

*If I were to imagine or envision my being, in its development, I would long to compare it to that of a field of plants. Labeling it with the term “garden” has the implication that perhaps I have been consistently tended to by a single source of soft palms and tools, that the ground is in rows and the roses are in a section separate from the hydrangeas. With the watering of my experiences and gained insights, my body of plants grow in abundance without an order. They weave around one another and whisper secrets through the moist soil. It is a place where you can walk through and get lost, lay down and disappear into the leaves, or just sit: sitting is a simple way to thinking. I imagine it is a home to fairies, to creativity, maybe the leaf that a butterfly rests on top of has a question. On the downturned side of a smooth pebble is an answer. My yard has seen the sun's bright rays and felt the warmth of its nurturing guidance. But the rain has also poured and hail storms have come and gone that have flattened my plants and ruptured their roots. They could grow back, it is undecided, some are maybe absorbed, others mutate into thorny branches that leave an itch on your skin. Space is malleable. I look through an opening between two flowers and see a white deer bend over a glistening pond to take a sip of its waters. But wait, for if I look again, the pond could have evaporated, and become nothing but the singular dew drop on an orchid.*

I like to believe that part of my being has always been connected to the unexpected or indescribable aspects of our world that go beyond the realm of the ordinary. Fascination with these interludes as I grew up have enabled me to entertain and explore these concepts and energies. This mindset has allowed me to observe certain occurrences from unique perspectives as well as becoming more in touch with my own intuition. These moments, whether quietly sitting and becoming in tune with one's surroundings or sensing a feeling of energy in certain places, seem to create a bridge between our physical and spiritual worlds as well as the conscious and unconscious mind. The unknown parts of our world have revealed themselves to me via elements of mysticism, and continually ignite and provoke my own creativity and curiosity. They can be sought out or manifested in the mystical practice of divination which seeks the knowledge of the future by supernatural or mysterious means or fleeting moments of synchronicity, the odd alignment of two seemingly unrelated events. From just such experiences as these, my own outlook of deep wonder has been enabled: a deep wondering about how our world has and continues to interact with what is unknown or indescribable, and, just as importantly, what fuels one's desire to figure these things out. Whether it is from trying to predict our futures to conceiving a possible explanation of the subconscious mind: What is this yearning we hold for the unrevealed? And is it something that is perhaps an ingrained trait within us all?

## Chapter I: The Unknown

Trying to address all of the unknown parts of our world would be like trying to take a singular atom and hold it in your hand. There will always be more to find out and discover. Despite this we continually grasp and reach for these atoms. We long to hold their nuclear shape between our fingers and feel both negative and positive charges. This notion of wanting to know what is unknown presses at the brink of our minds. Sit back and think. Just a few moments ago you could have been trying to analyze or predict something that was as of now undetermined. One of the many ways we seek meaning or undiscovered knowledge is in practices such as divination where one might interpret an omen as guidance. Futurists follow an alternate avenue to explore and predict the future systematically. We continue to draw narratives that concern the future and place them in society and our personal lives. Although some of these predictions may waver in relevancy or accuracy, it clearly exemplifies the root of my research surrounding the question, “Why as individuals are we in a constant state of trying to develop answers when there are none?” Coinciding with this query, is the ongoing efforts we make to try to interpret unknown symbols. Take the example of synchronicities, these events truly have no explanation. Yet despite often being shaken off as cause and effect or coincidence, they still leave one to wonder. We place a special meaning on events such as synchronicities, because in many ways one can interpret them as a communication of unknown knowledge or meaning that can then be applied in some way to one’s life. All these avenues to understanding build on similar backbones of a curiosity and drive to know the unknown. The motivations in humans to enact their own quest for these answers is something that we can now try to measure in psychology as well as analyze to see if these notions are widely possessed.

The main way that this question has been analyzed has been based on the idea that we seek the unknown as a means to control aspects of our world and our lives. When studying interpersonal communication and attribution theories, it has been mentioned that in our active state of interpreting events and occurrences we are always logically trying to make sense of these things. This in large part is due to the fact that we wish to feel more dominant over something that is indescribable or random giving us a sense of control. In other ways it can be said that “This ‘seeking after a sign’ and the recognition of a revelation of future calamity in some strange happening may be traced to the nervous anxiety engendered by some momentous occasion or to the importance attributed to the occurrence of the abnormal” (Halliday pg 168). So perhaps our desires and motivations derive from our current anxieties and feelings of being unsure. I believe this gives a valid and likely look into our interactions and existing curiosity for finding clarity can reassure us all.

The term of Cognitive closure was introduced by psychologist Arie Kruglanski to coincide with her research in 1994, that measured our human need for closure. Jermoe Kagan, a pioneer in developmental psychology, also commented on this human behavior in 1972, stating that “uncertainty resolution was one of the foremost determinants of our behavior. When we cannot

immediately gratify our desire to know, we become highly motivated to reach a concrete explanation...We want to eliminate the distress of the unknown. We want, in other words, to achieve 'cognitive closure.' ” Our need and desire for information or answers that derive from unknown aspects of the world is something that is continuously practiced and now seen as part of our human nature. Extending past just our curiosity, we all partake in these greater searches or interpretations as we try to understand more about what is unknown in the world around us.

## Chapter II: Synchronicities

### MOM

*The days had shifted. It was as if the grey overcast skies of December had become stagnant in time. The small light on the door briefly illuminated the exterior old brick skeleton of the house, and with our departure you could hear the subtle crackling sound of the wheels gently rolling over the gravel and recently fallen twigs. The giant fir tree overhead cast ominous shadows from its extended branches. Time elapsed slowly as we drove silently down the road. It was the same route we had driven for over forty years when leaving our childhood home. The previous days still clung to my body like heavy wet clothes only emphasizing the weight of our mutual feelings of loss. My sister was someone who had been there in the entirety of the events of the last several days. Now it was the first time either of us would be leaving since his passing. It was dark, almost black, and the atmosphere held an undetermined moisture that cascaded and settled in the air as if a delicate presence hung in the mist. At the end of our street a red stop sign demarcated our path. The soft glow of the street lamp accentuated the eerie quiet of the evening. As we prepared to cross into the less familiar realm of the neighborhood, a moment of reflection lingered from the car lights. In front of us now, a small white figure had appeared and was perched directly on top of the sign. Its head rotated slowly looking at us with steady black eyes. They were open and wide like portals that you could walk into and get lost forever. A flash of inexplicable awe overcame us. For having grown up in the green of Seattle, we had never seen an owl in the city, never had witnessed its wise posture or looked into these keen all knowing eyes. Perhaps this was because mine were always drawn to the eagles that nested in the trees on the island. When they would swoop down every so often, streaking across the Puget Sound, crashing waves as a musical backdrop. I would watch from the patio, always with the same rush of excitement and wonder in their familiarity. Just the two of them sitting in the crown of the trees, a majestic pair. Just the two of us, sitting in the car, looking at this owl as we left the empty comfort of 440. And there before us sat a message, for I could hear the unspoken communication that was saying "I am here. I am still with you. You are not alone wherever you are." And despite my dad physically passing away two days before, there was a new sense of joy*

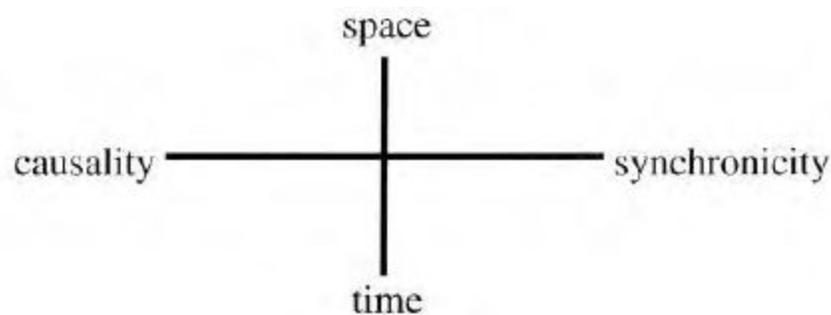
*and reassurance that had changed the energy surrounding us. You could feel the ambiance itself buzz slightly as if there was an electric wire that had just been plugged in and the heavy fog had briefly lifted and we felt his embrace.*

The word synchronicity is a concept that encompasses much more than just mere coincidence. It can be defined in the Merriam Webster dictionary as the coincidental occurrence of events and especially psychic ones (such as similar thoughts in widely separated persons or a mental image of an unexpected event before it happens) that are seemingly related but not explained by conventional mechanisms of causality. Our interpretations of certain events communicated in the form of synchronicities are often indescribable experiences. I believe that in many ways the occurrence of synchronicities transfer more than just the element of awe. They could have the ability to link us spiritually with parts of ourselves, others or an undiscovered notion that we have yet to unravel. This story of the owl is a translation from an experience of my mothers, a synchronous encounter. From her perspective, and my own (as in many ways I feel like I was there with her), this story is one of a couple that have really resided and taken root with me and this subject of coincidental events. Synchronicities along with other mystic elements of our world captivate me for many reasons. In this case, it is especially interesting as there is no doubt that this affair occurred, but the peculiarity of its contents and timing seemed almost too unusual to turn a blind eye or leave unmentioned. It often makes me question how synchronicities may play a role in our lives beyond just being unusual. From this perspective, one continues to entertain the occurrence, and attempt to grasp the meaning of how it intertwines with other concepts regarding our subconscious mind and to ascertain how to utilize what these experiences are trying to convey.

It is difficult to try to give a timeline to how long synchronicities have truly been happening or why they may take place. My mom describes her encounters with synchronicity as a connection between two worlds. It is this bridge across which we can communicate or translate a sense of something spiritual into something physical or present. For her, it can be deeply related to the focusing of energy. When looking for a certain support or needing a certain reassurance, she describes that she either consciously or subconsciously focuses her thoughts on the energy she is looking for in a return message. During these instances is when she finds a synchronicity is most likely to spark. Often times within myself, I also long to manifest or interact with this form of transcendence. I believe that certain people may possess specific intuitions that allows this process to be easier or more frequent. If one is putting energy into something, they are more likely to receive this energy in return. Maybe coincidences are just coincidences, it can be like many things what you make of it, and although possibly foolish, it is these instances in which I have felt the most in touch with myself as well as something much, much bigger.

Synchronicity is a concept that has gained recognition from many different people, which has resulted in the various approaches and or attempts to understand their occurrences or analyze

what they may signify or influence. In a study conducted by the University of Missouri, 15% of people reported that they had experienced their own synchronistic phenomena. The actual term “synchronicity”, was first introduced in 1930 by Carl Jung. After his own studies alongside the theories of Sigmund Freud that revolved around our subconscious and other psychoanalysis, Jung began to explore the other “unknowns” that sparked his interest. He coined the word himself mainly to allow him to approach the superstitions of magic and fantasy that surrounded synchronicities in a more scientific way. In his research and later publications of work, Jung gave multiple insights that provided possible descriptions to how synchronicities are intertwined with our subconscious. He describes synchronicity as separate from just cause and effect, and that “Synchronistic events rest on the simultaneous occurrence of 2 different physical states. One of them is the normal, probable state, and the other, the critical experience, is the one that cannot be derived from the first.” (pg 28). He also accounts for it as requiring “a certain narrowing of the conscious and strengthening of the unconscious... The tone of the unconscious is heightened creating a gradient for the unconscious to flow towards the conscious. The conscious then comes under the influence of the unconscious’ instinctual impulses and contents” (pg 30). In this diagram, Jung maps the human relationship to synchronicity in a spectrum that crossroads causality, time and space to try to interpret the phenomenon we encounter.



Dr. Bernard Beitman is a psychiatrist and currently a Visiting Professor at the University of Virginia who has taken up Jung’s efforts to categorize the study of coincidences. He states that “The jolt of coincidence opens up possibilities, makes you stop and think, and makes you observe your now energised mind...you become more conscious of the potential for connections between your mind and environment.” Allowing oneself to embrace the potential import of an instance of coincidence has proved to be a useful learning tool for people. Through our curiosity to discover the unknown, synchronicities have become a way in which people can derive significance or meaning from an otherwise random event. Achieving a sense of explanation from an otherworldly moment is a way for individuals to find guidance, direction or comfort in times

of uncertainty which may be necessary elements in their lives at that time. Witnessing such an occurrence can offer us new insights as well as provide clarity or strength. With all of the different methods humans use to cope with the stresses of the world, perhaps the belief in synchronicity is just one other way to find glimpses of hope and magic.

*ME*

*And I looked out the enclosed glass window that had been the background of the past week. Sitting as usual in the leather chair that had been my provided “comfort” for countless hours. This time, the white noise of the breathing machine had ceased, replaced with the sweet symphonic jazz of Louis and Ella. When I looked now over the city, it was different than the other times. Not just because the hospital bed was empty or that it had just been an hour since his hand was resting peacefully and close, waiting to be held. The buildings were still all varying shades of grey and the streets still slightly blurry from cars going back and forth in the light rain, but this time the universe itself had seemingly shifted. In the last few moments it became apparent that there had been a prominent movement in the skies formation. The clouds had all completely joined together from their predisposed positions pulling themselves unanimously into a large white circle of mist, directly encompassing and warping around what was the top of the tallest building in the city. And it was not only his building, but his floor, the 55th, the one he spent hours on everyday working, looking out at Mount Rainier and eerily enough directly at this room where I now sat. The clouds swooped in encircled only his building then dispersed in the opposite direction from which they had arrived. Just above the ring of clouds and mist was the red light blinking. It seemed all but non coincidental, for I knew that my grandpa had in a way reappeared in front of me, in his gentlemanly manner to say goodbye one last time before evaporating and dissipating into the air.*

### Chapter III: Divination

*CELESTE*

*The camp was desolate and quiet except for the skeletal tree branches that swayed and rocked in the soft breeze with creaking vibrations. The leaves were awakened and restless, detaching from their roots and floating gently in the air in a dancing descent. It was the odd emptiness of the tents that continued to remind me how the others had still not returned. Now it was just me. Succumbing to my intuition had given direction to my unguided wandering and had somehow led me back to camp despite the random twists and turns. The thoughts in my head rang loud, and despite knowing there was dinner needing to be tended to or other chores aching to be done, I instead allowed myself to do what was tugging at my being. Grabbing the blue bowl and filling it, I found a comfortable place on the ground. Making a rhyme always seemed to work best when*

*practicing divination, so I allowed a random stream of words that referenced my lost peers hopefully to provide the answer to their whereabouts. I looked now and in my divine image I could only briefly catch the soft shadows of their forms rippling against the waters dark reflection. A brief one second snapshot of a tall tree under which they sat peacefully in a circle. All too quick was the vision replaced with the reflection of the tree above me and it seemed that it had just been my mind fooling me again, mocking me and reflecting my inabilities in this dark bowl. My own self doubt now was the only presence I could feel. For awhile the atmosphere hung with my anxious waiting and the ground felt hard and uncomfortably damp. An hour or so had passed until the sun began to evolve into a dark red and sink back into the mountains. It was in this moment that a soft pitter patter of footsteps emerged and everyone began to reappear from the wood. It was almost as if they had never been gone in the first place, time was put at a stop, and with a curiosity I asked where my leader had found them, and even more remarkably how they had somehow all found one another.*

*“They were all just sitting under a tree, waiting.” He answered.*

The methodology of divination has been a practice that dates back far beyond the time before Christ. As it has stemmed and continued to grow from this ancient history, the modes, methods, and meanings of divination have all evolved and branched into various forms as our modern world has also significantly developed. The mystical practices of divination are what I (and I am sure many others) had seemingly viewed as mysterious gazes into a crystal ball or the flipping of some tarot cards. Perhaps my lack of awareness was partially due to the cultural feed of entertainment given to me via tv shows and bedtime stories. It's not unusual that I became indifferent to their true significance. Although slightly blinded to the reality of divination, magical happenings or rituals have never been something I have dismissed. From various readings about divination and in depth research I have come to the realization that I have always had somewhat of a connection to its principles. This became apparent to me as I now recall certain events or things I would enact that could be regarded as divining. A large part of divination is that one can divine and create from almost anything, and this could occur in a vast variety of settings or surroundings. I began to see the fact that I had been doing small modes of divination ever since I was young. This could range from picking flowers off a daisy, repeating “*does he love me, does he love me not*”, to creating a small chant if I lost something and then trying to visualize its placement and be guided by an unseen energy to find the objects whereabouts. As I have recognized these small relations within myself, It has made me wonder if it also raises the question of how does our own subconscious play a role in divination? In various ways it could be that one must unlock an unknown of oneself to discover another. Beyond this, divination has been one of if not the most commonly regarded tools that is associated with the “ability” to read unanswered questions regarding the past, present and future, and it is the seeking and performing of this exercise that unites with our quest of knowing what is yet to be revealed.

Before fully diving into the personal effects or motivations deriving from practicing divination, I think it is important to give the olden ritual(s) some background, as its history is vast and wide ranging. In its origin, becoming increasingly used in graeco-roman times, these predictions were aligned mainly with ideals of symbolism, and interpreting or reading certain imagery to then produce meaning. In other cultures divination had been used to connect with gods or goddesses or it could be heavily relied upon to predict future omens or troubles. Their are our current day methods that are more well known than others, including palmistry, The book of the I ching, the casting of lots, tarot and more. Other divining methods could span from hydromancy (divination with water) to Syphomancy (the use of cups or glasses whilst divining.) Referencing from Scott Cunningham, writer of *“Divination for beginners”*, he perceives that there are certain aspects of divination that now have been misinterpreted. What used to be considered a science in 1900 B.C.E babylon, performed by temple priests, has been put in a box confined to the walls of fantasy and prophecy. In his eyes the act of divining does not reveal destiny, it rather responds in a way which later can be altered and changed. It is evident that we possess our own free will and have the power in ourselves to then change the future. Divination is merely a helpful source that can help and guide us or give us clarity.

I am not the only one that has approached and tried to analyze the interaction of our subconscious into divinatory practices; in fact, many diviners heavily rely and reference what is their unconscious so they can become more in touch and meditative with what they are trying to divine. Even outside of divination many this utilization of the unconscious can be believed to open inspiration or allow flows of natural knowledge. Joseph Murphy, writer of *“The power of your subconscious mind”* completely focuses on this ‘power’, saying that the subconscious can “reveal to you everything you need to know at every moment of time and point of space provided if you are open minded and receptive” (Murphy 16). On the opposite side “some argue that these methods of divination rely solely on the powers of our subconscious minds. This is only half the picture, true, positive thinking and affirmations can indeed change our lives but the energy waves from present actions can cause much greater changes and positive thinking can affect many events” (Cunningham pg 75). For me, I believe that both divination and our subconscious to be intertwined. Parts of ourselves that are unknown may need to come forth to access an effective divination, but one also is not limited to this complex of mental activity.

While researching divination and its relationship with the subconscious, the overall notion that humans desire to answer and predict what is unresolved or unknown has been reinforced. Seeking out divination could hold various objectives. As stated eloquently by author William Halliday, “For the object of divination is never the idle curiosity which prompts the society lady to interview the Bond street palmist. The inquirer desires to know what the future has in store in order that he may turn into account, make sure of the good things, or in case of necessity, cheat the devil” (Halliday 41). This is an insight from a study of Greek Divination, and I think that it holds significance as it addresses the more self centered motives to why humans look to the divine. As mentioned before, people use divination for various reasons, discovering

the unknown is just one of them. Since divination has become such a broad way that we can look into the indescribable or attempt to predetermine the future, our increased ability to access it in modern culture has given further foundation to our pursuits.

#### Chapter IV: Denouement

*A stream is running. It is navigating through brinks, around stones and falling over waterfalls. Cascades of white glowing droplets that will later rest on a rock or leaf like a small diamond. Here it pulls in different directions, like melted gold being poured into a mold, it spreads and transfers an energy that is in constant motion. I feel its movement and circulatory rotation until even my own actions succumb to an indescribable tug from what is an unknown source. The creek is a radiation of light that is present underneath our feet and in the sky, through the wind as it whistles or the willow as it grows. Maybe it is just my internal stream of consciousness, but there is this undoubted connect present and I can sense its subtle charge in differing parts of life.*

Entertaining the otherworldly concepts that gravitate around us, whether they are accurate or not, has given me a valuable look into the ways in which one can discover knowledge, whether within our subconscious, our surroundings, or a greater energy and use it to ground parts of ourselves. The practice of Divination or occurrence of unusual synchronistic events have given us avenues in which we can explore some of the unknowns of the world. They also provide ways in which one can connect to them. Although we may set out with different motivations in doing so, it still holds true that our want and desire to unravel the mysteries of life compels us to seek them out. Even if the belief in it may vary, there is an aspect that still holds true, that finding answers to what is unknown can provide a universal feeling of comfort or fulfillment. It is our innate desire that propels us into researching and understanding these mystical elements that circulate our space. This will always be something that I can look at and further wonder about. For it is the mystery within all of these concepts that allow my own freedom of thought and curiosity to deepen.

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