. When a person or animal faces a potentially life-threatening situation, its first response at a physiological level is to move from a relaxed state to an active alert state, with a heightened alertness, orienting itself to danger. If this danger increases, then the fight or flight response kicks in. This is mediated through the autonomic nervous system which consists of the sympathetic and parasympathetic elements. The sympathetic nervous system will surge: metabolism dramatically increases, and the body becomes flooded with chemicals which override the immune system. This is the mobilisation response, and the body will take action. If the danger goes away, then a further flood of endorphins may arise, and it returns to the relaxed state. It has escaped danger, and was not traumatised by the experience. If, it seems that there is no escape, then the parasympathetic nervous system comes into action and takes over from the sympathetic nervous system, and other neurohormones are released. This will lead to collapse, and the consciousness dissociates from the sensations in the body: its psyche will dissociate from its soma and sensations, and the body becomes immobilised and frozen. Now both nervous systems are surging, and the energy from the sympathetic nervous system, which cannot be expressed in flight, literally implodes inwards, and keeps cycling. In nature, most mammals will then go through a process of releasing the increased hormones from its system. It clears the cycling energies by action, shifting from a frozen state to an expression of its defensive energies. We can see this in nature when an animal has escaped from a predator: for example in the bucking of an antelope if it has escaped being eaten by a lion. The animal has survived, come successfully out of shock, and discharged the imploding energies.

Human beings are often not as successful in processing traumatic experience as other mammals. This is due to the complexity of the nervous system and the thinking mind coming in too quickly, leaving the effects unprocessed. Thus cultural and family conditioning may say 'You should be able to handle that' or 'Pull out of it'. An example of how this may happen is after a car accident where those involved are not allowed to shake and shiver, or cry, which is the body's attempt to rid itself of these hormones. When the shock is not fully processed then a person becomes traumatised. The person ends up cycling both sympathetic and parasympathetic energies, producing a high volume of stress-related hormones. These continue to recycle until they are resolved. Psychological, emotional and pathological processes will become coupled with these states.

Once a person has experienced a situation in which they have been helpless, unless they are able to release cycling hormones, then it is possible that they can become fear-conditioned to anything that may provoke what we perceive as a similar situation. Because of the vast associational network of the brain, fear can become paired with anything, and anything that resembles the original traumatic event may trigger that fear again. Later the person is not usually consciously aware of how they may become triggered by similar situations, and may lead a life that is either limited or characterized by further trauma, as their fight and flight response is compromised (Rees and Smith). They may not, for example, be as aware of oncoming danger as they have not been given a warning system, and will constantly find themselves in further traumatising conditions. The fight and flight bypasses the frontal cortex (the new mammalian brain) and someone may well shake and shiver, see images of things from the past which can take on a life of their own. In short, the experience they have is literally 'out of time', the images that they 'see' are those of the memory, and not of the present, such that their perception of what is happening is out of kilter with reality.

When gone untreated, such a condition develops into post-traumatic stress disorder, where the person may be constantly triggered by events in the outside world that remind them of the original event. This leads to misreading of situations, flashbacks, emotional shut-down – the person will do anything not to remember the original situation – but the unconscious is constantly pushing through by its physiological mechanisms,

Trauma and the development of complexes Complexes will develop as a result of chronic trauma in childhood. We are learning more and more the effect of physical, emotional and intellectual deprivation. When a child is growing up, they are completely dependent upon the adults around for their survival: if the parents or care-givers are not able to give the child adequate emotional, physical and intellectual stimulation, then the child is in a potentially life-threatening situation, and so the child may constantly live with the fight and flight mechanism up and running. It will develop different strategies to cope with this situation. It may dissociate from its environment (through the parasympathetic nervous system); or it may develop its own violent behaviours (through the sympathetic system) which are then acted out in the environment. As the care-givers are thus perceived as potentially dangerous, it may internalize values such as 'It must be my fault – I must be bad' in order to appear to make the care-givers appear safe, thus reducing the overwhelm of the fight and flight. This later develops into what Jung would have called a complex, for example a view that says 'It must be my fault' would manifest as a martyr complex, and someone with this would constantly take responsibility for other people's damaging behaviours.

These archetypal emotions of fear and rage with their own autonomy and narratives, which become suppressed or acted out, since they have not been processed by the conscious ego. This may erupt later as neurosis, or even psychosis as the physiologically-based emotions become overwhelming. The complex has become part of the lower layers of the psyche, deeply buried in the unconscious.

When an archetype does constellate, the person experiencing it may undergo a numinous or alternatively terrifying experience – which has both physical and psychological components. The body may tremble or shake, and at the same time, the psyche may fall into an 'altered state' from the normal pathways through which the present is experienced. Since the archetypal emergence is processed through the reptilian and limbic system, the release of chemicals that affect the nervous system and brain means that the event is accompanied by a strong emotion. We have seen how when an archetype is constellated, the frontal cortex (the new mammalian brain) which is responsible for critical reflection and judgement, is bypassed so that the experience then appears to take place outside of time and often cannot be verbalized. It is also out of a consensual reality. That person has entered a different

state of consciousness wherein the body and its emotions have taken over the normal processing of experience within a generally agreed moment in time and space.

Generally, the person has developed a series of defensive strategies to try and avoid these overwhelming states: these may appear as compulsive behaviour, addictions, dependent behaviour, or the person may be locked into a very controlled life in order not to meet the chaos of the triggered emotions. It may also lead to split personalities, when the complex begins to take over, and ultimately, at best restricted personal and professional relationships and at worst serious mental illness or violence.

Conscious cultivation of altered states of consciousness: mastering the fight and flight mechanism

We could say then, that a complex lies below the surface of the new mammalian brain, and develops through lack of adequate emotional, physical or intellectual support in childhood, and at its extreme can lead to mental illness. One of the characteristics is that it has an overwhelming physiological counterpart that takes over the normal cognitive functioning – this bypasses the new mammalian part of the brain. Healing takes place through a parallel constellation of an archetype strong enough to create a new channel of connections that will bring the new mammalian brain (front cortex) into action, and connect up all three layers of the brain. This requires the constellation of an archetype which is a constant possibility and evolutionary constant. The archetype-as-potential exists in the earliest evolutionary part of the brain. When this is constellated, then the effect can be said to be an altered state of consciousness which by their nature are out of consensual time and space (and hence can also be called synchronistic). If the strong energy of this interaction is contained and held by a witness, then transformation takes place.

Most evolutionary psychologists would agree that altered states of consciousness are ‘incomprehensible unless they also confer advantageous survival benefits’ (Hayden, 2003, p. 21 Haule, p. 1671) Altered states of consciousness are an integral part of human experience and may well be a necessary part of human health and community. The oldest form we know of are shamans who appear cross-culturally, from the jungles of South America, through to the aborigines of Australia, and those of Siberian. They will cultivate ‘trance’ states to evoke energetic responses in the body. Through shamanising, an individual repeatedly activates deep neurocognitive structures at a level below theoretical and operational thinking.

It would seem that this works through a conscious manipulation of the different levels of the psyche to create archetypal experiences. Physiologically, they can be said to be ‘tuning’ the autonomic nervous system – that is they are consciously provoking the fight and flight response through physical ritual such as drumming, movement which firstly harnesses the sympathetic nervous system. This means that they maintain a degree of ‘ego’ consciousness as they traverse the different regions of the unconscious. Finally, the parasympathetic system will begin to work, such that both the sympathetic and parasympathetic are working in parallel, which would produce a collective euphoria. A shamanic ceremony evokes endorphin release which alters autonomic nervous system balance and generates an emotional charge. These same endorphins are those of the mother-infant, and lover-lover interaction, to be found in the earlier instinctual and mammalian parts of the brain. These energies, as we have seen, bypass the frontal cortex which gives space for critical reflection, and emerge from the more ancient part of the brain to create these archetypal experiences.

This realigns neural networks in individuals so that each member of the group’s patterning aligns so the group learns habitually to act collectively for the survival of the group. This fosters social interaction, play and the safety of having a place in society: the archetypal image becomes aligned with a physiological response which hardwires the group neural pathways.

Thus, according to Haule, the collective consciousness and mythscape evoked ‘serves as a bridge between the iconic and the verbal rational levels by including elements of both domains’ (Haule, 2011b).

For a shaman to do this work, he or she will have had to face a life-threatening situation that has accustomed him to the strong energies of the fight and flight mechanism. Thus ‘training’ for a shaman will almost always consist of a period of life-threatening illness, out of which they emerge with the ability to visit different realms (or areas of consciousness) and bring back wisdom and healing. To do so, he first has to navigate dangerous phases of consciousness – and in this risks permanent

disassociations in their personality, but this process takes place within a social context that is understood.

Other traditions also learn consciously how to control these strong states. In the Buddhist tradition, this is done through meditation, by slowing down the body enough to begin to learn to see the constant arising and relationship between thought processes, emotions and predispositions. In the early Buddhist tradition this would be done by sitting meditation, where the practitioner is not stirring up the sympathetic nervous system, but is attempting to arouse the parasympathetic which could then lead to states of bliss and so-called emptiness. In later Tibetan Buddhism, in contrast, there are many practices which may also stir up the sympathetic nervous system. For example, the Chod practice in which the practitioner imagines himself slaying various part of his ego. Or the meditation in charnel grounds where a practitioner learns to face up to her fear of death. One of the key channels in the Tibetan system are the 'nadis' – or subtle channels which cannot be seen but through which the practitioner will trace energetic movement – the centres of the nadis are the 'chakras', and these typically control various emotional states of being. The aim of the practitioner will be to be able to sense when these chakras have become open or closed and to work with this in meditation. There would seem to be a parallel between the nadis and the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system.

In both these areas, the nervous system is being tuned in order that the trained ego can seek out the unconscious patternings that imprison the ego to habituated behaviour, and thus limit action. The consciousness that searches for these hidden networks, is not the ego –for this it must be the ego of the active imagination, that has relinquished the idea of being in charge. By withdrawing from everyday consciousness and redirecting attention to the meditative field of active imagination this permits images to emerge from our 'mood'. Husserl was to call this the 'transcendental ego', as would Steiner call this the 'Ego'. This is a sense of being that transcends the desires, ambitions, drives, fears of the small 'ego' and keeps it in conformity with the collective. It is also that which blocks the flow of energy around the body.

Common to all these approaches is a sense of 'timeless' space. It is in such practices and situations that synchronistic experiences are far more likely to arise, as both are opening to a 'field' that contains both psychical and physical phenomena, that provide 'meaning' and hence potential for transformation – in the sense that the neural pathways have been permanently changed.

The energies of the fight and flight mechanism, which arise in the earliest part of the brain, are drawn into alignment with the emotional and cognitive areas, thus bringing the three areas of the brain into a sense of wholeness – and producing a sense of unitive 'bliss' and from which the person may make 'meaning' and open up to a whole new perspective on life.

To bring this back to Jung and the notion of synchronicity, we could say that this is also the world of the Tao. As Jung notes in his book on synchronicity: 'Chuang-tzu (a contemporary of Plato's) says of the psychological premises on which Taoism based: "The state in which ego and non-ego are no longer opposed is called the pivot of Tao" (Jung, 1955,p. 99). It is an expression of the implicate and explicate world. Meaning has arisen in a sense of wholeness. It is the *unus mundi* that Pauli and Jung described as part of a synchronistic event. It is an expression and experience of belonging.

The implications of synchronicity for modern life and therapy

What I have been pointing to so far has been the status attributed to synchronicity as a universal principle. If we accept this as a background to our reality, then that has great implications for how this is worked with in therapy. Jung was working at a time when psychology was just laying down its foundations, mapping out putative models of the psyche and relating these to patterns of human development and behavioural psychology. Like many scientific disciplines, this was based on unquestioned assumptions of the way the world was, using the natural laws of the physical world.

Jung came to the study of synchronicity partially as a result of his own experiences, and a desire to find a place for them within the scientific tradition. The notion of synchronicity as illuminated by Jung was pointing not just to a phenomenon, but to a phenomenon that had been deeply enshadowed by the assumptions of science and human progress in the West. He was pointing to a reality that had been suppressed by the advance of science and technology, which would not allow into culture any phenomena that was not explicable within the measurable limits of time and space, and which

ostensibly lay outside the human organism. His search for a place for this within the modern pantheon of science was symbolic of bringing into light aspects of human experience that could not be explained by mechanistic systems that have now come to dominate our world. The 'splitting off' of God from culture and structure meant that the human species in the West was cut off from meaning – and it is meaning that gives the human energy to live. The epidemic of mental health issues may well be attributed to the 'cutting' out of so much experience – as may the violence that is acted out in different parts of the world. Lack of meaning has become the collective complex of a globalized humanity.

Jung was pointing to, and illuminating pathways to greater consciousness which was not simply about dealing with neuroses, but also with the seed of collective pathologies that are just now emerging. Even though so-called parapsychological events are considered the realm of the sick, the mad or the feeble, neuroscience, evolutionary biology, physics are having to grapple with findings that run counter to the very bedrock of science's assumptions. Simply because science pushes out of consciousness these phenomena does not mean that they do not exist. The lack of any metaphysics has led the lack of a collective value set, and this has passed through conditioned collective pathways into a subtle but very real psychological and emotional collective sickness.

Most therapists today will have encountered, uninvited or not, synchronistic experiences within their therapy rooms. This short essay has seen that archetypes and complexes contain the depths of our potential as human beings. They are what helps us make meaning of our lives: and without meaning we can only just survive. When witnessed and worked with, they can illuminate our lives. They are not just theoretical images or symbols: they are both the image and the physiological counterpart, which have a very real place in our everyday life. They are layered within our evolutionary heritage, and shape the course of our lives, consciously or unconsciously. The constellation of any archetype is above all a typical emotional body state, which includes cortical and limbic changes in the brain, the alternation of the autonomic nervous system balance, the dispatch of hormones and neuromodulators, bodily posture, facial expression and physical movement. It takes place out of time. Symbols are the brain's interpretation of the bodily state – and if paid attention to, then healing becomes possible. We can learn to work with these individually, in the joint practice of our therapy room, and within our group settings. This means consciously creating the conditions in which the archetypes can emerge – and a critical part of that is for the therapist to know this territory. They will not know the particular instances of the archetypes as they present for the clients, but will be familiar with the strength of the archetypal patterns to be able to support the client in containing them. Part of the role is thus training themselves in developing and mastering altered states of consciousness so that they can ultimately, transmit the techniques of the training to the client or group – so that they themselves can work with this dynamic within themselves and their everyday lives. The value of these is already being seen in the adoption of various mindfulness methods – but to date they have not necessarily been aligned with a consensual metaphysical position which has created much confusion in this area.

Whilst I have attempted to explore synchronicity within the findings of physics and neuroscience, I am not using this as mechanism for reducing or constraining the experience of the archetype. For that experience goes beyond any work of language, and that includes the parameters of the scientist. We are as a species constantly evolving, working within mysterious and unknown territory – the movement into the unknown is the movement towards growth – and growth implies a loss of the ego and identification with that ego. Jung had the courage, supported by his own experience, to move beyond the conventional and take his exploration out into uncharted territory. This support for his views from physical and biological sciences places science in its rightful context (that is alongside the paranormal) and can help shift the theoretical perspectives of psychotherapy.

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Appendix 1: Personal examples of synchronistic phenomena

Workshop in East West Sanctuary, Hungary

Theme of workshop: Chiron and his relationship to modern day healing

The theme of this day was to look at the relationship of the discovery of the asteroid Chiron to a possible emergent new worldview. I was working with a small Hungarian group, some of whom were meditators, others quite new to the process. I began with a talk about the myth of Chiron, and particularly the synchronistic discovery of this planet/asteroid at a time when many thinkers and activists are suggesting that we are at a time of moving into a new consciousness. I suggested that transformation, in emotional and psychological terms, can only take place, when we are prepared to meet deeper elements of our unconscious, and surrender ourselves to the messages that are contained therein. My suggestion, was, that if we are to transform, or evolve consciousness, then we will be opening to entering into this place of perceived fear .

I began the day with a small talk on the myth of Chiron.

Chiron is an asteroid or small planet that was discovered in 1977. It has an elliptical path, and can be likened to the outsider, or the wanderer. Chiron is known as ‘the wounded healer’, and its implication in the astrological archetypes, is that this is where we hold our deepest wounding , that which is most damaged, and therefore that area where we hold the most deeply embedded defensive patterns.

Chiron is the son of Cronus and Philyra. Cronus found Philyra while looking for his baby son, Zeus, whom his wife Rhea had concealed from him, as he constantly devoured their offspring. Philyra changed herself into a mare to try and escape from him. Cronus turned himself into a horse, and thus succeeded in mating with her. A child was born who had the body and legs of a horse, and the torso and arms of a man. She was so disgusted that she pleaded to be changed into anything, and was turned into a Linden tree. Chiron was abandoned, later to be found by Apollo who taught him many skills of healing and the arts.

Chiron had a relationship with the Centaurs, mythical beasts who were half human and half horse. Chiron is sometimes their ancestor, sometimes their priest and ruler. One of the central themes in the myth of Chiron is the conflict between the civilised and the uncivilised. The theme is that of the rejected instincts which is shared by many in our society. It has at its heart the notion of abandonment, which I would argue is the pathology of our times, as we have become out of relationship with ourselves.

Chiron turned into a great healer, astrologer and an oracle, and teacher of great heroes including Achilles and Asclepius. The myth of his death was particularly pertinent to what happened at this workshop. Chiron gave his death as a tribute to mankind. He gave himself so that Prometheus could be released to offer fire to mankind. This was done so that humankind could learn to use power in the right way. In the process of obtaining fire, Chiron had to die. This took place when a poisoned arrow of Hercules fell on his leg. Chiron spent nine days attempting to heal himself with herbs, but did not succeed. Thus Chiron gave his life for the greater good of humanity.

After the talk on Chiron, I led a Kum Nye Body meditation. Kum Nye is an ancient Tibetan yoga practice, which invites awareness to stuck energy patterns in the body. This particular exercise was called ‘Flying’, and consisted of sitting, evoking the field energies, and then standing and raising the arms to above one’s head, as slowly as possibly, and then slowly lowering the arms. This , as with other Kum Nye exercises, is potentially transformative, but also physically and emotionally rather challenging.

When we had a feedback after this practice one of the participants remarked that this practice was one which helped one understand the nature of death. I agreed, but invited him to say more about his comment. He said that the movement itself enabled one to slip into death-like states, and that this had brought to his attention the fact that he had visited an old friend who was dying the day before. I asked

how he was now, and he explained that he was aged around 60 and had undergone surgery which had gone wrong, so as a homeopath had decided not to have any more conventional treatment.

This felt like an important field energy, so I asked the rest of the group to place their attention upon the man named Sylvester, who lived in a village a couple of hundred miles away. We did this, and we imagined him letting his spirit go.

That lunchtime, a call came from the friends of Sylvester to say that he had died that morning. Later, I learned that Sylvester had become poisoned by the surgery, but as a homeopath, had then decided that he no longer wanted any allopathic treatment, and so allowed himself to die. Most synchronistically, the surgery had been in his leg, thus evoking with immense precision, the death of Chiron. So, on this initiatory day of Chiron, we had an archetypal and actual Chiron experience enter the field, providing healing and connection for all of us.

For me, this was the most clear pointer of the power of the field to yield up symbolic and healing truths if we can only turn our mind to listening to what is being subtly vibrated. Further, this was our first 'archetypal psychotherapy' course, and Roland, the astrologer, who was also the friend of Sylvester, was also keenly open to these archetypal energies. By bringing other attention to bear on this, the field can offer up 'synchronistic' events that harmonise and strengthen collective energies.

The talk had evoked both the crumbling of our civilization and death, and the archetype of the wounded healer as a bridge. We cannot say that one event caused the other – but by bringing our consciousness to bear on the particular phenomenon, it provoked a field resonance out of which archetypal energies emerged.

I later discovered other synchronicities with aspects of the Chiron myth that took place on that day. One of the other characteristics of transits of Chiron is that long-forgotten memories, repressed pain or traumatic memories may be reactivated, in order for reintegration of mind and body to take place. According to Reihart (1989)

Unconsciously I had also decided to work with Chiron, later to learn that it stimulates the process of initiation and leads towards a new beginning, a psychological rebirth which was what I had opened to. All this became present to us in this session, and gave an auspicious start to the astrological psychotherapy school.

Conversation with astrologer Barry Goddard

I was planning a day's workshop around working with archetypes and we happened to be discussing the archetype of the planet Mars as the warrior energy. He was just in the process of talking about what that meant for him, when both his phone rang as did mine. For me, the caller was an ex-lover who had particularly strong male energies, and for Barry, he was being called away to deal with a potentially dangerous situation of a friend of his, and the possibility of violence. It was as though the archetype of Mars had appeared in the chaotic energies that constellated around this conversation.

Workshop at Waterbeach, Cambridge

I was hosting a day's workshop on family constellations which was being run by a colleague of mine. Family constellations therapy is based around working with the field energy of the dynamics of family systems, and often does constellate the emotional energy of the field of current and even deceased family members. On this particular occasion, a woman had evoked her mother's experiences in the Blitz, and the person representing the mother was talking about the sounds and night fires of the Blitz, and the fear this brought up. At that moment, there was a noise of sirens outside and the doorbell was rung. Three men appeared in some type of uniform, and outside there was flashing lights, two enormous lorries and many of the neighbours out on the street. It transpired there was some type of emergency with water, and the men were checking if I had a problem. It was the first and only time that this had happened in my house which I had lived in for 22 years and was on a quiet Saturday afternoon. It was literally as though the Blitz had been conjured out of nothing.

The call of the past: musical revelations

As a child, my mother had not allowed me to play the piano, as it was considered that I would not be able to make any money out of this. I dearly wanted to do this, and had an aunt in North Wales who

was a piano teacher, and she had wanted us to have her piano. My mother did not allow this. Later in life, I taught myself, and found myself one day playing a Bach prelude. As my fingers touched the keys I thought to myself that this was the first time that I had really felt the music come to life – I managed to connect emotionally in a way that had not been possible.

As it happened, my mother and father retired to North Wales, and ended up living in the bungalow in which my Auntie Florrie had lived. After my father's death, my mother asked me to try and clear out the cellar in the bungalow. This was on three levels, and one negotiated the lower and lower levels of ceiling. At one point I came across several boxes of sheet music left by my aunt. I opened this up, and low and behold, a book fell open at precisely that piece of music! It is difficult to describe the excitement, shivering that accompanied this revelation.

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