

The Definition of Magical Thinking: Basic Aspects and Possible Clinical Implications

José Henrique Rocha Dias Correia

Licentiate in Psychological Sciences, Rua Cidade de Bissau, 47, 5^oB, 1800-075 Lisboa, Portugal

*Corresponding Author: joseh.dcorreia@gmail.com

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Abstract One possible definition of what is magical thinking will be attempted with an emphasis on non-causality, on Jungian synchronicity theory, on the presentation of unpublished experimentation with one oracle, plus the Freudian implications on the matter, and how all this can have a bearing on the understanding of the concept of magical thinking itself and, indirectly, on possible new modes of psychotherapy already based on the few reports that have been published to this end so far.

Keywords Analytical Psychology, I Ching, Magical Thinking, Psychoanalysis, Synchronicity

1. Introduction

Magical thinking was the mode of thought on which the study of British anthropologist Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1902-1972) concerning witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande tribe of the nowadays Sudan nation, was based. His pioneered Ph.D. thesis, and his related most famous book subsequently published in 1937 [1], showed how this particular way of thinking affected the common daily life of the Azande people. In this paper I will sketch out the workings of this way of thought in the human mind, how it explains misfortune for the Azande people, and what consequences are brought about by the interpretations given through magical thinking to a whole range of real life situations, that might include magical thinking in the condition of one positive symptom in schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders. The topic of this paper is on magical thinking viewed in its basic aspects as dealt with by Evans-Pritchard, and afterwards in particular reference to the famous Chinese I Ching oracle and also in reference to spontaneous significant coincidences interpreted in light of the modern theory of synchronicity. An attempt will be made to clear what roles magical thinking associated with the oracle and with spontaneous significant coincidences can potentially have in clinical practice. Magical thinking has been one positive symptom in schizophrenia and other psychoses, and consequentially the study of magical thinking

can be important for these established psychiatric disorders. The problem remains, though, that this modality of thought has not been much researched, and only the synchronicity theory, so far, has delved deeply into this matter. So, we are facing here a new line of inquiry that eventually will prove useful for the clinical practice.

Firstly, an attempt to a definition of what is magical thinking: magical thought has been a peculiar moral process by means of which a hidden meaning has been conferred on one real life event that consists in an outcome brought about by the confluence, both in space and in time, of two or more independently caused phenomena. Then, we are faced with independent or separate phenomena that can be explained ordinarily by different causes, but with the phenomena evolving in parallel so that at a certain point they give rise to a distinguishable event that becomes so because of the concurrence of the independent causal chains meeting somewhere and somehow under the observer's eyes. The new event emerges in the intellect witnessing it as a significant coincidence with an occult meaning, the hidden meaning becoming evident for the observer just because of the coincidental final event. Hence, an acausal connecting principle has supposed to be in operation making the bridge between a priori unrelated phenomena but in such a way that all of these, nevertheless, become evident when they yield the significant coincidence. This general (but simultaneously startling and eerie) pattern giving rise to specific meaning under unique circumstance, has been dealt with by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) in his seminal 1951 German paper posteriorly rendered under the title Synchronicity: an acausal connecting principle. Jung [2] concludes in favour of the empirically observable pattern of events conducive to new meanings in people's lives experiences, patterns that are coherently illuminated by the synchronicity theory and by synchronistic interpretations. In terms of Western civilization and of orthodox scientific worldviews synchronicity has not been one endorsed theory to explain non-causally arisen events, leaving room for explanations provided by concepts like that of chance or randomness attributable to singular phenomena, unexplainable by the current tenets and, because of this very last reason, not worthy of having any numinous or

emotionally charged meaning whatsoever. But for the Azande people these kind of coincidences are constantly interpreted under the light of their witchcraft theory if some sort of evil is perceived as attached to the events. These folk assume that such coincidences are invariably connected to evil forces and their source must be checked up on witches. So, a moral principle has been implicated here for them. But who are witches for the Azande? They are individuals who by virtue of unknowable reasons have the power to negatively affect in a psychical way third parties, and this faculty makes the latter suffer loss or damage, like for instance, misfortune in daily life, disease or even death. The nature of the influence is supposed to be psychokinetic, that is, a mind over matter effect by means of which the mind of the witch directly affects the material life of the victim. Witches do not practice magical rituals, do not possess magical crafts, in opposition to medicine man. They may be plain neighbors in the same village. To fight against witchcraft the Azande consult oracles and diviners, and use magical drugs; these procedures always intended for to take revenge on behalf of the victims, and for this reason magic and witchcraft among the Azande have permanently been associated with evil forces and the rage of retaliation. This has been the morality stance imbuing with their magical thinking. Obviously, this moralistic attitude has not been pertaining to a scientific appreciation of the phenomenon of significant coincidences as it has been worked out by philosophers and by psychologists.

Let us consider one typical example for the Azande people: in a hot summer afternoon some villagers take shelter under the shade inside of a hut; termites had been eroding the wood on the roof of the hut; the roof eventually collapses while the people were relaxing under it and some of the villagers become badly wounded or eventually die. So, clearly the two independent chains of events, with separate causations, converge into a singular bad event with a heavy social significance. It is this last feature that triggers off the character of a significant coincidence for the resultant event that, following, becomes one social issue, amenable to a peculiar interpretation under the concept of a theory for witchcraft that it is socially acceptable for those people. The theory explains misfortune in general, and gives the Azande tribesman a stereotyped and quick way of thinking in face of any bad luck. But magical thought it is not one particular moral process exclusively. It is also a mental frame that causes specific behaviors, namely to urge on revenge. Consultation of oracles and magical rituals has a social value for the Azande and they are components of the behaviors associated with magical thinking. For the people concerned witchcraft is omnipresent in their daily life and has been a leitmotiv that justifies the consultation of oracles and the additional procedures based on magical thought. Hence, these aspects are a part of their common lives, leading the natives to regard the peculiar behaviors and motivations for them as trivial phenomena. As a matter of fact, witchcraft is not considered in awe of the supernatural and overriding forces controlling life but with anger or rage, with an urge on

retaliation against evil doers and undercover forces. These persons do not consider that there is an unbridgeable gap between natural events and the supernatural or paranormal. Neither do they proclaim a natural philosophy to elucidate by natural law the relations between cause and effect that can be observed repeatedly. But one should notice that they do not generalize the mystical causality (another name for non-causality) implied in witchcraft to give a full explanation regarding physical phenomena. When explaining disease caused by witchcraft their civilization's deficiency does not preclude them from avoiding mystical causation regarding the natural phenomena portion. The theory is only called upon when explanations by means of natural causes have been exhausted. Witchcraft is basically a putative concept that involves personal agents, albeit holding supernatural powers, to materialize specific instances of misfortune, loss or damage, disease and death, for which the knowers of the event cannot realize the sole concurrence of natural causes. It is at the level of significant coincidences that the Azande way of thinking introduces a peculiar mode for explaining the events, namely that phenomena chained to each other but belonging to separate causes can eventually converge to produce an evilly event to identified individuals or groups of people, and the ensuing explanation is provided by the witchcraft theory. This becomes one link in the gap that for Western civilized thought has been filled in by chance, good luck or bad luck, randomness, where these find their roles to play. Mystical causation and natural causation are, then, not mutually excluded in the thinking of the Azande. For instance, when discussing the death of one person they do understand that there would be natural reasons for the death, but they also consider that witchcraft's associated mystical causality was an adjuvant factor adding to the lethal outcome. This is so because for the Azande death has been not just a natural occurrence but a social issue as well, and it has been at this last level that mystical causes have been and can become implicated. In the situations of misfortune that strike these folk it is the social relevance of the situation that determines the invocation of witchcraft (plus its mystical causality) as definitely involved, ipso facto, with the determinism of one death or other kinds of loss. Natural as well as paranormal causes can be simultaneously associated in a bad happening.

Unfortunately the Azande do not proclaim one doctrine of witchcraft. Their relations with witchcraft are more practical and not analytical. They understand the connection between a cause and its effect under natural circumstance, but they also add witchcraft to their natural philosophy of living in order to explain the coincidences with a significance of misfortune, loss or damage. The Azande react against witchcraft, and fight it off, not theorizing extensively about what has been at stake. The theory stands for a justification of what has been used to fight against evil forces grounded on magical procedures. The concept pretends to explain the why of the occurrence of significant coincidences, bad in meaning, rather than to explain how the phenomena that gave rise to the coincidences unfolded and eventually

coalesced harmfully to a certain point in space and in time. There resides the explanatory function of their intellect. The pristine way (at the time of the Pritchard's anthropologic enquiry not yet contaminated by a positivist and exclusively rationalist worldview such as in current Western common sense) of magical thinking featured in the Azande's thought will be highlighted and cleared up by means of the still contemporary, albeit scientifically unorthodox, oracular tool named I Ching that curiously also bases its functioning on magical thinking.

2. Experimental Section of the Paper

The I Ching is an old book of oracles. It was devised more than three thousand years ago in China. Modernly, the I Ching can be faced as a database of ancient wisdom. The oracular material is organized in sixty-four records named hexagrams. These sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching are very abstract symbols that depict the same number of archetypal situations. The abstract symbols have a high level of generalization and integration of any information probed with the oracle. The sixty-four hexagrams consist of specific six lines figures and their particularly associated sections of text. The lines referred to are either opened or whole, and eventually also with the possibility of changing or transforming into their opposites. This last pair is the pair of moving lines. So, there are four species of lines to constitute the hexagrams. Throughout the book the sections of oracular text are distributed in fields that are constant. For example, The Judgment, The Commentary on the Decision, The Image, The Lines, and so on, are regular fields throughout. These fields or sections compose the oracular material and contain specific lines of text that differ from hexagram to hexagram. The text under the title The Lines pertains to each of the six independent lines that make up the different hexagrams. To access the oracular information from the I Ching a ritual must be performed. This ritual consists of the operation of a random event generator, namely, the tossing at random six times of three identical coins and taking note of the tails and heads upward, or, alternatively, the laborious and chance division of forty-nine yarrow stalks (*Achillea millefolium*). The outcome of these rituals can be a single, closed hexagram, or a set of hexagrams that are chained by their so called moving lines. Next, I will abridge one oracle drawn from the I Ching in the context of a question pertaining to the topic of magical thinking, the oracle composed of two hexagrams connected by one moving line. The I Ching has been known as a tool to guess at the future, and this has been what folklore has attributed to the oracle as its useful and only property. But actually the oracle has been the practical expression of a doctrine based on a particular and specific worldview that Chinese Philosophy has been developing for centuries [3]. The divinatory power has been just a side effect or secondary result for those who master the doctrine [4] (p. 317) and truly one should not be seduced by it for this would stand for a too personal or egocentric attitude

perverting the genuine essence of the doctrine; then divination will be of no avail. Since my first contact with the I Ching I have faced it as an amazing source of experimentally produced significant coincidences, and in my opinion the oracular outcomes must be analyzed as significant coincidences produced by a tentative procedure. The interpretation of the oracles drawn from the I Ching calls for a sort of eidetic variation that has been proper to Hermeneutic Phenomenology in order to unfold the hidden meanings that can be supplied by the readings of the oracles. This interpretative criterion was shortly indicated as being the correct one in the early exegesis of the book of changes [4] (pp. 349-350) at a time when, obviously, Hermeneutic Phenomenology still did not exist. In this paper there is not a full address to the Philosophy underpinning the I Ching; for this I refer the reader to bibliographic reference [3]. In the other hand, I will try to show the relevance of significant coincidences and the use of the I Ching in their germinal import inside clinical practice.

The ritual by the coins was performed and yielded two hexagrams, the first entitled Holding Together or Union (number 8 in the book of changes) and the second with the title Difficulty at the Beginning (number 3 in the book of changes) the first or initial line (bottom line in the hexagrams) chaining the transformation of the former into the latter of the hexagrams. For the first hexagram its Miscellaneous Notes read "Holding together is something joyous" [4] (p. 425). In the deeply symbolic language of the oracle joyous means, in this case, sortilege. Next, in The Judgment of the hexagram one reads "Holding together brings good fortune. Inquire of the oracle once again whether you possess sublimity, constancy, and perseverance; then there is no blame. Those who are uncertain gradually join. Whoever comes too late meets with misfortune" (*ibidem*). These fragments of text could be interpreted as a calling coming from magical thinking itself and redirecting the reader and interpreter of the oracle once again back into magical thinking. This reminds me of the famous hermeneutical circle proper to Hermeneutic Phenomenology. One can suppose at face value that there is a promise of gain on the exercising in magical thinking, but only for those who adhere to its peculiar way of functioning and proceed inquiring with the oracle, based on the very system of magical thinking. Apparently, magical thinking has been a modality of thought which has been self-sufficient, confined to its own magical frontiers, claiming to be something completely different from mundane experience. The second hexagram in the sequence shows the following passage in The Sequence of the Hexagrams: "After heaven and earth have come into existence, individual beings develop. It is these individual beings that fill the space between heaven and earth. Hence there follows the hexagram of difficulty at the beginning. Difficulty at the beginning is the same as filling up" (*ibidem*; p. 398). According to the symbolism pertaining to the oracle heaven stands for the creative power in Nature while the earth is a symbol of matter, the stuff that makes up the universe and the bodies of men. Then, and accordingly to the

Philosophy conveyed by the oracle, it is man's responsibility to make actual the two principles concerned, creative power and the matter that materializes that power, with the help of magical thinking for those who are recognizing the power, the justice and the virtue that are behind the oracle pronouncements. Man, in the condition of a microcosm reflecting correspondences with the larger macrocosm surrounding him, has been the symbolically uniting element between heaven and earth. We must bear in mind that these metaphors (and the profound symbolic language they imply) should be considered in light of the motive for the consultation of the oracle and that was this concrete question: "What is the usefulness of magical thinking for the practice of good and for the practice of evil?" This questioning presupposes a certain moral stance, not completely neutral, but then this aspect fully gives rise to the fundamentals of magical thinking in a natural scenario which is where this peculiar type of reasoning takes place. So, the question is a realistic formulation that has the power to unravel a response based on the very magical thinking process itself, the *modus operandi* for the I Ching. The experiment of drawing this specific oracle is unique, a single event that cannot be replicated by trying to draw other oracles repeatedly, and it is a situation that has been perfectly coherent with the theory of synchronicity (with its explanatory power for the emergence of non-causally generated patterns of meaning) as originally elaborated by Carl Jung. Is it not magic that this specific oracle resulted from the tentative ritual?

3. Discussions

After Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) discovered the personal unconscious [6] and Jung found out the collective unconscious and its archetypes [5] we can reasonably assume that the I Ching is an effective way of exploring the unconscious side from real life situations. This applies to the fact that the unconscious is revealed by the I Ching, whenever it has been pushing towards an amplified experience of the meaningfulness of each specific situation enlightened by the oracle. Also, in their own terms, the fields of oracular material will fill a gap in the knowledge of the consultant's consciousness. Both aspects lead the way to an increase in the appreciation of the meaningfulness of the real life situations that the oracle helps to analyze, bringing to light information that otherwise would be oversight. I have relied on the Richard Wilhelm [4] translation of the I Ching into German, rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes, to interpret the sayings from the oracle, because Wilhelm's translation from the Mandarin has been a reputable work, for some even a standard. In the foreword written by Carl Gustav Jung in 1949 to the English edition of the I Ching, he involved his original principle of synchronicity (and henceforth the unconscious and the archetypes) in the foundations of the function of the oracle [2] (pp. 49-53). In this foreword Jung reported on a couple of experiments he did with the I Ching, to put the oracle to the test of presenting

itself and also of commenting on the very Jung's procedure or attitude towards the oracle. So, the experimentation I have performed and reported has been building on an idea originally put forward and implemented by Jung.

The foregoing experimental results' interpretation calls for a deeper understanding of what are symbols and how they operate as objects inside the processes of human thought, a concept that thoroughly concerned Freud when researching dreams and the fantasies in primary processes, which he attributed to unconscious activities in the human mind in such a way that he had no doubt whatsoever about the roots of mental diseases plunging into the unconscious [6]. Dreams and fantasies abound with magical thoughts (and as such dreams and fantasies avoid causality inside their own specific contents) due to the special properties of the unconscious system that are absence of contradiction, timelessness, mobility of investments, and substitution of psychic reality for external reality [6] (pp. 69-72). In this piece of work the symbols are the hexagrams themselves, as I stated above, plus the metaphors contained in the associated bits of text. But most of what has been reported in the paper (the oracle experiment and the behaviors described for the Azande folk) has been operating at the level of consciousness, as manifest conspicuous contents, and surely we are not concerned here with ostensive primary processes like in a dream or in a fantasy subjected to analysis. Since magical thinking has been one positive symptom in schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders, and since symbols have been of a paramount importance for the doctrine of Psychoanalysis, to bridge the gap between these domains in Psychopathology with the help of new discoveries by original research on magical thinking, just as the humble discoveries that have been brought to light by means of the unique experimentation herein reported promise, looks something highly desirable.

This discussion must be amplified inside the perspective of the concepts of significant coincidences and of non-causality such as considered by the theory of synchronicity. Indeed, the outcome of the tentative ritual that has been used can be faced as a significant coincidence produced in a non-causal way, and as such amenable to an analysis and an interpretation in light of the synchronicity theory. Following I will make a series of citations from Jung [2], between quotation marks, in order to clear the above concepts up, and show the reader how they can have a bearing on the understanding of their implications into the functioning of the I Ching.

Quoting Jung [2] about why he selected 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" (*ibidem*; p. 36) is the justification to give such a name to his theory and, consequently, "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." (*ibidem*; p.36). Here we have a general definition of

what is synchronicity in terms of meaning, of time, and of space, according to Carl Jung's very words.

Again, according to Jung's own words, we have time, space, causes and meaning, as overall psychological characteristics of synchronicity stated in the following sentences: "Synchronistic events rest on the simultaneous occurrence of two different psychic states. One of them is the normal, probable state (i.e., the one that is causally explicable), and the other, the critical experience, is the one that cannot be derived causally from the first." (ibidem; p. 40). "An unexpected content which is directly or indirectly connected with some external event coincides with the ordinary psychic state: that is what I call synchronicity." (ibidem; p. 41). "The synchronicity principle asserts that the terms of a meaningful coincidence are connected by simultaneity and meaning." (ibidem; p. 91).

The next sentences underline non-causality as the main psychological characteristic of synchronicity: "...synchronistic phenomena cannot in principle be associated with any conceptions of causality. Hence the interconnection of meaningfully coincident factors must necessarily be thought of as acausal." (ibidem; p. 42). "Synchronicity therefore consists of two factors: a) an unconscious image comes into consciousness either directly (i.e., literally) or indirectly (symbolized or suggested) in the form of a dream, idea, or premonition. b) an objective situation coincides with this content. The one is as puzzling as the other. How does the unconscious image arise, and how the coincidence?" (ibidem; pp. 44-45).

Regarding meaning as the main feature in synchronicity this is what Jung had to say about it: "Although meaning is an anthropomorphic interpretation it nevertheless forms the indispensable criterion of synchronicity." (ibidem; p. 95). "The great difficulty is that we have absolutely no scientific means of proving the existence of an objective meaning which is not just a psychic product." (ibidem; p. 91). "If – and it seems plausible – the meaningful coincidence or cross-connection of events cannot be explained causally, then the connecting principle must lie in the equal significance of parallel events; in other words, their tertiumcomparationis is meaning." (ibidem; p. 91). "I incline in fact to the view that synchronicity in the narrower sense is only a particular instance of general acausalorderedness – that, namely, of the equivalence of psychic and physical processes where the observer is in the fortunate position of being able to recognize the tertiumcomparationis." (ibidem; p. 139).

I call my readers' attention to the reality that the tertiumcomparationis actually behaves as a tertium non datur that healthily re-establishes a meaning in life for the observer if the significant coincidences involved pertain to his/hers personal style of living. I did one experiment with the I Ching that confirms this point of view in general. The discussion of the experiment concerning the tertium non datur will be carried out at the end of this section. Meaning can have, potentially at least, a new therapeutic value if rooted in synchronicity, and, additionally, executing

experimentation with synchronicity has been a possibility opened by the I Ching as Jung himself suggested in his paper.

"Meaningful coincidences – which are to be distinguished from meaningless chance groupings...are thinkable as pure chance...Their inexplicability is not due to the fact that the cause is unknown, but to the fact that a cause is not even thinkable." (ibidem; pp. 33-34, 142-143). This is what Jung had to say concerning the implications of probability into synchronicity. Definitely, chance has an important role to play in the scenario of synchronicity happenings. Now, I must point out that the quotation below belongs to the editors of the particular English translation of Professor Jung's book that is specifically quoted in the references list, and the quotation helps clarifying Jung's thought on probability applied in the usual way to scientific experimentation: "Statistical analysis is designed to separate out groupings (termed dispersions) due to random activity from significant dispersions in which causes may be looked for. On Professor Jung's hypothesis, however, dispersions due to chance can be subdivided into meaningful and meaningless. The meaningful dispersions due to chance are made meaningful by the activation of the psychoid archetype." (ibidem; p. 34).

The psychological condition of surprise arisen out from synchronistic events was underlined by Jung in these sentences: "coincidences which were connected so meaningfully that their chance concurrence would be incredible...have as their common characteristic an element of impossibility." (ibidem; pp. 31, 34). "As against this, however, it must be borne in mind that the synchronistic phenomena which can be verified empirically, far from constituting a rule, are so exceptional that most people doubt their existence." (ibidem; p. 116).

To the statisticians' point of view I must add the following: the resolution of Montmort's Problem in Mathematics states the odds are about 63 to 37 (or nearly two to one) that in any convergence of an oscillating time series coincidences will crop up, eventually in the condition of significant coincidences for an observer inside some context. The results implicated in this probability hold true be the number of events susceptible of yielding the significant coincidence a small number or a huge number. A time series is a sequence of one kind of experiment, repeated over and over again in time, one experiment following the other, and in such a way that the probability for the typically expected outcome oscillates or fluctuates in time, the probability now rising now diminishing throughout the sequence; but in the fourth experiment the probability approaches a value that after the eighth trial stabilizes in such a narrow way that we can speak of the convergence of the probability for the outcome tending towards one specific numeric value; this numeric value for the probability has been the odds of nearly two to one in the Montmort's Problem solution.

Consequently, and most importantly, significant coincidences are unique events on an individual basis but by no means are they, as a whole, rare phenomena.

In the other hand, oracles, witchcraft and magic rituals intended for retaliation have been considered normal daily

matters by the Azande people, and they are not viewed by them as paranormal procedures or as an inferiority of their mentality. Hence, a clarification distinguishing causality from non-causality in correlated events must be presented because the distinction between causation and lack of causation has been supposed to demonstrate the Hallmark that separates phenomena attributable to clear normal causes from those in which the lack of recognition of at least one cause makes the whole situation highly unlikely to be either real or suitable for an interpretation of some possible meaning contained in it. Beloff[7] discussed causal versus acausal interpretation of psi phenomena, involving Jung's synchronicity theory in the discussion and questioning the value of the theory in psychological terms. He argued that what was going on was simply a shift of the residence of causes from a psychic level of reality (rendering a mechanistic determinism to psychological facts, whilst excluding from this rendering the quest he holds dear for unknown causes in the anomalous psi phenomena that are objects for Psychical Research) to a level pertaining to unconscious structures named archetypes [5] that could behave as autonomous complexes in the latent part of the human mind, or even to equivalent metaphysical agents, Beloff[7] claims cannot override the conspicuous role of "fortuitous juxtaposition" implying per se the inadequacy of the various a priori archetypal meanings pointed out by Jung [5] and that raise to conscience the numinous aspect in significant coincidences. But the discussion concerning causality, both from the point of view of the philosophical and the operational or eminently practical perspectives, has paramount and actual importance in biomedicine, in financial, political and the social sciences at large [8] (pp. 1-5) and has been endless argumentation presently far distant from the possibility of the elaboration of one unifying theory of causality, universally valid, which happens to be a situation constrained by philosophical factors (ibidem pp. 5, 66-67). The question of what does a cause consist of, in philosophical terms, remains unanswered in a full way and hence the concept of what a non-cause can be is also still very much debatable from a philosophical point of view, and this has been the question that consists in the kernel of the discussion for the matter in this paper.

3.1. Abridged Discussion of the Experiment Implying a Therapeutic Value for the Tertium Non Datur

Confronted with the question "I Ching, why do the coincidences occur?" the oracle yielded two hexagrams, numbers 11 and 46 in the book of changes. These hexagrams have the titles, respectively, Peace and Pushing Upward, their first or bottom line determining the transformation of the former hexagram into the last. The hexagram Peace can be faced as "what is above and what is below are united and of one will" according to Wilhelm's interpretation [4] (p. 440). This point in the direction of a harmonization of heaven and earth, the two main principles belonging to the Philosophy of the oracle as I explained in the foregoing

experimental section. The transforming first line has this portion of text associated with it: "When ribbon grass is pulled up, the sod comes with it." (ibidem; p. 443). From a symbolic point of view ribbon grass, sod, and the movement of pulling up, could represent an upward movement, metaphorically speaking, of conscience's dilemmas (sod) therapeutically treated (ribbon grass) by a solidarity ascending towards a higher plane, from down earth to above heavens. This line of interpretation indeed could be chained coherently with the successive hexagram, Pushing Upward, which shares the meaning just meant in The Sequence (ibidem; p. 619), the Miscellaneous Notes (ibidem; p. 620) and the very line at the beginning of the hexagram (ibidem; p. 621). In its Commentary on the Decision the therapeutic value is highlighted by the pronouncement: "One must see the great man. Fear not, for it brings blessing." (ibidem; p. 620). This dismissal from anxiety when stumbling across significant coincidence is based on a "transcendental reason" as stated by Wilhelm (ibidem; p. 621) when he came to interpret the oracle in a generalizable way. But it presupposes the attitude of the greatness of the so called "superior" person, that is, the one who trusts in the oracular sayings and lives up to their principles. In practice, the resolution of the anxiety must be derived from the analysis and the interpretation of the coincidence in light of a symbolic experience encountering us as a lucky break, coming from a spirit joker that urges us on to think over conscience's dilemmas. Jungian compensation has been crucially paramount to the resolution of this last problem according to my personal experience of the phenomenon. Now, the significant coincidence crops up unexpectedly from a deep layer of the unconscious and from the environment around the observer. Hence the expression tertium non datur to indicate the non-rational character of both the situation and the human experience associated with it, but also bearing in mind the Jungian conceptions on the matter and that are not aloof from Jung embracing the oracle.

4. Conclusions

I have drawn information from a range of distinct sources largely scattered in the literature. One common denominator fairly noticeable in all this literature has been that any cause (regardless of being a finality cause, an efficient cause or a mystical cause) resides in the theory that is used to analyze and interpret the data focused by human attention. Then, the cause and its explanatory power have a context as to their expression which is the very theory employed to face the world, or the worldview of the observer. Causes are mental concepts that help us orient ourselves successfully around the world and in our lives. Magical thinking reaches for a special instance of causality based on finality and on singular events, something falling into an area where cognitive uncertainty or a degree of ignorance can bewilder the observer, who expects from the temporal closeness, the repeatability and the determinism that are naturally

pre-assumed features, the usually efficient, practical, usefulness in every causal relation with a certain effect, be it physical or be it psychic.

Probably, the Jungian theory of synchronicity is so far the best at capturing the peculiar ways of magical thinking, namely taking into account lack of causation and probabilistic rareness while richly meaningful. One particular way of experimentation based on the I Ching can be developed to put synchronicity to the test, as I hope I have shown with the couple of experiments performed by myself and herein reported. Jung had already suggested this type of experimentation with synchronicity. A potentiality for the therapeutic use of synchronicity and the oracle as well, is also hinted at by the work contained in this paper. Jung only acknowledged one instance of synchronicity with a healing effect; his most celebrated scarab case [2] (pp. 30-33, 41). In this clinical case history the psychotherapy moved forward because the female patient relaxed her excessive rationalistic way of thinking and began to admit to her consciousness more irrational information stemming from her dreams that actually found a correspondence in her awakened living in the form of one significant coincidence. In [9] two cases of significant coincidences were also reported with a healing effect: one young female afflicted with one episode of an acute migraine from a psychosomatic source, under harsh environmental conditions, was involved in a significant coincidence spontaneously and after a healing effect was noticed that surpassed the pain killer pills. The other case involved one young female borderline patient under Jungian analysis for a mourning situation and spontaneous coincidences provided welcome insight for the therapy, giving insights both to the patient as well as to the therapist.

Two more cases were reported in [10] but now with the significant coincidences yielded by the I Ching: the first case was a woman suffering from a deep depression that found relief from the morbid condition by the adequate readings of one oracle, showing her an archetypal purpose in her living situation that shifted her thoughts from morbid concerns to a higher level of understanding of the living process of any individual (pp. 36-40); the second case was a woman who showed up in psychotherapy and immediately developed an unsurmountable resistance against it. The oracle cleared up the inadequate upset psychotherapist's mind giving an indication of stoppage for an unsolvable problem that was founded in an unremitting archetypal substrate (pp. 43-45). The clinical cases associated with either spontaneous significant coincidences or with coincidences got by means of the I Ching provide evidence both to the realism and the efficacy of the Jungian theory of synchronicity, plus its obvious clinical implications. Unfortunately, reports related to this applied perspective are rather scarce and the current paper reflects this fact. Hence, further and sustained documentation of the clinical usefulness of the phenomenon

has been desperately needed if we want to prove this point as a valuable point.

In spite of the fact that there has been a lot of discussion concerning the ramified foundations and the hypothetically developments of the theory of synchronicity, there has been scanty experimentation in order to put the original theory to the testing in practice [11]. May be this has happened because experimentation with synchronicity demands a new paradigm in which causation and repeatability in time do not apply as they do in orthodox scientific experimentation. Jung himself had already called researchers' attention to this new singular aspect when he set out the theory.

In conclusion, still much more scientific research is needed to understand the reasons why apparently non-causally associated events can show rather important meanings to individuals, independently of the individual's awaken or dreaming states while the events are taking place, and eventually with great consequences for the development and the research of new methods in psychotherapy.

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