



Arthur Miller, *Deciphering the Cosmic Number: The Strange Friendship of Wolfgang Pauli and Carl Jung*, W. W. Norton & co. (2009)

Reviewed by Richard Harris

Arthur I. Miller's book is aimed at a general reading audience, but will be of particular interest to those familiar with the Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung (1875-1961); the German

physicist Wolfgang Pauli (1900-1958), the man Einstein called his successor; scientists and historians.

Miller undertakes a dual biography of two key early twentieth century thinkers, and attempts to describe their respective fields of study and capture the creative interaction between the two men that resulted in the collaboration of—among other things—a published book in which Jung wrote on the concept of, “Synchronicity,” and Pauli wrote on “The Influence of Archetypal Ideas on the Scientific Theories of Kepler.”

Miller, a professor emeritus of history and Philosophy of Science from University College London states that his “primary interest has always been in studying the creative process. The interaction between Jung and Pauli is a powerful example.” This book is a demonstration of that interest. The interest in the “creative process” is reflected in at least two of Miller's other works, one concerning *Picasso and Einstein*, and the other in his book, *Insights of Genius*.

The story told is essentially this: Before Pauli met Jung he was driven by the belief that mathematics could provide the ultimate answers to everything. After he met Jung he was

introduced to “non-rational” modes of thinking such as theory of personality types, alchemy, archetypes, and dream analysis. Those concepts allowed Pauli to think more creatively concerning issues of physics. Conversely, Jung looked to Pauli to provide him with a scientific basis for some of his psychological theories, particularly numbers as archetypes.

Miller’s treatment of the subjects’ biographies, summaries and contributions utilise extensive primary and secondary sources, including living authorities on Jung, Pauli and the Kaballah. The potentially complex mixture of quantum physics, alchemy, the prime number 137, Kabbalah, Jung’s theory of archetypes, Johannes Kepler, *The Book of Changes (I Ching)*, and dream analysis are expressed in readable language. Precision footnotes allow the reader to follow arguments and information, along with a selected bibliography. Those new to Jungian ideas, Pauli’s contributions to physics—including his “exclusion principle”—or issues in the history of quantum physics will find well documented explanations and summaries of those concepts. Miller’s goal to capture the story of the “creative process” between the two men was arguably successful.

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Rod Suskin

Editor