

HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS: BETWEEN SYNCHRONICITY AND CAUSALITY

Rico Sneller

Abstract: In this article I will make a case for the Jungian notion of ‘synchronicity’ as an adequate basis as from which to start interpreting consciousness. The prevailing causality principle might well be defective in doing justice to consciousness, and inevitably lead to the narrow materialistic and neurological accounts with which we are so familiar today. Rather than trying to locate the properly human in the complexity of neurological networks, I will suggest that the material ‘substrate’ of consciousness should be approached as arising from consciousness itself as its precondition. After a brief review of the predicaments of the causality principle in Western philosophy, I will claim that the notion of synchronicity is better equipped to do justice to the fullness of experience and phenomenality.

INTRODUCTION

“As strange or absurd as it may seem,” Waldo Vieira writes in his book *Projectiology*, “the extraphysical destination that your projected consciousness arrives at when it is lost, or that particular environment which is reached, is always somehow related (affinity or synchronicity) to you. Your consciousness is nevertheless unable to perceive the reasons or identify the connections that make you visit it in a lucid projection on that occasion. Nothing happens by chance. Synchronicity permeates our general self-thosenity [thosene = *thoughts, sentiments, energies*]. Every one of our cells has some kind of relationship with every other electron in the universe or cosmos.”¹ This passage expresses a belief that the world may manifest itself as an extension of consciousness, thereby challenging the established laws of time and space, and so, of the causality principle based on them.

In this article I will argue that an adequate approach of consciousness entails a reconsideration of causality as an omni-determinant principle. Being of decisive significance in the process of scientific explanation today, causality is not likely to be itself put into question. However, the principle might well be a major obstacle in interpreting some remarkable, ground-breaking phenomena, both on the level of individual experience, and on the level of the social, the micro-, and the macro-cosmological.

First, I will address an indispensable distinction that affects our understanding of consciousness, the distinction between *evolution* and *development*. With

¹ Waldo Vieira, *Projectiology. A Panorama of Experiences of the Consciousness outside the Human Body*, trans. Kevin & Simone de La Tour, Foz do Iguaçu, Editares, 2016, 663.

Carl du Prel, I will argue that evolutionism fails to do justice to the latter in accounting for the former, thereby enhancing its own implicit, *restrictive* axiom.

Next, I will introduce the Jungian concept of ‘synchronicity’ and distinguish it from analysis. I will briefly show how synchronicity entails a restructuring of the prevailing concept of causality. This restructuring has been prepared for in the history of Western philosophy, albeit that the Modern understanding of causality seems to have taken for granted a narrowing down of a preceding *multifaceted* conception. Yet, Hume’s thinking, which conceived of causality in terms of ‘constant conjunction’, deprived it of the burden of logic. Hence, alternative, broader accounts of change, such as accounts that allow for non-linear determination, became possible.

Finally, I will show that the idea of non-linear, acausal determination provides for a more adequate understanding of consciousness. Not only can individual experiences of remarkable ‘coincidences’ be better explained, but also world-historical (simultaneous discoveries), micro (morphogenesis) and macrocosmological (correspondences).

Although it would be contradictory, on my own premises, to *define* the concept of ‘consciousness’ (for, each definition is already an act of consciousness itself), I will nevertheless try to do this. My definition draws on the famous German philosopher Ludwig Klages (1872-1956), whose magnum opus *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (‘The Spirit as the Adversary of the Soul’) holds many precious, thought-provoking, yet still neglected resources for an adequate understanding of consciousness. In line with Klages, but without introducing his entire multifaceted approach of it, I would take consciousness to be a process of *contemplative mirroring*. This mirroring process, at least in Klages, comes down to a self-affection of life: in consciousness, life tastes itself.² Obviously, this definition asks for further conceptual clarification. What is it, for example, which is ‘mirrored’? What is ‘life’, and how can it ‘taste’ itself? Interesting though these questions undoubtedly are, they cannot be dealt with in this article without losing my focus: a reassessment of causality in light of deeper strands of determinacy.

1. EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Few people know that already during the 19th and well into the 20th Century, Darwinism, without being rejected, was nonetheless intelligently criticized for its one-sidedness and its materialistic implications. Based solely on the two *causal* principles of adaptation and mutation, so the critique went, Darwin’s doctrine of evolution failed to do justice to a more positive, *synchronistic* principle of organisation.

2 *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, Bonn, Bouvier Verlag, 1981 (1929-1932), Ch. 29 ‘Schauung und Spiegelung’. For life as self-tasting, also see Michel Henry, *l’Essence de la manifestation*, Paris, PUF, 2003 (1963).

The origin of this critique can be found in the philosophical descendants of Schelling and Schopenhauer. Thinkers like Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906), Gustav Fechner (1801-1887), Carl du Prel (1839-1899), Hans Driesch (1867-1941), Ludwig Klages (1872-1956), or Henri Bergson (1859-1941), even attempted to modestly reintroduce teleology or goal-orientedness in human nature, however differently. Obviously, they had to reinterpret consciousness for this attempt, and endow it with unconscious layers. In addition, they had to ‘resituate’ the prevailing causality principle – based on temporal consecution or consequence – in a wider field of *simultaneity* or *synchronicity*.

The ‘vitalistic’ critique these thinkers expressed confronted Darwinism with an implication of its most basic notion: ‘evolution.’ For, to be a real *evolution*, the process at stake must account for true *development*. Any evolution that does not *positively* enhance variety, i.e. account for the outcome of an equilibrated *form*, cannot rightfully be called ‘evolution.’³ By purely random ‘selection’, nothing really *develops*. What takes place is merely, in terms of the philosopher-biologist Hans Driesch, a ‘heaping up of materials’ (*Anhäufung des Materials*) or an ‘addition’, rather than an integrated assemblage or assignment (*Zuordnung*) of substances.

Subsequent developments in the theory of evolution tried to account for such critique. Think of the ‘modern synthesis’, brought about in the beginning of the 20th Century, between Darwin’s adaptation theory and Mendel’s theory of inheritance (R. Fisher, J.B.S. Haldane, S. Wright), or the ‘extended evolutionary synthesis’ (C.H. Waddington, M. Pigliucci). The latter is particularly interesting as it hesitatingly allows for forms of ‘non-material’ development enhancers (niche construction, evolvability, multilevel selection, epigenetic inheritance, etc.).

In lieu of outlining here the wide field of philosophical anti-Darwinism, let alone of the varieties of extended or mitigated evolutionism just mentioned, let us briefly and *pars pro toto* consider some points addressed by one of its most original representatives, Carl du Prel. Du Prel is an unjustly neglected thinker who can be seen as a bridge between Schopenhauer and Freud. His endeavours in elaborating on Schopenhauer’s intuitions about ‘exceptional experiences’ as *confirmation* of his metaphysics of will, consequent though they be, did not contribute to his ‘scientific’ reputation – for what it is worth. Du Prel held fascinating ideas, many of which are *implicitly* accepted, even by modern people; for example on the existence of a ‘transcendental consciousness’ beyond waking consciousness, only accessed in dreamless sleep except for some rare individuals (cf the renowned ‘seeress of Prevorst’) who have intermittent access.

3 Driesch calls an evolution based on chance or coincidence a mere *Scheinentwicklung*, cf. *Philosophie des Organischen* (1921). Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 561. Bergson argues in a similar way in his *l’Evolution créatrice*.

Du Prel takes advantage of evolutionism's *allusion* to development⁴, whether or not this allusion is acknowledged by its defenders. However, he claims that a full-blown theory of organic evolution ought to take seriously not only an evolution of the body, but also of the mind. Darwinism remains half-hearted by not genuinely taking into account forms of awareness that exceed habitual knowledge, such as unexplainable intuitions, prophetic flashes of insight or exceptional states of mind.⁵ Its chief orientation is retrospective (it looks back to *prior* 'causes'⁶), not prospective, Du Prel affirms.

Another critical point in Darwinism, according to Du Prel, is its wrongful dismissal of teleological explanation: "The opposite of teleology is chaos, not, however, regularity [*Gesetzmässigkeit*], which is rather fully teleological, and even more so in proportion to the completeness of mechanism."⁷ In causal explanations, constituents always prevail over wholes – in synchronistic accounts, the reverse is the case.

In line with this is Darwinism's problematic assumption of natural selection (adaptation and mutation) as the *sole* basis for species formation and morphogenesis (which are two distinct yet connected processes). Does not the foetus in the maternal womb develop without any struggle for its existence, and is not its morphogenesis still beyond the need for natural adaptation?⁸ Du Prel is addressing here the biological conundrum of morphogenesis which, despite being undeniably impacted by environmental adaptation and genetic mutation, cannot be reduced to these factors; a positive inner drive, steering embryonic development toward uniformity and equilibrium, must be acknowledged.

Darwinism is somehow right, Du Prel continues his argument, in supposing a correlation (not to be confused, though, with causality) between the increase of human consciousness on the one hand, and its organic substructure, on the other. How would the ongoing complexity of the brain not allow for an amplification of human sensation and sensitivity? "[A]n increase in these mystical aptitudes [*Anlagen*] can only be achieved by a biological altering of the human life form or of its brain, i.e., one by means of which the threshold of sensation is once more

4 "Der Materialismus hat sich des Darwinismus zur Stütze seiner Thesen bemächtigt; es wird sich aber zeigen, dass die Entwicklungstheorie keine Stütze, sondern die Überwinderin des Materialismus ist." *Philosophie der Mystik* (1885). Leipzig: Günther, 380.

5 „keimartige Anlagen die in uns schlummern und gelegentlich zur Äusserung kommen“; these „deuten prophetisch auf die Zukunft“, ib., 382.

6 Which is a pleonasm.

7 Ib., 409. Author's translation. Also cf: "dass die organisierende Seele auch in ihrer Haupttätigkeit, in der Bildung und Erhaltung des Organismus, eine zwecksetzende sein muss. Wenn das Gehirn in seinen Funktionen Zwecke setzt, so muss es auch selbst als Organ teleologisch entstanden sein." *Die monistische Seelenlehre. Ein Beitrag zur Lösung des Menschenrätsels* (1888). Leipzig: Günther, 125.

8 *Die monistische Seelenlehre. Ein Beitrag zur Lösung des Menschenrätsels*, 94. One could say that the embryo to some extent draws on its mother's nutritional affluence; still, as opposed to e.g. a carcinoma, it depends upon the continued affluence of resources and on mutual thriving.

shifted in the sense of in increased susceptibility to sensation [*gesteigerte Empfindungsfähigkeit*].”⁹

Interestingly, this view was already voiced by the 18th Century French thinker Condillac¹⁰, albeit on fully different (i.e. empiricist-sensualistic) premises. It will be repeated by contemporary anthropologists and neurologists.¹¹ Du Prel concludes that “the mystical phenomena of psychic life are anticipations to the biological process; therefore, an intimate connection between Darwinism and transcendental psychology exists.”¹²

2. SYNCHRONICITY AND ANALYSIS

If, despite its claims to do so, Darwinism fails to give an exhaustive picture of evolution, its general account of life and, more in particular, of consciousness, may be defective as well. The development of consciousness as a life-determining characteristic (see my definition) may not be random, or an arbitrary upshot of fitting, survival-promoting properties. Instead, it may well come down to the ‘first’ *synchronicity*. If it does, this would confirm my definition of consciousness as a ‘contemplative mirroring of life’. Consciousness, then, would be left unexplained; however, the very act of ‘explanation’, in virtue of it being reliant on causality, temporal succession, or temporal consecution, might turn out to be a *derivative* (instead of a primordial) undertaking.

The term ‘synchronicity’ was coined by C.G. Jung and referred to an apparently coincidental yet meaningfully correlated chain of events. We have seen that it is at least questionable if evolutionism can positively account for *development*. The notion of ‘development’ requires form-building, morpho-genesis, ‘outcome’, rather than ‘upshot’. It is the aim here to show that the idea of ‘synchronicity’ is indispensable to further corroborate a reliable anthropology that remains relatively invulnerable to preposterous technological claims – for synchronicity reveals a dimension of human life that transcends the impact of technological enhancement. It does so in principle inasmuch as the nature of this dimension is synthetic rather than analytic.

We will argue that any scientific inquiry into the anthropological impact of human enhancement necessarily misses the mark. It starts at the wrong end.

9 *Philosophie der Mystik*, 389. Author’s translation.

10 Condillac, “Tous les phénomènes de la mémoire dépendent des habitudes contractées par les parties mobiles & flexibles du cerveau ; & tous les mouvements dont ces parties sont susceptibles, sont liés les uns aux autres, comme toutes les idées qu’ils rappellent sont liées entre elles. » *La logique, ou, les premiers développement de l’art de penser* I, 9.

11 Cf. P. Shaw etc. who “demonstrate[s] that the trajectory of change in the thickness of the cerebral cortex, rather than cortical thickness itself, is most closely related to level of intelligence.” *Nature* 440, 2006, no. 7084, 676.

12 Du Prel, *Philosophie der Mystik*, 390; also cf 402. Also cf Waldo Vieira, updated trans. Jeffrey Lloyd, *Our Evolution*, Foz do Iguaçu, Editares, 2016, passim.

Therefore, it is blind to an implicit assumption: the unquestionable character of ‘analysis’. Another word for ‘analysis’ is ‘reduction’. As long as this assumption is ignored, discussions about human nature will continue to struggle over the latest technological development’s implications for mankind. It is one of my key suppositions that human consciousness is somehow related to ‘synchronicity’. The experience of synchronistic events defies causality inasmuch as such events represent a meaningful, albeit *acausal* constellation witnessed in amazement by a subject: independent causal chains unexpectedly meet and create a telling, though not always intelligible whole without a common cause. It is my claim that what is called *homo sapiens* is susceptible to synchronistic events. Should this claim be true, then this would not merely be a minor issue. On the contrary, it would affect the entire way in which this *homo sapiens* conceptualizes and is conceptualized, i.e. it would affect both his knowledge and its content. It would even affect *science* and *scientific* approaches of the *homo sapiens* (i.e. as a ‘hominid’ endowed with ‘understanding’/*sapientia*). For, if science obeys to a logic of causality (however this causality is conceived, as necessitarian or as probabilistic), it is likely to overlook what is or might be non-causal and yet decisive.

Admittedly, not *each* science or scientific paradigm is governed by the causality principle. We should make an exception at least for 1) parapsychology or psychical research, 2) quantum mechanics, and 3) the theory of relativity. Often a distinction is made between the meso-level, on which causality is made to apply, and the micro- and macro-levels, where it does not apply. Making this distinction between levels of application, however, does not really seem to ontologically corroborate causality. It suffers from a cumbersome form of anthropocentrism.

We will now take a glance at the notion of causality itself, its extent and its limitations.

3. CAUSALITY AT STAKE

3.1. Causal plurality

The concept (or rather: conceptualization) of causality is by far too complex to be discussed exhaustively. Let us for the moment equate the notion of causality with a ‘justified account of change’. This is at least how Aristotle started sorting out four different types of such an account in his *Physics* II.3: a material (τὸ ἐξ οὗ γίνεται¹³), a formal (τὸ εἶδος, τὸ παράδειγμα, ὁ τοῦ τί ἦν εἶναι¹⁴), a final (τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα¹⁵) and an efficient (ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ πρῶτη¹⁶) account. Note

13 *Ta ex hou ginetai.*

14 *To eidos, to paradeigma, ho tou ti en einai.*

15 *To hou heneka.*

16 *Hè archè tès metabolès hè protè.*

that Aristotle's language here is somewhat descriptive, if not allusive, rather than technical (as in scholastic thinking).

Modern science tried to eliminate the formal and the final cause as meaningful and cogent justifications of change, and restricted itself to the sole material and efficient ones (thereby narrowing down both the concept of 'cause' and that of 'explanation' to the latter).¹⁷ Philosophy, however, underwent an opposite development. Oddly enough, causal pluralism or teleology – and *therewith* what is called here 'synchronicity'¹⁸ – has been reintroduced by several thinkers. Let us consider a few cases.

One of the most profound examples of reintroduced teleology is without doubt Hegel's philosophy, which was centred around the *Geist* as history's ultimate *telos*. The same applies to any post-Hegelian philosophical future-orientedness, whether Marxist or liberal capitalist as defended by Francis Fukuyama.

The hermeneutical projects of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) consisted of preserving teleology and finality for the humanities.¹⁹ The *Geisteswissenschaften*, according to Dilthey, are 'hermeneutical': they study meaning (*Sinn*). 'Meaning', as the epochal mindset out of which human artefacts arose (Dilthey), or as the looming horizon unfolded by texts, does not *cause* a human artefact or a text, but draws them towards itself. Science, on the contrary, searches for causal explanations.

Another example of reintroduced teleology can be found in 19th Century thinkers of the unconscious. Eduard von Hartmann and Carl du Prel interpreted the unconscious as a leading principle in human physical or spiritual maturation, thereby also relying on teleology, albeit one that cannot be dialectically mastered (as in Hegel). One of the most astounding examples of an uncontrollable yet verifiable goal-orientedness in human agency could be identified in what Wilhelm Wundt, Germany's first psychologist, had called 'heterogony of ends' (*Heterogonie der Zwecke*): while acting on purpose, the agent 'develops' new, albeit unforeseen, ends. Discoveries enhance invention. Carl du Prel states that sometimes human artefacts, while presupposing intelligent reasoning, display properties that cannot be accounted for on the sole basis of intention.²⁰ Today, we could perhaps think of the internet as a major example; originally invented for military purposes, it is now used for ends that could not be anticipated *consciously*.

17 Cf. among many other studies Louis Dupré, *A Passage to Modernity. An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (1993). New Haven & London: YUP.

18 If synchronicity will be called 'acausal' henceforth, what is meant is that it is not determined by *efficient* causality, but rather by causal plurality – which may entail teleology.

19 "Die Natur erklären wir, das Seelenleben verstehen wir."

20 Carl du Prel, *Die monistische Seelenlehre: Ein Beitrag zur Lösung des Menschenrätsels*, 75f.

Fourthly, vitalism or *Lebensphilosophie* supplemented efficient causality with forms of finality. Hans Driesch, for example, reinstated the time-honoured Aristotelian notion of ‘entelechy’ as a steering morphogenetic principle, while Ludwig Klages passionately defended *Urbilder* (original images) as original syntheses governing any organism’s basic drives by eliciting them, rather than producing them.

Finally, let us not forget to mention what is called today ‘transpersonal psychology’ – an approach to the human psyche that is largely indebted to Jung, and that tries to do justice to future-orienting concepts such as maturing or self-elongation.

These examples of teleology’s re-appreciation may be said to also allow for synchronicity experiences. Each of the thinkers mentioned here tries to overcome, if not ignore, causality. Concerned with the fullness of phenomena, they favour pull over push. If 20th Century philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), criticizing Dilthey’s bifurcation of ‘sciences’ and ‘humanities’, tries to reunite causal explanation and understanding, at least for the humanities, this *also* shows a felt need to do full justice to phenomena and bring the best of both worlds together. The fact that the Anglophone world has familiarised itself with a sharp distinction between ‘science’ (note the singular!) and the ‘humanities’ is of deplorable significance: what starts as mere nomenclature imperceptibly continues by imposing its own normativity. As if the ‘humanities’ were not ‘scientific’, or worse, as if they cannot bring true knowledge (*scientia*, *scire*). On the other hand, science pretends to control change only in *virtue* of its previous reductionist account. The experiments it justifies this account with *presuppose* the reduction that enables experimental research itself, thereby closing the vicious circle.

3.2. Necessity, probability, and construction

Next to the reduction of ‘causality’ into a relatively comprehensible (since disambiguated) process, we need to highlight another development. David Hume unmasked what was hitherto seen as a *necessary* relation by showing that causality merely comes down to frequent accompaniment. According to Hume, Aristotle and his successors had mistakenly identified causal relations with logical ones. However, Hume tried to show that, whereas logical relations are cogent, empirical relations never are. Two events frequently going together, however sure I may be of their future conjunction, are never equal to two premises forcing the outcome of a syllogism.²¹

What is at stake here is more than a modern philosopher’s critical refutation of an ancient philosopher’s presumed philosophical error. On a deeper level,

21 Cf. e.g. G. Heymans, *Schets eener kritische geschiedenis van het causaliteitsbegrip in de nieuwere Wijsbegeerte* (1890). Leiden: Brill, 112-174. Also cf. Carl du Prel: “Die Unbegreiflichkeit einer Erscheinung besagt nur, dass sie gegen unsere Erfahrungsgewohnheit ist; Unmöglichkeit aber besagt sie durchaus nicht.” *Die monistische Seelenlehre: Ein Beitrag zur Lösung des Menschenrätsels*, 32.

Ancient and Modern philosophy tend to disagree on the relation between Being and Thinking at large. While Aristotle implicitly followed Parmenides' devise that "thinking and being are the same", Hume insisted on disentangling thinking from being (i.e. 'experience'). Classical (Humean) empiricism, which had offered the main philosophical arguments justifying modern science of nature, minimizes the role of the subject of perception in favour of 'unprejudiced' perception itself.²² Remarkably, though, Modern science's assumption of 'laws of nature' still cannot do justice to Hume's contention about the absence of necessity in perception. Nature knows of no law. Only man does, but *his* problem is to bring law and nature together in a stable connection.²³ For if we realize that "A must bring about B" is tantamount merely to "Due to their constant conjunction, we are psychologically certain that B will follow A", we are left with a very weak notion of necessity, let alone of law.

At any rate for those who prioritize necessity over chance or coincidence, Hume's account leads to scepticism, or at best to probabilism. Kant's subsequent localisation of necessity in transcendental consciousness may have settled the issue for some, such as Schopenhauer. Causality, Schopenhauer insisted, cogent though it may be, remains a product of the mind and is solely restricted to the world of appearances (which is in itself illusory). Pure will being the only ultimate reality, causal representation is fuelled by it. Therefore, causal necessity is a *mode* of representation rather than a final ontological structure. Modern-day theorists, such as the 20th Century epistemologist Fred Dretske, avoid transcending (rational) consciousness while maintaining an ontological link between thinking and being. Dretske's 'necessitarian' position as regards laws of nature requires "an ontological ascent" beyond the mere (probabilistic) "universal truths".²⁴ On the other hand, contemporary Humeans such as David Lewis remain sceptical and do not want to give these "universal truths" any ontological credit. Inasmuch as Kantian philosophy turned into Idealism, the ways between it and (what would henceforth be called) 'science' increasingly parted, most notably in the period following Hegel. Regrettably, since any invigoration of empiricism will always be proportionate to self-imposed conceptual blindness. 20th Century phenomenology tried to provide a remedy here and bridge the gap between thinking (i.e. Idealism, or philosophy) and being (i.e. science, perception, experience). Phenomenology did not, however, gain the upper hand, not even in philosophy, let alone in science. Perhaps the fascinating notion of 'paralaw' offers a solution here. It was suggested by Adriana de Lacerda Rocha in a comparative approach of the notions

22 Cf. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. Making of Modern Identity* (1992). Harvard: Harvard University Press.

23 See for this Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (1929-31). Bonn: Bouvier, IV. Buch: 'Die Lehre vom Willen', Chs. 41-43.

24 Fred I. Dretske, 'Laws of Nature', in: *Philosophy of Science* Vol. 44, No. 2 (Jun., 1977), 267.

of natural and moral law. “Paralaw”, Rocha claims, “is the ‘extraphysical law’ also applied to consciousness that have deactivated their soma (discarded the body) and to the projected consciousness as well.”²⁵ ‘Paralaw’ is a notion purportedly connecting ‘extra’-mental events and their conscious perception.

4. SYNCHRONICITY AND ‘ACAUSALITY’

4.1. Individual and social level

Whether or not in its necessitarian form, causality dominates the scientific scene and its conceptual jargon, with terms such as ‘proof’, ‘evidence’, ‘argument’, ‘explanation’, ‘confirmation’, ‘test’, ‘repetition’, etc. There is, however, an alternative to causality: synchronicity. Although the term comes from Jung, the idea itself, or rather, the *experience*, seems perennial, both on the individual level and on the level of society.

Individual examples are numerous, but it would be useless to relate them; it would lead to endless, hardly convincing casuistry. One could imagine, though, dreaming about a person one has not seen for a while at the *very* moment she sends you an e-mail – such scenario occurred to the author of this article. An example given by Jung is too well known to be listed here. It regards a scarab flying into his study at the very moment that a patient tells him about her dream of a scarab; this dream enhanced her healing process, which had up till then stagnated. In general, according to Jung, any form of mantic wisdom, precognition, clairvoyance, augurism, etc. (sometimes called ‘paranormal’ or ‘exceptional experiences’) could be said to be a case of synchronicity, i.e. of an ‘*acausal*’ connection between *vision* and *event* (in the sense of not determined by *efficient* causality).

Examples of synchronicity on a social or even global level are perhaps less ambiguous for modern, sceptical readers (though never undebatable).

One could think here of a global simultaneity of several ground-breaking inventions (e.g. of the wheel, fire, agriculture, the infinitesimal calculus). One could also think of the simultaneous introduction of a new science and its concomitant name (cf the coinciding inventions of ‘biology’, or of ‘psychology’, originating in the late 18th and the 19th Centuries).

A second example of synchronicity on a global scale would be the simultaneous rise of the future world religions and global worldviews in what Jaspers called the axial age (*Achsenzeit*). Buddha, Confucius, Lao-ze, the Jewish prophets, and Socrates lived and worked in a time span roughly between 600 and 300 BCE.

Thirdly, it was Michel Foucault who detected several remarkable socio-philosophical synchronicities characterizing historical epochs. One of the most significant examples Foucault discovered regarded the altering ways of societal strategies

25 Adriana de Lacerda Rocha, ‘Paralaw: Antonym of Natural Law’, in: *Interparadigmas. A Revista de Doutores da Conscienciologia* 2, 2, 2014, 162.

to deal with insanity exactly at the time that Descartes demarcated the rational from the irrational: instead of being allowed to linger around in town centres, madmen and lunatics were closed up in strictly supervised mental asylums and hospitals.²⁶

Next, on a microscopic level, one could think of the biological phenomenon of morphogenesis, i.e. the embryonic development towards a uniform organism. Despite contemporary scientific biology's rejection, or at best, neglect of famous (and daring) morphogenetic theorists, such as Hans Driesch and Rupert Sheldrake (1942), the problem of morphogenesis is still unresolved (and is likely to remain unresolved within the predominant causal parameters).

Finally, even though their scientific reputation has become debated, disciplines such as physiognomy, graphology, and *Gestalt* psychology, can very well be interpreted as forms of synchronicity awareness.

In sum, synchronicity experiences regard a coalescence, a production of unity or uniformity, without there being any identifiable maker or originator. This 'production' ought to be taken as subject-less, as a *pure* event, as an in-convenient event without a convener, i.e. without a subject or an agent. For, should such an originator be identified (which cannot be theoretically excluded, obviously), then: 1) synchronicity would be unmasked, and 2) linear causality restored, and also 3) the synchronic event's meaningfulness damaged. Provided, that is, that the *imposition* of 'meaning' on a subject by a hidden agent ('God', an unknown 'natural law', etc.) be less 'meaningful' – if at all – than a *freely* discovered, self-revelatory meaning. The 'meaningfulness' of some state of affairs or event is indeed reduced by any secret agency or intentions 'behind the screen'. Instead, one might argue that meaning only becomes significant by virtue of its *independent discovery*. For, does not the concept of 'meaning' *imply* an irreducible reference to a *subject experiencing it*? The significance of meaning, we would like to suggest, is in proportion to the becoming-transparent or – translucent of some event. 'Meaning', then, is identical to any *experience* of a revelation without a revealer. If a revealer reveals himself, meaning gets lost (*unless* revealer and revelation *coincide*). *Imposed* meanings are meaningless.

'Synchronicity' comes down to the experience of a *meaningful coincidence*, a concurrence of events without any common, clearly identifiable cause. It is as though a synchronicity experience displays a *cross-cut* of time and space, connecting independent causal chains in an acausal yet meaningful way. Causal explanations seem impossible, since the event apparently obeys to another logic. To the extent that scientific rhetoric is conditioned by causality, any meaningful account of a synchronicity experience challenging causality is excluded at the outset.

26 Cf Karl Joël on the simultaneous rise of ancient Greek natural philosophy on the one hand and of lyrical poetry on the other. Cf. *Ursprung der Naturphilosophie aus dem Geiste der Mystik* (1906). Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 38. Also cf Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, 912.

20th Century physician David Bohm's notion of an "implicate order" *beyond* the "explicate", spatio-temporal order might be conducive to a viable approach of synchronicity experiences; provided, that is, that such an implicate order be seen as existing *next to* the spatio-temporal order, rather than in opposition to it. From the perspective of the explicate order, it cannot but manifest itself as pure coincidence. If it be granted that 'physical reality' relies upon causality (and thereby on a principle of *repeatability*), it can hardly be denied that it is intrinsically meaningless, as it is somehow within human control. Synchronicity, on the other hand, is always coincidental, as it only takes place *once* (i.e. *as* a synchronicity). Being always out of human control, it meets a crucial condition for its potential meaningfulness (albeit that it will not always be immediately understood).

4.2. The 'subject' of synchronicity experience

There is another reason why science cannot cope with synchronicity experiences. Like it is not enough that they transcend 'ordinary' causality, such experiences affect the subject and its habitual observational stance. They *reflect* a subject's *state of mind* and exclude any objecti-*fication*. Interestingly, it is frequently stated that people with an altered state of consciousness – e.g. when in mourning, or in a mental or spiritual crisis etc. – are more susceptible to synchronistic events than others. While medieval thinkers such as Avicenna and Albertus Magnus already testify to this remarkable fact, philosophers as different as Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, Gabriel Marcel or Jacques Derrida even report it.²⁷

How to justify teleology, or even synchronicity, in the age of science and causality? Obviously, the aforementioned philosophical attempts to preserve teleology could not remain unaffected by mainstream scientific 'causal' thinking. More than Aristotle ever has been, this renewed teleology was exposed to the critical question as to how this purported 'teleological' structure or pattern could be accessed at all. It would be superficial to claim that each single philosopher dealt with this question in a satisfactory way. However, there is one belief that they all shared: the subject position itself must be altered in order to become susceptible to this 'widened' causality. For Hegel it is very clear that *Verstand* (intelligence) is limited and that it is in need of *Vernunft* to overcome its own limits. The theorists of the unconscious (Von Hartmann, Du Prel etc.) explicitly take into account an alternative, deepened form of consciousness from which to assess inner and outer processes. Klages expressly defended ecstasy as a breaking of the Ego shell preventing one to access the tendency of our inner drives. Driesch stayed as long as possible on the observational level to address organic 'entelechy'; realising, however, that this would only bring him indirect evidence, he finally referred to inner experience or self-awareness to complete his argument with *direct* evidence.

²⁷ Cf Hans Gerding, Hein van Dongen & Rico Sneller, *Wild Beasts of the Philosophical Desert. Philosophers on Telepathy and Other Exceptional Experiences* (2014). Cambridge Publishing.

Beyond the ‘usual’ altered states of consciousness that somehow belong to the human condition, some people seem to be almost continuously affected by them. We are referring here to the *genius*. The genius mind started to fascinate philosophers especially since the Romantic period.²⁸ Schelling and Schopenhauer considered it to be the most poignant form of humanity as such. The genius represents human enhancement more than any artificial form of intelligence, more than any technological extension of the body could ever bring about. According to Schopenhauer, the genius is capable of looking beyond the principle of sufficient reason – which is more or less identical to causality. Endowed with phantasy, they can look *through* or *beyond* immediate perception without, however, losing it out of sight.²⁹ Are geniuses susceptible, or perhaps even liable, to synchronicity experiences? Rather than elaborating on our hypothesis that such a susceptibility and liability *determines* the genius mind, let us, for reasons of space and time, point at a few examples.

We could think of great painters’ sensitivity to colour reflection (Monet, Cézanne) or of photographers’ ability to capture the right moment. Philosophers and theorists frequently see cross-cultural patterns, however different the distinct fields on which they appear (Foucault, Benjamin). Poets align euphonic sets of words while composers offer melodious and harmonious arrays in their musical *com*-positions. Visionary politicians read the signs of the time and try to act accordingly (Solon, Lincoln, Mandela). The founders of psychoanalysis (Freud, Jung) were extremely aware of almost imperceptible links between gestures, sounds and images; in his famous case study of the so-called Ratman, *der Rattenmann*, Freud discovers that the *rat* his patient was so obsessed with primarily had to be taken as a dense *verbal knot* combining several significant, yet unconscious anxieties and concerns of this patient. On a side-note, it is interesting to realise that not only was Freud sensitive to the merely *verbal* nature of the patient’s rat anxiety, but also the patient’s own unconscious! For precisely *due* to this unconscious awareness, the Ratman could develop his obsessional neurosis. How could one not to complete the obvious syllogism here by stating that the genius mind is in constant communication with his unconscious?

It is of note that, even less than exceptional states of consciousness (however *human* they be), the genius mind is hardly (if at all) referred to in anthropological

28 Cf Ludwig Klages: “Die Ursachenforschung mit – teilweise wenigstens – bewusster Folgerichtigkeit durch das Denken in Analogien ersetzend [...], eröffnen die Romantiker den Sinn des Geschehens, indem sie mit *einem* Blick zumal umfassen: räumlich das mütterliche Ei und die Ellipsenbahn der Planeten, zeitlich [...] die Bildungsstufen des Erdplaneten und die seiner Sonderwesen. Und davon wieder einer wichtigste Folge ist die gewaltige Schwungkraft, die dadurch *dem* Gedanken erteilt wird, mit dem sie das *Wesen* der Polarität – gewiss nicht zum erstenmal überhaupt, aber zum erstenmal in makrokosmischer Fassung – zu kennzeichnen unternahmen durch Deutung der Spannungsursache als elementarischer Liebe.“ *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, 897.

29 “daher der Genius der Phantasie bedarf, um in den Dingen nicht Das zu sehn, was die Natur wirklich gebildet hat, sondern was sie zu bilden sich bemühte”, Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* §36, 267.

discussions on human nature. Neurologists or socio-biologists tend to focus on quantity and extent (geniality as the presence of a more extensive neurological network), rather than on quality and discontinuity (geniality as a switch in mode of consciousness). Therefore, it is unlikely that a genius' susceptibility to synchronicities will convince the average scientist of causality's limitations.

4.3. Micro- and macrocosm

If the boundaries of the subject of synchronicity experiences loosen, this will have two implications. First, inasmuch as the subject is a *subject*, its concatenated system of identificatory and causal relations is impervious to elements that could still be real; this non-permeability is constitutive for the nature of subjectivity. Consequently, any 'science' that does not put causality into question distorts reality. Second, should a perceiving subject be *affected* by experience, i.e. in the depth structure of subjectivity itself, subject and object become permeable for each other. They cannot be fully distinguished anymore. Depending on their average disposition, the person confronted with a synchronistic experience may initially believe he goes mad. It seems as though the outside world has become malleable and has started *reflecting* inner states of mind. It is as if dimensions in a macro-cosmos mirror micro-cosmic sensitivities.

Strange though it seems to a modern rational person, this mirroring is not so peculiar if we realize that the modern rational subject itself is a product, not a fact of nature. In his ground-breaking work *Sources of the Self*, Charles Taylor has shown that modern subjectivity, whether in its rational or its empirical form, is the historical result of 'disengagement', i.e. of a self-imposed withdrawal from the outside world. The empiricist philosopher John Locke, according to Taylor, presupposes a "punctual self" as a subject of perception, whereas Descartes takes "disengaged reason" as a starting point.³⁰ Even they who believe this disengagement to be necessary or inevitable can easily see that it essentially *excludes* conscious contents. Kant, refilling the emptied Cartesian and Lockean consciousness with content (i.e. the forms of sensation and the categories of thinking), did not necessarily challenge 'disengaged reason'; its content, he claimed, was merely transcendental and implicit. With Hegel, consciousness and environment started interacting again, albeit in an essentially intelligible way, supposedly under dialectical control. Hegelian thinking is rife with synchronicity; however, it is highly doubtful, if this pretention of dialectical control deepened its understanding of synchronicity.

We cannot give an exhaustive picture here of the itinerary of consciousness throughout Western culture. Rather, let us briefly highlight some examples that equally suggest a correlation between inner and outer world, and that likewise

³⁰ Cf. Taylor, op. cit., 143ff.

emphasise the need to give up prevailing forms of subjectivity in order to access such correlations.

Firstly, the French classical scholar Pierre Hadot has emphasised a typical feature of ancient philosophy that is frequently ignored. Philosophy required, Hadot states, technologies of self-cultivation as an adequate preparation for the acquisition of philosophical insight. It would be wrong and fully anachronistic to attribute to e.g. Stoic thinkers a ‘primitive’ cosmology that has been ‘corrected’ by modern science. The Stoic cosmology cannot be objectified since it only becomes intelligible to those “living in conformity with nature”.³¹ Michel Foucault, equally critical of the modern subject, its presuppositions and its usurpations, drew on Hadot’s interpretations when developing his own late philosophy under the header ‘technologies of the self’.³²

Our second example of an awareness of micro- and macrocosm correspondence would definitely lead us astray if we did not limit ourselves to one single quote. It regards the significance attributed to meditation in the majority of Eastern philosophies. The Japanese philosopher Yuasa Yasuo (1925-2005) writes:

“meditation signifies the method of knowing the world with the mind-body theory as its foundation. Accordingly, in the stance that understands the ontological state of thing-events in the world in light of the subject’s inner experience, there is something comparable to the thought of ancient India that thinks of the correlative relationship between human beings and the cosmos on the basis of the *mandala*.”³³

Even Karl Jaspers, in his famous *Philosophie der Weltanschauungen*, had identified ‘self-reflective mind-sets’ (*selbstreflektierte Einstellungen*), in distinction from ‘objectifying’ (*gegenständliche*) and ‘enthusiast’ (*enthusiastische*) mind-sets. Whereas the scientific position is characterised by an objectifying stance that takes the outward world simply for granted, many Eastern traditions focus on the self and the way it relates to the world.

Our third example has been mentioned several times already: Jung’s account of the psyche. Though Jung was definitely a psychiatrist, his views did have cosmological implications. Jung addressed an issue the impact of which on consciousness cannot be underestimated: maturation. Psychological maturation processes, he said, may reproduce the outer world as an extension of the mind. External events start reflecting, or correspond to, what is going on inside.

31 cf Pierre Hadot, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie antique?* (1995). Paris: Gallimard.

32 Michel Foucault, ‘Technologies of the Self’, in Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (eds.) *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (1988). Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 16-49. Also cf Heidegger on the Aristotelian cosmology.

33 Yuasa Yasuo, *Overcoming Modernity. Synchronicity and Image-Thinking* (2008). Albany: SUNY Press.

These examples of ancient philosophy, Asian strands of thinking, and of a (Jungian) maturation process obviously do not ‘prove’ any micro-/macrocosm correspondence; they merely back up its presuppositions from a cross-cultural and historical perspective. According to Jung, an “understanding of synchronicity is the key which unlocks door to an Eastern apperception of totality”.³⁴ Should it be, as is our claim here, that synchronicity awareness is not limited to Eastern thinking, then there will be more connections between ‘East’ and ‘West’ than is often assumed. No anthropology could remain unaffected by such affinities.

5. EVIDENCE?

How to corroborate the reliability of synchronicity experiences? Obviously, it would be useless to get enmeshed in discussing casuistry here. Let us instead consider some general requirements that *condition* any meaningful discussion on our subject. To neglect them would equally obfuscate anthropological theory at large.

There are at least three prerequisites for an adequate philosophical underpinning of synchronicity.

The first one entails a scrupulous analysis of consciousness. It is not without reason that immediately after Kant’s analysis of ‘transcendental’ consciousness, Hegel initiates a *phenomenology* of the spirit. 20th Century philosophy maintained this term (cf Husserl etc.), as if any ‘transcendental’ approach of consciousness consisted of an illicit entrenchment and a foreclosure. Whereas Hegel deduces causality, Husserl, greatly indebted to Hume in this respect, induces it. Once Husserl’s disciples (Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, Henry, etc.) start loosening the bonds of intentional consciousness, causality cannot but fall prey to this move. Phenomenology consistently performed erodes causality away. Husserl’s philosophical offspring uncovered phenomenology’s remaining flaw: its over-theoretical nature. As of Heidegger, phenomenological thinkers reduced the weight of intentionality and gave priority to what *precedes* it – be it, as in Heidegger, the mood (*Stimmung*), or, as in Levinas, the otherness of the other (*l’autre*).

A second prerequisite when trying to find supportive evidence for synchronicity would imply a scrupulous analysis of nature – provided, that is, that the *concept* of ‘nature’ itself might be in need of reconsideration. Drawing on the aforementioned micro-macrocosm correspondence, one might argue with Jung that nature is ‘psychoid’ in kind, i.e. in conformity to patterns of the psyche/consciousness. Jung’s ‘archetypes’ or Klages’ *Urbilder* are psychoid, they are intrinsically, ontologically *linked* to the psyche. An implication of reconceiving nature as psychoid would be that consciousness is not a *mere* product of nature or evolution, but that it is an *original* phenomenon. Cf. Yuasa on Jung:

³⁴ Quoted by Yuasa, 97. Also cf. *Zhuang-ze*: “Meaning [dao] becomes obfuscated once we focus on small, accomplished pictures of existence.”

“by using a new concept ‘psychoid’ [...], Jung attempted to incorporate material activity into the realm of the unconscious. In other words, the sharp demarcation between the physical and the psychological is a consequence of the conscious intellectual judgment and does not mean that nature itself contains such a distinction. Nature that is purely material or physical, which scientific cognition grasps, is a consequence of observation and measurement based on definite presuppositions and methods.”

“To view the essence of nature as psychoid in this manner [...] is to grasp space as the field of unconscious activity that is universal transcending the individual. [...] In other words, space as a whole is imbued with a psychoid nature. When we assume such a standpoint, we can say that the synchronistic experience shows us a ‘face’ of nature prior to the distinction between mind and matter.”³⁵ (Yuasa, 119)

In other words, there is no reason necessitating us to set consciousness apart and to restrict it to conscious *individuals* supposedly *controlling* their consciousness. Nature ‘itself’ (can we still say ‘nature *itself*?’) shows signs of ‘consciousness’ (can we still speak of ‘*consciousness*?’). If so, consciousness as such can neither be defined, nor exhausted by individuals (unless by those who *appropriate* consciousness from the outset). It should be noted that the idea of consciousness as *trans*-individual is not new in itself. It is shared by Antiquity, neo-Platonism, medieval doctrines of *intellectus agens* and *possibilis*, Spinoza, Schelling, Hegel, Von Hartmann, Klages, Jung, Derrida, and many others.

A third precondition for evidencing synchronicity would be a complete review of the *nature of language*. For, does not language both *allow* for thinking and *hamper* it, or at least, does it not *aggravate* thinking differently, and, thereby, allow for a variety of equally sustainable worldviews? More in general, rather than as a tool at the service of an intellectualized mind, may not language be better approached as an *atmosphere* in which the mind originally becomes conscious (of itself, of the world, etc.)? Before hastily concluding that such an approach would be artificially over-asking the potentials of language, let us not forget that as of the late 18th Century and onwards, an entirely new perspective on language and its ontological impact was born. J.G. Hamann (1730-1788) was the first to attribute *revelatory* assets to language, echoes of which can still be heard in the philosophies of Walter Benjamin, Heidegger and Ricoeur.

But still, the *structure* of languages, its syntax and grammar, may also negatively determine them. Nietzsche argued that the Indo-Germanic subject/predicate structure of sentence building, in connection to the ambiguous verb *einai* (“being”, i.e. both as a copula and in the sense of ‘to exist’), predisposed their speakers to believe that there actually *are* ‘substances’ endowed with ‘properties’; even more,

³⁵ Yuasa, 119.

that 'being itself' exists. The assumed 'existence' of single and separate substances may have precipitated *noun*, and ultimately *concept*, formation. The Platonic 'ideas' and the Aristotelian 'forms' cannot fail to come up under such circumstances, soon accompanied by a 'logic' compensating for the ensuing alienation between (conceptualised) language and experience; logic's task being to offer 'syntactic' guidelines whose essence is the demarcation of concepts' connotational and denotational field ('semantics'). Here, we are following the extremely interesting views developed by Yuasa Yasuo. Yuasa suggested that a wholly different, 'semiotic' language such as Chinese, using a vocabulary without predefined verbal functions, inevitably remains closer to immediate experience and is therefore less in need of any 'logic' to correct 'syntactic' errors.³⁶ As a matter of fact, the Chinese tradition almost 'lacks' a full-blown logic, as was developed in both Greek and Indian philosophies. Need we be surprised that according to both Jung and Yuasa, Chinese philosophy (esp. the Daoist tradition) is far more susceptible to synchronicity experience?

Obviously, this does not on the rebound exempt 'Greek' from being philosophically adequate. For, should synchronicity make sense, it will not fail to manifest itself, both in language and in thinking. We have already seen many examples of philosophical critiques of causal thinking, and of a sensitivity to synchronistic patterns. The basic structure of (Indo-Germanic) language, however, seems less flexible. Nevertheless, it could be argued that (what is called) 'literature' and 'poetry' arise in proportion to a (subconsciously) experienced lack of the prevailing discourse to adequately account for the fullness and the variety of experience, as if to compensate for this discourse's concomitant linguistic impoverishment.

The literary and the poetic could very well be a case in point of synchronicity experiences. It is our hypothesis that the synchronicities of which literature (cf its plot) and poetry (cf rime, meter, assonance, alliteration, rhythm) tend to abound, reflect patterns of experience which are often reduced to silence by the predominant discourse. Think here of any form of doctrinal system, be it science, religion, common parlance, political correctness, etc. Heidegger emphatically addressed the destructive influence on language of modern technology, economism, and utilitarianism.³⁷ We should indeed not underestimate the power by means of which this prevalent discourse tacitly imposes its own set of norms and values, relegating any non-conceptual ('poetic', 'literary') form of linguistic expression to the field of 'improper' speech, as if it were 'mere' adornment or embellishment of language. Nevertheless, language, provided it be sufficiently untrammelled such

36 Cf Yuasa, 76f. Also cf Heidegger, who claims that the Greco-European languages rely upon metaphysical distinction between sensuous and super-sensuous, or, signifier and signified. Heidegger, 'Gespräch über die Sprache mit einem Japaner', *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (1990/1959). Frankfurt: Neske, 103.

37 "Die Verblendung wächst, so dass man auch nicht mehr zu sehen vermag, wie die Europäisierung des Menschen und der Erde alles Wesenhafte in seinen Quellen anzehrt. Es scheint, als sollten diese versiegen." Heidegger, 1990, 104.

as to unveil its hidden potentials, could be rightfully held to be a mediating force between consciousness and the world. Heidegger's own injunction here is to follow the lead of 'beckoning words' that hint towards what is beyond them without 'representing' anything. An example could be Heidegger's suggested alternative for 'language' (*Sprache*): the untranslatable *die Sage* (the say; cf the English 'from hearsay'). This word joins three in one: *das Sagen* (the saying), *sein Gesagtes* (the said), *das zu-Sagende* (the to-be-said). It might even match with the Japanese word for language, *koto ba*. In Heidegger's text 'A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer', this word is explained as similar to revelation, or even, unfolding (e.g. of petals).³⁸ Language unfolds or reveals. As such, it is auxiliary to synchronicity awareness. Whether or not language is *indispensable* to do justice to the fullness of experience remains a moot point that cannot be further discussed here.

A beautiful example of synchronicity in language is given by Carl du Prel. It shows that poetic rhyme does not merely reflect the poet's linguistic skill, it is also endowed with necessity, such as to *match* form and content. Du Prel quotes two lines from a poem written by the German poet Martin Greif (1839-1911). The poem is about a religious sceptic entering a dome:

“Durch die Fenster, lang und schmal,
Fällt der letzte Sonnenstrahl –”³⁹
(Through a window, long and narrow,
the last sunbeam comes in.)

Curiously, Du Prel notices, the rhyme words *lang und schmal* do not only fit the corresponding *Sonnenstrahl* – they equally form an appropriate description of the gothic windows. In good poetry often those words are 'made' (or better, *found* to be) correspondent, and which also already have the richest sensuous-aesthetic content. Synchronicity in art is like an economic principle: that of condensing sense.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have tried to show that lifting the arbitrary limits of unidirectional causality creates new ways of understanding and interpreting consciousness. A reinterpretation of consciousness in terms of a susceptibility to synchronicity – a 'conscientiology' – allows for a more adequate approach to remarkable phenomena, both on the level of individual experiences, and of global history. Reconsidering the prevailing principle of causality – the adequacy of which is tacitly

38 Heidegger, 'A Dialogue on language between a Japanese and an Inquirer', *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (1982/1971). New York: Harper & Row, 47 (Heidegger 1990, 144).

39 Du Prel, *Die monistische Seelenlehre*, 72.

assumed by science, common sense logic, common parlance, etc., but challenged in Waldo Vieira's research project – creates new possibilities to do justice to the genius mind set, human inspiration, or artistic creativity. The fact that language itself tends to not only determine but also follow social changes (e.g., the rise of 'science') could make one pessimistic as to the expressive resources of current language. However, these resources are continuously remodelled and rejuvenated by philosophers, artists and poets. Whereas common sense logic tends to relegate *literary expression* to the innocent realm of beauty and commodity, it might well be that, rather than being mere adornment, it regards reality itself.

Rico Sneller is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Leiden. His main interests lie in the field of Continental Philosophy, esp. 19th and 20th Century approaches of human consciousness, and altered states of mind (inspiration, geniality, mysticism, ecstasy, telepathy, etc.). He is Vice-President of the International Society of Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns (APGC): see www.ap-gc.net.