C. G. Jung is well known for developing a unique style of analysis that he called analytical psychology, but many will know that he was also interested in the paranormal. In the 1930s, Jung corresponded with the ‘grandfather’ of parapsychology, J. B. Rhine of Duke University, who gave us the terms ESP (extrasensory perception) and PK (psychokinesis). Jung was intrigued by Rhine’s findings. But Jung was no newcomer to parapsychology at that time. Decades earlier, he had written his thesis on mediumship and occultism, which earned him his doctorate. By the 1940s, Jung had conducted his own parapsychological experiments to test his synchronicity theory.

Synchronicity is probably Jung’s most controversial concept. Synchronicity theory posits that there are two types of coincidence—those that are meaningless, and those that are meaningful. The former refer to chance groupings, but the latter—meaningful coincidences—are cases of synchronicity, and they manifest when inner psychological states (Jung calls them ‘psychic’) correspond or coincide with outer physical events in ways that seem to defy reason. An example often given is the case of a client of Jung’s—a woman whose analytical treatment was not progressing very well. She dreamed of a golden scarab beetle, and as she was telling Jung about her dream, a similar beetle knocked against the window pane behind him. Jung quickly caught this ‘beetle of spiritual rebirth’ and presented it to the woman. Her overlogical mindset was broken and her condition began to improve.

Jung felt that cases of synchronicity always had an acausal component to them. Like the ‘dream’ beetle and the ‘real’ beetle, there is no clear way that we can explain such correspondences in a scientific way—Jung, in fact, thought that they happen as if by chance because there is no cause and therefore the effect cannot be explained. However, the meaningfulness is clear regardless of the impossibility of the twofold event. Jung felt that ESP and PK were types of synchronicity, thus implying that there were other forms of synchronicity that may not necessarily be paranormal. Whether cases of synchronicity are normal or paranormal, the meaningful component of synchronicity is always most important. It is of the utmost value because it results in an increase in consciousness if the over-arching truth of the experience is realised—the truth being that our inner personal life, the psychology of our being, is enmeshed with outer-world events in ways that we may find truly remarkable. The acausal connecting principle that characterised this enmeshment is synchronicity.

As mentioned above, Jung conducted an experiment with astrology to test his theory of synchronicity. He gathered many hundreds of natal charts belonging to married couples to see if the inner psychological state of the couple (their union in marriage) was synchronistically forecast in an outer physical event in the heavens (specifically, certain planetary aspects that allegedly indicate marriage). Jung was surprised to find evidence of one such aspect in the first of three batches of natal charts (statistical evidence of Moon conjunct Ascendant indicating marriage), but he watched that effect disappear only to be replaced by Moon-conjunct Sun, and then Moon-conjunct Moon in each respective batch. These two aspects also indicate marriage, but this three-fold effect should not occur if sampling was random. Not surprisingly, the merging of the three databases produced overall non-significant results—all previous effects cancelled each other out. Jung concluded that the subjective influence of his own unconscious was involved.

“Synchronicity is probably Jung’s most controversial concept”
Jung, Synchronicity, and the Australian AIPR (cont’d from page 1)

Jung then decided to test three different experimenters whose psychological characters were known to him. He was not surprised to find each of these three characters described perfectly by the dominant aspect in the corresponding batch of natal charts. Jung called this phenomenon the ‘secret mutual connivance’, which essentially boils down to a synchronicity effect, possibly of the most controversial kind. This effect is quite common in modern scientific parapsychology, and it is known as the experimenter effect. It has been found many times to be an “annoying incident,” as Jung called it, but one which he thought could never be proved scientifically to be anything more than that. Jung had hoped to conduct further tests on synchronicity using the ancient Chinese system of divination, the so-called I Ching, but his earlier conclusion led him to discard the whole idea as fanciful because he felt that a pure synchronicity effect could not be identified statistically due to the secret mutual connivance.

However, in recent times, the author and his colleague Dr. Michael A. Thalbourne at the Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit (APRU), School of Psychology, University of Adelaide, have endeavoured to find an ostensibly paranormal aspect underlying the I Ching process.6,7 Using a coin-tossing method that generates an outcome hexagram (a six-line symbol) and its accompanying ‘reading’ that serves as an answer to a specific question, Storm and Thalbourne proposed that participants already ‘knew’ (unconsciously) what their outcome readings would be. As there are 64 readings, each participant was given 16 chances out of 64 to prove the researchers right. The first and second studies6,11 produced above-chance (i.e., significant) results and that is, amongst their 16 possible choices, a sufficient number of participants seemed to be able to include the outcome reading more often than chance could explain. However, at the end of another two more I Ching experiments,8,12 researchers in the Unit watched their significant effects decline to overall non-significance. Echoes of Jung’s astrological experiments! Nevertheless, in a study that used the I Ching system to generate numbers for entry into a gambling game called ‘X-Lotto’ (pronounced Cross-Lotto), Storm13 showed that it was statistically possible to play X-Lotto and win substantial sums of money over a long time period, with minimal, or even zero, failure rate.

It is too soon to be drawing conclusions about whether or not the I Ching capitalises on a paranormal component of the human psyche, but Australian APRU researchers have at least shown that Jung was both right and wrong! Researchers in the unit now think it possible that a paranormal component (i.e., synchronicity) does underlie the I Ching process (something Jung did not think could be found), but this effect may not on occasion be statistically evident, thus supporting Jung’s conception that synchronicity was a chance-like phenomenon. That is, we cannot rule out the possibility that the typical I Ching user, as a single-trial case, is experiencing synchronicity when he or she generates an outcome hexagram.

Researchers in the APRU have also questioned the nature of paranormal phenomena. Results from the first two I Ching experiments6,10 support Dr. Thalbourne’s13 theory that Rhine’s ESP/PK nomenclature dichotomises what may be a single psi process—‘psychophasia’, meaning the ‘self at work’. If the I Ching process depends on normal and paranormal processes, and there is no way of telling whether it is PK (i.e., knowing what the coin throws have to be and influencing them) or ESP (i.e., knowing the future outcome in advance), then we might as well simplify the process and call it psychophasia to cover all possibilities. This decision in no way reduces our knowledge. In fact, if our current models do not explain, but merely categorise, we cannot get close to understanding how the human psyche works. From a purely pragmatic point of view, it is probably more important that we start to find the causes of these phenomena. We can do this by finding new approaches, and uncovering new ways of looking at things, rather than continue to test old conceptions that merely limit the way we think.

APRU researchers are currently involved in further work of this nature (including a new I Ching study now underway), which may involve synchronicity-related phenomena such as ‘secret mutual connivance’ (i.e., experimenter effect), meaningfulness, and time-period effects.

It can be seen that Jung’s ideas continue to have influence on parapsychology, and this influence may grow as time goes by since the depth of his remarkable insights are only now becoming more pertinent to modern parapsychologists.

Notes:
4. Ibid., para. 843-845.
5. Ibid., para. 872-915.
The Australian Institute of Parapsychological Research is a non-profit community association. Based in Sydney but with a world-wide membership base, it was established in 1977. The aims of the organisation are:

- To collect, assess and disseminate factual information about claims of psychic (paranormal) phenomena.
- To support and encourage parapsychology (the scientific study of paranormal phenomena).
- To undertake or promote activities (e.g., fundraising, social activities, etc.) in support of the above.

Looking for information on the paranormal? The AIPR has fact sheets on:

- Psychic and mystical experiences of the aborigines
- Psychic and psycho-spiritual development
- Healing
- Mystical experiences
- Apparitions, ghosts and hauntings
- Out of body experiences
- Near-death experiences
- The human aura

A Precognitive Dream Study by Colin Mitchell

It has been noticed throughout history that some dreams appear to forecast the future, often in relation to spectacular incidents. But precognitive dreams may be more common than generally supposed. In 1927, J. W. Dunne wrote An Experiment with Dreams in which he observed his dreams to determine just how frequently precognitive dreams might occur. I have been keeping a dream diary for many years, and in 1999 decided to begin a similar experiment on my own dreams.

I sought correlations between my dreams and waking life over several days into the future and the past from the time of each dream. The past correlations were obtained by remembering past events resembling the dream contents. The future correlations were obtained by either noticing them as they occurred in the days following the dream or by picking them up while reviewing the dream later. Because it is difficult to quantify dream imagery and waking subjective life, the experiment is dependent on subjective judgement. Precognition has been more objectively studied using random number generators and a weak effect was detected. However, indications are that the dream state is conducive to psi.

I rated the correlations on a scale: ‘very strong’ = 1; ‘strong’ = 2; ‘moderate’ = 3; ‘weak’ = 4; ‘very weak’ = 5. I took into account three factors: (1) degree of matching detail; (2) likelihood of occurrence of dream event and waking event; and (3) number of correlations in the same dream. I mixed all these factors up—in a more rigorous experiment these factors would be rated separately. A more objective experiment would also use independent judges to rate the correlations.

It is difficult at first to treat past and future correlations with equal respect. In reviewing a dream the tendency is to give past correlations more weight just because they occurred previous to the dream. A strategy suggested by Dunne to overcome this is to ask yourself whether you would consider the following day’s events would have influenced your dream if the events had occurred before the dream—in other words read the dream as though it is a dream you are going to have tonight. In this way you are judging correlations purely on the three factors above—not on their temporal position.

Between July 1999 and June 10, 2007, I recorded 2,128 dreams. Of these I recorded past correlations only with 128 dreams, future correlations only with 108 dreams and both past and future correlations with 36 dreams. Dunne found a similar low rate of recognisable correlations with his dreams. I found a strong decline effect with greater temporal distance from the dream for both past and future correlations—most correlations occurred the day before or the day after the dream, the overwhelming majority were within two days. The outstanding finding is the approximate equal frequency of past and future correlations. This was Dunne’s finding also. The table below shows results for all ratings. It also shows that Dunne’s finding is reflected across all correlation strengths. (cont’d page 4)
This is my inaugural column for the new *AIPR News*, so let me introduce myself. I am currently president of the AIPR, a long-time psi researcher and I’ve just finished writing a PhD on psi. And I mean *just* then. Really, no jokes. I’ve just now finished typing out the acknowledgements page, tidied up the bibliography and, well, I am thinking *that’s it*, *done*. Now I suddenly find myself writing this new column because it’s due, let’s see, about yesterday. But that’s where the similarity with my thesis ends. The column will be a lot more fun, it’s shorter for a start. And it should feel a whole lot more worthwhile. A thesis is only ever read by two people; whereas, this column will be read by you, and you, and you! That brings me to you. Who are you? We don’t know each other yet, but I hope to redress this situation soon. I’ll just have to hazard a few guesses in the interim. I know for starters that you probably subscribe to the AIPR’s journal—*Australian Journal of Parapsychology*—so you must have some kind of interest in psi research. And if you are reading this extra bonus special news bulletin, you must have some kind of interest in the more general paranormal. Therefore I imagine that you are intelligent, even-headed and well-read, as most people who are interested in the paranormal are. You probably also have a well-developed sense of humour and a finely honed no-nonsense radar. You might have an interesting story or two to share and you probably have all sorts of theories about things like: is telepathy a signal?; do ghosts exist?; are UFOs real?; and who really makes those crop circles? It certainly is a *weird and wonderful world* out there. That’s my motto and I am going to stick with it for the time being. That brings me back to me. Well, now I am done with the thesis ‘malarkey’, I imagine that I am going to have a whole lot more time to invest in discovering what *really* is out there. Then I’ll share it with you. So stay tuned.

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**The Weird and the Wonderful**

*by Hannah Jenkins*

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