The Conservation and Convergence of Meaning: A functional analysis of synchronicity and the I Ching

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There exists a type of phenomenon, even more mysterious than telepathy or pre-cognition, which has puzzled man since the dawn of mythology: the seemingly accidental meeting of two unrelated causal chains in a coincidental event which appears both highly improbable and highly significant (Arthur Koestler).

Introduction
This paper is an attempt to fathom the enigmatic phenomenon of synchronicity and its function within the process of I Ching divination. Accepted unreservedly by the ancient Chinese as an almost prosaic example of the inter-connectedness of universal process, I Ching divination and its associated synchronicity have become increasingly at odds with modern scientific values. That synchronicity exists cannot be denied, but neither can the absence of a convincing explanation of its functional process. Most attempts to define it are necessarily circumscriptive - outlining broad boundary conditions which lead to a kind of converse definition. Of all these, C.G. Jung's is still regarded as the most penetrating; he was clearly aware that embedded somewhere within the synchronistic process lay an operational principle, the outward manifestations of which were intriguingly impenetrable. No apologies are made for adopting a Taoist model in the explanation of synchronicity offered within this paper. It is used, not in order to exhort the reader to an act of blind faith in the middle of a scientific paper, nor in order to call upon the support of a higher authority; rather, it is used for the very simple reason that it works, and is economic, direct, graceful and profound at one and the same time. The unfamiliar reader is asked not to feel embarrassed or confused by its associated terminology; Taoism translates directly into abstract principles and can be read as such within this paper.

A consistent theme within the following pages is the contrast between a holistic and a reductionist interpretation of the universe. If this paper appears to be critical of the compulsive need continuously to isolate and fragment our world it is because such a one-sided approach cannot, and never will, lead to a complete understanding of human existence. Western science and academia have given the world an infinite array of explicit, analytical points, but without any understanding of their fundamental inter-connectedness such an array becomes a rambling, meaningless cacophony.

The universe presents us with a necessary duality, both aspects of which are equally important in their profound complexity. We need must use rational reductionism to define our world, but without the essentially female principle of unifying holistic wisdom, such rationality becomes dangerously fragmented, and increasingly meaningless.
The I Ching
The I Ching (pronounced Yee Jing) is both a book of wisdom and a book of divinational interpretation. It presents a formalised graphic cosmology which encompasses both the internal psychological, and external environmental, aspects of life. This cosmology is structured in a series of 64 archetypal symbols called 'hexagrams'. Each hexagram comprises a series of six horizontal lines which, taken together, give a pictorial representation of some aspect of conscious experience; when considered in a divinational context the hexagram represents a contextual framework within which one's answer can be interpreted. An example, featuring hexagram No. 14 - 'Possession in Great Measure', is given below in Figure 1.

The individual lines within each hexagram comprise either yin (broken) lines, or yang (unbroken) lines - depending on the numerical value obtained within the divinational process. Numerical values are generated by the random manipulation of yarrow stalks, or the throwing of coins; they are then translated into either yin or yang lines (6 = moving yin, 7 = non-moving yang, 8 = non-moving yin, 9 = moving-yang). A 'moving-line' represents an extreme value of yin or yang which, reaching its maximum potential, changes into its opposite polarity. Any moving-line within the initial hexagram changes into its converse polarity, i.e. a moving yin line becomes a yang line, a moving yang line becomes a yin line. This has the effect of creating a second, resultant hexagram which should also be considered within the overall context of one's question.

Each hexagram (Guai in Chinese) is accompanied by a unique core text (Tuan - Judgment), and commentary, setting out the general context within which the answer should be interpreted. Further, each individual line within the hexagram is accompanied by its own line-text (yao-text) and commentary. The Chinese word yao means criss-cross; it represents the intersection or convergence of yin and yang. If the line is a moving-line then its accompanying yao-text should be taken into consideration, if it is not a moving-line then its text is to be ignored within the given reading.

Each six-line hexagram should also be regarded as comprising internally two three-line 'trigrams'. These represent the fundamental archetypal symbolism of the I Ching; they are eight in total and each is associated with a range of aspected qualities (e.g. stillness, clarity, action, etc.) Thus a hexagram might be described as comprising the trigram Dui (lake) below, and Ken (mountain) above - this pictorial representation providing a further symbolic metaphor for the hexagram's interpretation.

For divinational purposes, hexagrams are generated by either the throwing of coins, or the random distribution of yarrow sticks. Either method will produce a series of six numerical values, which are converted to the six lines of a hexagram. The general text for
the hexagram should then be read in the context of one's question. If any moving lines are obtained, the individual yao-text for the lines concerned should also be taken into consideration along with the general text of the resultant second hexagram.

The above paragraphs must necessarily be taken as an exceedingly brief synopsis of the structure of the I Ching. Together, the internal relationships within - and external relationships between - hexagrams form a complex cosmology, which is coherent and self-consistent. Whilst the I Ching is not the expression of a theistic religion per se, its structure is synonymous with the manifestation of Tao within the phenomenal world.

The Tao
The Tao could be described as the formless absolute; it represents the latent potential of all values, the ultimate essence of what could be described as 'meaning' in its most abstract sense. The Tao is the origin of all relative values, but in itself it is not relative - it is absolute, hence it cannot be defined. Its origination is not dependent on any external value hence it stands truly alone, constant and complete. Whilst its ultimate nature is absolute and formless, its manifest dynamics comprise an infinitude of relative values (forms) in a state of constant flux and change. These relative values are an emergent property of the Tao's two manifest principles - yin and yang.

The primordial principles of yin and yang are the building blocks of the phenomenal universe; originating in the completeness of the Tao, their relationship is reciprocal; their totality is a constant. Their respective aspects are so profound and pervasive as to constitute the basis of all relative values within human experience. Within the I Ching, the yang principle is symbolised by an unbroken line representing heaven, male-ness, positivity, force, light, dynamic action and explicit consciousness (rationality); the yin principle is symbolised by a broken line representing earth, physical matter, female-ness, flexible receptivity, negativity, darkness, passive response and implicit consciousness (wisdom). These two principles are of equal value in the totality of existence; they are relative, correlative values in that they are mutually defining and reciprocal - they formulate the origination of discrimination and meaning, the basis of discriminatory (mundane) consciousness (the ego). The interaction of yin and yang extrapolates to an infinite range of relative values, or meanings, which represent the phenomenal universe; but the core generative polarity within all these values originates in the primordial duality of yin and yang - just as the entire cosmology of the computer's 'virtual reality' reduces down to two binary digits.

If relative values define each other, it follows that they formulate meaning. To discriminatory consciousness, a flat one-dimensional universe without any significant differences would appear to be meaningless, just as the concept of colour would be meaningless if literally everything in the universe were one colour. If all relative values are reducible to two primary values, yin and yang, then it follows that the totality of meaning is conditional upon the extrapolation of yin and yang, which is a universal constant.

Jung's concept of the unus mundus leads in a similar direction. Jung regarded the two primary orders of physicality (physis) and consciousness (psyche) as two parallel aspects of the one underlying psychophysical, transpersonal reality (the unus mundus). Each of these two orders expresses the same essential meaning. In the case of physis - the physical order - if, from the law of conservation of mass and energy, we accept that the totality of physical mass in the universe is a constant, then Jung's a priori ordered meaning within that
physicality must also be a constant. The point is a difficult one but important for the explanation of synchronicity which is to follow. We shall return to it later, but for the present we shall continue with a brief review of the factors implicated within the phenomenon of synchronicity.

**The Psyche**

Jung's concept of the psyche incorporates both conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind. These two complementary but antithetical aspects stand in a dynamic, compensatory relationship to each other; that is, they maintain a condition of balanced homeostasis within the psyche. It is probably no exaggeration to state that the bulk of Jung's psychoanalytic theory is concerned with how this fundamental balance is maintained, and the symptoms and complexes that arise when it is lost.

A fundamental principle within the psyche is that all psychic life is governed by a necessary opposition - opposing polarities referred to by Jung as 'the opposites'. Libido flows between psychic opposites; the greater the tension between them, the greater the flow of energy. Without opposites there would be no manifest libido or self-regulation within the psyche.

> 'Everything human is relative, because everything rests on an inner polarity; for everything is a phenomenon of energy. Energy necessarily depends on a pre-existing polarity, without which there could be no energy. There must always be high and low, hot and cold, etc., so that the equilibrating process - which is energy - can take place' - C. G. Jung.

The equilibrating process, described above by Jung, is the self-regulating homeostasis that takes place between opposites within the psyche. According to Jung this function of psychological opposites was first discovered by Heraclitus who called it enantodromia - a principle by which everything must ultimately flow into its opposite. When one extreme is reached, the function of libido flows into its opposite mode. Frieda Fordham suggests that this reversal of polarity can be seen in everyday human behaviour such as when violent rage is succeeded by calm, or when intense hatred turns to liking - '...the regulatory function of the opposites is inherent in human nature and essential to an understanding of psychic functioning'.

The self-regulating process of enantodromia is precisely mirrored within the principles of yin and yang. At its maximum value, a point of yin or yang energy will transmute into its converse polarity; as mentioned earlier, this is represented within the hexagram structure by a moving-line. Any hexagram can be seen as a graphic representation of polarised tensions, with maximal yin or yang values undergoing enantodromia into converse polarity. Thus the polarised tensions of the initial hexagram are 'resolved' into the situation represented by the second, subsequent hexagram.

This process of resolution is not random but in accordance with the self-regulating balance of the Tao. In this way the Tao undergoes its constant inner process of change whilst simultaneously maintaining its state of unchanging constancy. Hence, just as with the psyche, the Tao represents a process of constant inner flux and change, taking place within an overall constant value that is unchanging, and hence, in Taoism, eternal and absolute.

Enantodromia, therefore, is more than a simple process of reversing polarities, it corresponds to the physical laws of conservation, a constant value within which change is constantly taking place. As Jung comments - '...the point is not conversion into the opposite but conservation of precious values together with recognition of their opposites'. The
'precious values' mentioned by Jung comprise the precious resource of libido energy within the psyche. Hence, the dynamic function of the psyche serves to conserve the total psychic energy available whilst simultaneously maintaining a balanced equilibrium - '...these relations (within the psyche) are regulated by the movements and transfers of psychic energy ...the quantity of energy is constant and only its distribution is variable' - Jacobi.  

If we consider the statistical implications of such a system we find a model whose inner dynamics vary to significant degrees, yet the summation of those variables will always be a constant. This has a clear parallel with the constant totality of variance between yin and yang, and the constant totality of abstract meaning that the said variance represents.

The Archetypes
Underlying both the conscious and personal unconscious aspects of the mind lies a deeper stratum which Jung named the collective unconscious. Whereas the personal unconscious could be said to represent the accumulation of psychic contents which have been repressed during the life of the individual, the collective unconscious comprises 'key' psychic elements which are characteristic of the human species taken as a whole; but far from just functioning as a kind of psychic repository, the collective unconscious plays a pro-active, formative role in our motivations and instinctive behaviour; it provides the inherited framework upon which we build much of our individual conscious experience.

This necessary process of experiencing life in a manner which is conditioned by the past history of mankind is described as 'archetypal'. Over time, the historical mental processes of our ancestors have come to form primordial clusters of formative meaning - archetypes, deep within the collective psyche. These underpin the conscious mind with meaning, not in a literal factual sense, but in an implicit sense such as can only be portrayed through image and symbolism. As such, they play a principal role within the economy of the psyche, formulating our patterns of apprehension and perception. They provide '...a priori, inborn forms of 'intuition'...of perception and apprehension...just as instincts compel man to a specifically human mode of existence, so the archetypes force his ways of perception and apprehension into specifically human patterns' - Jung.

Bridging between the instinctive drives of the unconscious, and the perceptual cognition of the conscious aspect of psyche, the archetype could be described as a lens through which the language of the one is translated into the language of the other. But the translation is not literal; the powerful meaning of the unconscious has to be mediated by symbolism in order to preserve intact the rational coherence of the conscious mind. The primordial symbolism of the unconscious is at once more universal and implicit than the specific and explicit rationale of the conscious mind, hence the two can never translate directly, but must adopt the mediating agency of the archetype.

When we apply the above principles to the I Ching, we can see that the archetypal imagery of the hexagram should not be approached in a direct, literal sense; its imagery must be viewed 'one step removed' from the rational processes of the conscious mind. That is not to say that the archetypal symbolism of the I Ching is irrational, rather, it means that we should understand it as coming from a level of meaning that is subtle and implicit as opposed to literal and specific.

It is only when the implicit symbolism of the I Ching resonates with the contents of the individual psyche that the full implications of the former are 'crystallised' into explicit meaning. The principle of synchronicity provides a hexagram, the symbolic content of which will correspond to archetypal symbols within the individual psyche; when we interpret these...
symbols in the light of the question posed we find our meaningful answer.

**Synchronicity**

'Synchronicity...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...the simultaneous occurrence of two meaningful but not causally connected events.' - C.G. Jung

Synchronistic coincidences are objective events, which symbolically mirror subjective, personal realities. They occur acausally, that is, independent of conventional limitations imposed by the operation of linear causality. Synchronicities are coincidences which vary from the casual to the profound; but in all cases they imply an underlying inter-connectedness of meaning.

The phenomenon of intrinsic meaning within physical phenomena is described by Jung as an 'a priori' or pre-existent order - a kind of formal structure which points to an 'absolute knowledge' implicit within the physical state. It is evident not only in the intelligent behaviour within nature, but also in the symbolic order within implicitly meaningful events. Physicality appears to mirror back the same meaningful archetypal structure as exists within the psyche. Hence both the physical (physis) and psychic orders appear to originate in the one underlying reality of the unus mundus.

The unus mundus represents an ultimate unity of psychic and physical energy, the fundamental core of the collective unconscious, a core which generates formal structure and meaning through archetypal patterns. This concept of a psychophysical wholeness, acting as the generative root of both physical and psychic manifestation is closely echoed by the manner in which the unity of the Tao manifests in the two complementary principles of yin and yang. Yin represents the physically manifest order, yang the transcendent nature of consciousness; the transpersonal purposive action that emanates through them both is the Tao. A further parallel to the unus mundus is found in physicist David Bohm's holomovement - a universal flux from which all manifestations emerge.

We can see in the above models, the unus mundus and the Tao, two identical structures - namely, an underlying transcendent reality which generates two fundamental principles, the one physical, the other psychic. One could describe these two principles, the physical and the psychic, as two parallel orders, generated from the one source. Whilst there is no direct causal effect from one order to the other, the intrinsic meaning of each originates within the one source. We have, therefore, a situation whereby we might say there exists a 'correlation of meaning' between the two orders. A synchronicity occurs when there is a realisation of this correlation at the profound level of the archetype.

The correlation of meaning within synchronicity implies that, strictly speaking, it occurs not between a physical and a psychological event but, in fact, between two different psychological states. The a priori meaningful structure within physical events is, of course, not physical in itself but metaphysical, it is described by Jung as 'a pre-existent psyche which organises matter'. It is the manifestation of archetypal structure within this external aspect of the psyche that triggers the corresponding resonance within the psyche of the individual. Hence at various points Jung refers to synchronicity as occurring between two psychic states - '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 [subjective] experience, is the one that cannot be derived causally from the first.' Viewed naively, from a superficial perspective,
synchronicities appear to occur between external, physical events and internal psychological states, yet it is the symbolic meaning within the physical - essentially a psychological phenomena - which correlates with the inner psyche of the individual.

'Meaning' within the Jungian cosmology is provided by the underlying role of the archetype. Here we find, just as with all other relative phenomena, that archetypes condition and define each other, their meanings are not fixed and definitive but relative and implicit. Jacobi\textsuperscript{12} indicates this interdependent, mutually defining relationship between two complementary, opposing archetypes in his description of the mother principle and the father principle - 'at the beginning both were one and neither can exist without the other, just as light would be meaningless in a world without darkness. The world exists only because opposing forces are held in equilibrium.'

The essentially convergent meaning of archetypes is further revealed by their innately ungraspable nature, whereby they avoid any attempt at direct definition:

'An archetypal content, expresses itself first and foremost in metaphors. If it should speak of the sun and identify with it the lion, the king, the hoard of gold guarded by the dragon, or the power that makes for the life and health of man, it is neither one thing nor the other, but the unknown third thing that finds more or less adequate expression in all these similes, yet - to the perpetual vexation of the intellect - remains unknown and not to be fitted into a formula...not for a moment dare we succumb to the illusion that an archetype can be finally explained and disposed of' - Jung.\textsuperscript{13}

The enigmatic nature of archetypes within Jungian cosmology is mirrored in the archetypal symbolism of the I Ching. Many hexagrams present a symbolic image for which there is no one fixed definition. For example, hexagram number 43, Guai, can be variously interpreted as Eliminating, Resoluteness or Parting, depending on context. Rather than viewing hexagrams or archetypes in a fixed literal sense, one should, therefore, regard them as 'clusters of related meaning', the faceted aspects of which will vary according to context.

**The conservation and convergence of meaning**

Just as the individual qualities of patience, tolerance, self-sacrifice and joy all stem from the one core value of love, so it is that archetypes also manifest many outwardly disparate facets from the one core value. Viewing this process in reverse; superficial, outwardly discrete aspects appear to converge in the meaning of the archetype, just as we might describe the individual qualities of patience and joy as converging within the underlying quality of love. The hierarchical order of convergence implied by this approach is clearly seen in the structure of the I Ching, where superficially independent events can be seen through synchronicity to have a convergence of meaning within the one hexagram. The hexagrams, in turn, are the outward manifestations of the eight primary trigrams, i.e. the meaningful content of the 64 hexagrams converges within the eight trigrams. The eight primary trigrams, in turn, converge into the two primordial archetypes of pure yin and pure yang (the archetype's archetype), which, in turn, converge into the Tao. Each step in the regression reveals a level of archetypal meaning that is increasingly profound and increasingly congruent; this is why archetypes appear to us to represent a fusion of converging meanings.

'In the unconscious the individual archetypes are not insulated from one another, but are in a state of contamination, of complete mutual interpenetration and
fusion ... often it is a well-nigh hopeless undertaking to tear a single archetype out of the living tissue of the psyche; but despite their interwoveness they do form units of meaning that can be apprehended intuitively.' Jung, from Jacobi, Complex, Archetype, Symbol.  

Just as the superficial events of everyday reality are given meaning by the underlying archetypal structure, so the archetypes are themselves given meaning by an even deeper, more profound level of 'root-archetype'. At each deeper level, meaning becomes increasingly convergent and holistic, and hence, increasingly implicit. We can view this process in reverse when we examine the outward manifestation of Tao. From a state of completely implicit abstraction, meaning manifests into the primordial level of yin and yang - the prime generators of discriminatory values. At this level, meaning is still almost entirely implicit and whole. From this point onwards, however, as yin and yang extrapolate into their manifest combinations, meaning becomes an increasingly relative value, its variance reaching levels where significant differences begin to appear as explicit values. Within the psyche, this is the point at which the emergent conscious ego manifests from the unconscious. At the superficial level, these explicit values appear to be infinite, random and discrete, yet if we regress their core meanings back through the orders of manifestation we find their summation to be a constant invariable - the Tao. The entire process reflects the principle of conservation of meaning within the universe.

The regression of archetypal meaning within the Tao leads ultimately to the two fundamental principles, or root-archetypes, of yin and yang, the discriminatory basis of meaning within the Tao. All superficial explicit meanings are reducible to archetypal combinations of yin and yang - the hexagrams. In turn, the hexagrams are directly reducible to the two principal orders of pure yin and pure yang - the profound origin of all discriminatory meaning. From the process of enantiodromia, we know that the totality of variance between yin and yang at infinity is a constant, hence we know that the totality of yin and yang must be a unitary constant and that their relationship must be one of reciprocal complementarity.

Hence, the infinite manifest variations of yin and yang, which occur within that totality, must also be in a relationship of reciprocity. Thus, for any given value of yang there will be a complementary, reciprocal value of yin, i.e. for any given explicit, conscious meaning within the psyche, there will be a reciprocal implicit meaning within the physical order.

Hence, when we create an explicit meaning within consciousness, in the form of a question to the I Ching, its reciprocal implicit meaning is available to us through the symbolism embedded within simultaneous physical phenomena such as the fall of coins, distribution of yarrow sticks, etc. The relationship between the explicit meaning of our question, and the implicit meaning within our 'answer' is not a causal one, but one of reciprocal correlation. Thus, the universe presents us with a mathematically principled response which is uniquely relevant to that moment in time. This is the essence of synchronicity.

The response we receive will be meaningful only from a universal perspective of wholeness, its functional principle will be one of homeostasis - if interpreted correctly, it will trigger archetypal meaning within the psyche, which, in turn, will enable us to return to a more balanced relationship within ourselves and with the universe. Thus the symbolic, implicit meaning within the physical order prompts the self-regulating, homeostatic principle of the psyche's conscious and unconscious aspects. The I Ching is incapable of
responding from an egocentric perspective; it is 'locked' into a universal perspective, hence the difficulties people often have in interpreting its meaning.

The physical order can be regarded as the external expression of the reciprocal relationship between internal and external meaning. On the rare occasions when these two values are momentarily in a state of balanced equivalence, then the contents of the psyche will be in a temporary state of balanced accord with the implicit meaning of the physical order. This is when 'spontaneous synchronicities', or 'meaningful coincidences' can take place; synchronicities whereby, say, we find ourselves travelling on a number 10 bus, on the way to our 10-year-old daughter's birthday, at 10 am in the morning. The implication of such synchronicities is that when the meaningful content of the psyche is momentarily in a state of balanced equivalence with the implicit meaning of the physical order, then we experience a 'spontaneous' convergence of meaning. In a sense, spontaneous synchronicities are simply one dimensional and factual, there is no implied divinational meaning to be interpreted, other than the profound implication that as we approach the balanced equivalence of meaning that exists within the Tao, so also shall we experience the congruent merging of meanings that is the Tao.

When we consult the I Ching, the meaningful content of the psyche correlates with the symbolic meaning of physical 'chance' events such as the throwing of coins. The I Ching is not the divination per se, it is an aid to interpreting the symbolic meaning implicit within the physical order of the universe. The divination per se is the symbolic order of physical, chance events. If the summation of the implicit meaning within the totality of chance events is a constant, then it follows that the summation of chance itself must be a constant value - and that is exactly what we find. Regardless of whether we toss a coin, roll a die or spin the roulette wheel, given an infinite number of repetitions we will approach the limiting value for the method used, which in every case is a constant. At the universal value of infinity, the event characteristics approach constancy (wholeness). At the specific level of individual physical events, chance, like the symbolic meanings it represents, appears to generate significant differences between events, but when viewed from a universal perspective (ie: at infinity) both event characteristics and differences in meaning merge into a universal constant. Because the Tao represents one universal constant, not several, it follows that all constant principles merge at infinity; their ultimate meanings are one.

**Summary - the Convergence of Meaning**

The Tao represents the formless absolute, the latent, implicit potential of all values, both physical and psychic; it manifests through the reciprocal values of yin and yang. These two fundamental orders initiate the first process of mutual definition and dependent origination; they represent the basis of discriminatory meaning. The generative opposition and interaction of yin and yang produces increasingly relative values within implicit meaning to a point where significant differences emerge as an infinite range of fragmented 'explicit' meanings. These are interpreted by discriminatory-consciousness as the 'reality' of the phenomenal world, but their values are relative and mutually exclusive; they constitute the illusion of avidya-maya, their meanings are, as Gödel demonstrated, 'incomplete'. The more fragmented and explicit the meaning, the less coherent it becomes from a universal perspective. From the perspective of discriminatory, rational consciousness, we can only ever induce ultimate reality, we can never directly deduce it, hence the purpose of Zen koans such as the famous meditation on the sound of one hand clapping.
Archetypes are clusters of meaning within the psyche, underlying and substantiating the superficial, explicit meanings of everyday reality. They occupy a level of meaning which is mid-way between the absolute implicit coherence of the Tao, where all meanings converge, and the superficial divergence of explicit meanings. Hence they can never be fully explicit to the rational mind but appear as a partial convergence of meanings - hovering between two realities. They are ungraspable yet deeply meaningful at the same time. Convergence of meaning occurs when consciousness witnesses the regression of divergent explicit meanings towards the unified essence of implicit meaning, such as takes place within a synchronistic event.

Summary - the conservation of meaning

- Within the Taoist cosmology, manifesting from the formless, abstract potential of both physical and psychic phenomena, discriminatory meaning is represented by the variance between the two fundamental orders of yin and yang.

- Through the process of enantiodromia, the totality of variance between yin and yang is a constant value at infinity. Hence, the totality of yin is equivalent to the totality of yang, their summation is a constant and their relationship is reciprocal. The totality of discriminatory meaning is a constant value. The process of enantiodromia reflects the conservation of meaning.

- Within yin (physicality), meaning is implicit. Within yang (consciousness), meaning is explicit.

- At any one moment in time, the explicit meaning within consciousness will be in a reciprocal relationship with the symbolic, implicit meaning within the physical order.

- The explicit, meaningful question within the psyche is reciprocated by the symbolic meaning within physical events such as the fall of coins, etc.

The symbolic, implicit meaning within the answer triggers its corresponding archetypal content within the unconscious; if interpreted correctly this produces a state of homeostatic balance within the psyche, i.e. a state of equilibrium between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche - the balanced equilibrium which Jung regarded as vital for the completeness and wholeness of the psyche. The symbolic meaning within the I Ching hexagram is, at its core, a representation of the dynamic function of homeostasis within the psyche. There is no physical causal connection between inner and outer states, just a correlatory relationship of meaning.

It is proposed that the above conceptual framework offers a viable explanation of synchronicities as we experience them. Conservation of meaning produces a simple, mathematically principled definition of synchronicity without detracting from its holistic implications; experienced users of the I Ching are aware of the simple, direct nature of
synchronistic events. Regardless of the method employed, regardless of whether the falling coin strikes a table leg or a fold in the carpet, the principled response will be unerringly accurate. The choice of physical medium is almost irrelevant; given sufficient time one could learn to interpret synchronicities from the shape of clouds, or the flight of birds. Clarity of mind and respectful, sincere purpose are of crucial importance; the more transpersonal one’s frame of mind, the more coherent will be the response.

Conservation of meaning explains and distinguishes between spontaneous synchronicities, such as occur by circumstance, and intentional synchronicities such as occur through divination. The implications of the relationship between conscious, explicit meaning and the physical, implicit meaning of the environment are extensive; the house one lives in, is, after all, just as symbolic as the falling pattern of coins, but on a different scale.

References


This paper was first published in The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology Section of The British Psychological Society – Volume 4 Number 3, June 2000