

C. G. JUNG'S CONCEPT OF "SYNCHRONICITY"

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Synchronicity is a new way of looking at things. It takes seriously phenomena inexplicable by ordinary scientific criteria. It is applied in cases in which causal connection between two facts cannot be explained or conceived, but where we cannot help connecting the facts: there must then be a "tertium comparationis." This is an emotional value, anything between "meaningfulness" and "luminosity," which strikes us.

Necessity for the concept can be seen in Rhine's card and dice experiments. Causality cannot explain target hits significantly above probability. When *distance in space* reveals itself ineffective, the role of space is reduced almost to zero. When above chance hits occur with regard to a *future* series, the role of time proves equally ineffective. Time is reversible or at least relative, just as is space. Where these two categories are limited if not eliminated, it makes no sense to apply the category of causality. "Precognition," "telepathy" or "PK" are therefore descriptions, not explanations.

Phenomena of the same nature sometimes occur spontaneously. These cases often are more improbable than experimental cases, and their emotional connotations correspondingly stronger. The emotional factor seems to bridge the gap left by lack of causal connection. However it is impossible to determine priority as between fact and emotion. What, then, is the common denominator of these a-causal phenomena where time and/or space are obviously out of joint, yet the connection between two or more facts "hits between the eyes?"

Jung, approaching from the psychological angle, finds in such cases: (1) Inadequacy of causality; (2) Emotional factor

involved; and (3) A formal factor, common to all the links in the set of comparable facts.

Where, Jung asks, do we meet in psychological experience the same set of conditions? Wherever, he says, *Archetypes* are involved. They play a part where high emotional tension exists. They have moreover the faculty of arranging or constellating psychic contents which shows they are a *formal factor*, which manifests itself in an archetypal *image*. Simultaneously we can often observe that a formally similar, possibly external, objective situation coincides with the purely inner archetypal image, though no causal connection can be established.

Jung cites many phenomena and says that they fall into three categories:

1. Coincidence of a psychic condition of the observer with an objective, outer event simultaneously observed and which corresponds to the content of the psychic condition. There is no causal connection in evidence; assuming the well established relativity of space and time, such is not even conceivable.

2. Coincidence of a psychic condition with a corresponding (more or less spontaneous) outer event outside the observer's field of perception, which can be verified only subsequently.

3. Coincidence of a psychic condition with a corresponding, not yet existent, future event that is distant in time, which also can only be verified subsequently.

In situations (2) and (3) events are not yet present to the observer. But since they correspond, though not necessarily in time, Jung calls such events *synchronistic*.

Rhine's experiments come under (2) and (3). Since it is impossible to guess sequences or to influence fall of dice by mere wishing, the impossible task induces hope for a miracle, however unconscious with emotional tension, and sets up an archetypal situation. Thus the results are the product of an auto-observation of the percipient's or agent's own psyche.