

A STUDY IN SYNCHRONICITY

Mark Oliver Smith



**Boer War Memorial
BATHURST**

Dear Arthur,

In the following collection of notes I have sought to recount the sequence of events which comprised our two-day trip from Canberra to Bathurst and return. It was a thoroughly enjoyable trip. We managed to achieve everything we set out to achieve. However, it was not so much the achievement that was enjoyable but the MANNER in which we achieved it! I have listed seven coincidences which occurred. These enabled us to fulfil our intentions. Perhaps we would have fulfilled our intentions without them? I felt that the coincidences were, in some strange way, a confirmation that our endeavours were 'given approval'!

In addition to describing the trip and its coincidental confirmations I have included some of my reflections on the nature of synchronicity. Synchronicity arises when coincidences 'pile-up' on each other. In supplying these additional reflections, (including eight approaches to coincidence), I was hoping to stimulate your thoughts about this strange world of acausality. For my own part I think the most significant factors in allowing this world to EMERGE were:

- some harmony between the two participants and P.M.A.
- clear pre-planning objectives three days prior
- an acceptance of the reality of an 'open' world where the normal conventions associated with time, space and causality do not apply.

I have relegated a more detailed treatment of some theorists about synchronicity to an appendix.

Good Reading.

Mark

3 January 2010

Dear Milt,

I was pleased to hear your remarks about 'Synchronicity' after your reading of Victor Mansfield's book. I was hoping you would enjoy reading it on your holiday in Fiji. The world is not only more mysterious than we imagine but it is more mysterious that we CAN IMAGINE!

I find it somewhat annoying and frustrating that our own westernised culture inhibits and restricts our thinking to a narrow scientism. One does not find this so much in Asia or in cultures which have not been 'contaminated' by a narrow scientific outlook imbued with materialism, determinism and atomism.

I hope you enjoy these notes which I have supplied to Arthur Mumford. You will recognise that most of the Appendix is found in my 'Time, Space and Causality'.

Much Love
and
Good Reading

Dad
3 January 2010

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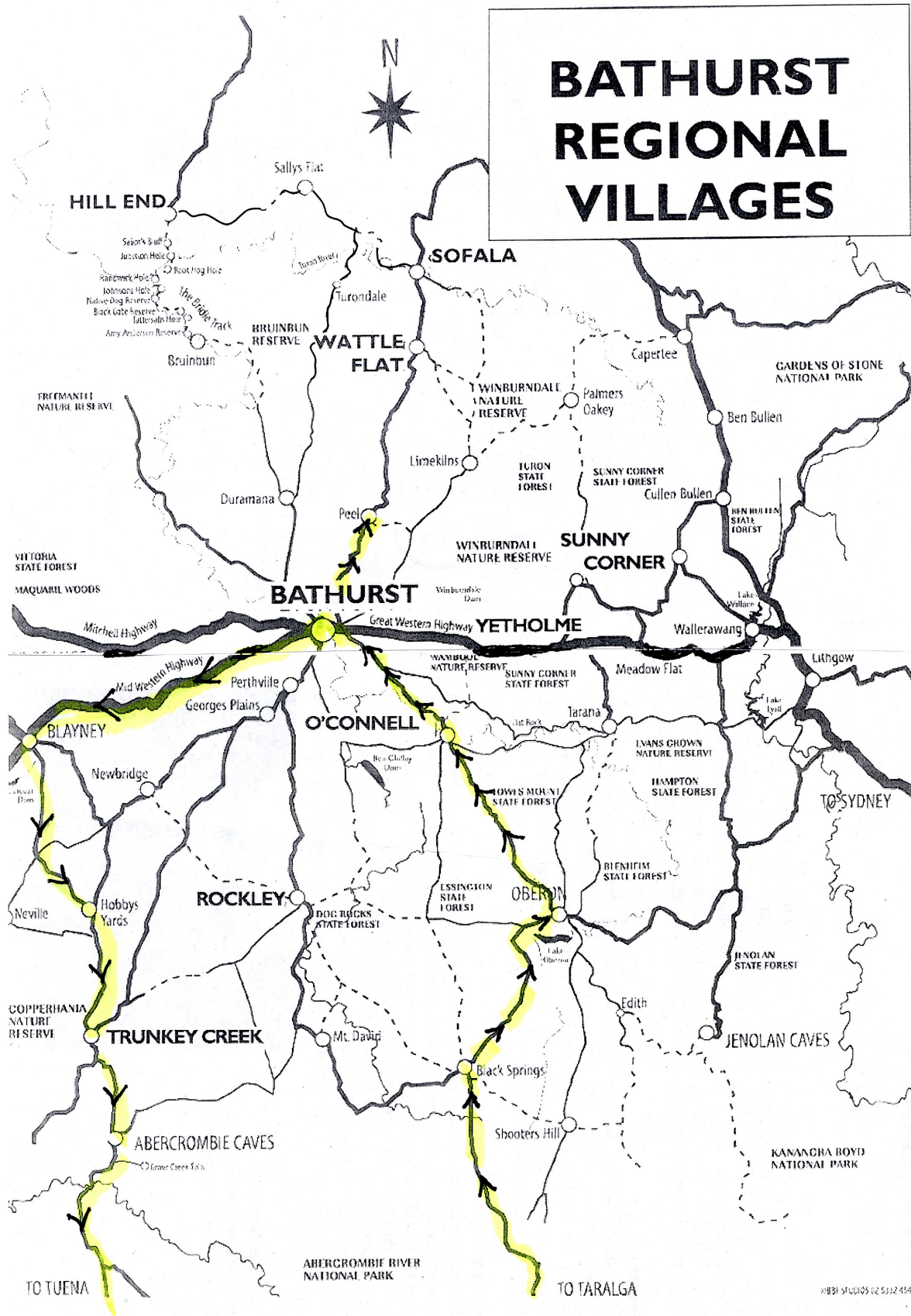
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BATHURST REGIONAL VILLAGES



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A STUDY IN SYNCHRONICITY

Part I

Mark Smith and Arthur Mumford and Pre-planning the Trip from Canberra to Bathurst

Context

These notes are reflections about a series of co-incidences which occurred on a two-day trip from Canberra to Bathurst which I made with Arthur Mumford on the 10th and 11th November 2009. Although the co-incidences may seem trivial to others they certainly were so striking and meaningful to both of us that I think it a worthwhile exercise to attempt to provide ‘a framework of coherence’ to account for the phenomena. I have divided these introductory notes into three parts because I believe each part could contribute to the total explanation:

- Mark Smith and Arthur Mumford and Pre-planning the Trip
- The Seven Co-incidences
- A Framework of Coherence

Mark Smith and Arthur Mumford

The most striking thing about this relationship is the geographical connection. We have both lived in:

- Blayney
- Adelong
- Wagga
- Canberra

We have mothers who lived outside Bathurst and we both have a connection with Milton although this is somewhat tenuous. For a time (6 months) we formed a partnership agency with the same insurance company. It could be said that in the totality of our lives there are a number of correspondences and co-incidences.

Pre-planning the Canberra-Bathurst Trip

Arthur invited me to join him on a day trip to Bathurst. Initially, he only wanted to revisit his father’s grocery shop at Blayney and retrace the journey he had travelled as a boy on a holiday trip from Blayney via Trunkey Creek, Crookwell and so on. I said I would consider the invitation and phone back. When I phoned Arthur I said “yes” with two provisos viz. (i) I would go if he extended the trip to make it a two-day trip instead of a one-day trip and (ii) would he be prepared to go to Bathurst via the ‘Throsby Highway’ (i.e. go via Goulburn, Taralga, Oberon, O’Connell, Kelso) and return via Blayney, Trunkey Creek, Crookwell to Canberra?

Later Arthur agreed with my two provisos and added two of his own! He explained that he wanted to find the grave site of his Dempsey relatives at Peel and also locate the Boer War Memorial with his great-uncle's name on it. His great uncle's name was the controversial companion of Breaker Morant – Lt. Peter Handcock. We agreed on a date, a time of departure and Arthur asked me to attend to the arrangements of accommodation and other aspects of the itinerary.

In making the plans for the trip I rang the Goulburn Police Station (02 – 4824 0799) and confirmed that the road to Bathurst via Taralga had been sealed. I then booked into the Country Comfort Motel (02 – 6332 1800) for one night (\$125). I then made three phone calls to the Abercrombie House number (02 – 6331 4929). However, on each occasion the call was unanswered. I had hoped to visit the country mansion at 311 Ophir Road on this occasion. My other plans included a visit to my mother's gravesite in the Bathurst cemetery and a visit to the Bathurst historical museum. I thought it might have been possible to visit the Ben Chifley residence, St. Stanislaus' College and the Lands Department to see Kevin Boole. I left these possibilities up in the 'air'.

The Journey From Canberra to Bathurst

We journeyed from Canberra to Goulburn and called in to the Goulburn Tourist Information Centre. I purchased a copy of 'Arthursleigh' while Arthur inspected the vehicle displays. We had a quick visit to the Goulburn Railway Station where we admired the renovations and viewed the War Memorial list of railway men who served in the First World War. Another Memorial Board listed those who had successfully competed in the Goodhew Safety Award Competitions. When we motored through the 'Throsby Town' of Taralga (1819) I noticed there was a Goodhew Street. We motored out of Taralga, crossed the Abercrombie River, through Porter's Retreat, Black Springs and had lunch in the tidy town of Oberon. We visited the Information Office and they directed me to the Council Chambers where I obtained a free copy of Philippa-Gemmell-Smith's 'Thematic History of Oberon Shire'. This publication (2004) listed some information about the early 1819 Throsby expedition from Taralga to O'Connell. We then journeyed through O'Connell to Kelso where we made inquiries about any Boer War Memorial. We were directed to the one-time Army Camp/Bathurst Migrant Centre. Its War Memorial was dedicated to World War II servicemen and not Boer War servicemen. We drove through the entrance to the Bathurst Sheep and Cattle Drome. In the information centre we met a Ms Suttor who was able to direct us to the road that led to the small village of Peel.

Part II The Seven Coincidences of the Trip

Day 1

Coincidence No. 1

The Discovery of the Dempsey Headstones Through a Series of Improbabilities

On arrival at the small village of Peel we drove along the main road and turned back near the bridge-crossing and went back along a street we later discovered was Dempsey Street.



There were no signs of life. When Arthur investigated a home which looked as though it was being renovated he found no one at home. After we circled the block we came back to the main road into the town. Arthur thought there was a possibility that the cemetery he was seeking was probably just behind the small church. There were two young dogs in the outer section of the church grounds. This indicated that someone might be living nearby. When we knocked on the church door we were surprised that it was, indeed, occupied by a young man and his wife. Arthur explained that he was seeking directions to the Peel cemetery where a number of his Dempsey relatives were interred. It was about 3.30 pm. They invited us inside their 'home' which was cool inside. We were, firstly, surprised that they were 'home' at this time of the day and secondly, that they were to prove so knowledgeable about Peel. They were only newcomers to the area and they both worked in nearby towns. The young man produced a copy of the *History of Peel*. In it were references to Arthur's Dempsey relatives. The young man also explained that the street we had driven down was named Dempsey Street. He also explained that the cemetery Arthur was seeking was not 'just over the rise from the church'. It was five or six kilometres away. We had to exit the town the way we had entered and look for the entrance to the historic homestead 'Brucelands'. Incidentally, 'Brucelands' had just been mentioned to us as the ancestral home of the Ms Suttor we had met earlier at the Sheep and Cattle Drome. Opposite the entrance to 'Brucelands' we would see a gateway which led to the cemetery. We followed the directions and went through the gateway and crossed a paddock about a kilometre wide. We found a second gated entrance to another paddock. After another 400 metres we discovered a

cemetery with about 200 headstones. Arthur found his Dempsey relatives in a fenced enclosure which contained nine headstones.



Arthur with the headstone of his Grandparents
Jane Martha Dempsey and James Dempsey
Peel Cemetery
(near Bathurst, NSW)

The discovery of these headstones was not so much the outcome of a single coincidence but **the cumulative effect of a number of improbabilities**. Any resident of Peel could have supplied the information we wanted but we could not find any visible signs of human activity in the scattered homes. We succeeded in finding Peel's most recent residents in a church they had converted into a home. It was our good fortune that they had returned from their workplaces and that they possessed a *History of Peel*. This book provided helpful details to Arthur. We attempted to purchase this book on four occasions but even the Bathurst Historical Society had no copy for sale!

Coincidence No. 2

Locating the Hancock Plaque

Our three inquiries in Kelso had failed to locate a Boer War Memorial in that area. I reasoned that the memorial we were seeking was probably the one I knew at Bathurst. There had been quite a controversy about placing Lt. Hancock's name on the Bathurst Memorial at the time of its erection. Peter Hancock and 'Breaker Morant' had been executed for dishonourable conduct during their service with the Bush Veldt Carboneers. On his Australian visit General Kitchener had refused to unveil the Bathurst Boer War Memorial if Hancock's name was included on the plaque. Accordingly, Hancock's name

was omitted. Many years later, that decision was reversed. Arthur, however, had not seen the amended memorial plaque.



Boer War Monument, Bathurst

When we scanned the list of names on the memorial at Bathurst we did not see Hancock's name listed. While I moved away from the Memorial, Arthur kept reading the names on the Honour Roll. Imagine my surprise when he declared he had found the name! He showed me that the name was not in the lists but was on the border-frame of the lists.



Arthur indicating the place where the name 'LIEUT. P.J. HANDCOCK' was added to the Roll of Honour on the Bathurst Boer War Memorial.

Arthur's discovery does not appear to be a coincidence to the casual observer and yet it does appear that way to me. I had walked away, satisfied that the name was not on the memorial. Arthur had persevered by having a more thorough search. Sure, it was 'his relation' and not mine. The name was not where I had expected it to be but it was there nevertheless. If Arthur had adopted my attitude to the search his mission would have failed. This small difference in attitude may not be a coincidence at all but at the time it seemed to be one for me! Perhaps **coincidences are very personal**. Their meaning is unique to a particular person.



Coincidence No. 3

The Conversation at the Bathurst R.S.L.

Now that the first two of Arthur's four aims had been achieved we decided to make a move to our motel and book-in for the night. After booking-in I then decided to locate 'Abercrombie House' at 311 Ophir Road. After receiving some assistance we eventually found the magnificent building. Unfortunately, the entrance gates were locked. Arthur photographed it from a great distance. We motored back to our motel, had a shower, and decided to have a meal at the downtown 'Rose Café' Restaurant.

During the meal we conversed with our waitress who had attended the Milton High School! We decided to drop-in to the nearby R.S.L. Club on our way 'home'. This was to discover the local version of why 'Handcock's' name was successfully inscribed on the Bathurst Boer War Memorial. Again, it appeared as if our intentions were thwarted. The Committee members had met that evening but had left the club not long before we arrived. However we were not discouraged.

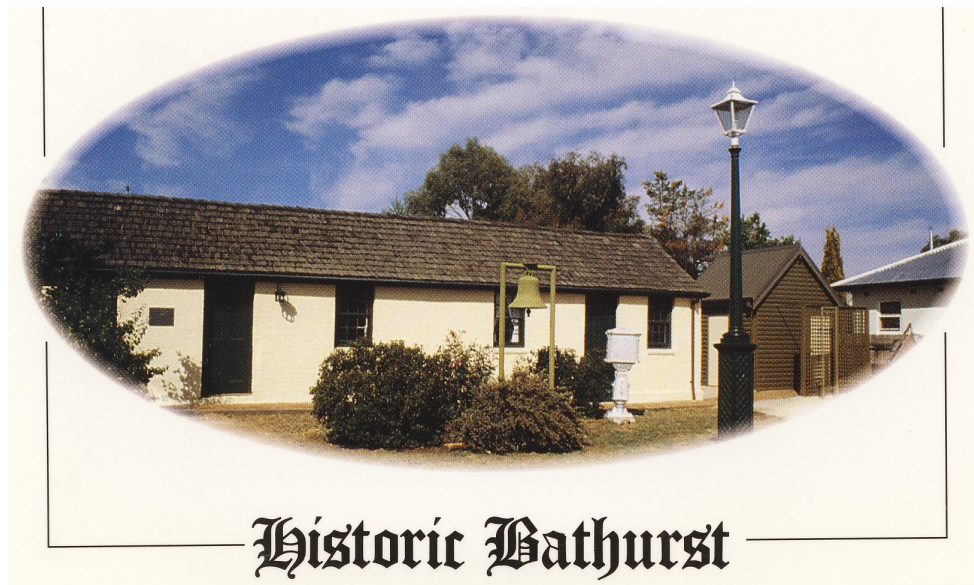
I surveyed the club and found two elderly gentlemen drinking. They looked likely prospects who could supply Arthur with information about Lieutenant Peter Handcock. In point of fact, they knew little about the history of the Boer War plaque with its additional name. However, more surprisingly, one of them proved to be a one-time resident of the small township of Peel! This man told Arthur tales of his boyhood and of his memories of the Dempseys. This was a surprising, though welcome exchange of information. It illustrated the principle of **'unintended emergence'** which may also be a characteristic of coincidence. Our intention was not fulfilled but information about our earlier Peel visit was supplied!

Day 2

A Pre-Breakfast Cemetery Visit

Since our motel was south of Bathurst, in Brilliant/Stewart Streets, I thought it would be convenient if we visited my mother's grave-site and my grandfather's grave. While at the cemetery Arthur photographed Ben Chifley's obelisk and we departed the cemetery via Suttor Street and Mitre Street until it met Durham Street. We travelled along Durham Street until we came to McDonalds' where we stopped for breakfast.

The Old Government Cottage, The Okhuma Gardens, The Foundation Cairn



Circa 1817

Welcome to one of the oldest brick buildings in Australia, and certainly the oldest still standing in Bathurst.

This area is the oldest part of Bathurst. The area on this left bank of the Macquarie River was reserved for the Government Depot, used and occupied by convicts and soldiers when settlement began. Civilians and private development were confined to the Kelso side opposite. Some of this 'government' land, such as the present Bicentennial Park, Bathurst Showgrounds and the Haymarket Reserve still remain in the hands of the crown.

After breakfast I directed Arthur to the Old Government Cottage in Stanley Street. This cottage was thought to have been built in about c. 1817. It is currently being renovated and is situated in the backyard of the historic two-storey house fronting No. 1 George Street. This house was built by John Ford, a local banker and pastoralist circa 1860. It has been the residence of the local Inspector of Schools, the 'Macquarie House' School for Girls, an old men's home and a private dwelling at various times. It is now owned by the Bathurst City Council. We then motored to the nearby Okhuma Japanese Gardens. These were a gift from Bathurst's sister city – Okhuma. Nearby we inspected the Foundation Cairn of Bathurst at the spot Governor Lachlan Macquarie inaugurated the town and site of Bathurst on 7th May 1815. The first divine service west of the Blue Mountains was held on this spot. The Heritage Wall near the Cairn records the contribution of the early settlers to the district. Arthur photographed the plaque of Sergeant Charles Whalan:

'He was in charge of Governor Macquarie's bodyguard and read the lesson at the church service when Governor Macquarie proclaimed the township of Bathurst'.



Arthur at the Foundation Cairn

The town's inauguration took place on 7th May 1815 and Governor Macquarie immediately commissioned all Government facilities such as housing for the administration, soldiers and convicts, the gaol, as well as stores and produce sheds.

Coincidence No. 4

Meeting the Map-maker at The Lands Department

We motored down Durham Street to the newly sited Tourist Information Centre. It features a fully restored Cobb and Co. Coach which Arthur carefully inspected. We then motored up Havannah Street past the Railway Station, the McGrath home in Cambria Terrace (107) opposite the old Railway Institute and the one-time John McGrath Battery shop. We turned into Brilliant Street and passed St. Stanislaus's College. Because we were in the vicinity I decided to make a quick visit to the Lands Department to visit Kevin Boole. It was about 9.10 am and we had to wait a few minutes for Kevin to arrive. During the waiting time Arthur busied himself looking at the collection of Lands Department maps on sale. He actually purchased one. When Kevin Boole arrived I introduced him to Arthur and Kevin asked Arthur what map he had purchased. Arthur explained that it was a map of the Jervis Bay area. It included details of the village of Currarong where Arthur had a holiday home. Imagine our surprise when Kevin Boole explained it was one of the maps he had personally drawn. Kevin went on to explain how previous maps had incorrectly labelled the Jervis Bay area as being on Commonwealth property when, in fact, it was actually on land leased from the N.S.W. Government. As far as I was concerned I thought this **chance encounter** of Arthur and the map-maker through my introduction qualified to be regarded as Coincidence No. 4! **Is synchronicity sometimes related to a trickster?** We motored back to the motel and booked out at about 10.05 am. I suggested to Arthur that we return to the Civic Centre to visit the Historical Museum in order to obtain a *History of Peel*.

The Bathurst Civic Centre

The Civic Centre with its Kings Parade was the site of the original Market Place. It features the tall red-brick Carillon, the Boer War Memorial and the Evans Memorial commemorating the first white explorer of the area. Opposite these features in Russell Street stand the Bathurst Civic Centre, the imposing historic Courthouse, built in 1880 in the beautiful Machattie Park. This Courthouse complex contains the Bathurst Historical Museum in one wing. On the Howick Street side of the central park stands the beautiful Anglican Cathedral.

Coincidence No. 5

Encountering Christopher Morgan of Abercrombie House inside the Bathurst Historical Museum

After parking the car in George Street we made our way to the Civic Centre to be photographed beside the portrait of Ben Chifley. We then moved into the adjacent Historical Museum in order to purchase a copy of the *History of Peel*. They only had a display copy. I took the opportunity of purchasing some postcards, including one of Abercrombie House. A visiting Education Officer appeared at the entrance with a class of children in tow. He engaged me in brief conversation. I explained to him that we had visited Abercrombie House but had not been able to go inside it. Imagine my surprise when he exclaimed: "That's my house!" His name was Christopher Morgan, son of Rex Morgan, the owner!

He was the very person I had been trying to contact by phone before the trip began! Our chance encounter in the Historical Museum certainly rated as a coincidence as far as I was concerned! **Did my pre-planning create the magic for his appearance?**



Abercrombie House

Remembrance Day, 11th November 2009

I had suggested to Arthur that it would be fitting for us to attend the Remembrance Day Service at the time he had found Lt. Peter Hancock's name on the Boer War Memorial. However he dismissed the suggestion because it would 'cut into the time' at our disposal. However when he exited the Historical Museum and looked across the road to the Carillon he could see dignitaries and the catafalque guard assembling for a 10.35 am service. He then suggested to me that he would like to stay for the service! Naturally I was surprised at Arthur's reversal of opinion but I was quite happy to accede. So we crossed the road and joined in the service.

The Search For 'A History of Peel'

We had been surprised at the success of our visits but disappointed that we had not been able to find a *History of Peel* for sale. We visited another three shops but had no success. We decided to leave Bathurst and drive to Blayney. Arthur, again, had another inspiration. He wanted to call in to the Mount Panorama Speedway on the way. We visited the main entrance but an official blocked the entrance and we had to admit defeat. On our way to Blayney we passed the sign post pointing to Kings Plain. This place had been the original site of the Blayney township and it was the place where my great-grandmother Sarah Jane Evans had been born on the 6th January 1845.

Coincidence No. 6

At Miskall's White Goods Store, Blayney

Seven or eight years ago I met a man called Bernie Miskall in Bathurst. He was an ex-engine-driver for the NSWGR. On the way home to Canberra through Blayney I noticed a shop on a corner opposite a hotel. This shop bore the name of the owner: 'Miskall'. On the five or six times I visited Blayney since then I had the desire to visit the shop and determine whether the owner was related to the Bernie Miskall I had met in Bathurst. On one of these occasions I went into the shop to speak to the owner but he was not in attendance. Now on this occasion I thought that I would again visit the shop. I told this intention to Arthur as I knew he also wished to visit his father's old grocery shop in Blayney. Indeed, it was one of his original reasons for undertaking the trip. Again, imagine my surprise when Arthur parked the car outside Miskall's shop and declared that the self-same shop of Miskall's White Goods Store was, indeed, once his father's grocery shop! **Without either of us knowing we had each intended to visit the same Blayney shop!** As far as I was concerned this qualified as Coincidence No. 6! Although the woman serving at the counter said Mr Miskall was 'not in at the moment' I went around to the rear lane and found him loading his utility for a home visit! After speaking to him I ascertained that he was not a relative of the Bernie Miskall I had met years ago in Bathurst.



Miskalls Electrical Shop, Blayney
One-time Grocery Store of Arthur Mumford's father.

Coincidence No. 7

The Pie Shop Conversation

I suggested to Arthur that it would be wise for us to have a 'bite' of lunch because there was little likelihood of getting much to eat on our return journey. I suggested a small café nearby but Arthur preferred the local bakery which was also close by. Once inside Arthur struck up a conversation with some elderly locals. He inquired as to whether any of them remembered his father as the local grocer. While this conversation was proceeding a middle-aged woman overheard Arthur explaining that he was the grocer's son! The woman then disclosed that she was the best friend of Arthur's cousin's wife! Furthermore, she had not heard from her for some time. They had met on a regular basis at the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Reunion meetings and had exchanged Christmas cards annually. Arthur was able to provide the woman with up-to-date details about her close friend. Arthur and the woman exchanged private details so that she could contact her close friend. Again, I think this **chance encounter** also qualified as a coincidence! Had we gone into the small café instead of the bakery Arthur would never have met this woman who was so pleased to have met Arthur. **'Who' or 'what' arranged for this meeting to take place?**

Part III

Attempting to Unravel the Mystery of Multiple Coincidences by Distinguishing the Accidental, the Coincidental and the Synchronous Level

The Seven Coincidences of the Trip as Synchronous Phenomena

The seven coincidences of our trip might not strike an impartial observer as anything but **chance events**. However they did not strike me or Arthur as simple chance events. We found difficulty in describing them as **'just coincidences'**. They seemed to be all related to aspects of our pre-planning and to matters which had meaning to each of us personally and to both of us in combination. Had there been one coincidence it would probably have been put down to 'lady luck'. However the fact that there were seven in two days became a talking point as each occurred. Did we create a 'climate' for coincidences to occur? Did we 'cause' this 'acausal' phenomena? We may say that seven coincidences in two days constitutes synchronous phenomena.

The Word 'Significance'

The noun 'significance' derives from the word 'sign' which is a modern rendition of the Middle English and Old French word 'signe' from the Latin 'signum'. The equivalent Latin word for 'significance' is 'significantia'. It means the hidden but real import of an event. The importance or significance which is attached to an event is related to the degree of non-causal attributes (or signs) which co-incide in time with that event.

Significance - Quantitative and Qualitative Aspects

1. *Quantitative Aspects*

Research scientists are quite familiar with the probability devices known as 'tests of significance'. When generalisations are being made about total populations from incident rates in small samples, care must be taken not to allow errors of sampling and data collection to exaggerate the findings. Tests of significance are applied by researchers to establish the statistical confidence level of the data. This is an attempt to quantify the significance of the data. This can be an involved task when examining the effects of multi-causality on a probable outcome. However, in this article, I am not really concerned with a mathematical or statistical concept of significance. In fact, I regard such usage as self-contradictory. It is a misuse of the traditional term 'significance'. Its application should be reserved for those occasions where uniqueness is more important than statistical recurrence.

2. *Qualitative Aspects*

When we invest an event with significance we are usually declaring that its occurrence exceeds the boundaries of ordinariness. A significant event is accompanied by signifiers. These transform the event into another dimension and impregnate it with a meaning and uniqueness it would not otherwise possess. The mundane is transcended and becomes a source of wonder. The signifiers occur at, or about, the same time, and have no detectable causal relation to the event. It is possible to grade the significance of events according to the degree of improbability of the signifiers and their number. However, **qualitative** grading cannot, by definition, be done solely on a statistical basis. Accordingly, the following classification by 'degree' is proposed:

(a) **The Accidental Level**

An accident may be thought of as an unexpected interruption to a predictable outcome by something which is entirely unforeseen. Many discoveries have been made by accident and, likewise, many adventures have been turned into calamities by unforeseen changes of circumstances. We may refer to the accidental level as that order of events which is effected by chance. For example, a person may have turned into a 'wrong' alley while shopping only to make the discovery that their 'missing' shop had been found. Unbeknown to them the owners had relocated their premises the week before! The shop had been found by accident.

It can, of course, work the other way. A person may catch the 'right' bus only to find that because of an accident they are late for an appointment. Most people do not make a great deal of such events and off-handedly ascribe to the outcome the phrase: 'that's the luck of the draw' or 'you've just got to put it down to bad luck'. There are, however, a few obstinate people who insist that there is no such thing as luck. They assert that you actually

generate your own successes and failures by your own attitudes. Perhaps it is possible to reconcile both views.

(b) The Co-incident Level

Events have causality and occur in time and space. When two entirely different caused events occur simultaneously we can say they occur coincidentally. If two such unrelated events however share a common sign they begin to acquire a significance beyond that of their individual occurrence. If, for example, my brother is hitch-hiking 500 miles to visit me and hails a driver, who by chance, stops and picks him up, makes the discovery, after 250 miles of travelling, that the driver was also coming to see me, then we have an example of significance at the co-incident level. The statistical probability of such a 'chance' happening are so astronomical that one is left seeking for an explanation from another dimension. Again, there are some obstinate people who prefer to describe such events as 'just coincidences'. Their use of the word 'just' seems to be a 'cop-out' and indicates a raising of a protective screen to avoid disturbing the complacency of their ordered, cause-effect world.

(c) The Synchronous Level

When co-incident events 'pile-up' on other co-incident events to form a sequence of unexpected outcomes we may describe the total process as operating at the synchronous level of significance. Thus the qualitative levels of significance begin with the accidental level, proceed with the co-incident and have, as their highest expression their development at the synchronous level. The synchronous level occurs when more than two unrelated events share a common sign and occur simultaneously or in a series. Thus if a person were to receive a tax bill for \$1200 and a lottery win of \$1200 in the same mail and on the same day be visited by childhood friend whose car number plate was TAX 1200 he would be entitled to see something significant in the occurrence of the three non-related events.

Part IV

Synchronicity – An Acausal Connecting Principle

Carl Jung and Wolfgang Pauli

In 1952 Carl Jung and Wolfgang Pauli collaborated on a book *The Interpretation of the Psyche*. In a sense, this work represented the marriage of psychology and physics and the conception of synchronicity as an acausal connecting principle.

The *I Ching* or *Book of Changes* by R. Wilhelm

The English translation of this book by C.F. Barnes in 1951 contained a foreword by Carl Jung. In Jung's introductory essay he 'coined' the term 'synchronicity'.

'Referring to the belief in divination Jung says: This assumption involves a certain curious principle that I have termed synchronicity, a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality.' (Cited from J.G. Bennett's *The Dramatic Universe*, Vol. 2, p. 43).

Synchronicity As Meaningful Coincidence (Hopcke)

Robert H. Hopcke adds a fourth feature to the characteristics of synchronistic events listed by Jung - (see p. 23 *There are no Accidents*):

- synchronistic events are acausally connected but unconnected to an individual's intentional design;
- such events are accompanied by a deep emotional experience;
- thirdly, the content of the synchronistic experience is always symbolic in nature;
- fourthly, the coincidences occur at important transitions in life.

Barbara Hanna and Maria von Franz

Several of Jung's colleagues have tried to clarify some of his thoughts about synchronicity:

- **Barbara Hanna**, Jung's biographer has suggested that synchronistic thinking exists outside of time and space (see F. David Peats *Synchronicity*, p. 25).
- **Marie-Louise von Franz** believed that 'synchronicity is a manifestation of a much wider principle of acausal orderliness which is found in mathematics and quantum theory and represents acts of creation in time.' (Ibid, p. 26).

Aspects of Definition of Synchronicity

In summary, Synchronicity may be defined as an acausal connecting principle which manifests itself through meaningful coincidences. In searching for a theoretical grounding for synchronicity scientists have appealed to quantum physics, fractal geometry and chaos theory. Parapsychologists are more inclined to understand it as an aspect of precognition or clairvoyance.

The Roots of Co-incidence

Arthur Koestler, in his book *The Roots of Co-incidence* admits the phenomenology of co-incidence but does not propose any theoretical framework for its explication. He outlines Kammerer's early study and criticises Carl Jung's woolly thinking about synchronicity. Koestler describes the problem but does not really get to the root of the problem.

The real question is how can we account for significant events at the accidental, coincidental or synchronous level? What is operating behind the daily cause-effect relationship to imbue many quite ordinary and banal events with a significance beyond the actual events themselves? Let us then examine a number of approaches to this baffling and elusive problem.

Part V

Eight Approaches to Coincidence

(a) The Poker-machine Theory

The game of poker exhibits all of the characteristics of chance or accident, coincidence and synchronicity except the presence of signs. It is definitely not a theory of qualitative significance but rather one of quantitative significance. It is a probability game based on chance and some skill at remembering what cards have not been played and are likely to occur in a microcosm of 52 variables. It is mentioned only because, in a perverse way, it illustrates a deeply felt desire among people to participate in an event of some significance over which they have little or no control. However, like the Pawuton Calendar of the Balinese, it denies the most essential ingredient of qualitative significance viz the unplanned and unique emergence of events. The Pawuton Calendar controls a great deal of Balinese behaviour and is based on making decisions on the days of intersecting periodicities of time. It attempts to plan for co-incidence and so defeats the very nature of significance in the qualitative sense. Significance and auspicious events belong to the hidden world and their emergence is not subject to rational control.

(b) The Guardian Angel Theory

The Guardian Angel theory is espoused by a great number of people who have experienced a number of amazing co-incidences in their lives. They candidly claim that, no human planning could arrange events to fall into place as they have experienced them. They believe that only a supernatural agency could be responsible for the unique manifestation of occurrences. Indeed, there are some persons who have had visionary experiences to corroborate their testimony. To such persons the Guardian Angel theory is beyond dispute.

(c) The Higher Self Theory

The Higher Self Theory is similar to the Guardian Angel Theory but locates the agency as part of the individual's nature. The Higher Self, in this theory, possesses an overview and a greater knowledge than the rational mind of man. It is an unconscious aspect of man that under certain conditions controls and organises seemingly disparate events to fall into their proper place. The Higher Self is a super conductor of the great orchestra of life.

(d) The Chaos Theory

No doubt some sage or philosopher promulgated the doctrine that order, or cosmos, comes from chaos. If this doctrine is applied to the domain of significance it results in such divinatory practices as oracle-bone reading, entrail reading, tea-leaf reading and so on. A situation of complete disorder is consulted for a sign. The quatrains of Nostradamus illustrates the idea. After writing his verses in an orderly succession he threw them into the air and picked them up at random and re-numbered them. This, according to the theory increases their potency. The Sybylline Oracles, the I Ching and the Tarot attempt to divine order from the most disorderly.

(e) The Anima/Animus Theory

The Anima/Animus theory borrows its title from Jung's male/female polarity. The theory recognises that the dynamic between two people is sometimes greater than the sum of their parts. Strange things occur when positive and negative valencies work alongside each other. A field force is created for the 'principle of emergence'. Significant events are likely to eventuate in such conditions. At least, that is the theory. I am rather partial to this 'field-force' idea. It partially explains why some people appear to have a monopoly on coincidences. The male/female aspect is not necessarily gender based and may work between two men, two women or in reverse with male/female. A woman may be a male life-force dominant and her husband a female life-force dominant. The polaric, or dyadic, relationship is thought to be the essential aspect of this theory.

(f) The Epileptic Theory

The word 'epileptic' is chosen only to draw attention to the stress this theory attributes to unusual brain-wave patterns in unusual people such as St. Paul, Mohammed and Joseph Smith. They seemed to have unusual co-incidences associated with their lives. Whether epilepsy is associated with a disturbed relationship between the right and left hemispheres of the brain is something for neurologists to establish but even if it is not, one can hypothesise that left-right hemispheric dominance may well be associated with the occurrence of co-incidence.

(g) Worlds Within Worlds

J.G. Bennett, one-time disciple of Gurdjieff and spokesperson of Subud to the West, proposed a model of the real world which consisted of a great number of intersecting worlds. With his three co-ordinates of space, time and hyperaxis he was able to develop a model of a 'dramatic universe'. This included provision for synchronicity to emerge as an outcome of these co-ordinates intersecting.

Bennett's theory is complex but, of course, he is attempting to deal with complex matters. Synchronicity is not a subject given attention by scientists. (See Appendix for further details).

(h) **The Omnibus Theory**

The Omnibus Theory proposes that the totality of life experiences incorporates co-incidence at every turn. G.K. Chesterton based his novels on this theory. At its most generalised level it proposes that what happens at the microcosmic level can only be a reflection of what is happening at the macrocosmic level. That is the nature of reality and there should be little wonder that correspondences abound. Co-incidence is something one should expect to happen and they are somehow confirmation of the general orderliness of reality. There are some people who are 'specialists' at seeing co-incidences. They see, or rather perceive, co-incidences which the average person would not notice. The Balinese people regulate their lives according to signs and 'auspicious' events. Their Pawuton calendar is an almanac which governs their daily living.

The great weakness of the omnibus theory is that it is too comprehensive and leads to the absurd proposition that even when there are no co-incidences the 'empty' events are significant because of the absence of signs!

Concluding Remarks

Accidents and co-incidents occur daily but sometimes they are accompanied by a sign or a form of bonding which takes them from 'just a coincidence' to 'what an amazing coincidence'. There are some theories which attempt to account for the significance which coincidence sometimes possesses but none of them is totally convincing. One thing however, is certain: that man himself is, in some way, implicated in the very processes of the world he seeks to observe. Man can no longer stand as an outside observer of life. His very act of observation changes the influences which impinge on him. Co-incidences and synchronous phenomena are almost always privately meaningful to the observer. As such, they cannot be subject to the scientific method of enquiry.

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APPENDIX

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF JUNG, OUSPENSKY, BENNETT AND PEAT

A.

Pioneers of Synchronicity

A number of researchers have delved into the complexities of synchronicity and acausality. These include:

- Paul Kammerer, an Austrian biologist who published a selection and commentary in *Das Gesetz der Serie* in 1919.
- J.W. Dunne published his *An Experiment in Time* in 1927. As an engineer he explained dream coincidences in terms of traditional physics by invoking the concept of 'time displacements'.
- Carl Gustav Jung and Wolfgang Pauli published together *The Interpretation and Nature of the Psyche* in 1952. Pauli, a quantum physicist, contributed an essay on the influence of archetypes in Kepler's theory of planetary motion while Jung's essay was concerned with the nature of synchronicity.
- J.B. Priestly, the British sage and playwright wrote several plays which drew on many of Ouspensky's thoughts concerning the nature of time. In 1964 he compiled a book of curious dreams which appeared in 1964 as *Man and Time*.
- Arthur Koestler published a book in 1972, *The Roots of Coincidence*. He also endowed the Edinburgh University with a Chair of Parapsychology and the Koestler Foundation continues to promote research into areas beyond the area of orthodox science.
- David Bohm wrote his book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* in 1980. In this work he characterises the universe not so much as a collection of objects or events but more as a complicated web of relations between the parts of a unified whole. He calls this deeper order an 'implicate' or 'enfolded' order in which interconnections of the whole have nothing to do with locality in space and time. He uses the hologram as a helpful analogy.
- Rupert Sheldrake wrote his *New Science of Life* in 1981 and *The Presence of the Past* in 1988. His major thesis was to replace the central importance of genes with an equally important concept of a 'morpho-

genetic field'. According to Sheldrake, all matter has an associated field of memory which plays an active role in guiding the formation of structures and various processes.

B. FOUR THEORISTS

1. Carl Justav Jung (1875 – 1961) and Acausality

Biographical Detail

Carl Gustav Jung was born on 26 July 1875 of Swiss parents. His father, though strict as a Church Pastor, was riddled with doubts. Jung's mother developed a nervous disorder and slept apart from husband. Two of Jung's brothers died in infancy and his only sister was born nine years after he was born.

Jung obtained a Doctor of Medicine at Basel. After an internship as an assistant in the Burghölzli Mental Hospital in Zurich and a period of teaching and research at the University of Zurich he went into private practice as a Psychiatrist in 1913.

Association with Freud

Jung commenced a friendship with Sigmund Freud in 1906 which only lasted until 1914. At this time Jung withdrew from The International Psychoanalytic Association which had become dominated by Freudian analysts.

Writings

Jung wrote voluminously on personality, religion, mysticism, symbology and alchemy – to name just a few of his studies. Most of his works have now been gathered together in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (20 vols), Edited by Sir Herbert Read et. al. Princeton University Press (Bollingen Series XX); London; Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Time and Space As Hypostatized Psychic Concepts

In the teachings of Carl Jung we cross the bridge from physics to psychics! Victor Mansfield cites Carl Jung's view about space and time: 'In themselves, space and time consist of nothing. They are hypostatized concepts born of the discriminating activity of the conscious mind, and they form the indispensable coordinates for describing the behaviour or bodies in motion. They are therefore, **essentially psychic in nature** (see p. 86, *Synchronicity, Science and Soul-Making*).

C. Jung and His Relationship to Time, Space and Causality

Jung was a psychiatrist who explored the inner space of man where time's past memories are stored. He also introduced synchronicity, or acausality, to western man and he made teleology very central to the study of man's behaviour. The following notes provide only a brief introduction to the thoughts of a scientifically trained doctor who dared to think unscientifically!

Synchronicity

Jung popularised the idea that a thought and an event may occur simultaneously without the one being caused by the other.

Ledford Bischof's Interpretation of Jung's Personality Theory

Ledford Bischof attempts to summarise the main body of Jung's writings under four principles: polarity, self-actualisation, unconscious states and teleology.

1. *Polarity Principle*

Philosophically, Jung delineates three approaches to the resolution of conflict viz compensation, union and opposition. These three approaches each reflect the principles of equivalence and entropy. **Equivalence**, in physics, is the first law of thermodynamics or the law of conservation of energy principle and **entropy** is the second law of thermodynamics. 'Entropy' states that the properties of one body, when placed in juxtaposition to another that is similar in kind, will tend to assume the characteristics of the most highly charged body.

Some of Jung's polarities include:

- **Regression vs Progression.** For Jung the personality cannot remain still. It only goes forwards or backwards.
- **Personal Unconscious vs Collective Unconscious**
- **Conscious vs Unconscious**
- **Superior Functions vs Inferior Functions**
- **Physical Energy vs Psychic Energy** (both have a common source in the libido)
- **Organic Needs vs Cultural Needs**
- **Anima vs Animus** (each person is bi-sexual)
- **Sublimation vs Repression**
- **Causality vs Teleology** (see below).

Individuation is the process of moving towards finding equilibrium between the polarities.

2. *Self-Actualisation Principle*

Jung differentiates many aspects of the personality or **psyche**. These include the ego, the states of conscious and unconscious, the four fundamental mental functions (Intuition, Sensation, Feeling and Thinking), the personal, the attitude of introversion and extraversion, the psychic and physical energy systems. The **Self** lies midway between the conscious and unconscious and attempts to give equilibrium to the total psyche.

The Mechanisms of Self Actualisation

- All of the factors of polarity must have achieved equilibrium according to the principles of equivalence and entropy.
- Man must come to terms with his biological inheritance. This includes his racial inheritance of instincts and an awareness of his primordial, collective unconscious with its rich store of mythological archetypes.
- Man cannot be fully actualised unless his behaviour is purposive.
- Man cannot gain self-actualisation until his organic energy is transformed into psychic energy. The impulsivity of youth must be replaced by behaviour in conformity to values.
- Symbolism helps man to achieve a higher and more differentiated self than is possible in animals. In the use of literature, music, dance etc. man aspires to higher and higher levels of self-actualisation.

3. *Unconscious States Principle*

Jung placed great emphasis on the importance of the unconscious upon man's behaviour. He distinguished two categories viz the individual or personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. These two states may operate singly or in harmony.

The Personal Unconscious maintains a complete record of an individual's life experiences. This storehouse may play into the conscious or be repressed. In due course, a person may aggregate experiences and the memories that associate with them and form **complexes**. Complexes may be obsessive and intrusive, they may devolve about power, they may be organised about the arts, athletics, health, outdoor living, travel, football, religion, political parties or Golf Clubs.

The Collective Unconscious according to Jung, is the record of the racial or folk memories. These ancestral memories provide each person with archetypal images that emerge in dreams, folklore and mythology. The Major Archetypal Images are:

- **the persona** or 'conformity self image' is the mask a person wears for the community;
- **the shadow** is the repressed and rejected part of our natural wholeness.

Ruth Benedict said that the Americans are obsessed with crime and killing as the Japanese are with suicide. Both of the themes are powerfully repressed in the Australian psyche,

- **the anima** is the repressed feminine aspect of man;
- **the animus** is the repressed male aspect of woman;

- **the Wise Old Man** takes many shapes as God the Father, King, Priest, Philosopher, Leonardo da Vinci, The Pope, The Dalai Lama;
- **The Magna Mater** or Great Mother has appeared as Ishtar of Babylon, Isis of Egypt, Demeter of Greece and the Madonna of Rome. In modern times she may be a Queen Elizabeth I or a Queen Victoria or a Mother Theresa;
- **the Miraculous Child** has an unusual birth history, overcomes extraordinary difficulties and is usually creative, beautiful, gifted or talented;
- **the Hero Saviour** may be like Orpheus, Ulysses, Jason, Caesar, Charlemagne, Gandhi, Mao-Tse-Tung or Churchill.

There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. Objects such as trees, snakes and water may appear as **Ygdrasil** the world tree, **Uroboros** the tail-biting serpent and **Holy Water** in church ritual. Perhaps the greatest symbol of wholeness is the **Mandala** which, remarkably, appears in the Celtic Cross.

4. *The Teleology Principle*

According to Jung, man's behaviour is determined by much more than the satisfaction of immediate goals or year-to-year living. He may have a sense of responsibility towards future generations. Teleology maintains that humanity is moving towards a goal and has a long-range purpose. Although Jung acknowledged that the past was the cause of much of man's present behaviour he was one of the very few psychoanalysts who gave appreciable weight to the impact of the possible future.

2. Peter Ouspensky (1878 – 1947) and His New Model of the Universe

Biographical Detail

Peter Ouspensky wrote several books which were far-reaching in their scope. His first book *The Fourth Dimension* (1909) offered a contribution to mathematical theory. In 1912 he wrote *Tertium Organum* and in 1914 he wrote *A New Model of the Universe*. These works were written before he became a pupil of Geroge I. Gurdjieff. In 1915 he met Gurdjieff but he dissociated himself from *The Work* in 1922. He later wrote *In Search of the Miraculous* and *The Fourth Way* both of which were published after his death in 1947. These books reveal Ouspensky as a deep and original thinker who wrote often about the nature of time. One of Ouspensky's pupils was J.G. Bennett who gave his own formulation to the structure of the universe.

An Introduction to his Teaching about Time

It is unfortunate that Ouspensky uses the word 'dimensions' in contexts where a better word would do. I have found it helpful to view his thinking about time from three viewpoints:

(i) The Seven Dimensional Framework of the Universe

The following excerpts are taken from Ouspensky's book *In Search of the Miraculous*:

“As I have said, seven dimensions, from zero-dimension to the sixth dimension, constitute the full period of dimensions.” (p. 211). “Only a six-dimensional body can be completely real. A five-dimensional body is only an incomplete view of a six-dimensional body... And, of course, a plane is an incomplete view of a three dimensional body in the same way as a line is an incomplete view of a plane and a point is an incomplete view of a line.” (p. 211).

(ii) Possibility and Actualisation

Ouspensky explained that at every moment of time only a finite number of **possibilities** exist. At the next moment only one (or some) of these possibilities will be **actualised**. ‘The consecutiveness of these moments of actualisation (of one possibility) constitutes the line of time’. ‘Each moment of time has an infinite existence in eternity’. ‘The possibilities which have been actualised continue to be actualised in eternity’. Ouspensky then goes on to claim: ‘But ALL the possibilities that have been created or originated in the world must be actualised.’ (p. 211). ‘The sixth dimension is the line of the actualisation of all possibilities. The fifth dimension is the line of the eternal existence or repetition of the actualised possibilities. The fourth dimension is the sequence of the moments of the actualisation.’ (p. 211).

(iii) The Three ‘Dimensions’ of Time

In Yvonne Rousseau's *The Secret of Hanging Rock* (Angus and Robertson, 1981) there is a reference to Ouspensky's *A New Model of the Universe* and a claim that time has three ‘dimensions’ but we only normally perceive the first. (The use of the word ‘dimensions’ is confusing, in my view. It would be clearer if he used ‘aspects’).

Time 1:	Duration or ordinary time
Time 2:	The Perpetual Now
Time 3:	The Aggregate of all possibilities.

Ouspensky claimed that ‘if we attempt to unite the three ‘coordinates of time’ into one whole we obtain a spiral’. **Synchronicity arises from the inter-play of these three dimensions.**

3. John Godolphin Bennett and the Dramatic Universe

Biographical Detail

J.D. Bennett, like P.D. Ouspensky, was a one-time disciple of George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1873-1949). These three men developed complex systems of thought about the nature of man and reality. These thinkers are largely ignored by western academics because their thinking is based on assumptions that

challenge traditional science. Each of these thinkers accept the claims of parapsychology and their thought teases out the implications that these pursuits would have on our understanding of reality. Thus P.D. Ouspensky wrote a book called *A New Model of the Universe*. In Bennett's case, his thought is largely contained in his three volumes of the Dramatic Universe:

Volume 1 – The Foundations of Natural Philosophy.

Volume 2 – The Foundations of Moral Philosophy.

Volume 3 – To be – The Domain of Harmony and its realisation in History.

Bennett as 'John the Baptist' to Pak Subuh

Bennett met Gurdjieff in 1920 and regarded him as the most remarkable man he had ever met. This is praise indeed from someone as erudite as Bennett. It loses some of its force when Bennett switched his allegiance to Pak Subuh after the death of Gurdjieff in 1949. Bennett 'was to become the English John the Baptist' to Pak Subuh whom Bennett heralded as the avatar of a new age. However, after four years Bennett and Pak Subuh parted company and Bennett returned to the practice of exercises advocated by Gurdjieff.

J.G. Bennet's Theory of Intersecting Worlds

J.G. Bennett, proposed a model of the real world which consisted of a great number of intersecting worlds. With his three co-ordinates of space, time and hyperaxis he was able to develop a model of a 'dramatic universe' which included provision for 'synchronicity'.

Although Bennett's system appears complex, it is seeking to explain rather complex phenomena. Bennett proposed six universal laws of synchronicity to account for the reality of 'emergence' as a principle outside of the realm of the factual or real world. He used the symbols S, E, and H to designate the emergent properties of space, time and hyperaxis where:

S (Space)	=	The influences of form, scale and proportion.
E (Eternity)	=	The influences of potentiality, organisation and pattern
H (Hyperaxis)	=	The influence of recurrence, regulation and emergence

The Six Laws of Synchronicity

Bennett formulated six laws which comprised all the possible combinations in which time is not explicit:

THE SIX LAWS OF SYNCHRONICITY

	Symbol	Dominant	Subordinate	Intermediate
1st Law	S-E-H	Space	Eternity	Hyparxis
2nd Law	S-H-E	Space	Hyparxis	Eternity
3rd Law	E-S-H	Eternity	Space	Hyparxis
4th Law	E-H-S	Eternity	Hyparxis	Space
5th Law	H-S-E	Hyparxis	Space	Eternity
6th Law	H-E-S	Hyparxis	Eternity	Space

(Reference: *The Dramatic Universe*, Vol. II. The Foundations of Moral Philosophy, J.G. Bennett, Hodder and Soughton, 1961, pps 42-65).

4. F. David Peat

Biographical Detail

A Quantum Physicist, he was born in Liverpool in 1938. His most famous book is *Synchronicity – The Bridge Between Matter and Mind*, Bantam Books, 1987.

A Definition of Synchronicity

Carl Jung was one of the first western psychotherapists to formulate a definition of synchronicity. Of course it was a concept well known to Chinese and Indian thought well before it gained currency in modern western thought.

“This concept formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality ... Synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, viz, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves, as well as with the subjective (psychic) state of the observer or observers.”

This statement originally appeared in Dr Jung's introduction to Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching*. I found it quoted on p. 43 of Chapter 26 'Synchronicity' of *The Dramatic Universe* by John G. Bennett.

Synchronicity as a Bridge

The central argument of F. David Peat is that synchronicity provides 'a bridge that spans the worlds of mind and matter, physics and psyche' (p. 2). Peat suggests 'that the time order of nature is in fact wider than suggested by Newton or Einstein. Time does not consist of a **single order of succession but of a whole spectrum of orders of which eternity and the mathematical order of succession, are but two particular aspects.** (p. 229).

Different Orders of Time and Consciousness

According to Peat, consciousness is not bound within any single one of the orders of time and is extremely sensitive to the **movement** of time. A person is only aware of movement not time. Synchronicities occur when creativity breaks through the barriers of the self and allows awareness to flood through the whole domain of consciousness. Synchronicity heralds the dawning of a greater reality where mind and matter are no longer different aspects of creation.