C. G. Jung and the Composition of Synchronicity
“...a certain curious principle... [which] takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance...”

C. G. Jung 1949
SYNCHRONICITY
THE MARriage OF MATTER AND PSYCHE
F. David Peat
However, for Jung synchronicity was much more than simply a synonym for meaningful coincidences.

He also conceived of it as an acausal connecting principle for all types of phenomena that could not be fully explained by standard notions of causality, including quantum randomness and the results of ESP experiments.
C. G. JUNG
AND
W. PAULI

THE INTERPRETATION OF NATURE AND THE PSYCHE

1. SYNCHRONICITY: AN ACAUSAL CONNECTING PRINCIPLE

2. THE INFLUENCE OF ARCHETYPAL IDEAS ON THE SCIENTIFIC THEORIES OF KEPLER

TRANSLATED BY R. F. C. HULL
“It would be most satisfactory of all if psyche and physis could be seen as complementary aspects of the same reality.”

Wolfgang Pauli
An essential element of Jung’s theory of synchronicity is the distinction he made between the *wider principle of synchronicity*, the 'acausal connecting principle' of the subtitle of his treatise, and the *narrower category of synchronistic events*, which he described as “a special instance of general acausal orderedness.”
Coming under the *wider* conception of synchronicity as acausal orderedness:

- properties of natural numbers
- discontinuities of quantum physics
- measurement of radioactive decay
- ESP experiments

Coming under the *narrower* conception of synchronicity as a special instance:

- synchronistic events (meaningful coincidences)
Influences on Jung in the conceptualisation of synchronicity:

• Gottfried Leibniz, 1646-1716
• Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860
• Paul Kammerer, 1880-1926
• Richard Wilhelm, 1873-1930
• J. B. Rhine, 1895-1980
• Wolfgang Pauli, 1900-1958
Leibniz held that the universe was “a vast living organism, each part of which was also an organism.”

Each organism or ‘monad’ exists independently from all others but is perfectly synchronised within the *pre-established harmony* of the whole. In his words:

“The soul follows its own laws, and the body its own likewise, and they accord by virtue of the harmony pre-established among all representations of one and the same universe.”
YES EARTHLING, I TOO HAVE NOTICED BY SOME BIZARRE TWIST OF COINCIDENCE, BOTH OF OUR LANGUAGES ARE IDENTICAL.
Schopenhauer’s essay *On the Apparent Design in the Fate of the Individual*, according to Jung, “originally stood godfather to the views I am developing.”

From Schopenhauer’s perspective: “Coincidence is the simultaneous occurrence of causally unconnected events” that can only be explained by the action of a *transcendent will* which orchestrates the lives of individuals, both subjectively and objectively, in accordance with “the most wonderful pre-established harmony.”
Paul Kammerer (1880 - 1926)
Paul Kammerer was an Austrian biologist who for 20 years kept a log book of coincidences, published in 1919 as *Das Gesetz der Serie*. For Kammerer, each coincidence we perceive is a fleeting glimpse or tip of the iceberg of the underlying activity of *seriality*, which he held to be “ubiquitous and continuous in life, nature and cosmos. It is the umbilical cord that connects thought, feeling, science and art with the womb of the universe which gave birth to them.”
A golfer watched his perfect drive collide mid-flight with another ball – a recovery shot by another player in the opposite direction. Astounded by the coincidence, O’Brien and the other player ran to the collision point to introduce themselves. They were both called Kevin O’Brien.

(Plimmer & King, Beyond Coincidence)
“Anyone who, like myself, has had the rare good fortune to experience in a spiritual exchange with Wilhelm the divinatory power of the *I Ching*, cannot for long remain ignorant of the fact that we have touched here an Archimedean point from which our Western attitude of mind could be shaken to its foundations.”

Jung, 1930
“I regretted very much not seeing you when you were in Europe. Soon after you left I recovered from my illness and I have been able to finish a paper that is largely based on your ESP experiment which, by the way, is intensely discussed over here by psychologists as well as physicists.”

Jung 1951 (writing to Rhine)
Noboby is smarter than Einstein? Wrong. You have Wolfgang Pauli.
“I dream about physics as Herr Jung (and other non-physicists) think about physics. The danger of this situation lies in Herr Jung publishing nonsense about physics and could moreover quote me in the process.”

Pauli 1949 (writing to Fierz)
“...although microphysics allows for an acausal form of observation, it actually has no use for the concept of ‘meaning’. So I have grave misgivings about placing physical discontinuities and synchronicity on the same level, which is what you do on p. 58. If you do not share my misgivings, I shall be most interested to hear what your arguments are.”

Pauli to Jung, Nov 1950
“Despite my express warning I see that this concept has already been confused with *synchronism*. By synchronicity I mean the occurrence of a *meaningful coincidence in time*.”

The psychic and physical aspects of a meaningful coincidence may be simultaneous, or they may be chronologically separate.
The Dance of Chance
“Chance and synchronicity will look the same in their display of an event but they are worlds apart... Chance happens to us, synchronicity happens in us.”

David Richo, 2007
In his essay Jung identifies three key elements that characterise a synchronistic occurrence:

1) an *equivalence of meaning* between an external event and deep psychological processes in the individual involved;

2) an accompanying feeling of *numinosity* experienced as an emotional charge;

3) a *flash of total insight* or, as Jung called it, ‘absolute knowledge’.
“The realisation of ‘meaning’ is not a simple acquisition of information or of knowledge, but a living experience that touches the heart just as much as the mind. It seems to us to be an illumination characterised by great clarity as well as something ineffable.”

M-L von Franz, 1984
“The most essential and certainly the most impressive thing about synchronistic occurrences, the thing which really constitutes their numinosity, is the fact that in them the duality of soul and matter seems to be eliminated. They are therefore an empirical indication of an ultimate unity of all existence, which Jung, using the terminology of medieval natural philosophy called the unus mundus.”

von Franz, 1975
There is something formless yet complete
That existed before heaven and earth,
    How still! How empty!
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,
All pervading, unfailing.
One may think of it as the mother of all things
    under heaven.
I do not know its name,
But I call it ‘Meaning’.
If I had to give it a name, I would call it ‘The
    Great.’

_Tao Te Ching_, Ch. 25
The difference between most people and myself is that for me the "dividing walls" are transparent.

C.G. Jung