SYNCHRONISTIC DESTINY

A Philosophical Inquiry into C.G. Jung's Depth Psychology

Master's Thesis

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Dedicated to my grandparents Gerrit and Ineke, without whose support I could not have finished this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

While one goes about conducting one's life, one sometimes experiences these remarkable events that make one reflect on one's destiny. These experiences can be positive: recently out of work, one "coincidentally" encounters a job opening that perfectly fits one's job experience and skill set. At other times, the experiences work negatively, steering one away from disaster: because one spills coffee over one's shirt, one "coincidentally" misses the bus that one later learns got into a fatal traffic accident. Human lives are riddled with such puzzling experiences that make one call out: 'it was meant to be!' or 'it must be destiny!' The concept of destiny seems to be most regularly invoked in everyday life at the moments when events are so "coincidental" that it gives one at least the *impression* that they were pre-ordained by some mysterious, transcendent force or principle. Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung proposes the synchronicity principle to explain such phenomena. Can synchronicity be considered the master key to destiny?[1]

'Synchronicity' and 'destiny' are two concepts that may seem elusive at first sight, but which are possibly intimately involved in the life of the individual. I will argue that there exists a special relation between the two as they are connected in experience. In this thesis, the concern is not whether destiny is ontologically possible as were it some material structure, but how it is possible that individuals can have an experience of destiny as a personally meaningful knowledge about one's life course. This largely phenomenological inquiry underlies my main research question: what are the implications of C.G. Jung's depth psychology, and his synchronicity principle in particular, for the personal significance and attainability of destiny?

In chapter one, I will use the psychologist Bargdill's historical analysis of the destiny concept as a starting point. I will highlight the epistemological characteristics of the concept of 'destiny' and discuss the problems that arise when attempting to consider its meaningful dimensions from a causal framework. The prevailing principle of causality, as constant conjunction between states that follow each other as cause and effect, seems inadequate to consider the question why destiny is experienced

[1] Progoff, I. (1973). *Jung, Synchronicity, and Human Destiny*. New York: Dell Publishing Co. 1982, 15.

as personally meaningful. As I will argue, the necessarily subjective nature of destiny contradicts with the norm of objectivity that the principle of causility seems to demand.

Next, I will propose an alternative framework, that is, Jung's synchronistic framework. The principle of synchronicity allows for the combination of events without any mutual connection allowed by a causal chain in such a way that they come together at the required moment, so that these events are suitable to the course of the individual's life. Synchronicities, or meaningful co-incidences, often create important junctions in our lives or may even obstruct the conscious plans we have made for our lives. As such, synchronicity and destiny seem to be related concepts. From the synchronistic viewpoint, it may be possible to reach a clearer conception of the life destiny of the individual.

In chapter two, I will elaborate on Jung's theoretical framework and consider the epistemological status of synchronistic experiences. To understand destiny on the basis of the synchronicity principle, it is essential to first clarify the principle and the theoretical framework in which it is formulated. Summarily stated, the theory that Jung proposes is that synchronistic experiences can bring to light archetypical 'patterns' that act as a guiding force to the individual throughout one's life. I will argue that, in synchronistic experiences, one may arrive at a form of hermeneutical knowledge.

Finally, in chapter three, I will discuss the implications of the latter for destiny, or how synchronistic experiences may provide a hermeneutical framework from which one can interpret one's life course. To make the connection between synchronicity and destiny, I will ground both in Jung's concept of the individuation process, or the personal journey of transformation that every individual undergoes, either willingly or unwillingly. Becoming conscious of synchronistic phenomena, I will argue, can allow one to advance in one's individuation, giving one self-knowledge and the agency to be the captain of one's own ship as one travels toward one's life's destination.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING DESTINY

In this first chapter, I will argue that there is an intimate relation between the concept of destiny and the principle of synchronicity, as introduced by C.G. Jung. I will start by investigating the concept of destiny, drawing on a historical comparative analysis from psychologist Richard Bargdill, who distinguishes it from its related concept fate.[2] I will show what destiny is and why it is important to every individual. I will focus on Greek myth and two modern thinkers, José Ortega y Gasset and Arthur Schopenhauer.

Next, I will discuss the limits of a purely causal framework in understanding destiny. I will give a brief reflection on the principle of causality, understanding it foremost as a functional relation between temporally subsequent events or states. Causal conceptions of destiny all seem to run into the problem of not being able to account for the meaningful, subjective, dimension of destiny, or for its singularity. Therefore, it may be informative to consider an alternative, acausal principle. For this acausal principle, I will turn to Carl Jung's thoughts on synchronicity. Synchronicity is a principle that is meant for interpreting a specific type of a-causal events: meaningful co-incidences.[3] I will introduce Jung's principle and argue that these meaningful co-incidences – 'co-incidences' as distinguished from regular 'coincidences' – can and often do form important junction points in a person's life. I will argue that this shows that they may be intimately related to destiny.

1.1. The Concept of Destiny

Destiny is a concept of rarely recognised significance despite the fact that it is inherent to the life of every single person. Speaking of destiny might invoke associations of grandiosity and legendary heroes, but destiny also exists in the everyday experience of the individual. It is not an abstract

[2] Bargdill, R. W. (2006). Fate and destiny: Some Historical Distinctions between the Concepts. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 26(1).
[3] Jung, C. G. (1971). *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle.* Hull, R.F.C. and Shamdasani, S. (eds.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2010.

concept, but simply how each individual meaningfully relates to the course of one's own life. In this sense, it is one of the most intimate concepts one might imagine and one whose invisible threads affect every aspect of life. If we are to take control of our lives, it is necessary to become aware of these threads. Therefore, we should consider the concept of destiny more closely.

Destiny can only be defined in relation to fate because the two concepts have been intimately intertwined since at least the ancient Greeks, and are oftentimes confused or taken as synonymous. Both terms have historically been used to refer to the belief in a pre-determined or otherwise necessarily higher-order structure to the course of events that life holds. Destiny being the overarching topic of this thesis, it is crucial that there should be no confusion between the many, slightly different concepts with varying connotations ranging from hard causal determinism to the freedom to shape one's life in an authentic way. I will distinguish destiny from fate in order to show what is specific about destiny.

In the Western world, concepts of 'destiny' seem to have made a proto-appearance in Greek mythology. Although similar concepts were present in other and earlier cultures, Bargdill starts his analysis with Greek mythology, which served as a kind of forerunner to early Western philosophy. The Greeks had several related concepts of fate: moira, 'Μοίρα' (three fate goddesses who each decided on one aspect of one's life course: the complexity, the length, and the manner of death.); tyche, 'Τύχη' (goddess of fortune, chance, relating to singular events); and ananke, 'Ανάγκη' (external constraining force, physical necessity).[4] Fate, then, was generally understood as an external power that in one way or another determined the course of one's life.

As Bargdill relates, in Greek mythology and everyday life, the individual was believed able to gain insight, foreknowledge, into the course of one's life by visiting an oracle, a mediator between gods and men.[5] However, the oracle never gave complete information about one's fate, could only interpret major life events, and only spoke in ambiguous statements and riddles. As such, the oracle's message had to be interpreted by the individual and, indeed, in many Greek myths the hero's

[4] Moira/Tyche/Ananke (2006). In *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/ encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/moiratycheananke. Last visited: 18/11/19.
[5] Bargdill, 207.

interpretation of such an oracle was precisely what led him to satisfy his usually tragic fate.

In this act of interpretation, I would argue, there exists a proto-form of the destiny concept. While there was little distinction between fate and destiny in Greek mythology, there seems to be a nuanced difference. In Bargdill's words, "[d]estiny appears to be the foreknowledge of a section of one's fate that is taken out of context. Certain seekers are told about a particular upcoming event in their lives […] Therefore, no hero gets a full story of their Moira, only a piece of their future fate. Destiny, then, is a known, but not fully pre-determined, portion of fate that has not yet come to pass."[6] Here, destiny is defined by Bargdill as a limited foreknowledge about one's fate.

The same epistemological dimension recurs throughout the other, later manifestations of the concept. Destiny and fate came to be distinguished further from early philosophy and onwards, with fate being conceived as the inevitable and necessary givens of life over which one cannot exert control, while destiny was tied to choice on the basis of an understanding of one's fate.[7] Interesting is the recurring emphasis on the temporal dimension of this knowledge. The temporal condition of destiny will be a recurring point in this thesis. In the Greek conception as related by Bargdill, destiny is a knowledge in the present about a future state of events rather than of the past. If destiny is a form of knowledge oriented towards the future, how is destiny possible to begin with? I will return to this question in the next chapters.

Already in Greek mythology, destiny seems related to, or even to be, a form of knowledge. Destiny is thus primarily understood in epistemological terms and may best be understood as the knowledge about one's lifecourse. In other words, destiny refers to a consciously appropriated or acknowledged fate. However, this type of subject-thinking was not yet present in ancient Greece and we might rather see Greek myth as providing a proto-concept for destiny that was subsequently developed by modern thinkers, two of which I will now discuss here.

First, I will look at the work of José Ortega y Gasset (from here on simply Ortega). Ortega is a Spanish philosopher of life and existentialist thinker who is most well-known for his dictum "Yo

[6] Ibid., 209.
[7] Ibid., 209–12.

soy yo y mi circunstansia", or 'I am I and my circumstance.'[8] His philosophy has at its centre a view of reality as located in the individual life, which consists of a dialectical relationship between oneself and one's circumstances.

As discussed by Bargdill, Ortega defines the destiny of the individual life as acting in accordance with one's authentic self: "each person has an intuitive knowledge about who one's real self is and while a person can deny this and try to be someone else, ultimately one's true destiny is to act in accord with this real self. Therefore, destiny comes from an honest evaluation of fate."[9] Ortega here explicitly distinguishes destiny from fate, the latter of which might here be understood as one's circumstances. In order to know destiny, Ortega argues that one must free oneself for the future by reinterpreting one's past and present circumstances.[10] In other words, for Ortega, one can have a future-oriented knowledge of one's lifecourse on the basis of a reinterpretation of one's past and present circumstances, which form one's fate.

Again, destiny is defined in terms of knowledge, which is here specified as an intuitive knowledge. In order to live one's destiny, one has to know, at least on an intuitive level, what destiny is most appropriate to oneself. Destiny, then, is always a knowledge relating to oneself, to one's authentic or proper self, on the one hand, and the events of one's own life history, on the other. When we speak of destiny, we typically speak of the destiny of a person or a group of persons. However, while destiny is personal, it is yet dependent on the objective events that occur in the individual life. In destiny, then, there is a coming together of oneself, one's particular self, and one's circumstances, or the external events in the course of one's life, that is, one's fate.

This same dual nature of destiny becomes apparent in Schopenhauer's essay "Transzendente Spekulation über die anscheinende Absichtlichkeit im Schiksale des Einzelnen."[11] According to Schopenhauer, the *Schicksal* – which translates to both 'fate' and 'destiny' – of the individual is revealed to him over the course of his life because "certain events become "conspicuous" to everyone

[8] Ortega y Gasset, J. (1914). *Meditaciones del Quijote.* Madrid: Residencia de Estudiantes, 43.
[9] Bargdill, 216.
[10] Ortega, 42–3.
[11] Schopenhauer, A. "Transzendente Spekulation über die anscheinende Absichtlichkeit im Schiksale des Einzelnen." *Parerga und Paralipomena* (Leipzig: F.U. Brodhaus, 1874), pp. 215–40; English translation: "Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the Individual." Payne E.F.J. (trans.), *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 201–23.

and, by virtue of their being specially and peculiarly appropriate to him, they bear, on the one hand, the stamp of a moral or inner necessity, yet, on the other, they carry the clear impression of an external and wholly accidental nature."[12] Those events which are especially suitable to the individual despite being apparently coincidental – those events in which fate reveals itself to be at work[13] – have a double nature. They are connected in two fundamentally different ways: on the one hand, there are objective causal connections that run the course of nature, and on the other hand there are subjective (acausal) meaningful connections which exist only in relation to the individual that experiences them.[14] Schopenhauer stresses that both types of connection are necessary and exist simultaneously. Therefore, what Schopenhauer understands as *Schicksal* is something that is internal to the individual, yet at the same time, wholly outside him: it is remote to consciousness, yet connected with it.

Schopenhauer speaks foremost of *Schicksal* as the course of events in the individual's life which are fated by higher powers, or chance, and are thus beyond the agency of the individual.[15] Comparing this definition to the conceptions of fate and destiny considered until now, this use of *Schicksal* seems more appropriate to refer to 'fate' than to 'destiny.' Although he does not explicitly distinguish between fate and destiny, we might see this distinction take shape in a more implicit form:

> [T]hat fate [*Schicksal*] that controls the actual course of our lives ultimately comes in some way from the [*Will*]. This is our own and yet here, where it appears as fate, it operates from a region that lies far beyond our representing individual consciousness; whereas this furnishes the motives that guide our empirically knowable will. Hence such will has often to contend most violently with that will of ours that manifests itself as fate, with our guiding genius, with our 'spirit which dwells outside us and has its seat in the stars above,' which surveys the individual consciousness and thus, in relentless opposition thereto, arranges and fixes as external restraint that which it could not leave the consciousness to find out and yet does not wish to see miscarry."[16]

[12] Ibid., 219; trans. 204.
[13] Ibid., 221; trans. 207.
[14] Ibid., 234–5; trans. 220.
[15] Schicksal. (2015) In *PONS Großwörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache*. Retrieved from https://de.pons.com/%C3%BCbersetzung?q=Schicksal&l=dedx&in=&lf= Last visited: 18/11/19.
[16] Schopenhauer, "Transzendente Spekulation," 233; trans., 218–9.

For Schopenhauer, *Schicksal,* as fate, is a manifestation of the Will, or Will-to-Live, which constitutes a large part of his theoretical framework.[17] He understands the Will as the Kantian 'thing-in-itself,' the essence that transcends and determines all appearances, and is itself a blind and indivisible striving that is fundamental to all being.[18] Schopenhauer uses *Schicksal* to refer to the metaphysical guiding principle, the manifestation of transcendent Will, that controls the actual course of the individual's life and is itself remote to the individual's consciousness. The individual's actions are guided by this external fate, which is a "necessity of a higher order that precedes knowledge and consciousness."[19] Fate, then, is that guiding principle, preceding knowledge, that shapes the actual course of our lives. It is itself outside of but manifests itself inside the individual. Therefore, in this view, fate sets the course of life and the individual walks this course without knowledge of his destination.

Yet, Schopenhauer also speaks of an individual, conscious will. While the Will guides the individual, it does so in ways which often oppose the individual's conscious will and insight. If the Will can obstruct the individual will, this implies that the two cannot be absolutely equated. The individual will may not be independent from the Will, but it is not fully determined by it either.

If Schopenhauer understands fate as the guidance of the Will, which precedes and eludes the individual's consciousness, then how are we to understand the individual's conscious reflection on the "fatedness" of events? Schopenhauer uses different terms for the actual course and the destination of the individual's life which becomes available to his consciousness only retrospectively. Destiny emerges at the 'destination' of our lives, where knowledge of fate breaks through to consciousness, and thus becomes internal to the individual. In this sense, destiny becomes a kind of goal or 'destination' [*Bestimmung*]: "All, however, share the view that, when fate [*Schicksal*] opposes a plan

[17] Ibid., 229; trans., 214. I will not adopt this framework and reject the strict necessity Schopenhauer associates with it.
[18] Schopenhauer, A. (1873) *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (Vol. I). München: Georg Müller, 1913, 251; 372–3; 411; 565.
[19] Schopenhauer, "Transzendente Spekulation," 227–8; trans. 213.

with such obvious doggedness, we should give it up since, as it is unsuited to our destiny [*Bestimmung*] that to us is unknown […]."[20] Destiny, from the Latin destinare, does not only refer to destination, as the final and actual course of one's life, but more importantly, to an intentional act from the present directed toward the future: to determine, to intend, to address, to arrange.[21] If destiny is located in one's subjective relation to one's own life, destiny may best be understood as the knowledge by which one gives purpose to or makes one's life meaningful.

Schopenhauer emphasizes that one only becomes aware of the uniform direction and necessity of one's life's path retrospectively, that is, after one has already covered this path.[22] He calls this 'transcendent fatalism,' the belief in the connection of events in our life as systematic. This, he argues, does not come from a theoretical knowledge, but "it gradually reveals itself from the experiences in the course of a man's own life."[23] In so far as there is any knowledge of one's life course, this is then an *a posteriori* and largely phenomenological knowledge that accompanies one at reaching one's destiny, or destination. Relating this back to the temporal dimension in the previously discussed conceptions of destiny, there is a backward temporality in Schopenhauer's view: a destiny-knowledge that is always retrospective.

He further argues that the knowing subject is itself a mere spectator: "Now the ego that judges of the ensuing course of things is the subject of knowing; as such it is a stranger to both [objective and subjective connections which bring about the course of a man's life] and is merely the critical spectator of their action."[24] However, if the knowledge of destiny arises gradually rather than instantly upon life's completion, there cannot be a strict separation between the knowing subject and the course of his life. The knowing subject is the same subject that experiences life and is subjected to the course of life that fate sets for him. As such, it seems more reasonable to assume that there is a constant mutual interaction between the knowing subject and the course of their life, where the former reflects on the latter in order to grasp one's destiny. I will consider the role of retrospectivity in the relation of

[20] Schopenhauer, "Transzendente Spekulation," 233; trans. 222.
[21] Destino, destinare, destinavi, destinatus. In *Oxford Latin Dictionary,* 1982. Retrieved from http://latin-dictionary.net/definition/17090/destino-destinare-destinavi-destinatus Last visited: 18/11/19.
[22] Schopenhauer, "Transzendente Spekulation," 219–20; trans. 205–6.
[23] Ibid., 218–9; trans. 204.
[24] Ibid., 223–4; trans. 208–9.

the individual to destiny more closely in the final chapter.

Then, how might we understand destiny? Certainly Schopenhauer does not mean that destiny is knowledge of the metaphysical guiding principle itself, for he himself remarks that "one obtains only remote glances of fate in the form of analogies and similes."[25] Fate itself always remains inaccessible, but destiny is experienced by the individual in the form of knowledge of the course that fate has set for him breaking through to consciousness. Destiny, then, can be distinguished from fate as the difference between the phenomenal manifestation and that in-itself which it manifests. Destiny is the conscious, epistemological manifestation of an unconscious, metaphysical fate. Fate is thus what precedes and provides the conditions for destiny, while destiny is the conscious knowledge of one's fate.

If we are not ready to accept the hard knowledge-condition of destiny, for now, it suffices to conclude that destiny always in some way connects subjective, internal states with objective, external events. Assuming that fate happens, it happens whether one is aware of it or not, external to the knowing subject. Destiny, rather, is only brought into being in relation to the knowing subject that attributes a meaningful connection between a set of external events, i.e. the objective course of one's life. In short, destiny consists in the individual's subjective relation to their own life, whereas fate is always outside oneself and imposed on one's life. However, if destiny is a subjective knowledge regarding the meaningfulness of one's life course, how are we to understand this knowledge? Can it be understood on the basis of the principle of causality which rules life's external events?

1.2. Causal Interpretation of the Destiny Concept

If we accept Schopenhauer's argument, and the sovereignty of the principle of causality, in order for events to happen that are appropriate to the individual's life, the objective causal chain has to be bent in such a way as to allow for unlikely, "coincidental" events. "Now such a power that runs through all things with an invisible thread would also have to combine those, which without any mutual connection are allowed by the causal chain, in such a way that they would come together at the

[25] Ibid., 227; trans. 212.

required moment."[26] Such events are appropriate to the individual only if one can establish a meaningful connection between them and one's own life. As such, it concerns experiences that combine a certain inner necessity, a meaningfulness, with an external accidental nature, a coincidence.

This returns us to the two types of connections (subjective and objective) discussed previously. In this Schopenhauer prefigures Jung, as will be shown in the third section, but unlike Jung, he ultimately strives to explain both types of connection in causal terms. "[C]onsidered purely objectively, it is and continues to be the universal causal connection that embraces everything without exception – by virtue whereof everything that happens does so with strict and absolute necessity."[27] Following this line of thought, the apparent coincidences involved in destiny, then, are not truly coincidental, but occur according to a strict causal necessity that is simply not (yet) known to us.[28] Let me cite a longer passage.

> Accordingly, all those causal chains, that move in the direction of time, now form a large, common, much-interwoven net which with its whole breadth likewise moves forward in the direction of time and constitutes the course of the world. Now if we represent those individual causal chains by meridians that would lie in the direction of time, then that which is simultaneous, and for this reason does not stand in direct causal connection, can be everywhere indicated by parallel circles. Now although all things situated under the same parallel circle do not directly depend on one another, they nevertheless stand indirectly in some connection, though remote, by virtue of the interlacing of the whole net or of the totality of all causes and effects that roll along in the direction of time. Their present co-existence is therefore necessary' and on this rests the accidental coincidence of all the conditions of an event that is necessary in a higher sense, the happening of that which fate has willed.[29]

In short, Schopenhauer argues that all events are, at bottom, causally connected by virtue of being interconnected relations that are part of an all-encompassing causal network. However, his conception of causality does not explain how one can distinguish between purely accidental events and

[26] Ibid., 224; trans. 209.
[27] Ibid., 229; trans. 214.
[28] Ibid., 229; trans. 214–5.
[29] Ibid., 229–30; trans. 215.

meaningful co-incidences, because it considers both as occurring with absolute necessity. From one's own experience one might already see that not all coincidences bear "the stamp of a moral or inner necessity."[30] It is unlikely that all events of coincidence have a significant impact on one's destiny, so it seems more reasonable to assume that, like in Greek mythology, these "destiny-coincidences" occur at the rare, singular and meaningful junction points in one's life. It is necessary that a principle of explanation can account for this difference. Schopenhauer's conception of causality as one of absolute necessity is clearly unable to do this.

However, at least since David Hume, the principle of causality has been subjected to critical scrutiny as a principle of absolute necessity. Hume attacks this necessity, stating that causality is rather something that humans attribute to events on the basis of the observation of a constant conjunction between them.[31] Causality, then, could be understood as an attributed connection on the basis of regularly observed conjunction between events where one event (the cause) under certain conditions gives rise to another event (the effect). Its temporal model is typically inferred as linear and uni-directional, where cause precedes effect, although this inference itself often starts from the effect.

In Hume's words, "[i]t is only when two species of objects are found to be constantly conjoined, that we can infer the one from the other; and were an effect presented, which was entirely singular, and could not be comprehended under any known species, I do not see, that we could form any conjecture or inference at all concerning its cause."[32] Causality can only be inferred through repetition and is, therefore, unable to account for singular events such as those involved in destiny. Destiny involves not regular, recurring events, but singular, "coincidental" events that direct one on the course of life. A life-changing event cannot be repeated or willfully produced: it only happens once, at the right time. Because such events are unrepeatable, they cannot form the basis for an inference of causality. Therefore, destiny cannot exhaustively be understood on the basis of a conception of causality as regular and recurring conjunctions.

How do other conceptions of causality fare at explaining destiny? More precisely, can they

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[30] Ibid., 219; trans. 204.
[31] Hume, D. (1748). *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Stephen Buckle (Ed.). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[32] Ibid., 130.

explain why the individual experiences a certain inner necessity or purpose in their destiny? First, one might trace causality back to Aristotle's causal pluralism, which distinguishes four types of causes: material, formal, efficient, and final. Speaking of 'causality' in the current context, the term refers to Aristotle's efficient cause, i.e. the cause that produces change. Destiny, however, concerns a final cause, i.e., the purpose of one's being. As such, destiny cannot be explained with efficient causes but only with final causes. However, final causes, it may be objected, are not a "genuine mode of causality" and, go "beyond the boundaries of natural science" to explain human action.[33] In other words, in Aristotle, one may already see that (efficient) causality is not an appropriate explanatory principle for destiny.

Moving from antiquity to modernity, one may refer to the Bradford Hill Criteria for causality.[34] Hill proposes a list of nine criteria which, when fulfilled, give one a reasonable basis for interpreting a certain connection between states as an instance of causality. I will limit myself to the three criteria most relevant to the current discussion.

First, the strength or effect size criterion, states that when an association occurs on a large scale, it is likely that one is dealing with causal association. In (individual) destiny, however, the association has a minimal scale, indeed applies to a singular case, namely a specific (experience of the) life of a specific individual. Therefore, on this first criterion, causality fails to account for destiny.

Second, Hill poses the consistency criterion, which asks whether the association has been or can be "repeatedly observed by different persons, in different places, circumstances and times."[35] Apart from the non-repeatability of destiny-events, as discussed before, destiny is determined not solely by the causal progress of events in one's life, but also – or more so – by one's subjective, meaningful connections to these events. Destiny is self-relational, thus can only be experienced by the person itself. One can observe another person as they move towards their destination, but one's life

[33] Falcon, A., "Aristotle on Causality", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), Zalta, E.N. (ed.). Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/aristotle-causality. Last visited: 18/11/19.
[34] Hill, A.B. (1965). "The Environment and Disease: Association or Causation?" *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 58 (5), 295–300.
[35] Ibid.

course can only be experienced by oneself. However, causality requires that the connection between events can be repeated with another observer. It is not causality if only one observer can experience it.

Third, the temporal criterion states that the cause necessarily precedes the effect.[36] An antecedent process or state (the cause) is responsible for a temporally subsequent process or state (the effect). However, in destiny there is, rather than a temporal succession of states, a co-incidence or simultaneity of states and events. Therefore, causality defined by this criterion does not seem to apply to destiny, and neither do any other conceptions of causality that rely on such a temporal criterion.

In conclusion, while the causality principle can account for the connections between objective, external events that occur in individual destiny, it falls short at explaining the connections between subjective states and objective events: it can explain the first (objective, causal) but not the second (subjective, meaningful) type of connection required for destiny. To understand why destiny is experienced as important, then, I would suggest that Carl Jung's principle of synchronicity might be more useful.

1.3. Synchronicity and Junction Points

Following the argument put forward in the previous section, one may conclude that there may be particular experiences that do not allow for exhaustive causal explanation, but require an additional, alternative principle of explanation.[37] Jung proposes such a principle of interpretation, of equal rank to the principle of causality.[38] That said, the principle of synchronicity is not meant as a rejection of or a replacement for causality, but as an additional principle that can explain those events of meaningful connection that the principle of causality cannot adequately account for.

Schopenhauer's essay already carries in it something that points towards Jung's principle of synchronicity. More precisely, Jung drew inspiration from Schopenhauer in the development of his ideas.[39] The phenomenon that Schopenhauer describes might be more clearly understood within a Jungian framework. Schopenhauer refers to meaningful instances of chance and coincidence in the

[36] Ibid.
[37] Jung, *Synchronicity*, 5.
[38] Ibid., 19.
[39] Ibid., 11.

formation of the destiny of the individual, although understanding this phenomenon from an entirely different metaphysical framework than Jung, namely as an objectivation of Will that operates via an interconnected network of causal chains. Jung, rather, speaks of meaningful co-incidences, where one event could not have caused the other and where the two events do not possess a common cause either. Rather, their connection should be explained as 'synchronistic.'

Synchronicity is an a-causal connecting principle that offers an interpretation to the occurrence of meaningful co-incidences: co-incidences of events that do not allow for any causal connection, but are yet experienced as profoundly meaningful. The events that shape one's destiny, as I maintain, are often of this specific type. Jung describes synchronistic experiences as "the simultaneous occurrence of two meaningfully but not causally connected events […], or more specifically, of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state—and, in certain cases, vice versa."[40] Synchronicity, then, refers to the co-incidence in time of two or more meaningfully but not causally connected events, between a mental state, that is, an unconscious image that is brought to consciousness, and a real-world event, an objective situation that coincides with this mental content.[41] Events would thus be related in two ways, on the one hand causally, and on the other hand by "a kind of *meaningful cross-connection.*"[42]

Examples of synchronistic experiences are when one thinks of an old friend and a moment later, they call on the telephone, or when one dreams of meeting that friend and the day after one actually encounters them. In these experiences, it is every time a co-incidence of, on the one hand, a subjective, mental state – thinking or dreaming about a person – and, on the other hand, an objective, actual event – receiving a call from or meeting this person. The second part of the co-incidence can be causally explained: we can trace back the causal chains that led to these objective events, such as the causal chain that led the other person to pick up the telephone and call you. However, the other part of the co-incidence is based in something subjective and mental, something intangible. It is implausible

[40] Ibid., 25; In practice, the connection can take place between inner and outer states, between inner states, or can involve multiple outer states. See Main, R. (2007). *Revelations of Chance: Synchronicity as Spiritual Experience*, SUNY, 18–9.
[41] Jung, *Synchronicity*, 31.
[42] Ibid., 11.

to believe that one's thinking or dreaming of the person was indeed what *caused* this person to call. One's mental state is not in any way causally related to the objective events with which they co-occur, yet this co-occurrence is experienced as profoundly meaningful.

Synchronistic experiences can also involve multiple external events, such as in the example given in the introduction about missing the bus that gets into an accident. It is possible to causally explain that one missed the bus *because* one was late *because* one spilled coffee over one's shirt, but not that the bus got into an accident that same day. It was not because one spilled coffee that the bus got into an accident. Moreover, causality cannot account for the sense of meaningfulness that the person in question experiences at learning that one has "coincidentally" averted disaster. Here, the synchronistic co-incidence is the connectedness between, on the one hand, the causal events that led one to miss the bus up to the point one learns that the bus has been in accident and, on the other, the meaningfulness attributed to the co-occurrence of causally unrelated events, namely (1) missing the bus because one spilled coffee and (2) the bus getting into an accident. This example is less straightforward because it involves a causal chain and a more complex temporality, but here again, what makes this a synchronistic experience is the co-incidence of a personal meaningfulness with causally unrelated events.

The important point, and what distinguishes synchronistic co-incidences from regular chance-happenings, then, is that they are experienced as meaningful by a subject. The external events receive extra weight in signification because of their connection to an internal state. Under any other circumstance, missing the bus because one spills coffee on one's shirt would simply be an accident, but if it co-occurs with one's regular bus getting into an accident, there emerges a meaningful dimension for the experiencing subject. To return to the first example, if you received the same phone call from an old friend out of the blue, it would be a surprise, but lack the sense of "fatedness" that comes from its co-incidence with thinking or dreaming about them the night before. When there is an experience of such a subjective connection, the event feels personally meaningful – part of one's destiny – rather than a random coincidence. Yet, such meaningful events would be reduced to mere chance within a causal framework. Therefore, Jung proposes synchronicity to account for these experiences which although not causally explainable, are yet important to us.

One might take this a step further and argue that synchronistic events form important junctions in the life destiny of the individual. What is specific to a junction point of life, is that it is a singular moment that influences the further course of one's life. In this moment, there is a coming together of circumstances, an arrangement of past and/or present conditions – such as was the case in Ortega's conception of destiny – with decisive impact on the future life course of the individual. Such a coming together in time, might best be understood by the principle of synchronicity.

One of Jung's commentators, Ira Progoff, relates an especially appropriate example.[43] In Abraham Lincoln's youth, he was frustrated in his desire to learn by a lack of intellectual resources. Around the same time, he received a box of supposedly worthless items. When he later inspected its contents, it "coincidentally" contained a set of law books. These allowed him to build the intellectual foundation that would eventually allow him to become the president of the United States of America.

This is one example of how a meaningful co-incidence might have life-changing consequences for the individual. Just that there are examples of life-altering synchronicities, does not imply that all destinies are shaped by synchronistic experience. Yet, if one asks people how they came where they are today, many of them will respond that they "happened upon it," or had a "chance opportunity." There is nearly always something apparently coincidental that led someone to be in the profession that they are. It seems more than coincidental that people so often take recourse to the notion of 'coincidence' when speaking of the course of their lives. It might be possible that the phenomenon which the principle of synchronicity describes is at the heart of destiny, but has not been recognized as such because destiny has not yet been studied in the light of the principle of synchronicity. As such, it seems useful to take a closer look at the relation between synchronicity and destiny: synchronicity might be the missing master key to destiny.

[43] Progoff, 170–1.

1.4. Chapter Conclusion

If my analysis of the destiny concept is accepted, destiny can be said to be the knowing awareness of the realization of the course of one's life, which may occur on the basis of the coming together of seemingly disconnected circumstances joined in time, or meaningful co-incidences. The latter allow for, on the one hand, objective, causal connections for each disjointed event, and on the other hand, for a subjective connection that meaningfully brings these events together. In short, destiny is closely related to meaningful co-incidences, which Jung's principle of synchronicity is meant to interpret. As such, it seems adequate to conclude that the principle of synchronicity can offer an interesting perspective on individual destiny.

If destiny presupposes a self-relational form and not necessarily unidirectional temporality of knowledge, how is destiny possible at all? In other words, how might we understand the operations of the knowledge that we call destiny? To investigate this, the next chapter will first take a closer look at the theoretical background and epistemological status of synchronistic experiences.

CHAPTER 2

SYNCHRONISTIC EXPERIENCES EXPLAINED

To understand destiny on the basis of the synchronicity principle, it is essential to first provide a clear overview of this principle and the theoretical framework in which it is formulated. Only then, one might begin to consider the question in what sense synchronistic experiences involve and can provide knowledge and what kind of knowledge this would be, in order to see how synchronicity may serve as a basis to destiny.

First, I examine Jung's theoretical framework to see how he explains the possibility of synchronistic phenomena. Because synchronistic experiences seem to bend time and space, my starting point will be how Jung treats spatiotemporality in his thought. Next, I consider the notions of the collective unconscious and archetypes in order to clarify what kind of theories and worldviews underlie Jung's synchronicity principle. In the second section, I look at the epistemological status of synchronistic experiences and specifically elaborate on the concept of intuition.

2.1. The Synchronistic Framework

Before it is possible to say anything about the possibility of knowledge allotted by synchronistic experiences, it is necessary to take a closer look at the specific workings of synchronicity. As acausal principle, synchronicity goes beyond the debates of causal determinism to open up an investigation into questions of consciousness, totality, and the occurrence of meaningful co-incidences. Jung's collected work consists of twenty volumes, reaching a total of ca. ten thousand pages. I will limit myself to the most relevant concepts, begining my elaboration with the issue of the temporality of synchronicity, then moving on to discuss Jung's theories of archetypes and the collective unconscious.

As a preliminary remark, it is important to note that the synchronicity principle explains meaningful co-incidences, 'explains' being the operative word. Synchronicity does *not* cause the phenomena. It is, then, not some mysterious, transcendent force like how Schopenhauer speaks of

Will and of *Schicksal*, but a principle, developed on the basis of empirical anecdotes, that is meant to interpret and explain a certain type of experience.

As Jung relates, "[…] for want of a demonstrable cause, we are all too likely to fall into the temptation of positing a *transcendental* one. But a "cause" can only be a demonstrable quantity. A "transcendental cause" is a contradiction in terms, because anything transcendent cannot by definition be demonstrated."[44] If one defines cause as necessarily demonstrable, it is indeed impossible to speak of a transcendental cause, considering that transcendental philosophy, as per Kant, concerns *a priori* knowledge, or a knowledge independent of experience, whereas the 'transcendent' – which in this context seems a more appropriate term than 'transcendental' – lies outside of the human cognitive and experiential limits altogether.[45] Hume's definition of causality requires demonstrability, thus does not allow for transcendent causes. Schopenhauer's account of causality as absolute necessity, however, would easily evade this problem because, in his framework, transcendent(al) causes need not be demonstrable or even noticeable by individuals. If one rejects transcendent(al) causes, Jung's argument makes sense, but if one accepts them, his criterion of causal demonstrability will be rejected, and his argument falls apart. Jung's argument wholly depends on whether one accepts or rejects his conclusion to begin with and is, thus, not entirely convincing. He should have given an argument for why causes need to be demonstrable if he wanted to make this claim.

Nevertheless, the takeaway here is that synchronicity is an acausal connecting principle, thus should not be interpreted in a causal manner. It is easy to fall into this trap because causality pervades the dominant way of thinking, but it is incorrect to posit synchronicity as a cause, even a hidden one. The whole purpose of the principle is to explain meaningful connections which have no causal basis, discernible or otherwise. Merely that one fails to apprehend the cause of a coincidental event, does not make the event synchronistic.

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[44] Jung, *Synchronicity*, 30.

[45] Kant, I. (1781/1787) *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1956. The terms 'transcendent' and 'transcendental' are often used interchangeably. As per Kant, 'transcendent' refers to the quality of surpassing ordinary knowledge, experience, and existence, whereas 'transcendental' to the limits and conditions whereby these are possible within the Kantian framework that posits an unbreachable distance between the thing as it is experienced and the thing-in-itself, the *phenomenon* and the *noumenon*.

2.1.1. The Spatiotemporal Strangeness in Synchronicity

Time and space play a distinctive role in Jung's synchronistic framework, which, after all, speaks of simultaneity or a coming together in time (and space). How does Jung understand this simultaneity? The term 'synchronicity' invokes associations with 'synchronism,' from which Jung distinguishes it in the following way:

> Here I would like to call attention to a possible misunderstanding which may be occasioned by the term "synchronicity." I chose this term because the simultaneous occurrence of two meaningfully but not causally connected events seemed to me an essential criterion. I am therefore using the general concept of synchronicity in the special sense of a coincidence in time of two or more causally unrelated events which have the same or a similar meaning, in contrast to "synchronism," which simply means the simultaneous occurrence of two events. Synchronicity therefore means the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state—and, in certain cases, vice versa.[46]

'Synchronicity' is a lot more specific than 'synchronism,' and includes the criteria of, on the one hand, meaningfulness, and, on the other, acausality. Moreover, he speaks of psychic and subjective states, which are not included in the definition of 'synchronism.' Yet, to what extent is synchronicity also synchronic?

While containing a form of synchronism, synchronicity stretches the meaning of the term by allowing for events that are roughly simultaneous but may still occur days apart. According to Jung, the simultaneity occurs between the subjective state and the objective event(s), but it could occur that one realizes only later that one experienced a meaningful co-incidence. To return to my previous examples, the synchronicity is experienced only when one learns that one co-incidentally missed the bus that got into an accident, and only when one encounters the old friend one dreamt about. The act of missing the bus, in the first, and dreaming about an old friend, in the second example, are part of the same synchronistic experience as their counterparts of the bus accident and the encounter, but do

[46] Jung, *Synchronicity,* 25.

not occur at the exact same moment. Rather, one might say that these events all fall within one particular period that psychologically belongs together.[47] It concerns a relative rather than an absolute simultaneity. To understand why Jung allows for such relativity, it needs to be clear how he conceives of space and time to begin with.

> [S]pace and time have a very precarious existence. They become "fixed" concepts only in the course of [man's] mental development, thanks largely to the introduction of measurement. In themselves, space and time consist of *nothing.* They are hypostatized concepts born of the discriminating activity of the conscious mind, and they form the indispensable co-ordinates for describing the behaviour of bodies in motion. They are, therefore, essentially psychic in origin, which is probably the reason that impelled Kant to regard them as *a priori* categories.[48]

Jung does not consider time and space as real properties or existing substances, but rather as conceptual constructs that humans use for making sense of reality. They are, in other words, psychical, exist only for the mind and not in reality. There is no such thing as a 'space' or a 'time.' In so far as they exist, it is only because humans conceptualize time and space to make kinetics quantifiable, measurable.

Noteworthy here is that Jung repeatedly refers to Kant in various contexts and regularly uses Kantian notions like '*a priori*,' which seems to imply a certain theoretical indebtedness – which he, in turn, may have inherited from Schopenhauer. However, Kant would probably object to Jung's understanding of time and space as 'concepts.' In *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft,* Kant questions time and space, and defines them as 'pure intuitions.'[49] For Kant, space and time are *a priori,* sensible intuitions that are valid only as the conditions of possibility of how objects can be given to us in experience and have no reality outside of that.[50] Intuitions are singular and immediate to experience, while concepts are general and concerned with classes of things.[51] One can only conceive of time and

[47] Hamaker-Zondag, K. (2015) "Inleiding." *Synchroniciteit: Een Beginsel van Acausale Verbondenheid.* Lemniscaat, Rotterdam, 21.
[48] Ibid., 20. Emphasis in original.
[49] Kant, *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft,* B146–7.
[50] Ibid., B148.
[51] Ibid., A320/B377.

space as an *a priori* framework through which one perceives concrete objects and events. Therefore, space and time are more appropriately characterized as intuitions than as concepts.

Now, let us see how Jung's conception of time and space applies to synchronistic phenomena, that is, meaningful co-incidences. Synchronistic phenomena, it seems, are contained in a psychically relative space and time, as is shown by experiences where one has a kind of "knowledge" of future or spatially different events. Jung is explicit on this point: "Distance [and time are] psychically variable, and may in certain circumstances be reduced to vanishing point by a psychic condition."[52] There are certain conditions under which one may experience all time and all space as one totality, and hence all time and space disappears into one. According to Jung, this kind of totality-experience is involved in meaningful co-incidences. "[S]ince experience has shown that under certain conditions space and time can be reduced almost to zero, causality disappears along with them, because causality is bound up with the existence of space and time […]. Hence the interconnection of meaningfully coincident factors must necessarily be thought of as acausal."[53] Causality depends on particular conceptions of time and space that are different from those associated with synchronistic experiences. From the viewpoint of causality, time and space are measurable, and can be used as linear-geometric models for understanding reality, but from a synchronistic viewpoint, they are relative and psychically variable.

Jung's basis for asserting that space and time can be reduced to zero comes largely from his discussion of Rhine's experiments in extra-sensory perception, in other words, parapsychological research[54]. These experiments consisted, among other things, in letting test subjects guess the number on cards that the experimenter drew in a spatially isolated space where the subject had no way of physically perceiving the card. The quantity of positive hits was surprisingly high and seemed to depend on neither spatial nor temporal distance. Subjects could even predict cards that had yet to be drawn.

However, as overwhelmingly convincing as this evidence may have seemed to Jung at the time, Rhine's experiments have subsequently become the subject of critique from the scientific community: "The procedural errors in the Rhine experiments have been extremely damaging to his

[52] Jung, *Synchronicity*, 17.
[53] Ibid., 29–30.
[54] Ibid., 16.

claims to have demonstrated the existence of ESP. Equally damaging has been the fact that the results have not replicated when the experiments have been conducted in other laboratories."[55] Aside from methodological flaws, and overestimating the significance of his results, the experiments were unrepeatable. Although it could be countered with 'the conditions in the repeated experiments were wrong', it seems more accurate to conclude that Rhine's experiments may have been influenced by observer bias, that is, his desire to prove the existence of extra-sensory perception.

Nevertheless, even without this (pseudo-)scientific basis, one might recognize the relativity of time and space as they come to the fore in synchronistic phenomena. One may gain an insight into something that happens in another place, or something that comes to pass in the future, as though by coincidence. For example, it has happened to me more than once that, when I am humming a song that I have not heard in years, seconds later the same song starts to play on the radio, as though I somehow predicted that I would hear it. "Coincidentally", this is always a song that relates to my personal situation at that particular moment, thus becomes extra meaningful. How is such a peculiar experience possible? That is what the synchronicity principle strives to explain, and it does so by considering time and space as flexible. If time and space are seen as relative to psychic states, their boundaries can become flexible in a way that allows the subject to psychically connect to something in another place and time. If we conceive of time as totality, there is no distinction between past, present, and future. Only then does it become possible to have precognitions.

By treating time and space as relative, reducible concepts, the synchronicity principle taps into a concept of totality that is best known from Eastern philosophy. Jung discusses the Chinese prediction technique I Ching, which he explains as a method of intuitively grasping totality in order to place a detail-problem against the background of the whole.[56] Among forerunners to the synchronicity principle, Jung foremost credits Chinese philosophy, specifically Daoism.[57]

[55] Hines, T. (2003). *Pseudoscience and the Paranormal*. New York: Prometheus Books, 122.
[56] Jung, *Synchronicity*, 34–5.
[57] Ibid., 70–4.

Because of the diversity of interpretations in various commentaries of the central *Dao De Jing* text, it is difficult to characterize either Daoism or its key concepts.[58] Roughly speaking, Daoism, also spelled as Taoism, is a philosophical school, religion, and way of life that uses practices such as meditation for harmonizing life energy – or *qi/ki* – with the cosmos, that is, *qi*-cultivation. One of its most central concepts is of course *dao*/*tao*, or 'the Way', which may be understood as a doctrine of virtue, but also as nothingness, a chaos, and an origin that pervades the totality of existence yet is itself nothing concrete.[59] It is commonly understood as the source-of-being that is not itself a being.[60] As Yasua understands it, *dao* functions as the source pattern for the rhythmic undulations of *qi* that form the cosmos.[61] As source, *dao* feeds, nurtures, all beings: it gives form to *qi*, which in turn alternates between *yin*- and *yang*-energy, that is, stillness and motion. In conclusion, this origin, *dao*, is what connects all that exists, regardless of how far things are separated in space and time.

Using this totality conception to see time and space as a psychically accessible whole, one might explain how in synchronistic phenomena there seem to be interrelations, inter-resonances or harmonisations, between human beings and the cosmos.[62] Synchronistic phenomena require explanation from the perspective of a worldview that allows for the interconnectedness of all that exists. For the synchronicity principle to be effective as principle of explanation, then, it needs to stand in a necessary relationship to totality. How does Jung understand totality?

2.1.2. The Collective Unconscious and Archetypes

The concept through which Jung conceptualizes totality as a psychically accessible, spatiotemporally relative whole, is the collective unconscious. On top of the individual's psychic distinction between consciousness and the unconscious, Jung adds the collective unconscious as a deeper layer, which plays a pivotal role in the hypothesized workings of synchronistic phenomena. Noteworthy is that Jung hypothesized the concept of the collective unconscious as early as 1932, twenty years prior to his

[58] Chan, A.K.L., (2000) "The *Daodejing* and Its Tradition." *Daoism Handbook.* Kohn, L. (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 17–9.
[59] Ibid.,20.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Yasua, Y. *Overcoming Modernity: Synchronicity and Image-Thinking*. Krummel, J.W.M. and Nagatomo, S. (trans.), New York: SUNY, 2009, 47; 51; 53.
[62] Ibid., 153.

work on synchronicity (1952), so this is a move that Jung makes based on his prior theories, which I will discuss summarily.

Jung defines the collective unconscious as follows: "this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us."[63] In the collective unconscious, the subject-object distinction falls away in the sense that there is no longer an individual subject that relates to others as objects, but rather, all individuals are part of the same totality. By postulating a common psychical foundation for all individuals, Jung can explain how it is possible for an individual to pick up on a piece of information that is spatially separated from one. If one taps into the collective unconscious, time and space are no longer an issue because there is a common source that connects all individuals anywhere and at any time. He moreover repeatedly emphasizes that the collective unconscious is something that every person inherits upon birth, giving the concept a sense of historicity leading back to our most primitive ancestors.

The collective unconscious "cannot be localized, since either it is complete in principle in every individual or is found to be the same everywhere. You can never say with certainty whether what appears to be going on in the collective unconscious of a single individual is not also happening in other individuals or organisms or things or situations."[64] The collective unconsciousness is everywhere at once and connects all spatially separated entities. This makes it theoretically possible to "receive" insights into events that happen in a faraway location as is sometimes the case in synchronistic experiences. It also explains how a similar idea can be developed at the same time by two thinkers who work independently of one another and may not even know the other person exists, that is, the multiple discovery hypothesis.[65]

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[63] Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. In Adler, G., Fordham, M., and Read, H. (eds.) and Hull, R.F.C. (trans.), *Jung Collected Works* (Vol. 9, Part 1). East Sussex: Routledge, 2014, 3511–2.
[64] Jung, *Synchronicity*, 65.
[65] Merton, R. (1963). "Resistance to the Systematic Study of Multiple Discoveries in Science." *European Journal of Sociology*, 4(2), 237–282.

Because it is distinct and in a certain way prior to the personal consciousness, the collective unconscious cannot be directly perceived or represented.[66] Jung characterizes it as psychoid which is not the same as a purely psychic process, but seems to indicate a "transcendental ideality", an unrepresentable, primordial state of undifferentiation.[67] In other words, the collective unconscious is not something that one can access at will. It only reaches out to the individual in very specific situations.

Jung distinguishes the personal and collective unconscious primarily on the basis of their contents.[68] The contents of the personal unconsciousness consist of ideas and experiences that have disappeared from consciousness through forgetting or repression. As such, the personal consciousness is made up of things that were first consciously acquired by the individual. In contrast, the contents of collective unconscious, which Jung calls archetypes, have never directly come to consciousness, but only secondarily through their expression in e.g. myths and fairy tales.[69]

Archetypes, as Jung understands them, are primordial, universal images or, "collective representations," in the collective unconscious.[70] However, they can be said to be at once the content and the form of the collective unconscious. "The archetypes are formal factors responsible for the organization of unconscious psychic processes: they are "patterns of behaviour." At the same time they have a "specific charge" and develop numinous effects which express themselves as *affects*."[71]

The latter citation gives two relevant pieces of information. First, archetypes are organizing principles. They not only form the contents but also constitute the structure of the collective unconscious. Second, archetypes by their "numinous", or overpowering nature,[72] produce affects, the experience of feeling or of emotion, which is especially relevant to the value-dimension of synchronistic phenomena. The affective charge of archetypal expression forms the basis of the meaningfulness of the experience, which allows Jung to distinguish meaningful from meaningless co-

[66] Jung, *Synchronicity,* 20.
[67] Jung, C.G, (1954) "On the Nature of the Psyche." In *JCW,* 3133.
[68] Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious,* 3512; 3550–1.
[69] Ibid., 3512.
[70] Ibid., 3550–1.
[71] Jung, *Synchronicity,* 20.
[72] Main, 39–43.

incidences.[73] When one encounters an expression of an archetype, one may feel a resonance from the unconscious, and relate to the primordial archetype from one's individual experience. In this way, archetypes make synchronistic experiences personally appropriate – a characteristic of destiny as discussed in chapter one.

Considering this relation to destiny, how do archetypes involve knowledge? Jung makes an explicit distinction between contents from the personal and the collective unconscious. The former are subliminal perceptions, such as forgotten memory-images, but the latter – more relevantly to this thesis – concerns "inexplicable "knowledge," or an "immediacy" of psychic images."[74] In other words, it concerns the kind of insights involved in synchronistic experiences:

> [T]his "knowledge," or the "immediacy" of unconscious images, either has no recognizable foundation, or else we find that there are recognizable causal connections with certain already existing, and often archetypal, contents. But these images, whether rooted in an already existing basis or not, stand in an analogous or equivalent (i.e., meaningful) relationship to objective occurrences which have no recognizable or even conceivable causal relationship with them. How could an event remote in space and time produce a corresponding psychic image when the transmission of energy necessary for this is not even thinkable? However incomprehensible it may appear, we are finally compelled to assume that there is in the unconscious something like an a priori knowledge or an "immediacy" of events which lacks any causal basis.[75]

Here, Jung sees in the unconscious content the kind of "knowledge" that synchronistic experiences can provide, the specifics of which will further be developed in the next section. For now, this passage demonstrates how synchronistic phenomena may have an archetypal foundation. The archetypes as patterns of the collective unconscious, can satisfy all criteria required to explain synchronistic experiences: they produce affects which are personally meaningful, they are not bound by time, space, or causality, and they can make a seemingly inexplicable "knowledge" break through to consciousness.

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[73] Ibid, 13.
[74] Jung, *Synchronicity*, 20.
[75] Ibid., 30–1.

In the collective unconscious, where space and time are suspended, as it were, archetypes allow for patterning across time and space. Similar to *dao*, which is conceived as a source pattern for all existence, one might say that archetypes form source patterns which repeat across time and space. In synchronistic phenomena, the interconnectedness of events may stem from an archetypal foundation, where the archetype "synchronizes" people, places, and events into a meaningful order. This is not a matter of cause and effect, but the arrangement of patterns. Archetypes seem to function as 'constellating hubs' or 'ordering factors' for the meaningfully "falling together" that characterizes synchronistic phenomena.[76] In other words, it seems that archetypes are Jung's *dao,* the source patterns of life.

2.2. An Epistemological Investigation of Synchronicity

As touched on in the last section, archetypes indirectly produce affects which lower the threshold for unconscious contents to break through to consciousness, which sometimes allows the individual to receive "knowledge" or an "immediacy" of unconscious, psychic images. How can synchronistic experiences provide a form of knowledge and what kind of knowledge is this? This section will subject synchronistic phenomena to an epistemological inquiry.

To begin with, a distinction needs to be established regarding the different types of "knowledge" involved in synchronistic experiences: empirical, unconscious, fore-, and hermeneutical. I will discuss each of these and their categorizations as *a priori* or *a posteriori*, on the one hand, and as subjective or objective, on the other. Then, in the subsection, I will consider in detail how the distinction of analytical and intuitive applies.

The first type, empirical knowledge, is by far the most straightforward, yet already runs into complications on the second axis. In synchronistic experiences, there is always some empirical knowledge involved – *a posteriori,* based on experience – of the events in the causal chain. To stick with the example of running into an old friend – call him Matthew – that one dreamt about the night prior, one empirically knows that one dreamt about Matthew and that one encountered Matthew the

[76] Progoff, 135; 156.

following day. The latter can be said to be objective knowledge, as the fact of the encounter is true not only for the subject but also for Matthew and any potential witnesses to their encounter. However, the objectivity of dreams is debatable. One can say, 'I know I dreamt about my old friend Matthew,' but neither Matthew nor anyone else can ever check that this is true. As such, even the empirical knowledge of synchronistic experiences is to some extent subjective.

Second, in synchronistic experiences one receives certain psychic contents from the (collective) unconscious, which often take the shape of images, but may also have a more "factual" nature. This is the kind of knowledge that one already (unconsciously) possesses, but only becomes consciously aware of in certain situations where the unconscious breaks through to consciousness, such as in synchronistic experiences or in the activity of free association. As a knowledge that can be found within oneself independent of experience, this seems to concern an *a priori* – independent of and preceding experience – rather than *a posteriori* knowledge. Moreover, this knowledge is always to some extent subjective because it is personally meaningful because archetypes only break through in consciousness when they are relevant to oneself. Even when, in such an experience, a knowledge comes to one in the form of an objective fact, it is specifically a fact that relates to the experiencing subject in a meaningful way, or this unconscious content could not have been triggered in the subject in the first place.

Third, and this is the type that Jung predominantly speaks of, there is a type of knowledge that one might hesitate to call 'knowledge' in any strict sense, namely a precognitive or extra-sensorially perceived knowledge that transgresses the ordinary boundaries of time and space. One may have a premonition that something tragic is going to happen and later see it confirmed. For example, some people had "precognitions" about the sinking of the Titanic. This, then, does not concern *a posteriori* knowledge: one cannot know from experience that which is (yet) outside one's experience. This "foreknowledge", however, is also not precisely *a priori.* These people did not know that the Titanic would hit an iceberg and sink, but had a "gut feeling", or an intuition, that something was amiss. Only when the Titanic indeed sank, did they – that being, the survivors and those who decided not to board the ship before it departed – have any real knowledge, which, having to be confirmed by experience, would not be purely *a priori*. As for the subjective-objective axis, the matter becomes no easier to

decipher. At the moment of the premonition, the "foreknowledge" is subjective, and only available as given to one in one's own experience of the foreboding feeling, but it becomes objective as soon as it concerns a factual event.

Fourth, and most significantly to this thesis, in synchronistic phenomena, there is a hermeneutical knowledge through which one interprets the meaningful relation between not-causally related events. It is not a knowledge of the meaning of the separate events in the causal chains – not of the content of the experience – but of the very relation between the events. To stick to the previous example, one is not interpreting the meaning of one's dream about one's friend Matthew or the fact that one encountered him the following day, but rather the meaning of the relation between these two events. Each of the causal chains by itself can largely be understood with objective, empirical knowledge. However, the coming together of these unrelated causal chains is subjective, meaning-based, that is, hermeneutical knowledge, or the knowledge one needs for interpretation. The synchronistic experience provides a frame of reference through which one may interpret events. This hermeneutical knowledge is *a posteriori* because it depends on experience, yet *a priori* because it depends on frameworks that precede experience and, following Jung, may originate in the archetypes of the collective unconscious. This fourth type seems most relevant to understanding destiny, which Ortega already linked to interpretation. Therefore, hermeneutical knowledge will henceforth become the focus of the discussion.

As might be evident by now, synchronistic phenomena are epistemologically complex because they involve at once empirical knowledge of actual events; intuitive knowledge of unconscious, psychic contents, i.e. archetypal contents from the collective unconscious; phenomena of "foreknowledge"; and provide a knowledge of meaningfulness, which is necessarily related to interpretation. In short, synchronistic experiences are accompanied by many types of knowledge, none of which can easily be classified along the axes of *a priori-a posteriori* and subjective-objective.

2.2.1. Intuitive and Analytical Knowledge

In this sub-section, I will consider another distinction, namely between analytical and intuitive knowledge, and discuss their interrelation in synchronistic experiences to further clarify the status of synchronistic hermeneutical knowledge. This knowledge, at first glance, seems not to be analytical, in the sense of grasping the whole by means of its parts, but intuitive, in the sense of grasping the part by means of the whole. Intuition, from Latin *intueri*, meaning 'to contemplate' or 'to look at,'[77] finds its incarnation in many theories. I will here discuss Jung's own conception to see how he understands the knowledge yielded by synchronistic phenomena.

Jung considers intuition as an elementary psychological function that conveys perceptions via an unconscious way.[78] It could be seen as a kind of instinctive comprehension. Its contents are unconsciously grasped patterns, not necessarily something one is conscious of until it breaks through to the surface. Intuition gives its contents as rounded-off wholes: to grasp the whole of the content before grasping the parts that make that whole possible. It does not have a specific type of object but is widely applicable to a variety of contents. Moreover, it can be subjective as self-relative intuition, or objective as the intuition of something external that one unconsciously picked up. It can be concrete, factual, or abstract, ideal. In short, intuition can come in many forms.

According to Kant, intuitions are cognized through pure reason.[79] Jung, in contrast, sees intuition as a purely *irrational* function of perception. The rational, i.e. thinking and feeling, is characterized by Jung as a 'directed function,' whereas the irrational, i.e. intuiting and sensing, lacks such direction and instead "find[s] fulfilment in the *absolute perception* of the flux of events."[80] One might see reason as a straight arrow directed at a specific target, while intuition as a circle that encompasses the whole, with no particular attention to any of its parts.

The rational is analytical, objective, and scientific. It considers the whole by its parts and singles out one or more parts for observation. The irrational, in contrast, is intuitive, subjective, and

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[77] Intuition. In *Online Etymological Dictionary*. Retrieved from https://www.etymonline.com/word/intuition. Last visited: 23/10/2019.
[78] Jung, C. G. (1921) *Psychological Types.* In *JCW*, 2513–4.
[79] There exists dissensus on whether the synthesis of intuition as he describes it is truly a rational process. See Kitcher, P. "Kants Unconscious "Given"." *Kant's Philosophy of the Unconscious.* Giordanetti, P, Pozzo, R., and Sgarbi, M. (eds.), Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012, 31–5.
[80] Jung, *Psychological Types*, 2515.

cannot be the object of science precisely because it lies outside or beyond reason. Reason tends to focus on what is necessary, whereas intuition, as irrational function, is wholly open to accidentals and contingents. "[Intuition and sensation] by their very nature, […] will react to every possible occurrence and be attuned to the absolutely contingent and must therefore lack all rational direction."[81] Intuition, then, is holistic, starting from the whole.

However, it seems incorrect to separate the rational and irrational functions of the mind too sharply. They constantly operate in tandem. It is not the case that synchronistic experiences yield exclusively intuitive knowledge. Rather, there is a hermeneutical circle of interpretation, moving between whole and its parts. Reason, or analytical thinking, and intuition might be regarded as complementary hermeneutical functions that zoom in and out between part and whole. Hermeneutic knowledge, then, is both intuitive and analytical, and, has a somewhat special status as knowledge. In a synchronistic experience, what this means is that one has an intuitive glance of totality, and the conscious, rational mind seeks out those elements that are relevant, which it then analyses. The cyclical cooperation of these two allows for interpretation, specifically of the meaningful relation between acausally related events as it relates to one's self.

2.3. Chapter Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the synchronicity principle depends on a complicated framework of depth psychology and a specific worldview that allows for total interconnectedness. Summarily, Jung understands space and time as reducible within the collective unconscious, which contains and is structured by archetypes, primordial patterns, which can come to expression in the individual consciousness through a lowering of the conscious content, and transpersonally and transcausally organize unconscious contents, images and ideas, in such a way that an individual can experience a meaningful co-incidence.

[81] Ibid.

The second section investigated the epistemological status of the various kinds of knowledge involved in synchronistic experiences. Most relevantly, it seems that in a synchronistic experience one receives a complex hermeneutical knowledge on the basis of archetypal patterns of meaning in the collective unconscious. These patterns are expressed in the interconnectedness of not-causally related states and/or events, the interconnectedness of which is experienced as personally meaningful because of this archetypal foundation. Because of this foundation, meaningful co-incidences yield hermeneutical knowledge with which one interprets in a manner that relates to one's self.

Now that it is clearer how synchronistic experiences can provide a kind of knowledge, the next chapter will consider how one can know one's destiny when understood from this synchronistic framework. In other words, how can synchronistic experiences provide hermeneutical knowledge specifically about one's lifecourse? How can one attain one's destiny?

CHAPTER 3

THE DESTINY OF THE SELF

This final chapter will discuss the implications of Jung's synchronistic framework for understanding destiny. It cannot simply be assumed that all synchronistic experiences necessarily result in knowledge about one's life course: running into an old friend that one dreamt about the prior night is not necessarily a life-changing event that makes one view one's life course in a different light. Inversely, not all destiny necessarily comes in the form of synchronistic experiences: someone who has little receptivity to synchronicities, may have knowledge about their life course from other sources, such as introspection – consciously reflecting on one's life – or social comparison – looking at one's life in relation to the lives of others. Therefore, it needs to be considered what it is specifically that makes a synchronistic experience into a ground for attaining destiny.

The question I will be researching is not *what* but *how* one can know about one's life course. Destiny is an internal experience, yet it is not wholly internal because it also relies on external events. Nevertheless, destiny is primarily a knowledge that relates to oneself. It is a knowledge about the subjective meaningfulness of one's life course rather than the objective events thereof. Because it concerns meaning and interpretation, it seems most appropriate to speak of destiny as a hermeneutical knowledge.

First, it is useful to consider in more detail what temporal direction we might associate with destiny: like Schopenhauer, retrospective, or, like Jung and the ancient Greeks, precognitive? Next, I consider how synchronistic experiences can form a ground for destiny by discussing two other central concepts in Jung's thought, 'individuation' and 'self.' Finally, I will consider to what extent destiny is an (interpretative) activity, and place this discussion in the context of Western, globalized, postmodern society to emphasize the difficulty as well as the importance of attaining destiny.

3.1. Retrospectivity or Precognition?

For the experiencing subject nothing exists but the present: one can remember the past, but never return to it, and one can never find oneself in the future because when one does, it becomes the present. Therefore, whichever direction destiny takes, it can only ever be experienced in the present. The present is always the vantage point.

As one may remember from the first chapter, Schopenhauer argues that destiny is retrospective, oriented into the past, and although this knowledge arises gradually, it only becomes available to conscious reflection at the end of one's life course. Recalling my earlier argument, it seems odd to claim this, if only because one can never experience the completion of one's life.[82] Rather, the individual should be able to reflect on one's destiny at theoretically any point in one's life. Yet, even if we grant Schopenhauer that destiny is retrospective, his claims remain questionable. Retrospective self-reflection is not what one would readily characterize as destiny, or knowledge of one's fate, but more like an autobiographical impulse or nostalgia. Such a conception of destiny seems limited and, moreover, unable to account for the experience of purposiveness, the 'towards-something', implied in destiny.

Jung's theory of synchronicity, in contrast, pays attention mostly to a forwardlooking, or 'precognitive' perspective[83] as was shortly considered in the second chapter. Although one is not afforded any (fore)knowledge about the onset and specific nature of the contents of the synchronistic experience, there might be support for Jung's claim that within the synchronistic experience itself, a form of intuitive foreknowledge becomes possible. Nevertheless, even if one accepts that such precognition is possible, it seems incorrect to state that destiny necessarily takes the form of clairvoyance. One evidently does not need to be a prophet to have knowledge about one's life course at all, at least not if it concerns a hermeneutical, that is, interpretative knowledge. One can well interpret where one's life is headed without taking recourse to magic.

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[82] Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus." *Epicurus: The Extant Remains.* Bailey, C. (trans.)., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926, section 3; Heidegger, M. (1927). *Sein und Zeit.* Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1997, 237.
[83] Jung, *Synchronicity,* 29.

In contrast to the aforementioned thinkers, Ortega speaks of destiny in the sense of anticipating what life is most appropriate to the individual on the basis of past and present circumstances. He focusses on an interpretation of the circumstances of past and present, which is somewhat similar to Schopenhauer's argument, but importantly includes the notions of 'interpretation' and 'present', as well as allowing a forward-looking perspective. Following Ortega, one might most accurately characterize destiny as a multidirectional knowledge of past, present, and future as they are interwoven in the fate of the individual.

Although always taking the present as its point of departure and looking forward to a destination, in destiny, one interprets the totality of one's life course. It is, therefore, not as much a question of direction as a hermeneutical zooming in and out. Defined as a hermeneutical knowledge about one's life course, destiny seems to be neither about understanding the meaning of one's past, nor about having a prescience about concrete, objective future events, but about grasping the meaningful totality of one's life course at any given present moment. Destiny is, hence, neither retrospective nor precognitive and yet a bit of both. Rather, we might see destiny as the product of an ongoing process of self-interpretation and self-realization. Characterized as such, the concept seems to bear an essential relation to Jung's concept of individuation, which will be considered in the subsequent section.

3.2. The Individuation of the Self

Roderick Main argues that the effect of synchronistic experiences takes the form of a transformation of one's "fundamental orientation toward reality."[84] In how far this transformation of consciousness is enacted, depends on among other things the experiencer's interpretative capability, once more highlighting the relevance of hermeneutics. Main dissects the transformation into three parts. First, the synchronistic phenomenon itself poses an enigma that stimulates the experiencer to think differently about reality. Second, in the synchronistic experience, one's personality is extended "through [a]

[84] Main, 47.

reordering of the experiencer's memories and interests,"[85] with which Main means to say that following the experience, one starts paying attention to specific contents that one previously failed to notice, such as how, after learning a new word, you start to encounter this word everywhere while you cannot remember ever having seen it before you learnt of it. Third, and most relevantly, a transformation may take place where the experiencer shifts from an ego-centric to a holistic orientation wherein individual and collective are closely connected, even inseparable. This describes the process of self-realization, or individuation.

This, to Jung, is the most important task of every individual: to undergo a journey of personal growth, i.e. the fulfilment of one's potential. It is in this context that he speaks of individuation, which he understands as the integration of the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche into a unified whole.[86] In other words, individuation concerns a holistic[87] process of transformation, whereby the personal and collective unconscious are brought into consciousness to be integrated into the whole personality. Jung characterizes the process as a "[psychological] expression, of that biological process […] by which every living thing becomes what it was destined to become from the beginning."[88] Individuation, it would follow, is the process by which the individual reaches their 'destination.'

Individuation can occur through a whole range of activities, among which introspective meditation, dreams, and free association practices. As such, it is not the case that synchronistic experiences are a necessary criterion for individuation to be possible. Nor is it the case that all synchronistic experiences necessarily contribute to the process of individuation: although there is a "breakthrough" from unconscious content to the consciousness which becomes personally meaningful, it still depends on the experiencing subject, the person oneself and one's conditions, whether such and such content is indeed successfully assimilated in the individuation process.

How, on the basis of Jung's framework as discussed in the previous chapter, might one understand individuation as the common ground whereby synchronistic experiences lead to destiny? The following passage from Jung's *Psychology and Religion* might shed light on this question*:*

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[85] Ibid., 48.
[86] Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*. In: *JCW*, 1801.
[87] Cambray, J., *Synchronicity: Nature and Psyche in an Interconnected Universe*, Texas A&M UP, 2009, 33.
[88] Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West*. In: *JCW*, 5191.

> Something empirically demonstrable comes to our aid from the depths of our unconscious nature. It is the task of the conscious mind to understand these hints. If this does not happen, the process of individuation will nevertheless continue. The only difference is that we become its victims and are *dragged along by fate towards that inescapable goal* which we might have reached walking upright, if only we had taken the trouble and been patient enough to understand in time the meaning of the numina that cross our path. The only thing that really matters now is whether man can climb up to a higher moral level, to a higher plane of consciousness […] But he can make no progress with himself unless he becomes very much better acquainted with his own nature. Unfortunately, a terrifying ignorance prevails in this respect, and an equally great aversion to increasing the knowledge of his intrinsic character.[89]

The unconscious contents, or archetypes, which are expressed in synchronistic experiences, provide clues to the individual consciousness about the nature and direction of one's life course. When these clues are ignored, one still follows this direction but without the hermeneutical knowledge needed to interpret this life course, that is, without destiny. If one blindly follows the course of life, one is dragged along by fate. Only by consciously paying attention to the unconscious contents, that is, by striving for self-knowledge, one may attain destiny.

Let me illustrate this with an example. A man "coincidentally" starts seeing (images of) infants all around him: a baby on the bus, an advertisement on a billboard, even a graphic on someone's shirt. That same night, the meaningful co-incidence becomes apparent when his wife tells him she is pregnant. Here, the archetypal image of the infant meaningfully resonates with the man's life and provides hints that becoming a father is part of his life path. He may ignore these signs, but his wife is pregnant whether he acknowledges it or not. At the point of discovery, the man who ignored the synchronistic experience, has not had time to consciously reflect on whether he indeed wants to be a father and may feel 'dragged along by fate.' Ignorant of himself and his life path, he is not in control of his own life.

However, were he to heed the synchronistic "signs", he can come to self-knowledge – e.g. about his until then unconscious standpoint regarding fatherhood – and, upon learning about his

[89] Ibid., 5344. Emphasis mine.

wife's pregnancy, may know that becoming a father makes sense in the larger scheme of his life. On the basis of the synchronistic experience of seeing the infant(image)s, which becomes part of the process of individuation, the prospective father is able to reflect on the meaning of his own life course. He can interpret whether to be a father is appropriate to his life course, that is, he can consciously come to terms with his fate to be a father and make it into his destiny, as consciously acknowledged fate. What this example demonstrates is that synchronistic experiences can and often do contribute to the individuation process and when they do, lead to destiny.

The primary end product of individuation, however, is not destiny but the self, "which is man's totality, [and which] consist[s] on the one hand of that which is conscious to him, and on the other hand of the contents of the unconscious."[90] As the ego stands to the consciousness as a control centre, so does the self function as a centre to the total psyche, the encompassing whole of ego consciousness and its unconscious counterparts (personal and collective). Confusingly, the self is at once the unification of unconscious and consciousness, the totality of the psyche, and its central archetype.[91] One might see it primarily as a self-conscious totality, that is, an entity which is necessarily self-aware and hence necessarily possesses a minimum of self-knowledge.

Destiny and the self are closely related and even inseparable in so far as destiny is always the destiny of a self, and the self always has a destiny. One cannot know oneself without knowing at least some things about one's life course. Vice versa, one cannot know one's life course without at least knowing some things about oneself. The self always contains a self-referentiality, or a first-person perspective on one's own selfhood, while destiny is this self's hermeneutical knowledge of its own life course. Destiny, therefore, seems to be a special function of the self's self-awareness.

It is in the self, the integrated whole of the complementary relationship between consciousness and the unconscious, where one finds destiny. The optimal relationship here is that of "an harmonious complementation, a reciprocal balancing, in which the archetypes supply basic psychic contents and set the direction, while the ego and consciousness channelize, clarify, and guide

[90] Ibid., 5352; Cambray, 33–4.
[91] Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, 5147; See Neumann, E. (1949). *Origins and History of Consciousness*, Hull, R.F.C. (trans.), London: Karnac Books, 1989.

the process as a whole to assist in actualizing the aims that the psyche unconsciously contains."[92] In other words, the state wherein destiny most comes to the fore is when there is a mutually supporting relationship between the unconscious archetypes and the ego-consciousness, where one provides a frame and direction, while the other interprets the former so to give shape to one's life.

As Edward Whitmont relates, we may see destiny as an "unfolding plan" or "individual pattern of an intended wholeness" that arises from the self and which is realized in actual life by the "cooperation of consciousness."[93] As stated before, one's fate, or unconscious "plan," only becomes one's destiny when it is consciously acknowledged as part of one's total life course. By "viewing [one's] situation (past, present, and future) as a single encompassing whole, as an unfolding destiny pattern, [one] gain[s] the sense that whatever happens at a given point of time "belongs" to it as an indispensable part of the picture."[94] It seems that it is the totality experience of the individuation of the self that underlies the experience of destiny.

One might therefore say that the destiny of the self is the self. In one's life course, understood as a process of individuation, it is one's 'destination' to become wholly individuated as a personality. Every single experience contributes to the unfoldment of one's singular self as distinct from all other selves. Compared to other experiences, occurrences as meaningfully singular as synchronistic experiences may contribute qualitatively more to the self's individuation and, hence, to its destiny.

An important comment needs to be made here to avoid misunderstanding. Although the term 'individuation' seems to connote a radical individualism, this is quite opposite to what Jung claims. Rather, he states, the individual necessarily stands in relation to the rest of humanity:

> Although the conscious achievement of individuality is consistent with man's natural destiny, it is nevertheless not his whole aim. It cannot possibly be the object of human education to create an anarchic conglomeration of individual existences. That would be too much like the unavowed ideal of extreme individualism, which is essentially no more than a morbid reaction against an equally futile collectivism. In contrast to all this, the natural process of

[92] Progoff, 91.
[93] Whitmont, E. (2007). "The Destiny Concept in Psychotherapy." *Journal of Jungian Theory and Practice,* 9(1), 25.
[94] Ibid, 35.

> individuation brings to birth a consciousness of human community precisely because it makes us aware of the unconscious, which unites and is common to all mankind. Individuation is an at-one-ment with oneself and at the same time with humanity, since oneself is a part of humanity.[95]

The self, as a totality, includes the relation to the collective unconscious. As such, it is not possible to speak of the self as an isolated individual; It is always an individual who is part of a larger community and history of humans. Hence, self-knowledge and destiny might be said to specifically concern the relation between individual and collective. Destiny is to know how to interpret the role of one's individual life within the larger scheme of existence. As such, although this thesis concerns personal destiny, it is necessarily related to the destiny of humanity at large.

Here and elsewhere in Jung's thought, we find the unification of opposites. In synchronistic experiences, there is a coming-together of the internal and the external, the unconscious and the consciousness, the subject and the objective, into the totality of the experience. This seems to be the ideal condition wherein the destiny of the self becomes possible.

Having spoken of destiny in relation to the individuation process and the self-aware self in which it culminates, it might be useful to clarify this complex discussion with examples of how the conscious reflection on the archetype of the self leads to destiny.

3.2.1. Exemplary Expressions

As mentioned in chapter two, archetypes are not directly accessible but express themselves indirectly through symbols and mythical motives. Inspired by Jung among others, Joseph Campbell describes the monomyth, commonly known as 'the hero's journey.'[96] The monomyth might be understood as the universalized mythical expression of the archetype of the self which can be recognized throughout history and in all cultures. In literature, it is among the most common plot structures and, in such

[95] Jung, C.G. (1946). "Psychotherapy Today." In *JCW,* 7391.
[96] Campbell, J. (1949). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2004, 4; See Neumann, who, like Campbell, first published his interpretation of the hero myth in 1949.

stories, destiny typically plays an explicit or implicit role: the hero must take control of or come to terms with their destiny.

Campbell's "thesis, like those of the ancients—and as put forth also, but in different ways, by Freud, Jung, and others—is that by entering and transforming the personal psyche, […] other matters of life can be transformed too. […] By being challenged via the failings and fortunes one experiences [in one's personal journey of transformation], one is marked as belonging to a force far greater, and one is changed ever after."[97] In other words, the hero's journey describes how one can attain destiny through the individuation of the self. It teaches one how to grow as a person while navigating the peaks and pitfalls of life.

In its most generalized form, the monomyth, or hero's journey, concerns a three-step process, which often repeats itself cyclically: (1) disturbance of the equilibrium, or departure from the ordinary state of world and being; (2) overcoming hardships by facing one's demons; and (3) return to equilibrium with gained progress.[98] Campbell further develops these into substages, but that expansion is not necessary for the purpose of this thesis. Importantly, one should note that in this process, knowledge of the self and destiny play a crucial role. I will clarify this with an example from the well-known Harry Potter series, specifically *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, which describes a typical hero's journey.[99]

In the initial stage, Harry Potter, living with his "muggle" – that is, non-magical – family, lacks destiny: He has no idea who he is or where the future might lead him. The disturbance of the equilibrium occurs through Harry's gradual process of realizing that he is a wizard and, specifically, that he is famous for being the only person to survive the death spell of the evil wizard Voldemort. When he gains this self-knowledge, he first attains destiny because this realization gives him a framework from which to interpret the course of his life. Knowing that he is a wizard, on the one hand, he can reflect on past events, such as when he accidentally released a snake from the zoo, and, on the other hand, he can have a general idea of the nature and direction of his future: he will attend

[97] Estés, C.P., "Introduction to the 2004 Commemorative Edition." In: Campbell, xxvi–ii.
[98] Campbell, 28.
[99] Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. London: Bloomsbury,1997.

wizarding school Hogwarts and, although he cannot predict his close interactions with Voldemort later on, he can anticipate that this relationship will play a vital role in his life.

Throughout the school year, Harry encounters a variety of (magical) challenges and comes face to face with Voldemort, who might be argued to symbolize Harry's shadow, or the complexes from his personal unconscious.[100] This is, the second stage of the hero's journey: a process whereby Harry gradually builds his destiny by understanding who he is and wants to be.

Finally, at the end of the novel, Harry returns to the equilibrium – summer at the Dursleys – which forms the third stage of the hero's journey. The cycle, then, repeats for the next novels in the series. Every time, at the end, Harry is a changed person who has taken another step toward self-realization, up to the point where he realizes that Voldemort is (literally) part of him, after which Harry is able to finally overcome him. Interpreted from depth psychology, this battle allows Harry to become a unified self, incorporating both his 'heroic' and 'shadow' parts rather than projecting his shadow outside himself.[101]

Another example of destiny we may take from history. Historical sources seem to suggest that Alexander the Great was throughout his life strengthened in the conviction of his destiny to conquer the known world. On his campaigns, Alexander for example encountered the Gordion Knot, of which it was said "that whosoever loosed the fastening was destined to become king of the whole world."[102] Alexander, then, easily undid the knot – although sources diverge whether he cut through it with his sword or pulled out the pin that held the yoke-fastening together[103] – and went on to give direction to his life by aiming to become king of the whole world.

Further, we may speak of the oracle of Ammon who may have accidentally addressed Alexander as the son of God. "[S]ome say that the prophet, wishing to show his friendliness by addressing him with "O paidion," or *O my son*, in his foreign pronunciation ended the words with "s" instead of "n," and said, "O paidios," and that Alexander was pleased at the slip in pronunciation, and

[100] Jung, C.G. (1951). *Aion,* In *JCW*, 4012–4.
[101] Jung, C.G. (1957). *The Undiscovered Self.* In *JCW*, 4605.
[102] Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives.* Perrin, B. (trans.), Loeb Classical Library edition (vol. VII), Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP,1919, section 18.
[103] Ibid.

a story became current that the god had addressed him with "O pai Dios," or *O son of Zeus*."[104] This coincidental address would have been experienced as meaningful by Alexander because, ever since he was a child, his mother Olympias had told him mythical stories about his divine origins.

In Alexander's story, there is a clear manifestation of the hero archetype. An extensive clarification of this archetype is found in Neumann, who describes the hero as having a dual nature, where there is a doubling with the personal, earthly parents with a "suprapersonal," divine, parentage, which is recognized by the hero through his differences to other humans.[105] Alexander, who was raised precisely with the belief of such a dual parentage, inferred from this a "heroic" status similar to Achilles and Heracles.

Throughout Neumann's version of the hero myth, the hero struggles with the tension inherent in his nature, and only by overcoming his dual parentage and becoming his own self, does the hero achieve his goal. Apparent in Alexander's story are his conflicted relationships with both his parents: his mother Olympias is a clear manifestation of the archetype of the Great Mother, who both nurtures and dominates her child,[106] and his father Philippus II acts as the figure of the patriarch of the old order that the son has to rival with and must eventually replace.[107] These foregoing aspects and events which conform to the hero myth, all contributed to Alexander's conviction that he, at the very least, was destined for greatness. He interpreted his life course through this framework, and this gave shape to his destiny of individuating himself as Alexander the Great. In this way, although there is no way to discern to what extent the historical sources are accurate in their descriptions, it appears that Alexander the Great stands as an early example of a self that attains its destiny.

Yet, while Alexander did become a conqueror that remains famous millennia later, he also failed to reach his destination in two other senses. First, objectively, he failed because his campaign was cut short by his death before he could give shape to the unified world that he is reported to have envisioned. Subjectively, or psychologically, he failed in his hero's journey because, at the end of his life, he was consumed by these grandiose delusions of divinity first instilled in him by his mother, i.e.,

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[104] Ibid, section 27.
[105] Neumann, 132; 136–7.
[106] Ibid., 18.
[107] Ibid., 190.

he was "swallowed by the Great Mother."[108] In other words, it seems that, rather than overcoming and successfully integrating the unconscious into consciousness to become a unified self, Alexander the Great succumbed to unconscious forces in what some have described as a state of madness, making his an essentially tragic story.[109]

Finally, I will employ a recent example from the news, namely the remarkable story of Gavin Eastham, who founded a successful business in a time when he was homeless.[110] This case illustrates how self-knowledge can form a ground for destiny. In what was likely one of the most difficult periods in Eastham's life, he was able to take back control because of his self-knowledge that martial arts were the appropriate path for him. He knew this, not only because he recognized his own interest therein, but also because the principles of martial arts personally resonated with him throughout this difficult period. "He said the teachings of martial arts gave him the strength to continue: "Those essential skills have been instilled since a child so even though times were tough I knew I had to persevere and focus on my goals […].""[111] In other words, in Eastham's story, destiny was made possible through a self-knowledge made conscious, which allowed him to turn the tides on his fortune.

3.3. Destiny as Postmodern Activity

"Knowledge […] is a question of competence that goes beyond the simple determination and application of the criterion of truth, extending to the determination and application of criteria of efficiency (technical qualification), of justice and/or happiness (ethical wisdom), […] etc."[112] Knowledge, in other words, is not merely a list of facts that one has collected, but also encompasses many types of 'knowhow', or practical skills. Synchronistic destiny, as it has been discussed in the last section, seems to be less a knowledge of facts than a knowledge of competence, that is, the competence of interpreting one's life course. In how far, might we understand this as a deliberate

[108] Ibid., 276.
[109] See Jung, *Aion,* 4028–9.
[110] Silver, K. (24 November 2019). "I founded my business while living on the street." *BBC News*. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/business-50519297. Last visited: 08/12/2019.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Lyotard, J.F. (1979). "The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge." Bennington, G, and Massumi, B. (trans.), Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984, 18.

interpretative activity, or alternatively, to what extent does it involve a conscious agency rather than a passive reception of unconscious contents? To answer this, we would first need to ask the same question for (1) synchronistic knowledge and (2) self-knowledge.

First, in how far does one have agency with regard to synchronistic experiences at all? One cannot *cause* synchronistic phenomena because they are necessarily acausal, thus one cannot obtain synchronistic knowledge at will. Nevertheless, it seems well possible to increase one's sensitivity, or receptivity, to such experiences. To do so, is relatively simple: often, merely to read about them, already increases one's receptivity. Other practices such as meditation and, in general, increasing one's awareness of one's surroundings can contribute to this. Doing this, plus paying overall more attention to synchronistic experiences, one can reach the appropriate receptivity for synchronistic knowledge. This is still largely passive, however. The active part seems rather only to arise after the fact. Following a synchronistic experience, one has the liberty to choose how to proceed in life: whether to ignore the signs or to engage in the self-conscious epistemological activity of synchronistic destiny. We can choose how to respond to our intuitions and may often find this to have surprising or regrettable outcomes.

Second, to what extent might we say that the self, whose self-knowledge forms the ground by which synchronistic experiences contribute to destiny, has agency?

> The process of unification [in the individuation of the self] is only partly under the control of our will; for the rest it happens involuntarily. With the conscious mind we are able, at most, to get within reach of the unconscious process, and must then wait and see what will happen next. From the conscious standpoint the whole process looks like an adventure or a "quest," […]. To the constantly reiterated question "What can I do?" I know no other answer except "Become what you have always been," namely, the wholeness which we have lost in the midst of our civilized, conscious existence, a wholeness which we always were without knowing it.[113]

[113] Jung, C.G. (1958). *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth*. In *JCW*, 4685.

On the one hand, Jung seems to reject the ideal conception of the self as it emerged in the Enlightenment, the self as a free, sovereign, autonomous, and rational being. His account of the self, an account from depth psychology rather than based on Enlightenment ideals, considers the self as encapsulating both consciousness and the unconscious. The consciousness is but a small part of the self and seems to be constantly driven by the forces of its underlying unconscious, forming for each individual their particular fate. In this sense, self(-knowledge) is largely passive.

On the other hand, Jung does not absolutely and completely reject the Enlightenment conception of the self. There is room in his account for a positive agency when it concerns destiny, as distinct from fate. While the life course of the self is largely in the hands of an unconscious fate, destiny is the bringing to consciousness of this unconscious fate and to interpretatively intervene in it, thus allowing for (a modicum of) freedom. Throughout Jung's works, he seems to simultaneously prohibit and allow for the free agency of the subject, depending on whether he speaks of respectively fate or destiny. As such, this is consistent with Bargdill's analysis of these concepts as discussed in the first chapter. It is not the case that *either* the conscious individual *or* the unconscious archetypes are the active force in destiny: They work together complementarily.[114]

By striving for knowledge of one's life course, destiny, one can prepare oneself for one's future, perhaps not so much in the practical sense as in the psychological sense. As Jung eloquently puts it, "if he voluntarily takes the burden of completeness on himself, he need not find it "happening" to him against his will in a negative form. This is as much as to say that anyone who is destined to descend into a deep pit had better set about it with all the necessary precautions rather than risk falling into the hole backwards."[115] In other words, having insight into one's self and the life course appropriate to one's self, one can anticipate possible pitfalls and actively seek to prevent or diminish them.

To clarify the agency permitted to the self-conscious ego in synchronistic destiny, I will employ an analogy. One cannot control the course of the river of life which carries one along on the currents – the circumstance one is subjected to and the events that will come to pass, or one's

[114] Whitmont, 31.
[115] Jung, *Aion*, 4074.

unconscious "fate." Yet, that does not imply that one is without agency. The ego-consciousness is like a passenger on the metaphorical ship of the self, and when one has enough self-knowledge (in this analogy, knowledge of how to sail the ship), one can act as the ship's captain: steer the vessel and hoist its sails so that it reaches its desired destination. When one encounters a waterfall, or a fall from fortune, to the person who blindly rides the currents, the waterfall comes unexpectedly and thrusts one into the possibly destructive depths of the unknown future. However, if one has a clear insight into what the ship of the self can handle, one can prepare oneself for whatever fate has in store. The person who is in control of one's ship, may steer oneself away from the waterfall or, when this is not possible, know how to survive the fall. In other words, destiny, grounded on knowledge of the self, is to know how to interpret the river of life and how to move oneself in the direction of one's destination.

Just as not every person knows how to sail, destiny is not self-evident or easy to acquire. The life that one leads is not necessarily one that is experienced as meaningful or even worth living. "These are issues of strong evaluation, because the people who ask these questions have no doubt that one can, following one's immediate wishes and desires, take a wrong turn and hence fail to lead a full life."[116] Experience shows that it is possible to make life decisions that do not work out and which may lead one to consider one's life meaningless or failed. As I will argue next, in contemporary society, attaining destiny is becoming only harder and, therefore, ever more urgently requires attention.

In the past, one had defined trajectories from birth to death. In primitive societies, the destiny of the individual was that of the group.[117] One such group could be family: If one was born as the son of a shoemaker, one could "know" that it was one's fate to become a shoemaker because one had no other choice. Later, after the industrial revolution, one had a largely predefined trajectory from family to factory. "The individual never cease[d] passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws: first the family; then the school ("you are no longer in your family"); then the barracks ("you are no longer at school"); then the factory; from time to time the hospital; possibly the

[116] Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2001, 14.
[117] Neumann, 268–9.

prison, the preeminent instance of the enclosed environment." [118] For each individual, destiny was to a measure self-evident because there was only a limited amount of available options. One's circumstances – being born to a certain family in a certain class in a certain society – already largely determined one's destination.

In contemporary Western society, however, the boundaries have seemingly become more porous. There are a lot more options available, among the chaos of which it is becoming increasingly harder for the individual to find that one specific option that suits them best, i.e., is their destiny in the Ortegian sense. One merely has to look at a jobsite to see the overwhelming choice: Do you want to be a digital sales consultant, a communication's adviser, or a marketing intelligence analist? Moreover, if the job that suits one best does not exist, it is now possible to create this job for oneself as an entrepreneur – although, admittedly, not all these entreprises are equally succesful. Within this society where one can become virtually anything one can imagine, destiny is by no means self-evident. As such, there is an increased need for (narrative) interpretation of one's life course.

To have an interpretative framework from which to take life decisions would be extremely valuable. Meaning is always articulated within a framework. One cannot say that one's life is or is not meaningful, without subscribing to a particular conception of what is meaningful and knowing how one relates to this conception.[119] Ethical theories could provide such a framework, but then there remains the necessary translation of applying general theories to specific life issues. In contrast, were one to consider an alternative framework, such as Jung's synchronistic framework, this step of translation would fall away because synchronistic phenomena, after all, cannot exist outside of the scope of lived experience. One can abstract on ethics, formulate universal maxims, but synchronistic experiences are always to some extent concrete.

Synchronistic experiences seem able to provide guidance, or guidelines, for the interpretation of one's life course. As meaningful co-incidences, they are instances of "fullness," moments where one experiences meaningfulness. We can only see whether our experiences genuinely reflect growth

[118] Deleuze, G. (1990). "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October*, Vol. 59, (Winter, 1992) MIT Press, 3; See Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Sheridan, A. (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
[119] Taylor, 47.

or goodness "by seeing how they fit into our surrounding life, that is, what part they play in a narrative of this life. We have to move forward and back [such as in a hermeneutical circle, or between a forward-looking perspective and retrospectivity] to make a real assessment."[120] In short, to know where we are going, to have a destiny at all, we need a (synchronistic) framework for interpretation.

However, in our postmodern age, *all* frameworks have become suspect as potentially destructive ideologies and have thus lost their absolute value.[121] It is not the case that frameworks have disappeared, but that we have lost our confidence in them. They have become uncertain, contingent, relative. Therefore one must continually *produce* meaning through expression and articulation, and to make sense of one's life becomes the "object of a quest."[122] In other words, to attain destiny has increasingly become an activity rather than something that one passively undergoes; Indeed, to find meaningfulness in one's life has become a hero's journey.

3.4. Chapter Conclusion

Synchronicity, self, and destiny: What they have in common is that they are all characterized by an experience of totality of an acausal but meaningful coming-together of distinct elements. Synchronistic phenomena, which were defined along these lines, self-evidently comply. The self, as a totality of conscious and unconscious elements, does too: the assimilation of the self depends on an integration of meaningful components, which one would be hard-pressed to explain along a causal chain. Finally, destiny, as consciously acknowledged fate, or the hermeneutical, or interpretative knowledge about one's life course, was shown in section 3.1. to concern the life course as a totality, which can be regarded from any specific viewpoint in the present, and, as discussed in 3.2, a meaningful coming-together of a self and a life path that are suitable for one another.

In short, one may attain destiny on the basis of conscious reflection on the synchronistic expressions of the unconscious archetype of the Self. By carefully regarding and interpreting

[120] Ibid., 48.
[121] Ibid., 17–8; Lyotard, xxiv.
[122] Taylor, 18; See MacIntyre, A. (1981). *After Virtue.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

synchronistic experiences one can obtain a special kind of hermeneutical knowledge which can substantially inform one's life choices. Interpreted with the hermeneutical circle, wherein analytical and intuitive thinking have a complementary yet symbiotic function, "synchronistic destiny" would concern an interpretation of how specific archetypal patterns relate to one's self, which, in turn, forms the ground for destiny as knowledge about how one can meaningfully relate to one's life course. Synchronistic experiences, therefore, can help us to know whether we are on the right track: they guide us, warn us against decisions that are wrong for us, or, in contrast, confirm the ones that are right for us.

All in all, it might be valuable to reconsider the less commonly accepted parts of Jung's thought, which, in this thesis, have been shown to nonetheless hold philosophical merit and significant implications for how we may understand the concept of destiny.

CONCLUSION

This thesis considered the implications of the synchronicity principle – as promoted by C.G. Jung – for the personal significance and attainability of individual life destiny. In other words, how can synchronistic experiences lead to knowledge about one's life course?

In the first chapter, I analysed the destiny concept and argued why synchronicity was better suited as a principle of explanation for this concept than causality. I distinguished the concept of destiny from the closely related concept of fate, and concluded that destiny can be seen as consciously acknowledged fate, or the knowing awareness of the realization of the course of one's life. Destiny often occurs on the basis of the coming together of seemingly disconnected circumstances joined in time, or meaningful co-incidences. The latter allow for, on the one hand, objective, causal connections for each disjointed event, and on the other hand, for a subjective connection that meaningfully brings these events together. The objective connections can be explained causally, but for the subjective connections one needs the principle of synchronicity. Therefore, I concluded that it is valuable to interpret destiny from a synchronistic framework.

In the second chapter, I explained this framework by discussing Jung's theoretical underpinnings, such as his theory of the collective unconscious and its archetypes, and a specific worldview of totality inspired by Eastern thinkers. Jung understands space and time as reducible within the collective unconscious, which contains and is structured by archetypes, primordial patterns, which can come to expression in the individual consciousness, and which organize unconscious contents in such a way that an individual can experience meaningful co-incidences. The second section investigated the epistemological status of the various kinds of knowledge involved in synchronistic experiences. Synchronistic experience may yield a complex hermeneutical knowledge, on the basis of archetypal patterns of meaning in the collective unconscious, with which one can interpret life in a manner that relates to one's self.

Finally, in the third chapter, I argued that synchronistic experiences can lead to destiny, as knowledge about (the meaningfulness of) one's life course, on the ground of the process of individuation, which assimilates unconscious and conscious contents into a meaningful whole, the

self. Synchronicity, self, and destiny are characterized by an experience of totality in the sense of an acausal but meaningful coming-together of distinct elements. By carefully regarding and interpreting synchronistic experiences one can obtain a special kind of hermeneutical knowledge which can substantially inform one's life choices. Interpreted with the hermeneutical circle, wherein analytical and intuitive thinking have a complementary yet symbiotic function, "synchronistic destiny", then, would concern an interpretation of how specific archetypal patterns relate to one's self, which, in turn, forms the ground for destiny as knowledge about how one can meaningfully relate to one's life course. In short, one may attain destiny on the basis of conscious reflection on the synchronistic expressions of the unconscious archetype of the Self. Synchronistic experiences, therefore, can offer us a guiding framework from which to make life decisions.

Jung's synchronicity principle and accompanying framework of depth psychology are difficult to grasp and reach into domains beyond rational understanding. As this thesis has set out to demonstrate, the mystical qualities of Jung's theories, although contributing to the lack of serious attention some of his theories have enjoyed from the more rationally inclined, do not undermine their philosophical value in offering a unique perspective on some of the more baffling puzzles of existence, such as destiny. Merely because it involves some not-commonly accepted ideas, such as extra-sensory perception, does not make a theory worthless. In this thesis, I have attempted to show the relevance of Jung's thought for philosophy: He responds to a philosophical tradition we may trace through Schopenhauer and Kant, among others; he has developed a coherent and cogent philosophical system; and his theories have many philosophical implications for epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, political philosophy, and so forth.

On a more general level, this thesis reflects on the value of speculative thought in the postmodern age. One may either speculate on what is uncertain in the hopes of occasionally reaching a profound conclusion, or never say anything profoundly meaningful at all because one is too fast to dismiss anything that cannot be proven to be objectively true. Nowadays, in an age of 'information overload' and 'fake news,' it seems that certainty has come under siege. Western thought seems to be moving away from rationalism toward a psychologism that focusses on questions such as identity and

meaningfulness. In such a chaotic age, it seems, Jung's underappreciated philosophical system might well be what we need to keep in touch with our selfhood, and, in extension, our destiny.

As knowledge about one's life course, destiny is never concrete in showing what one might expect to happen but gives one a subtle glance at the larger pattern of things, to find oneself in the meaningful order of totality. Destiny is foremost about knowing what role one is to play within the whole. To attain destiny, one needs first to know oneself: self-knowledge forms the hermeneutical framework from which one interprets (the events of) one's life course. Synchronistic phenomena contribute to this self-knowledge in a uniquely compelling and valuable way by offering unconscious guidance through meaningful co-incidences.

Nevertheless, it is up to the individual to use this guidance to their advantage in attaining destiny and subsequently reaching one's destination. Many would let their lives be ruled by fate, the inevitable, the fatalistic. However, through an understanding of synchronistic experiences, one may be able to step out from this routine and actively direct oneself upon the river of life. Synchronistic interpretation of one's life course may help one to realize one's inner potential. Fate is what happens to us, whereas destiny is what we attain ourselves through the self-conscious hermeneutical motion which connects us to the larger universe in our endeavour to become the best possible versions of ourselves.

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