

## **Archetypal Cosmology: A Brief Account**

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With a recent issue devoted to matters archetypal, I was asked by the editors of *The Mountain Astrologer* and a number of its readers to consider writing a brief overview of the history of archetypal cosmology. So in this essay I would like to describe, first, the key individuals and influences that brought forth the academic discipline and philosophical perspective called archetypal cosmology; then its longer ancestry, the centuries-old traditions out of which it emerged; and finally a short summary of the basic principles that distinguish it as an approach to astrology.

It could be argued that the emergence of archetypal cosmology was in some sense inevitable, as scholars and researchers working in late twentieth-century academia recognized the larger implications of the evidence for planetary correlations with the patterns of human experience. Given the extraordinary nature of these correlations, the obvious task was to pursue the research in a more systematic way, think deeply about the resulting evidence, then integrate this with the relevant ideas and conceptual frameworks from both the past, like the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition or Kepler's work, and the cutting-edge present, from depth psychology to the new-paradigm sciences.

But if perhaps inevitable in principle, the specific character and even the naming of archetypal cosmology reflects its emergence from a unique convergence of scholars and intellectual currents at two particular learning communities, Esalen Institute during the 1970s and 1980s, and the California Institute of Integral Studies from the 1990s to the present. Out of that creative commingling of people and ideas arose a distinctive vision of psyche and cosmos, of the human being's co-creative participation in an ensouled, evolving universe. This cosmological vision is grounded in a particular astrological research paradigm that has proved highly promising in the study of history and biography, psychology, philosophy, religion, culture and the arts.

It often happens that the fresh winds of new ideas and spiritual impulses which enter into a culture and eventually transform it do not originate in the mainstream universities, but rather come from outlier institutions and learning communities that are more countercultural, adventurous, and visionary in character. Such was the case, for example, in fifteenth-century Europe, when the late medieval universities had become stagnant and the crucial insights and scholarship for the future emerged from Ficino's and Pico della Mirandola's small but immensely influential Platonic Academy in Florence, recovering seminal ideas from ancient and esoteric sources, helping to bring forth the High

Renaissance, and even contributing to the Copernican revolution. In the second half of the twentieth century, Esalen Institute in California played a similar role in late modern culture, attracting to its Big Sur cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean countless scholars and visionaries from Aldous Huxley, Alan Watts, and Arnold Toynbee to Abraham Maslow, R. D. Laing, and Lama Govinda. An overriding impulse towards both exploration and transformation pervaded the institute community, as contemporary psychology and philosophy met esoteric traditions and practices in service of expanding the horizons of human experience and knowledge. Ancient and modern, east and west, body and soul, science and spirituality, shamanism and mysticism, quantum physics and the psychedelic revolution – all had a place at the table.

In astrology, the field at Esalen was seeded by Dane Rudhyar. I had first encountered astrology in conversations with a Jungian faculty member at Harvard when I was an undergraduate in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but it took the metaphysically wide-open, esoterically intensive atmosphere of Esalen to have a more serious engagement with that perspective. At the time I was working on my doctoral degree and taking Esalen seminars with a number of remarkable teachers, each of whom were carrying critical insights: Joseph Campbell, with his multicultural erudition deciphering the archetypal language of myth, “the secret opening through which the cosmos pours its inexhaustible energies into human cultural manifestation”; Gregory Bateson, with his polymath’s recognition of an “ecology of mind” in nature, and “the patterns which connect”; Huston Smith with his ecumenical transmission of the world’s religious and mystical traditions; and Stanislav Grof, with his radically expanded cartography of the psyche and his powerful methods of psychospiritual transformation. While in retrospect, one can see how these teachers and teachings would play a role in shaping the approach to astrology that would emerge at Esalen, at the time astrology itself still seemed to me an unlikely candidate for being a key to the mystery of psyche and cosmos. Richly symbolic, yes, strangely helpful perhaps in framing imaginative reflections on one’s psychological tendencies, but what could it really have to do with the actual vast universe of planets and galaxies?

That suddenly changed when in the course of our research in the field of consciousness studies, Grof and I were surprised to discover an extraordinarily consistent and symbolically nuanced correlation between the timing of individuals’ major psychological transformations and the planetary transits to their natal charts. Because so many seekers came to Esalen in the course of their life journeys specifically to undergo profound transformative experiences, Esalen proved to be a superb laboratory for conducting this research. Suddenly, from this most improbable and scorned source, we had a method of illuminating both the archetypal character and the timing of individual experiences, including non-ordinary states of consciousness such as those mediated by powerful

psychoactive plants and compounds – something Grof and his colleagues at his psychiatric research clinics in Prague and later in Maryland had searched for fruitlessly for many years. To be able to better understand the sudden onset of a psychological crisis or a spiritual breakthrough, to schedule sessions of LSD therapy or shamanic sacred medicine rituals with greater awareness of the psychological dynamics active for that person and that time, to gain insight into certain cyclical activations of particular complexes in an individual's inner world and outer life circumstances: as Grof put it, astrology seemed to represent a kind of "Rosetta stone" for understanding the human psyche, of inestimable value. I was reminded of Bruno Schulz's words:

*So it comes to pass that, when we pursue an inquiry beyond a certain depth, we step out of the field of psychological categories and enter the sphere of the ultimate mysteries of life. The floorboards of the soul, to which we try to penetrate, fan open and reveal the starry firmament.*

This particular context and pragmatic motivation for our astrological research had another unexpected consequence. The unusually profound encounters with the deep unconscious that we were studying frequently involved direct experiences of an archetypal dimension of reality – whether in the form of mythic figures and narratives from various cultures, gods and goddesses, transcendent Platonic Ideas, or Jungian archetypes. These numinous essences and forces were experienced as informing the wide range of biographical memories, psychological complexes, transpersonal experiences, and other vivid emotional and somatic content activated during the sessions. Such encounters allowed us to have a more precise grasp of the multivalent character of the archetypal principles connected to the planetary alignments, as we witnessed the various ways a transit involving Saturn or Uranus, Neptune or Pluto to the natal chart could be embodied in experience. Instead of a list of key words memorized from a text book, we were able to recognize in a more direct, visceral, multidimensional manner the qualities of experience governed by these primordial forms – their "iridescent variation of aspect," to use the Neoplatonist philosopher J. N. Findlay's apt phrase. We also were able to assess with greater experimental precision the orbs, the range of degrees before and after exact, within which the various planetary alignments were archetypally operative. From 1976 onwards, we expanded the compass of the research to include a systematic study of the biographies of hundreds of prominent historical and cultural figures, as well as the archetypal dynamics of the collective psyche evident in major historical phenomena and cultural epochs.

In essence, the research was driven by a synthesis of two traditions that had been evolving rapidly during the twentieth century: the depth psychology of Jung, Freud, and William James, developed further by Rank, Reich, Klein, von Franz, Edinger, and many

others; and what we might call depth astrology, coming from Rudhyar, with Leo, Carter, Addey, and Ebertin among others contributing to the lineage. In the later 1960s and 1970s, both these traditions received a fresh creative infusion, on the one hand with the simultaneous rise of transpersonal psychology led by Grof and archetypal psychology led by James Hillman; and on the other hand with a new generation of psychologically informed astrologers led by Robert Hand, Stephen Arroyo, Liz Greene, and Charles Harvey – most of them coming to Esalen at this time for private discussions as well as public seminars. Hillman's magnum opus of 1975, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, provided a manifesto of rich archetypal discourse reaching back from Jung to Ficino and Plato that deeply informed our astrological analyses, while Grof's *Realms of the Human Unconscious* in the same year provided a radically expanded map of the psyche adequate to the emerging vision.

Something of the excitement felt at this time, almost like a Platonic epiphany, is conveyed in a letter written by Charles Harvey, then president of the British Astrological Association, after reading an early essay in archetypal astrology (*Prometheus the Awakener*) that set forth the beginning outlines of a conjoined archetypal cosmology and psychology: "Astrology has kept the archetypes alive, we have all worked with them, but how flat, abstract, remote, dry this all now seems. . . Like breaking through into the world of real living ideas after watching the shadow show. . . . A living astrology is being born again."

During the ten years of research at Esalen (I stayed on as its director of programs and education for several years), our astrological reflections were shaped by one other important factor. Educated within the cosmological assumptions of a modern scientific world view that made astrology more or less impossible, Grof and I naturally sought to develop a new frame of reference which could bring these findings into a larger coherence. Although the evidence for planetary correlations sharply contradicted the mainstream Newtonian-Cartesian scientific paradigm, we noticed many parallels with the concepts coming from new-paradigm sciences – quantum physics, systems theory, morphogenetic fields, the implicate order, the holonomic universe – and from innovative thinkers who we in turn invited to Esalen for numerous seminars and discussions: David Bohm, Fritjof Capra, Rupert Sheldrake, Karl Pribram, Theodore Roszak, and Ervin Laszlo among them. All these provided a fertile matrix shaping the ideas and research that were developing into an archetypal cosmology.

In other important respects, however, the astrological evidence pointed to the metaphysical intuitions of the past. The word "archetype" comes from Platonism, and indeed the archetypal cosmos was first articulated by Plato and developed in the Platonic tradition. Here was the philosophical vision of the universe as pervasively ensouled,

informed by transcendent archetypal principles, and ordered in its complex celestial movements by a sovereign divine intelligence. There were yet earlier roots to this perspective: the ancient pantheon of Greek myth (gods as archetypes), the ritual illuminations of the mystery religions (cosmos as divine revelation), and the Pythagorean disclosure of a universe whose unitive order was at once mathematical and numinous. For the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition, to align with the archetypal order of the cosmos was to realize one's essential being. To know the cosmos was to know oneself. To study the numinous order of the heavens was to be spiritually and philosophically elevated, to break free from the cave of ephemeral shadows, to know the Good and the Beautiful.

The word "archetype" comes from the Greeks and the Platonic philosophical tradition. I had been drawn to this concept since my early education in classical Greek and Latin with the Jesuits, where Plato's and Aristotle's differing views of transcendent and immanent universal forms had made a deep impression. Even two years before the astrological evidence emerged, I had originally proposed as my doctoral dissertation topic, "A History of Archetypes from Plato to Jung," as it was clear to me that this concept provided a central organizing principle not only for understanding psychological phenomena but for comprehending much of the history of Western thought. The differences between Plato's archetypes and Jung's as usually understood – the former seen as the essential metaphysical structures of reality, the latter as the essential psychological forms of the human unconscious – represented an enormous cosmological evolution in the Western world view, with the Copernican revolution as the turning point in shifting the locus of archetypal meaning from the cosmos to the human psyche.

This epic intellectual drama was rich with paradox. For it was Plato's own prescient recognition of the "problem of the planets" (how to explain mathematically their apparently erratic movements in a divinely ordered cosmos), as well as his metaphysical exaltation of the Sun, that led eventually to the Copernican revolution. And the key figure making possible the Copernican revolution was the inspired Platonist astronomer Johannes Kepler, with his brilliant mathematical discovery of the heliocentric planetary orbits. Indeed, Kepler would play a dual role in the evolution of archetypal cosmology – one astronomical, the other astrological. While his laws of planetary motion made possible the cosmological matrix of the modern age, Kepler also formulated a new, elegantly clarified approach to astrology that was to become central to archetypal cosmology with its dominant focus on the planetary aspects as the principal indicators of astrological meaning. In turn, it was the disenchanting modern cosmology that issued from the Scientific Revolution that precipitated – both made possible and necessitated – the emergence of modern depth psychology, with its recovery of the archetypes from within. As Jung put it,

Since the stars have fallen from heaven and our highest symbols have paled, a secret life holds sway in the unconscious. That is why we have a psychology today, and why we speak of the unconscious.

Thus the necessity of depth psychology in the modern cosmos: the archetypal forms were no longer carried by the encompassing universe. But in another sense, the modern cosmos *made possible* psychology: It was Copernicus's act of transcending our subjective experience of being on a stable Earth at the center of the cosmos, of seeing through our vast cosmic projection, of rational consciousness disidentifying with our natural subjectivity on the Earth – in a sense, identifying with the Sun as center rather than the Earth -- that set in motion the development of modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant. As Jung often said, Kant's critical philosophy (what Kant called his "Copernican revolution" in philosophy) was the mother of psychology. It made possible our owning of cognitive projections and our study of the fundamental *a priori* structures of the psyche, the archetypes, that unconsciously shape our knowledge and experience. More generally, the erasure of pre-established governing structures of meaning in the cosmos by the Copernican revolution helped forge the autonomous modern self.

In the later decades of his life, however, Jung moved to a new view of the archetypes, particularly as a result of his observations of synchronicities. He began to see the archetypes as informing both outer world and inner psyche. Even astrology, which he had sometimes described as a projection of the collective unconscious onto the heavens, but which he was now using with many of his patients to discern their archetypal dynamics, he began to consider as potentially reflecting a kind of cosmic form of synchronicity on a vast scale. Yet Jung remained ambiguous about astrology in his writings, and one can see why, given both the limits of his astrological evidence and knowledge and the overwhelming power of the modern disenchanted cosmology that had shaped his scientific education and identity.

By 1980, we had accumulated such an enormous body of evidence showing systematic correlations between planetary alignments and the archetypal patterns of human experience – in the clinical therapeutic setting, in individual biographies, and on the collective level in historical and cultural phenomena – that the question became, how to introduce this evidence and perspective to the larger educated public that was astrologically uninitiated. While Grof and I had already begun lecturing on the material, developing a synthesis of transpersonal psychology and archetypal astrology, I decided for the longer term on a two-stage strategy. Before setting out the astrological evidence, I would first write a history of the Western world view from the ancient Greek to the postmodern that would set out the necessary concepts and contexts for understanding the significance of the archetypal planetary correlations. Over the next ten years, in the book

that became *The Passion of the Western Mind*, I traced the evolution of the archetypal perspective, the evolving status of astrology in the different eras, the crucial role of Christianity and Judaism, the complex interaction between religion and science and philosophy, the transformation of our cosmology, the rise of the modern self through the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution, the emergence of depth psychology out of the combined Romantic and Enlightenment streams of modernity, and finally our own postmodern age of extraordinary metaphysical uncertainty, fluidity, and pluralism.

Ideally, I felt this book could both properly prepare the reader for the astrological evidence and in some sense serve as a helpful foundation and source of credibility for what was to come. The second stage would be a book setting out a sufficient body of planetary correlations with archetypal patterns of human experience that the rigorous, open-minded reader could come to his or her own assessment of the potential validity and value of astrology. This would become *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*, but although most of the research and the basic framework had been completed by the early 1980s, another step would intervene.

After *The Passion of the Western Mind* was published in 1991, I was invited to join the faculty as a professor of philosophy at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, an accredited graduate school that focused especially on psychology, religion, and philosophy. To my surprise, both the faculty and the students requested that I teach not only the history of philosophy and Western thought but also the astrological research, which Grof and I began to do in quite large graduate seminars, the most highly enrolled courses in the school. In addition, with the cosmologist Brian Swimme, the philosopher Robert McDermott, the ecofeminist Charlene Spretnak, and others we began in 1994 a multidisciplinary Master's and Ph.D. program called Philosophy, Cosmology and Consciousness. We essentially created a program that represented what we ourselves would want to attend if we were now beginning graduate school. As the institute catalog described the program:

This course of study is designed for students who wish to engage the intellectual challenge, in our postmodern age, of exploring new understandings of the cosmos and the human being's place in it. . . . Areas of inquiry include cosmology, epistemology, metaphysics and metapsychology, as well as archetypal studies (Platonic, Romantic, esoteric), mythology, history of ideas, evolution of consciousness, ecofeminist thought, new paradigm studies, and the changing relationship between science and spirituality.

Over the next seventeen years, hundreds of unusually committed, often brilliant students participated in the PCC program, as it is called, and, again to my surprise, the language of

archetypal astrology became a kind of lingua franca (or lingua astra) within the community, used as a uniquely powerful tool for self-understanding as well as historical and philosophical insight. Since then, many courses have been taught applying the method and perspective of archetypal astrological analysis to history, to psychology, to music and film, even to comedic creativity and the cultural role of comedy (in a course I co-taught with John Cleese). The teaching of such courses also had the beneficial effect on the writing of *Cosmos and Psyche*, as the years of lectures and discussions shaped the presentation of the astrological evidence to be as clear and effective as possible. (As Heidegger once said, the person in the classroom who is learning the most is the instructor.) But even more important was the larger multidisciplinary dialogue that was an essential element of the faculty and students' interactions. For by bringing astrology into direct engagement with the thinking of pioneers in other disciplines – contemporary physics and evolutionary cosmology, ecology, feminism, history of ideas, epistemology, postmodern philosophy, religious studies – the PCC program provided a nourishing matrix for the evolution, critical self-reflection, and refinement of astrological thought in a philosophically rigorous, open-minded academic setting. These are the bridges that are needed for the return of astrology to the center of our cultural life, where it belongs.

An example of the kind of dialogue and synthesis developing during these years was the “Return of Soul to the Cosmos” conference in San Francisco in 1997, organized by Barbara Winkler and myself, with psychologists James Hillman and Stan Grof, physicists Victor Mansfield and Will Keepin, and many leading astrologers – Robert Hand, Charles Harvey, Stephen Arroyo, Caroline Casey, Steven Forrest, Karen Hamaker, Gerry Goddard, and others – and with over a thousand people in attendance.

Because cosmology is the encompassing container within which take place all our activities both inner and outer, collectively and individually, and conversely, because our cosmology is deeply influenced by our psychology, as so much postmodern thought has shown, the dialogue between cosmology and psychology is perhaps especially critical, with astrology as a meeting point. It was particularly in conversations in 2001 between Brian Swimme and myself – representing, as it were, the two poles within the PCC program, cosmos moving towards psyche, and psyche moving towards cosmos – that the term “archetypal cosmology” began to be used more regularly, drawing on parallels between Swimme's concept of cosmic powers and the cosmic archetypes evident in astrology. A public “Dialogue on Archetypal Cosmology” took place at Esalen in 2004, followed by a co-taught seminar, “Archetypal Process: Whitehead, Jung, and the Meeting of Psychology and Cosmology.”

After *Cosmos and Psyche* was published in 2006, a positive sign of astrology's gradual rapprochement with other intellectual communities was its being awarded the Book of the

Year Prize from the Scientific and Medical Network in the UK, an international association of new-paradigm, spiritually engaged scientists and scholars (members include Sheldrake, Pribram, Laszlo, and David Lorimer, and in earlier years Bohm and Schumacher); until that time, no book involving astrology had received the award nor played a role in the Network's conferences or public lectures. By this time I had also begun lecturing about archetypal astrology and cultural history at many Jungian associations and institutes in the U.S., at the Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara where I often offered courses, and at Eranos in Ascona, Switzerland, where Jung had presented his first paper on synchronicity, his final lecture at Eranos, in 1951.

In 2007, a group of about seventy scholars, researchers, and practitioners in the Bay Area formed the Archetypal Research Collective, with monthly meetings, presentations, and discussions. The following year, the scholarly *Archai Journal of Archetypal Cosmology* was started under the editorship of Keiron Le Grice and Rod O'Neal, its website established, and annual issues published first online and subsequently in hard copy. PCC professor Sean Kelly's *Coming Home: The Birth and Transformation of the Planetary Era*, published in 2009, provided in its epilogue an important analysis of the teleological dimension of history as it unfolds through the archetypal cycles correlated with the planetary alignments. Le Grice's *The Archetypal Cosmos: Recovering the Gods in Myth, Science, and Astrology*, published in 2010, set out a comprehensive analysis of an emerging cosmology reflecting a synthesis of Jungian psychology, Campbell's work in myth, and the new paradigm sciences, with archetypal astrology at the center.

Most recently, the several leading teachers of archetypal cosmology in the Bay Area – Le Grice, Jessica Garfield-Kabbara, Chad Harris, Matthew Stelzner, Rod O'Neal, Bill Streett, and Grant Maxwell, along with Stan Grof and myself – founded the Institute of Archetypal Cosmology, with the first foundational series of lectures (later to be streamed as teleseminars) taking place in early 2011. Another recent expression of the vitality of the field is *Correlations*, a series of lively, accessible podcasts on archetypal astrology hosted by Matthew Stelzner, with Delia Shargel, Garfield-Kabbara, Harris, and other leading archetypal astrologers in conversation.

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A final few words on the basic principles underlying archetypal cosmology.

The term "cosmology" reflects its focus on the implicit encompassing framework of our experience. Archetypal cosmology represents a multidisciplinary engagement with our civilization's world view, involving a dialogue of archetypal astrology with philosophy,

psychology, religion, science, history, culture and the arts, with the unique vantage point offered by the observations of systematic planetary correlations with archetypally patterned phenomena in human experience.

The term “archetypal” connotes its origins in both the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition and Jungian depth psychology, with more primordial roots in the mythological and religious experience of the ancients. Each planetary archetype is a multidimensional principle that reflects simultaneously a psychological impulse and formal patterning, as in the Jungian perspective; a transcendent metaphysical cosmic principle, as in the Platonic Ideas; and a numinous mythic being, as expressed in the Homeric epics or in the iconography of the ancient mystery religions, and as experienced in our own age in various forms of non-ordinary states of consciousness.

Archetypal astrology is not concretely predictive, but archetypally predictive. The archetypes are multivalent in their expression, open to creative enactment in a wide variety of ways that are nevertheless reflective of the essential core principle: both life-enhancing and destructive potentials, noble or ignoble, profound or trivial. (For example, a Venus-Saturn aspect could be experienced as a tendency towards fidelity in love, loyalty in friendship, duty and obligation in love relationships, difficulties in love, romantic obstacles, sustained and enduring love, love that thrives within or overcomes hardships, loss of love, cold-heartedness, the convergence of love and death, mature love, romance with an older person, romantic love in later years, aesthetic tendencies of a more classical form, appreciation of ancient or old objects, the preservation of old works of art, disciplined artistic expression, concrete sculptural forms of art, gravitas in social bearing, awareness of proper social etiquette and social duty, care in clothing and self-adornment, the convergence of beauty and maturity, and so forth. . . .)

The main astrological focus in archetypal cosmology is on planetary aspects: the alignments of the planets, Sun, and Moon, in natal charts, personal transits and progressions, and world transits. The evidence suggests the importance of recognizing larger orbs than have generally been used in traditional astrology. Aspects are seen less as acting like isolated on-and-off light switches and more as indicating archetypal wave forms that enter into the individual or collective psychic field, and interact with the larger complex whole of archetypal dynamics cumulatively operative in the field. These are shaped and inflected by the specific circumstances and creative responses of the individuals and communities in question, and then expressed as concrete occasions of experience.

This is where the dignity of human freedom, creativity, and responsibility comes into play. The chordal structures may be given by the cosmos, but the melodies we sing, the

dances we dance, are up to us. Archetypes are essentially open to multiple inflections, and they seem to always have a shadow potential. From this perspective, archetypal multivalence in an open universe is directly interconnected with human autonomy. Indeed, some of the archetypes seem to play crucial roles in the evolution of human autonomy itself.

One other distinguishing characteristic of this approach to astrology is the greater awareness of the extent to which the collective and individual are in complex interpenetration, the individual a carrier of the whole, the whole constantly being shaped by the individual. This complex holistic interaction between whole and part is also evident in the way that previous alignments, archetypal infusions, and cultural epochs cumulatively live on in the present, so that we are each carrying the full legacy of history, ancestral, cultural, biological, geological, cosmological, spiritual. Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy provides an especially valuable frame of reference for understanding these matters, as does Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, enhanced by the findings of Grof's perinatal and transpersonal psychology. Christopher Bache's work in the area of the species mind has been highly useful in this regard, integrating Sheldrake's theory of morphic fields. And Jorge Ferrer's theory of participatory enactment has illuminated some of the more conceptually challenging issues in astrology involving metaphysical pluralism and epistemological relativism.

An essential aspiration of archetypal cosmology is a high level of scholarly rigor and critical discernment in the presentation of evidence and the drawing of conclusions. We would expect and demand the same standards of scholarship and analytical care as would be assumed for any other contemporary academic discipline. Because of the intrinsic multivalence and multidimensionality of the archetypes, and because of the complexity and unpredictability of multiple factors modulating the concrete expression of archetypes in any specific event or experience, our present conviction is that quantitative, statistical methods of analysis do not appear to be adequate for assessing archetypal astrological correlations. These are, certainly at present, too blunt an instrument to register the intricate variations of archetypal patterning in human experience, any more than one could measure the psychological profundity of a Shakespearean play or a Beethoven symphony.

We today in the early twenty-first century who have been initiated into astrology live with a deep sense of paradox. We know that the astrological perspective provides an astonishing source of illumination for virtually every area of human experience, yet we live in an era when it is viewed by the established intellectual authorities as the most lowly and absurd of beliefs. Given our experience of its validity and value, we would imagine that astrology would be held in the highest regard, yet it is the very gold standard

of superstition in our culture. And behind this paradox lies a great contradiction: Astrology “works,” consistently, even dazzlingly, yet it contradicts the most basic assumptions of the disenchanting modern cosmology that we all were educated within and that continues to be taught in universities and expressed in most scientific and scholarly literature. Astrology is unintelligible within a randomly evolving universe of purposeless matter and energy.

And this tension of opposites intrinsic to the world of the thoughtful modern astrologer is complicated by yet another: Many practitioners of astrology in our own time continue to impart, often unconsciously, a deterministic, even fatalistic, concretely predictive view of astrological causation in human life, yet the modern self is constituted on a fundamental sense of human freedom and individual self-determination. Such practices make astrology seem not only intellectually naive but morally problematic, psychologically wounding, and deeply out of step with the spirit of the modern self. Yet clearly astrological factors are relevant to understanding the dynamics of human life.

Only by holding these several paradoxes and contradictions as consciously and thoughtfully as possible can we move towards that higher synthesis our culture deeply needs. And indeed, it was thinking through these paradoxes and contradictions that played a crucial role in the emergence of archetypal cosmology.

In the end, I believe that the astonishingly consistent and nuanced reality of the planetary correlations with the archetypal dynamics of human life is one of the most compelling intimations we have that we live in a meaning-laden and purposeful universe -- a cosmos that is deeply coherent with our deepest spiritual and moral aspirations. Recognition of these correlations can help us be more consciously co-creative participants in a cosmic unfolding. All of this points to yet another level of archetypal understanding: what Plato would call the Idea of the Good informing the cosmos, what Hegel would call the World Spirit realizing itself through history, and what Jung would call the Self archetype operating within the collective evolution of humankind itself. I believe astrology can serve as a powerful catalyst and vessel of this evolution of consciousness, as it reframes the larger Copernican revolution as part of a long, birth-panged initiation of humanity and the Earth into the larger galactic and cosmic community of being. In this sense, astrology would itself seem to have an archetypal character, as a form of Promethean fire that could help liberate humankind from the collapsing modern containment it has clearly outgrown.