

CHAPTER 3
How Divination Systems Work



THE STAR

The Star

Hope, idealism, grace

Palladini Tarot

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Human beings must be known to be loved; but Divine beings must be loved to be known.

—Pascal

The word *coincidence* describes the situation in which two or more events come together in time. In common usage the term carries the connotation that although things may seem and feel like they were arranged, their concurrence was basically a meaningless accident, as in “just a coincidence.”

Coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous.

—Bill Moyers

People who use divination, on the other hand, know that ultimately there are no accidents, and that coincidences are not meaningless. They also understand that coincidences can be useful as signs from above, if one knows how to interpret the signs.

In reality, every moment is a confluence of coincidences. Your very existence is the result of a multitude of coincidences — your mother and father getting together, the particular set of sperm and egg, supported by ovulation and fertility, that produced you! Your existence is the result of many coincidental elements, but that does not mean that you are not meaningful or important.

The human ability to notice and decipher the meaning of coincidental events and natural occurrences—the proverbial “signs and omens” of scriptures—is well documented across cultures throughout human history. It is a universal folk practice that has survived even in modern parts of the world. If, for example, you’re debating whether or not to take a trip to Italy, and you win an Italian phrase book in a raffle, you might interpret that event as a sign to go.

The Bible contains countless examples of the reading of signs and omens to interpret God’s will—one is the story of Gideon who asks God to give him a specific sign of an unusual nature, which he receives, to confirm what he thought was God’s decision for him (Judges 6:36-40). Some excellent books have been written about the interpretation of signs and omens, and a few are listed in our bibliography.



Chapter 3: How Divination Systems Work

Divination systems, some of which are almost as ancient as reading signs and omens, take a more deliberate approach. They were invented to generate coincidences that do not depend upon external events, which can then be reliably interpreted. A system like Tarot, or its more ancient cousin, the I-Ching, involves the deliberate production of a coincidental pattern—the cards you happen to pick at that time, or the coins you toss. The pattern consist of symbols—the images on the cards, the mix of yin and yang lines in I Ching—which have been interpreted by sages to help you further your depth of understanding in order to know yourself and/or make a decision.

Unlike the interpretation of signs and omens, the use of a divination system does not rely on psychic ability. Throughout history society's leaders turned to divining specialists—shamans, seers and oracles such as the famous oracle of Delphi—who used some type of divination system to create a pattern that could be interpreted to give advice regarding important challenges, opportunities and trends. For hundreds of years, the power of divination rituals was reserved for the limited few who had power and money, and everyone worshipped at the altar of Destiny.



Tyche: Goddess of Fortune. Tyche was highly regarded by the residents of ancient Greece. They honored, worshiped and celebrated her as their link to fortune, good luck, and success.

In classical times humans personified Destiny as a powerful goddess, and made great efforts to stay in her good graces. The Greeks called her Tyche. To the Romans she was Fortuna, the Goddess of Fortune, good and bad. Her symbols were a nautical steering wheel and a horn of plenty. To stay in sync with this original Lady Luck, it was necessary to let her steer the course and to follow her signals. For the most part, this required paying attention to signs and omens, the meaningful coincidences or synchronicities of daily life. By learning to notice and interpret patterns, one would develop one's intuition and improve one's fortunes.

Systems of divination provided humanity with a more reliable way to decipher the will of the gods, because they include a body of knowledge to guide our interpretation. The inspired knowledge of astrological signs, I-Ching hexagrams and Tarot archetypes was

codified by ancient sages in order to satisfy our natural desire to make sense of human situations and relationships, to help us develop better timing that is in sync with nature, and as a result make better decisions in the most important areas of our lives.

Through divination systems, humanity has been gifted with symbolic languages to interpret divine will. The symbols and archetypes that form the heart of all divination systems represent the dynamics of human life, including social and political interaction. Because it employs the language of archetypes and symbols, a divination ritual is more than a meditation technique. It can stimulate insights, provide timely advice and direction from the divine.

In my experience as a meditation teacher, I have heard prayer described as talking to God, with meditation as listening. Since divination is a process of not only communing with the divine but also interpreting divine will, it is a form of meditation that also delivers insights and advice. This type of meditative listening has a distinct advantage, because it is possible to receive information from the Divine when there is an organized language of symbols that we can interpret coming back to us, via the magic of a coincidental pattern we are generating for that purpose.

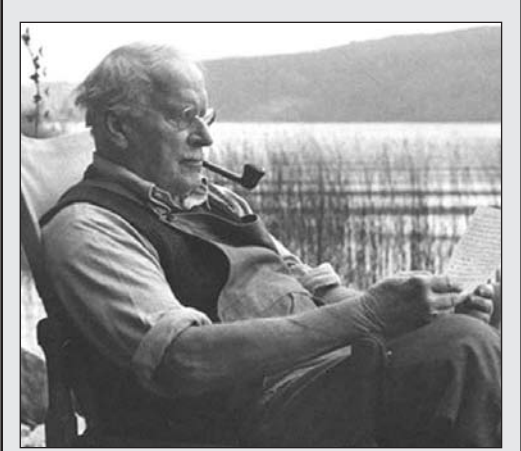
The academic question of how divination works has been taken up by a wide array of people, from philosophers to educators, psychologists to skeptics. Opinions have come from a broad spectrum of self-appointed experts—from New Age gurus to religious fundamentalists. Some fundamentalists purport the “fallen angel” theory—that the devil possesses diviners in order to lead people away from God.

Then there’s the order-out-of-chaos theory promulgated by skeptics: We have such an urgent need to find order for ourselves in this chaotic world, that we are naively susceptible to inventing meaning in an oracle’s random patterns. Humanity’s greatest psychologist, however, was able to reconcile the scientific and the mystical, while advancing the sophistication of psychology in the process. His name was Carl Gustav Jung.

*We are Divine enough
to ask and we are
important enough to
receive.*

—Wayne Dyer





Carl Gustav Jung

Carl Jung was an avid user of astrology, as evidenced by this excerpt of a letter to B.V. Raman, a world-renowned Hindu astrologer, about Astrology and Jung's Synchronicity principle.

"Since you want to know my opinion about astrology I can tell you that I've been interested in this particular activity of the human mind for more than 30 years.

"As I am a psychologist, I am chiefly interested in the particular light the horoscope sheds on certain complications in the character. In cases of difficult psychological diagnosis I usually get a horoscope in order to have a further point of view from an entirely different angle.

"I must say that I very often found that the astrological data elucidated certain points which I otherwise would have been unable to understand. From such experiences I formed the opinion that astrology is of particular interest to the psychologist, since it contains a sort of psychological experience which we call "projected"—this means that we find the psychological facts as it were in the constellations.

"This originally gave rise to the idea that these factors derive from the stars, whereas they are merely in a relation of synchronicity with them."

JUNG'S INSIGHT

Despite the skepticism of the religious and scientific establishment, the perceived gap between the empirical and the mystical has been closing now for over a century. Major credit for bringing these two camps within hailing distance must go to the founder of depth psychology, Carl Jung. Jung has done more for the understanding and promotion of divination than any other scientist. As part of his psychology, Jung made it a point to study the world's religions, mythologies, and divination systems, rather than to focus on pathologies, and simply dismiss the spiritual as irrational or irrelevant.

Sigmund Freud (who also used the Tarot) took an early interest in Jung's ideas. The men compared and debated ideas for years through correspondence. Freud described to Jung his theory of the unconscious mind—the reservoir of forgotten or repressed energies and experiences, often of a sexual nature, that reappear in adulthood as the various kinds of neuroses. But Jung's psychology would not only focus on psychological forces emanating from an individual subconscious, but also from what he termed our *collective unconscious*.

Jung explained how this collective unconscious included mythologies and belief systems inherited from the culture. This collective unconscious was a sort of psychic reservoir of accumulated knowledge, cultural conditioning that informs all of us, and in fact defines who we

are as a species. The following is a bit of Jung's explanation of his ideas from *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*:

While the personal unconscious is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious, but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, and therefore have never been individually acquired but owe their existence exclusively to heredity. Whereas the personal unconscious consists for the most part of complexes, the content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of archetypes.

Jung's theory of the collective unconscious made the entire unconscious realm much larger—and considerably more positive—than Freud's vision of a dark, foreboding nether land of demons and insatiable sexual hunger, ever eager to overcome our will and devour us.

ARCHETYPES

Jung's collective unconscious is populated by what he called *archetypes*. His fascination with divination systems like the I Ching, Tarot and Astrology stemmed from his perception that each of them comprised a balanced set of universal archetypes, and that they actually worked!

The way Jung saw archetypes was similar to Plato's concept of Forms—the ideal forms that provide the templates for all of nature, including human beings. Jung took this concept, refined it, and applied it to his formulation of depth psychology. Jungian archetypes are the common landscape of attributes and psychological forces that human consciousness is shaped by.

Individuals manifest different archetypal qualities in different proportions, but to some degree the energy or attitude of every archetype is contained within everyone of us. There is something reassuring in knowing that we all contain different combinations of the same stuff—the same instincts, desires, needs, impulses and fears. Viewed positively, this means we all share the same great potentials; only the proportions of factors are distributed



Being conscious of how you express energetic archetypes allows you to guide them in a positive direction.





Zeus

The gods of ancient Greece and Rome—mythological personalities manifesting some powerful quality or characteristic—were personifications of archetypes, often appearing in dreams. Their power over the human psyche was enormous.

differently. We also have all the same problematic tendencies too—again in different proportions.

Astrology, when properly understood, illustrates the universal nature of archetypes. Because of the tabloid “what’s your sign” treatment by popular media, most people don’t realize that according to real Astrology, everyone has each of the twelve signs active in their chart—in different placements and proportions for different individuals.

Archetypes represent qualities of consciousness or energy that inform human experiences, situations and roles. For instance, when we think of a Queen as an archetype, we are thinking not of an actual queen, but of feminine energy in a position of great influence. According to a Jungian understanding of archetypes, such queen energy is one element within every individual’s psyche, as is every other archetype. One of the Queen cards in Tarot, for instance, could be referring to a personal realm or social context—like a nurturing mother.

Throughout the world there are many different sets of archetypal images which are modified by culture, and no single representational system is the correct one for everybody. Also, the use of archetypes to understand personal dynamics is more art than science. In fact, Jung believed that archetypes, by definition, cannot be pinned down. Due to the fact that they reside in the collective unconscious, they can only be expressed. If a behavior or action is consistently present across cultures and throughout history, it is a manifestation of a universal archetype.

Jung explained that archetypes have a dark side as well as a positive side, and he called this dark element the shadow. The shadow is a fitting image for all that humanity represses, fears or denies in itself. Shadow energy can emerge most powerfully when an individual is ignorant of her or his own psychology, and it usually manifests as a projection of evil onto others. As Laurens van der Post, a friend to Jung for sixteen years, writes in *Jung and the Story of Our Time*:

[Jung] called... the “shadow” a pattern that had at its disposal all the energies of what man

had consciously despised, rejected, or ignored in himself. One sees immediately how aptly the term was chosen, because it is an image of what happens when the human being stands between himself and his own light. ... The trouble started only when the part of the human personality which was conscious behaved as if it were the whole of the man. There was nothing this unconscious world abhorred more than one-sidedness. ... Coming to terms with the shadow, the problem of reconciling the opposites in a whole greater than their parts, was an ultimate goal of his seeking.

Self-integration is one way of stating an overall goal of psychological healing. Jung's psychology used the conscious mind to mediate the mysterious contents of the unconscious, and bring more of the shadow into the light. Archetypes in and of themselves are neither positive nor negative. Like electricity, they are awesome sources of power that cannot be fully understood, and which must be carefully applied, in order to be healing rather than destructive. If the human ego identifies too much with an archetype—is "overshadowed" by it—rather than consciously tapping its energy, serious problems can result.

No matter how conscious we are, difficulty and pain will occur in life. Sometimes the only power we have is in the way we choose to respond. People are referring to archetypes when they say, "I don't know what came over me... I was not myself." Jung acknowledged the destructive power of archetypal energies when they operate outside of awareness, and take over to the point that an individual becomes out of control. He realized that if archetypal forces within the psyche are not recognized, respected, and channeled carefully, an individual's sanity, if not his life, could be in danger. Hitler, Stalin and all the other tyrants throughout history have personified the destructive power of archetypal energy when it overpowers and destroys the individual, in extreme cases taking with it millions of other innocent beings.

Awareness and respect are required for the skillful channeling of archetypal energies. Only when we recognize an archetype operating within or through us, are we

"No matter how much of a mess we may have made of our lives, it is always possible to tap into the part of the soul that is universal, the infinite field of pure potential, and change the course of our destiny. This is synchro-destiny—taking advantage of this connection between the personal soul and the universal soul to shape your life."

—Deepak Chopra,
*The Spontaneous
Fulfillment of Desire.*



Jung and the Suits of Tarot

Significant work has been done correlating Jungian archetypes and psychological conditions to the Tarot deck. In his last book *Man and His Symbols*, Jung wrote, “Four functional types correspond to the obvious means by which consciousness obtains its orientation to experience. Sensation (i.e. sense perception) tells us that something exists; thinking tells you what it is; feeling tells you whether it is agreeable or not; and intuition tells you whence it comes and where it is going.” These four states have been correlated to the suits of the Tarot as follows:

TYPE	SUIT	ELEMENT
Intuition	Wands	Fire
Feeling	Cups	Water
Thinking	Swords	Air
Sensation	Coins	Earth

able to channel the energy carefully. The art of powerful living is to be able to connect our unconscious power centers—the archetypes—with conscious choices, commitments and actions. This is how we become more of all we can be, and develop greater self-knowledge and integrity, the springboards for wisdom and success in life. Awareness plus effort was central to Jung’s psychotherapeutic style. They are also a result and requirement of successful divination, an ancient self-therapeutic approach which Jung was the first psychologist to explain.

For deeper information on the Jungian theory of archetypes or the Shadow, see Carl Jung’s collected works, edited by Joseph Campbell in *The Portable Jung*.

A Balanced Set of Archetypes

Our need for greater spiritual awareness and better intuitive decision-making has spawned the invention of brand new divination systems, available for sale in toy stores as well as New Age book stores. By definition, a divination system—whether it is called angel cards, soul cards, stichomancy or whatever—contains a set of archetypes. In most cases of newly invented divination systems, this is represented by a deck of cards. Some sets are more inspired than others.

For a divination system to be a useful tool for reflection, its set of archetypes needs to be balanced between light and shadow, as is the case with the classical systems we focus on in this book. Numerology, Astrology, Tarot, I Ching and Runes predate the age of marketing and they pass the test, instinctively reflecting a balanced range of human experience, including the darker tendencies of human experience. A collection of warm-fuzzy archetypes might make people feel good—and therefore sell better—but it will not serve as an accurate



reflector of human conditions, or a good tool for decision-making.

A system of archetypes needs to be a complete and balanced set of universal forms or ideas. For instance, the I Ching offers sixty-four primary archetypes—in the form of calligraphic images and associated text (our website, I-Ching.com, also has original paintings for each hexagram)—each representing a unique situation or attitude related to personal relations, business dealings, social situations and the like. For example, the twelfth hexagram P’i or Standstill is described as follows: “Heaven is above, drawing farther and farther away, while the earth below sinks farther into its depths. It is a time of standstill and decline” (Wilhelm/ Baynes version). One would never find the expression of such dire straits in the cards of most newly invented divination decks, even though this represents a common human experience that we have to deal with from time to time.

Like the I Ching, the other four classical divination systems reflect a realistic proportion of life’s shadow elements, and as a result can offer useful advice on how to deal with challenging situations. Runes represent the range of human experiences in a set of twenty-four inscribed stones. The rune hieroglyphic named Hagalaz, or hail, for instance, describes sudden dramatic change, disaster, loss and destruction.

Tarot decks contain seventy-eight cards, each representing an archetype or universal human condition. Each card has a shadowy aspect along with a forward-moving message. This is easy to see, starting with the first card of the Tarot deck, the Fool. While this image is now usually interpreted as signifying innocence and openness, the character in older Tarot decks is portrayed as inept, uneducated and ridiculous—in short, as foolish. Tarot offers a particularly rich matrix of archetypes. Every card has a numerical component as well as an astrological component. Tarot’s twenty-two trump cards also reflect the twenty-two highly symbolic characters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Probably the best-known set of archetypes is Astrology’s collection of the twelve signs, houses and the planets, which represent elements of human nature,



Wands



Fire



Cups



Water



Swords



Air



Coins



Earth



with both positive and shadow qualities. For instance the Leo character, which can be seen as a generous benefactor, can also express egocentricity and arrogance. Another classical system, Numerology, assigns meanings to numbers. Based on an understanding that the entire universe displays numerical properties, Numerology's meanings can be described by a base set of numbers. For instance, the number 11 represents intuition, idealism, invention, insensitivity, and fanaticism—a list of characteristics that includes darker manifestations.

It cannot be overemphasized that archetypes are metaphorical, not literal. One does not expect to become Queen of a monarchy because a queen card is drawn. Likewise, physical death is not the meaning of the Death card, as those who fear death could imagine.

The Beltway Snipers of 2002 were a prime example of literally interpreting a Tarot archetype. The Death card was found at the scene of one of their random shootings, with the words “Policeman, I am God” written on the back of the card. Occult groups around the country responded appropriately, pointing out that, despite the killer's use of it, the Death card actually means transformation, and is often seen as indicative of a positive event. *ABC News* even published a special report called “Tarot Novice?” by Michael James. The author wrote, “If a serial sniper sought by police left the ‘death’ tarot card found near a shooting scene in Maryland, he or she likely doesn't have much of an understanding of tarot...” Indeed, when I was asked by the press to comment, based on my position as founder of Tarot.com, I stated my suspicion that the sniper might be subconsciously using the Death card to project his own death wish (a wish that is coming true at the time of this writing by means of a death sentence).

“Synchronicity gives us a sense of hope, a sense that something bigger is happening out there than what we can see, which is especially important in times like this when there's so many reasons for despair. If your belief system is such that intuition and synchronicity are real and significant, you will notice them. If your belief system is that they're hogwash, you won't.”

—Carolyn North in
*Synchronicity: The
Anatomy of Coincidence.*

The Synchronicity Principle

Jung not only articulated the role of archetypes in the subconscious, dreams, and divination, he defined a second factor to explain the “meaningful coincidence” of divination systems, which he named *synchronicity*. Jung first used this term publicly in 1930 at Richard Wilhelm's funeral in his description of how the I Ching works. Synchronicity relies on a subtle relationship that



exists in time—between two or more different events, which could include inner events of insight or creative inspiration synchronizing with the outer events of one’s life. Jung gave credit to Albert Einstein as his inspiration for the theory of synchronicity. Like no scientist before or since, Carl Jung explored the territory connecting objective behavior with a person’s inner experience, including the spiritual dimension.

In Jung’s essay entitled “Synchronicity, An Acausal Connecting Principle,” he contrasted the Western mindset—influenced by early Greek philosophy with its focus on cause and effect—with the Eastern perspective, which views details only as part of a whole.

This ... involves a certain curious principle that I have termed ‘synchronicity,’ a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality. Since the latter is merely statistical truth and not absolute, it is a sort of working hypothesis of how events evolve one out of another, whereas synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers.

To Jung, the Eastern approach provides a more holistic viewpoint, reaching beyond the linear approaches and tunnel vision of the unassisted intellect. Jung pointed to a power of discernment that can take advantage of “the irrational functions of consciousness...sensation and intuition.”

This was obvious to the sages of ancient cultures. In modern times, we have excelled at applying a logical, objective line of inquiry toward discovering and inventing many useful mechanical tools. We have been obsessed with the question, “What are things made of?” As my friend the late Terence McKenna pointed out, the ancients were interested in a different question than this materialistic one. They wanted the answer to the question, “What kinds of things go together in time?” In other words, what is the relationship between subjective experience and objective reality at any given moment?

I can say that being prepared for an opportunity is only part of the synchronicity. Besides being qualified and experienced, uncontrollable elements such as timing and luck often play heavily.

—Randy West

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The consideration of time, and the value of having good timing, is more useful than logical analysis when it comes to politics, social rituals and affairs of the human heart. Even though the Chinese made momentous technological inventions like moveable type and gunpowder hundreds of years before Europe, the Eastern cultures have been just as interested in the practical challenges of human happiness.

Everyone has experienced amazing coincidences that turned out to have carried great meaning in their lives—synchronicity in action. Let's look at three kinds of synchronicity.

"I was walking down the street thinking about a friend I hadn't seen for some time, and when I looked up, there was my friend standing at the corner with his wife and he was looking at me in some surprise, for as it turned out they had been speaking of me in the same moment that I had been thinking of him, and so we congratulated ourselves on having arrived there at the corner at just the right moment for these facts to be revealed to us. We talked for a while... and when we parted I had the happy sense that the substance of my day had been revealed. Only later did I recall that none of us had referred to our fortunate meeting as a coincidence, which is what it was, of course. But coincidence is a word that we have learned to distrust, a term of mild derogation employed by parents, teachers and other grown-ups to dismiss the marvellous: 'only a coincidence' was the way they usually put it, and in that word only we understood meaning and significance to lie not in the world of the coincidental, but elsewhere, in a more real world of non-coincidence, in which events could be held accountable according to an iron law of cause and effect."

—Stephen Osborne, "The Coincidence Problem," *Geist*, Winter 2002

The first occurs when an individual has a thought, and then some related external event occurs at the same time, and within their field of perception. We immediately sense the meaning in these occurrences. In her article "A wink from the Cosmos," Meg Lundstrom wrote about the phenomenon. "Art was sitting at his computer typing an e-mail missive when his cat Coal jumped from his lap onto the keyboard. Before Art's startled eyes, as the cat shifted from key to key, its paws tapped out the word 'emerson' on the screen. 'To make it even weirder, I've been studying Ralph Waldo Emerson intently for the past year, and the study has taken on a very symbolic meaning to me,' he says, still in shock."

The second type of synchronicity occurs when an internal mental process corresponds to an event that happens concurrently, but at a distance. For example, Sarah was just finalizing her divorce, and went to Asia for a little soul searching. While visiting a Buddhist temple, she had her fortune read. "Your second love is your true soulmate," was the message she got. Upon returning home a week later, she received an



e-mail from an old friend describing a powerful dream he'd had the previous week about searching for her, and had to locate her just to put his mind at ease. He had been Sarah's boyfriend in college and her second lover.

The last type happens when an internal thought relates to an external event that hasn't happened yet, but where no causal relationship seems possible. For instance, a friend of mine was telling me about a series of dreams she had been having in which the ocean suddenly rises, flooding above the windows. In her dreams, she was safe, but she couldn't figure out what made the water rise so fast. A few days after she told me of her dreams, the 2004 "Boxing Day" tsunami devastated Asia.

The last two types of synchronicity cannot be known immediately, they can only be verified later. In Jung's eyes, the occurrence of such meaningful coincidences points to an interconnected union of the material and conscious worlds.

We in the west have also had the idea that events tend to cluster around a moment in time, as evidenced by folk sayings like, "good things (or accidents) happen in threes." In today's world, we tend to dismiss such notions as merely superstitious. However, Jung pointed out that events in our lives, especially emotionally charged ones, could stimulate archetypes within us, which can attract similar events, in turn providing meaningful synchronicities.

How does synchronicity apply to the divination process? Art Rosengarten, in his book *Tarot and Psychology: Spectrums of Possibility*, describes how divination is a technique of "applied synchronicity." He writes, "In effect, Tarot, like I Ching and other such oracular methods, intentionally manufactures the probability of meaningful connection to occur via (seemingly) random selection."

When you formulate a query for an oracle system, you are deliberately entering a mental state of receptivity for a synchronistic response to the inquiry. Then, by picking particular cards, throwing coins, and so on, you are injecting a seemingly random element into the equation, but a personal one that is activated by your energy—your choice of cards, tossing of the coins, tim-

Any attempt to determine the nature of the unconscious state runs up against the same difficulties as atomic physics: the very act of observation alters the object observed. Consequently, there is at present no way of objectively determining the real nature of the unconscious.

—Carl Jung



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ing or rolling of the dice.

My introduction to divination as a UC Berkeley undergraduate is a prime example of how important one's attitude and approach to divination can be. A spiritually oriented female classmate, with whom I was flirting, offered to show me how to cast an I Ching reading. Skeptical, but using the opportunity to spend more time with her, I went along. She asked me to write down a subject of personal concern. I scribbled something that didn't mean much to me, in a lame attempt to be humorous. I certainly was not taking my first encounter with an oracle very seriously.

After I tossed the three coins six times, she showed me how to look up the pattern in the large Wilhelm/Baynes version of the I Ching which she had. The I Ching's response to my frivolous inquiry was to return its fourth hexagram, entitled "Youthful Folly." It was immediately obvious that the I Ching was ignoring my question. It seemed to reflect my flippant energy instead. Chastised, but still unconvinced, I consulted the oracle again—this time to test it. Once again it ignored my frivolous query and returned a reading "questioning the sincerity of the seeker." Once again it reflected my energy—I had tried to test it and it tested me right back. Through its oracle, Higher Power was displaying that divine quality known as a sense of humor!

The sudden realization that divination reflects and clarifies one's intent as much as it dispenses practical wisdom was a great lesson for me—one that changed my life. Since that day over thirty-five years ago, I've used the I Ching and other divination systems like Tarot as intuitive decision-making aids that help me see beyond my ego and exercise better timing in my life.

Serving as a guide without an interfering ego, divination systems can provide immediate access to profound resources.

A form of what I call *applied synchronicity*, divination offers a systematic way to produce a meaningful insight experience. It is a spiritual practice that can be used deliberately for expanding awareness and personal transformation. As Jung put it, the I Ching oracle interprets an "inner unconscious knowledge that corresponds to the state of consciousness at the moment." What a gift; what an opportunity!

Jung was fascinated by how the I Ching provided a



systematic methodology for understanding any human situation—not by analyzing its components, but by viewing individual elements in context, as part of a seamless cosmic whole. As he put it, “There is no need,” he wrote, “of any criteria which imposes conditions and restricts the wholeness of the natural process.... In the I Ching, the coins fall just as happens to suit them.”

This is key to understanding Jung’s worldview. The world is an interconnected web of the subjective and objective, with synchronicity providing a link between the two. Jung overlapped with the new quantum physics of the 20th century in his explanations of synchronicity and consciousness. He showed how quantum physics, which empirically demonstrates behaviors that can only be described as “paradoxical synchronicities,” contributes to understanding how divination systems work too.

THE SCIENCE OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Science relies on reason and logic, valuable tools to be sure, but when we depend on logic alone to divine the workings of the universe—or even to manage a relationship—we fall far short. Intuition is something other than reason, so it is no surprise that the role of intuition is grudgingly accepted in scientific circles. While logical analysis has contributed to unraveling nature’s secrets, intuition has helped us make discoveries beyond the domain of rational processes. Fortunately, a number of people—including prominent scientists and business leaders—have rediscovered ancient technologies for intuitive decision-making and creative problem-solving known as divination systems.

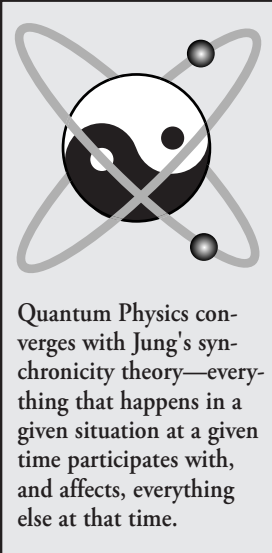
The discoveries of modern physics seem to validate the synchronicity principle, as they overthrow assumptions about the universe being strictly mechanical. Thomas McFarlane discusses this in *Quantum Physics, Depth Psychology, and Beyond*.

Although scientific materialism provided the dominant worldview of modern Western culture, it did not exist to the total exclusion of other alternatives. Nevertheless, these alternatives did not succeed in fundamentally challenging the dominance of materialism. Instead, this

As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.

—Albert Einstein





Quantum Physics converges with Jung's synchronicity theory—everything that happens in a given situation at a given time participates with, and affects, everything else at that time.

challenge largely came from within empirical science (i.e. the new physics) itself.

When a person consults the I Ching, he or she generally tosses sticks or coins and records the way they land as a six-line pattern called a hexagram. Naturally, we ask, how can any sort of truth be divined from such happenstance? Such moments are not entirely random, however. An event in the external world triggers inner knowledge, and the two realities merge within our working consciousness. L.T. More wrote of one such incident in his book *Isaac Newton*:

On one memorable day, an apple falls with a slight thud at his feet. It was a trifling incident which has been idly noticed thousands of times; but now like the click of some small switch which starts a great machine in operation, it proved to be the jog which awoke his mind to action. As in a vision, he saw that if the mysterious pull of the earth can act through space as far as the top of a tree ... so it might even reach so far as the moon.

The dynamics of synchronicity might seem to fly in the face of scientific method—based on the ability to objectively measure and predict cause and effect—yet the synchronicity principle was validated by the basic discoveries of quantum physics. In the proof of their Uncertainty Principle in 1927, which still stands, Werner Heisenberg and Erwin Schrödinger demonstrated that, in the realm of sub-atomic particles, the act of perception influences what is being perceived, and objective measurement is impossible. Some things just happen together in time!

Thomas McFarlane, in another book, which was entitled *Einstein and Buddha*, further describes the contrast between Newtonian physics and the new findings:

Electrons—which were previously thought to be particles—were found to exhibit the properties of waves. Conversely, light—which was previously thought to be waves—was found to exhibit some of the properties of particles. This confusion of classical distinctions between particles and waves was resolved by Niels Bohr's principle of complementarity, according to which the

wave and particle concepts are understood to be mutually exclusive but both necessary for a complete description of quantum phenomena.

The discoveries of the new physics can be interpreted to describe the essence of synchronicity. Substitute the terminology of physics with Jungian terms and you get, “the collective unconscious and the material world are understood to be mutually exclusive but both necessary for a complete description of reality.” Everything that happens in a given situation at a given time participates with, and has an effect, however subtle, on everything else. Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrödinger, and many others who have dedicated their professional lives to exploring quantum physics have done much to emphasize the connections between matter and mind. In fact, Heisenberg incorporated into his family coat of arms the ancient Taoist yin-yang symbol, which signifies the interconnectedness of all things in time and space.

Ultimately, when one extends Heisenberg’s mathematical proof of the Uncertainty Principle beyond subatomic physics, it becomes clear that ultimately scientific objectivity does not exist, only statistical probabilities. As Jung put it in his foreword to Wilhelm’s *I Ching*, “every process is partially or totally interfered with by chance, so much so that under natural circumstances a course of events absolutely conforming to specific laws is almost an exception.”

In his book, *New Directions in the I Ching*, mathematician Larry Schoenholtz points out several scientific theories that also validate the synchronicity theory:

The spontaneous disintegration of certain atoms through radioactive emission is an event for which modern physics cannot provide an answer. But it is quite in keeping with a synchronistic view of things. No less a figure than the physicist Sir James Jeans says of this mystery, ‘Radioactive break-up appeared to be an effect without a cause, and suggested that the ultimate laws of nature were not even causal.’

If we add the radioactivity puzzle to those of quantum theory—such as the Bohr’s complementarity principle, and Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, as well as much of Einstein’s general theory of relativity—the

“When it comes to scientific evaluations of astrology, the pickings are slim. There is only one figure to my knowledge who has tried to evaluate astrology in anything like a scientific way: the French researcher Michel Gauquelin (1928-91). After scrutinizing thousands of birth charts, Gauquelin came to conclusions that discomfited both conventional scientists and astrologers. He discovered that prominent members of various professions did indeed tend to have certain planets in certain places in their charts. Doctors often had Mars in a particular position, while politicians had Jupiter, and writers, the moon. Control groups taken from the general population had no such correlations.”

—Richard Smoley in
“The Stars We Are,”
Gnosis, Winter 1996.



Chapter 3: How Divination Systems Work



We can never fully know the collective unconscious because it exists outside of our consciousness.

—Carl Jung

argument for a nonlinear worldview becomes unassailable. So it happens that the answer to a long-unsolved quandary can just pop into our heads. So it happens that events oozing with connective portent appear to have no causal relationship. But meaning does arise, and it is no accident.

This mutual interplay between matter and mind is key to future pursuits of knowledge and understanding. When the unified field theory is finally worked through—and the evidence is mounting—the clockworks of the cosmos will reveal a set of unifying equations, and the synchronicity principle will come into full recognition among all scientists. We look forward to that day.

In terms of managing the practical affairs of everyday life, looking for the meaning in synchronistic events works better than striving to predict things according to strict notions of causality or statistical probabilities. Perhaps ancient observers, who lacked our computational and record-keeping technologies, realized this and devised the I Ching, Astrology, Tarot, Runes and Numerology to put their understanding to work. Using the magic of applied synchronicity within a rich set of traditional archetypes, they strove to predict and cooperate with the way events are destined to happen, with the way things tend to go together in time.

Carl Jung did more than anyone to help us understand how divination systems work, and how they combine ancient wisdom with modern psychology. By defining and explaining the concepts of archetypes and synchronicity, he gave us criteria by which to better manage our lives, and he showed how divination systems can truly be helpful.

Jung realized that the nature of the principles he described was paradoxical. In *Psychological Reflections*, he wrote:

Microphysics is feeling its way into the unknown side of matter, just as complex psychology is pushing forward into the unknown side of the psyche. Both lines of investigation have yielded findings which can be conceived only by means of antinomies, and both have developed con-



cepts which display remarkable analogies. If this trend should become more pronounced in the future, the hypothesis of the unity of their subject-matters would gain in probability. Of course there is little or no hope that the unitary Being can ever be conceived, since our powers of thought and language permit only of anti-nomian statements. But this much we do know beyond all doubt, that empirical reality has a transcendental background.

So, while it is possible to investigate and explore the realms of the mysterious—even to use them in our personal quests for wisdom—it is likely that they will never be “proven” in the scientific sense. But isn’t the best proof how well something actually works?

Once you learn how to use divination systems to their best advantage, you will appreciate the supportive role they can play in the cosmic dance that is your life. When you dance with a skilled partner, the one who is leading has ways of signaling the next steps. Similarly, if you want to develop a sense of rhythm in your life, you need to stay in tune with signs and omens from above, including the synchronicities produced for your guidance by divination. In his recent book, *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire*, Deepak Chopra refers to this skill as “synchrodestiny.” Dr. Chopra shows how meditation can help us become more sensitively attuned to synchronistic signals as they arise in our lives. Divination is a form of meditation specifically designed for this.

Traditionally, meditation was called *raja yoga*, the royal yoga. Meditation makes everything better, including the twin benefits of divination—self-knowledge and skillful decision-making. When you learn how to systematically tune into what Dr. Chopra calls the universal soul to divine your destiny—and then make the right choices on your highest path—the fulfillment of your Heart’s Desires will emerge almost effortlessly.

The universal order and the personal order are nothing but different expressions and manifestations of a common underlying principle.

—Marcus Aurelius

