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Keiron Le Grice and Rod O’Neal
Section One

Theoretical Foundations of Archetypal Cosmology
The Birth of a New Discipline
Archetypal Cosmology in Historical Perspective

Keiron Le Grice

This opening essay places archetypal cosmology in its historical context by exploring its main antecedents and identifying its likely future directions. Drawing parallels with the beginning of the psychoanalytic movement over a century ago, Le Grice discusses the emergence of archetypal cosmology from the confluence of ancient Greek thought, depth psychology, and astrology, and considers specifically the contributions of C. G. Jung, James Hillman, Stanislav Grof, and Richard Tarnas.

At the turn of the twentieth century, when Sigmund Freud first developed the theoretical framework and therapeutic method of psychoanalysis in Vienna, one could scarcely have conceived of a movement less likely to exert a powerful, lasting influence on the modern mind. Controversial, taboo, ridiculed and rejected by many, psychoanalysis, with its theories of repressed libidinal impulses and childhood sexuality, radically contravened and challenged the deeply entrenched values, mores, and attitudes of the Victorian morality of the era. To many people at the time it must have seemed certain that psychoanalysis was destined to be quickly consigned to history, to be written off as a curious oddity, a failed experiment, a perverted and warped conception of human nature. The early reactions to Freud’s publications were scornful and scathing. According to Ernest Jones, Freud’s biographer and fiercest ally, “The Interpretation of Dreams had been hailed as fantastic and ridiculous . . . the Three Essays were [deemed] shockingly wicked. Freud was a man with an evil and obscene mind.”

1. Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, ed. Lionel Trilling and Steven Marcus (New York: Basic Books, 1961), 243. As is well known, Freud compared the revolution he launched in psychology to the Copernican revolution in astronomy in that both served to undermine and deflate humanity’s self-image. The Copernican revolution is, of course, the paradigmatic example of a scientific-philosophical development that provoked resistance and derisive scorn on its first presentation to the intellectual community.

Yet within the space of a few decades, psychoanalysis and its many offshoots in the wider field of depth psychology had achieved a cultural influence extending right across the major urban centers of Europe, North America, and beyond. Today, over a century after the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, despite the repudiation of some of Freud’s more exaggerated claims and unsubstantiated theories, the prevalence and influence of the psychology of the unconscious across many areas of contemporary culture—including psychotherapy, religious studies, comparative mythology, critical theory, and the arts—is as pervasive as ever, and, for all its inherent shortcomings, it has contributed greatly to our understanding of human nature.

That the psychoanalytic movement was a necessary corrective to the values and world view of the nineteenth century is perfectly apparent to us now. Indeed, it seems in retrospect as if the emergence of that movement were in some way a response to the evolutionary imperatives of the time—as if it were just what was required for the modern self to achieve greater self-knowledge and self-awareness, and to outgrow the psychological and moral limitations of that period of history. Of course, it is seldom obvious to those enmeshed in a particular cultural zeitgeist, or those operating within the dominant scientific paradigms of the time, just how these paradigms will change in the future, or what ideas will next seize hold of the human mind and thereafter determine the direction of philosophical speculation and scientific research, or the course of major cultural shifts. In fact, as Thomas Kuhn’s work has well described, much psychological energy is usually invested in maintaining the hegemony of dominant paradigms and proclaiming their validity even in the face of mounting anomalies and contradictory evidence.3 Resistance to radical new ideas and anomalous data is an essential element in the dialectic of change, and this resistance is normally provided by those in the established majority viewpoint.

It therefore remains the fate of the few, often those existing outside the margins of conventional academic disciplines, to serve as emissaries for emerging truths; it is the challenge of a creative minority to nurture and give expression to the nascent ideas impinging on human consciousness. And—as the example of psychoanalysis plainly demonstrates—these few sometimes come from the most unexpected quarters, proclaiming the most unlikely message, and often to a skeptical or even hostile audience.

**Basic Postulates of Archetypal Cosmology**

Certain parallels might be observed between this precedent and the current emergence of *archetypal cosmology*, a new academic discipline that is being developed by a group of scholars and researchers based for the most part in the San Francisco Bay Area, California. Archetypal cosmology, which explores the correlation between discernible archetypal patterns

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in human experience and the structural order within the solar system, draws on the methodology, interpretive principles, and cosmological perspective provided by perhaps the most controversial of all subjects: astrology.

Although many people would be quick to reject outright the truth claims of astrology, recent evidence of striking correlations between planetary cycles and the major patterns of world history presented by philosopher and cultural historian Richard Tarnas has given to the discipline a new, unexpected credibility and provided the most compelling evidence yet that this ancient symbolic system, following decades of reformulation through its encounter with depth, humanistic, and transpersonal psychology, is once again worthy of serious consideration.

Archetypal astrology, as this new approach has been called, is based on an observed correspondence between the planets in the solar system and specific themes, qualities, and impulses associated with a set of universal principles and thematic categories known as planetary archetypes. Each of the planetary bodies, as well as the Sun and the Moon, is associated with a distinct archetypal principle. Thus, the planet Mars, for example, is related to a complex array of themes and qualities associated with the warrior archetype and, more generally, to the principle of assertion, action, and aggressive force; whereas Venus, understood in its simplest terms, is related to the principle of eros, romantic love, beauty, and pleasure. Rather like the ancient mythic conception of the gods, and as in the Platonic conception of archetypal Forms, the archetypal principles associated with the planets are recognized to be not only psychological but also cosmological in essence, exerting a dynamic formative ordering influence on both the interior and exterior dimensions of reality.

The central supposition informing archetypal astrology is that one can gain a deep insight into the archetypal dynamics underlying human experience by interpreting the meaning of the positions of the planets in relationship to each other. There are two main components to archetypal astrology: natal analysis and transit analysis. Natal analysis is based on the premise that the positions of the planets at the moment of a person’s birth, relative to the location of birth, can reveal a meaningful archetypal pattern that is expressed both in that individual’s personality and in the events and experiences of his or her personal biography. Transit analysis is based on the study of the cycles of the planets over time and the geometric relationships formed between the different planets within these cycles. These changing relationships are understood to be symbolically significant, to reveal corresponding changes in the thematic content and quality of human experience. Two types of transits are studied in archetypal astrology: world transits and personal transits. World transits relate to the whole world, to the changing patterns of collective human experience. Personal transits relate specifically to individuals, and are derived by comparing the positions of the orbiting planets at any given time with the positions of the planets in an individual’s birth chart. Here, then, briefly stated, are the essentials of astrological theory. Although traditional astrology is a vast

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4. The term world transit was first coined by Stanislav Grof during his research into astrology with Richard Tarnas at Esalen Institute in the 1970s.
and complex subject with a bewildering array of factors that could potentially be considered, archetypal astrology usually focuses only on these three “forms of correspondence,” as Tarnas has called them: the natal chart showing the planetary positions at the time of an individual’s birth, the changing planetary positions through time relative to the Earth (world transits), and the relationship between these two (personal transits).\(^5\)

The method employed to analyze and interpret the archetypal dynamics of human experience in terms of the movements of the planets is based on a consideration of the geometric alignment—the specific angle of relationship—formed between the different planets in their respective orbits.\(^6\) The meaning of every planetary alignment or aspect depends both upon the archetypal characteristics associated with the planets involved and the particular angle of relationship between the planets. As in the Pythagorean view, in astrology principles of number and geometry are recognized as fundamental to the deep structure and organization of the cosmos, and these numeric principles are reflected in the geometric relationships between the planets.

It is this method of interpreting world transits that was employed by Tarnas in his 2006 publication *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*. He found that during the period when two or more planets move into aspect—into significant angular relationship—the world events of that time (revolutions and wars, political and social movements, artistic expressions and scientific discoveries, cultural shifts and spiritual

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5. Archetypal astrological research as represented by Tarnas’s *Cosmos and Psyche* and in the *Archai* journal is not primarily concerned with the other major components of traditional astrological practice, such as the characteristics of the signs of the zodiac, the houses in the horoscope, rulerships, and other related factors. Rather, the focus is predominantly on the planets, their cyclical alignments, and the corresponding archetypal dynamics.

6. Each planet, as it orbits the Sun, changes its position relative to the Earth. These changing positions are precisely measured by tracking the movement of the planets around the Earth using, as a line of reference, what is known as the ecliptic. Over the course of a year, the Sun appears to move across the constellations of the fixed stars, circumambulating the Earth, and the ecliptic is the circular line based on the Sun’s apparent movement. As the planets continue along their orbits, their relative positions on the ecliptic change and they form different geometric alignments with each other. It is this changing pattern of planetary relationships that is studied in astrology in order to understand the changing relationships between the archetypal principles associated with the planets. To know how we are related to the planets at a moment in time gives us insight into how we are related to the different archetypal principles these planets represent.

The major aspects recognized in the astrological tradition are the conjunction (two or more planets approximately 0 degrees apart), the sextile (60 degrees), the square (90 degrees), the trine (120 degrees), and the opposition (180 degrees). Of these, Tarnas found that the quadrature alignments—the conjunction, the opposition, and the square—are usually the most significant in terms of understanding both world events and the major themes of individual biography. In the astrological tradition, these alignments are considered to be dynamic, “hard,” or challenging in that they signify relationships between the archetypal principles that generally require some form of adaptation or considerable exertion or struggle to integrate, that tend to promote action to release the inherent energetic tension between the archetypal principles, and that are, therefore, often seen as most problematic or challenging, if ultimately creative and progressive. The trine and sextile, by contrast, are deemed “soft,” harmonious, or confluent aspects in that they tend to indicate a relatively well-established, already integrated, mutually supportive, and harmonious relationship between the archetypal principles. At the risk of oversimplification, one can think of the soft aspects as already integrated states of being and the hard aspects as dynamic states of becoming that require integration.
transformations) and the entire zeitgeist (the pervasive mood or spirit of the age) reflect the archetypal meanings associated with that particular planetary combination. For example, Tarnas realized that those periods in history when Uranus and Pluto were in major dynamic alignment (including the years 1787–1798 centered on the French Revolution, the 1845–1856 period of the revolutions across Europe and the wider world, and the decade of the 1960s) were characterized by a complex of themes associated with the dynamic mutual interaction of the two planetary archetypes: the eruption of powerful revolutionary impulses, the liberation of the instincts (both libidinal and aggressive), the empowerment of mass freedom movements, and a pervasive mood of radical change and turbulence—to give but a few examples. During these periods, in agreement with the established astrological meaning of the planets, the Uranus archetype liberated and awakened the instincts and primordial drives associated with Pluto, as the Pluto archetype simultaneously empowered and intensified the revolutionary, experimental impulses associated with Uranus. In this way, the interaction of the two planetary archetypes shaped the defining themes and character of the entire culture during the periods when the two corresponding planets were in alignment. Tarnas discovered that, potentially, every historical period could be analyzed in this way. The study of the different combinations of these planetary archetypes, he realized, provides us with a powerful method to help understand the shifting dynamics of both cultural history and individual biography.

As with psychoanalysis a century ago, however, it is difficult to imagine a subject more incongruent with the dominant paradigms and established knowledge of the time than astrology. Despite its illustrious past, when it was held in high esteem by many of the world’s great civilizations, now, as Tarnas has said, astrology represents “the gold standard of superstition” in that it is seen by many to be the very epitome of the obscure irrationalism and projected mythic thinking that modern science has sought to overcome and dispel. The repudiation of the geocentric model of the solar system after the Copernican Revolution, and the absence of any adequate scientific explanation as to how the distant planets could possibly influence human lives, were believed by many to have deprived astrology of its former claims to validity, and condemned it to cultural and academic obscurity—a position that the inane, superficial forms of contemporary popular astrology have done little to redress. Moreover, the popular misconception of astrology, that human fates are unalterably “written in the stars,” seems to deprive human beings of the power of self-determination and to mark a return, therefore, to an oppressive fatalism, to a universe of inescapable predestination. Astrology, as it is commonly understood, appears to contradict the idea that we are free to forge our lives and shape our identities through acts of free will, to choose and fashion the life we please, and it is therefore perceived as a threat to the sovereign power of the human self. For some people, understandably, this itself is reason enough to reject astrology out of hand.

8. Tarnas, personal communication.
The Birth of a New Discipline

Keiron Le Grice

I should be clear, then, that the new archetypal understanding of astrology is far removed from the fatalistic predestination long associated with its traditional and popular forms. For astrology, according to Tarnas’s helpful definition, is not to be understood as literally predictive of future events and therefore indicative of the inescapable workings of a preordained fate, but rather as archetypally predictive in that its methods of analysis and interpretation of the planetary positions and movements give insight into the archetypal determinants, the general themes and motifs, evident in our experiences and not to the specific form of manifestation of these archetypes. To understand how an archetypal complex might manifest in the concrete particulars of life one would need to take into consideration many other factors not apparent from the astrology alone: cultural background, economic and social conditions, genetic inheritance, and, crucially, the degree of conscious awareness guiding our actions and decisions. Archetypal astrology is informed by a fundamental insight into the complex participatory nature of human experience. It is based upon the recognition that human experience, although occurring within a framework of cosmically based archetypal meanings, is shaped by the crucial intervention of the individual will. The archetypal principles, moreover, although always thematically constant, are radically indeterminate as to their forms of expression in the concrete particulars of human lives. As Tarnas has pointed out, the astrological archetypes are both multivalent (given to a range of expressions while remaining consistent with a central core of meaning) and multidimensional (manifesting in different ways across the various dimensions of human experience).

I should explain also that while astrology is incompatible with the basic tenets of mechanistic science and the materialistic conceptions of the nature of reality that have prevailed in the modern era, it is far more congruent with many of the so-called new paradigm perspectives that have recently emerged in physics, biology, psychology, and elsewhere. The ideas of holism, interconnectedness, interdependence, organicism, self-organization, and non-local causality that have emerged from relativity theory and quantum theory in physics or from the systems approach in biology have presented us with a view of reality sharply divergent from that based on classical physics and the still-dominant Cartesian-Newtonian mechanistic paradigm. It is more congruent, too, with the recent theories of an omnicentric universe emerging out of cosmology and modern physics, which, in recognizing that we are all inescapably centered in our psychological perspectives with regard to the universe, support astrology’s assumption of a person-centered (and therefore geocentric) viewpoint. These new models, together with the insights of depth psychology, provide an increasingly coherent and supportive theoretical context within which we can better comprehend the likely basis of astrological correspondences.

Archetypal cosmology thus incorporates not only the study of the correlation between the planetary alignments and archetypally themed phenomena in human experience

10. Tarnas, Cosmos and Psyche, 87.
(archetypal astrology), but also the wider issue of archetypal astrology’s relationship to and place within new paradigms of understanding and emerging cultural world views. Drawing on many fields of inquiry, it is concerned with the attempts to understand, in philosophical and scientific terms, the basis of astrological correlations, and the challenge of explicating the implications of archetypal astrology for contemporary global culture.

**Origins, Antecedents, and Emergence**

The emergence of any new field of research or a new paradigm of inquiry is in some sense always marked by a decisive break with the established body of learning and accepted knowledge of the day—and this is certainly true of archetypal cosmology. Yet invariably, a new field of study, no matter how controversial and radical its premises and implications, is also the result of the confluence of other well-established areas of knowledge, when existing theories, methods, and systems of thinking are brought together in creative and perhaps unexpected ways to give birth to something distinct and original. Psychoanalysis, for instance, came directly out of the late-nineteenth century neurology and hypnotism practiced by Charcot, Janet, Breuer, and Freud. Within a wider context, it brought together major elements of both the Romantic and Enlightenment traditions—confirming, on the one hand, insights into the unconscious basis of human motivations identified by the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and, on the other, applying to human psychology the rationalism and causal determinism that informed natural science and medicine. Looking back further, psychoanalytic developments such as the recognition of the primary drives of Eros and Thanatos, and the Oedipus and Electra complexes as underlying patterns of human behavior, presented a vision of human nature that, even amidst the scientific materialism of the time, recalled in its language and theoretical formulations the mythic sensibility of ancient Greece—a parallel that was more fully apparent in C. G. Jung’s later, more explicitly mythic, analytical psychology.

Historically, the roots of much of what now constitutes modern philosophical discourse and scientific inquiry can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, or earlier, when the human mind first grappled with the great questions of origin and purpose, seeking order and meaning behind the apparent flux of the phenomenal world. Atomistic science, for instance, was prefigured in the philosophy of Democritus; systems theory, in its recognition of the role of self-organizing form and pattern, has given emphasis to an idea not unlike Aristotle’s concept of formal causation; the heliocentric model of the solar system, with a moving Earth and stationary Sun, was anticipated by the speculations of Aristarchus; and quantum physics, which has disclosed a universe of dynamic change and process rather than one of static material forms, recalls Heraclitus’s famous insight that all is flux. In all these cases and more, ancient conceptions of the cosmos, formulated by the Greeks, returned many centuries later to the forefront of intellectual discourse and became pivotal to the dominant conceptions of the nature of reality and the
empirically derived models of modern science. As they reach into the future, then, all new movements and new disciplines are, it seems, simultaneously rooted in the past.

It is just this interplay between old and new, ancient and modern, that has given birth to archetypal cosmology. Here too the confluence of many fields of knowledge and culture has contributed to the emergence of this new multi-disciplinary subject—astrology, depth psychology, history, philosophy, cosmology, religious studies, comparative mythology, cultural studies, the arts, and the new sciences. And here too both the philosophical ideas and the earlier mythic sensibility of the ancient Greeks have once again resurfaced, for the astrological perspective, as Tarnas has pointed out, incorporates both the Homeric vision of an Olympian pantheon of gods and goddesses, and the Pythagorean-Platonic conception of the universe as pervasively ordered and dynamically infused with transcendent archetypal forms, both mythic and mathematical in nature.11

It is here, of course, that archetypal cosmology sharply diverges from and challenges the fundamental assumptions informing the dominant contemporary Western world view. Under the philosophical influence of rationalism, positivism, and materialism, together with the rise of empirical science and the establishment of monotheistic Christianity as the dominant Western religion, the ancient gods of Greek and Roman mythology were “forgotten”— dismissed first as pagan idols, and then as nothing but fictional creations of the imagination, superstitions of archaic belief systems from a pre-scientific age. After the Scientific Revolution, the idea that the universe is ordered by transcendent principles and that this order is the expression of a universal intelligence—a divine logos or nous—seemed, to the scientific mind, outmoded, fanciful, and altogether remote from contemporary thought. In the modern era, all explanations of phenomena in terms of transcendent factors, although often fundamental to earlier world views, were repudiated—deemed both unknowable and unnecessary—and replaced by entirely naturalistic accounts. Only the evidence of the senses, subjected to critical reason and the scientific method, could be relied upon in the quest for knowledge. The age of the gods had passed. The age of science and modern industrial society was upon us.

Two critical developments provided essential foundations for the scientific enterprise. Cartesian philosophy established a radical dualism between the inner world of human subjectivity and the external world of matter, between the thinking self or soul (res cogitans) and the unthinking extended substance of the world (res extensa). Newtonian mechanics then explicated the fundamental laws of nature and provided the mathematical models that enabled scientists to understand the workings of the external world and thus to measure, predict, and control its processes and operations. The external world seemed to be perfectly comprehensible on its own terms without reference to human thoughts, feelings, desires, and so forth. Scientific objectivity was born, and the efficacy of science was powerfully demonstrated by the unprecedented mastery of nature achieved since the Industrial Revolution.

A consequence of Cartesian ontology is that human beings were effectively seen to be inhabiting two separate yet mysteriously connected worlds: one to be accessed by looking out with the senses, the other by looking within introspectively. Increasingly, the sacred and the spiritual dimensions of life were to be approached and accessed only through human interiority, if at all. The material world was viewed as entirely unconscious, devoid of spiritual value or intrinsic meaning, comprised only of inert matter moved mechanistically by external, scientifically measurable forces. Science and spirituality were thrust apart. The sacred was divorced from matter. The cosmos became disenchanted.

In the modern world picture, as Tarnas has described at length, the only source of purpose, value, or reasoning consciousness was taken to be the individual human mind, which was itself seen as a mere epiphenomenon of the brain. The human being came to be conceived as a socially conditioned, biologically driven, genetically coded material organism existing as a peripheral, accidental creature confronted with the unimaginable vastness of a purposeless, soulless, mechanistic universe. Against this desolate vision stood the subjective reality of human self-awareness with its depth of interior experience that belied any reductionist explanations of consciousness. Without a sense of participation in a meaningful universe that a viable guiding myth, narrative, or cosmology could provide, however, the human became subject to all manner of existential distress and anxieties. It was in this context that depth psychology found its place in modern culture, first to try to alleviate the symptoms of psychopathology and then later, with Jung’s work in particular, to help modern individuals find their own sense of meaning and spiritual purpose based not on an outmoded religious orthodoxy, nor even on reason, but rather on a living relationship to the dynamisms in the depths of the human unconscious psyche.

It is surely more than just coincidence that the unconscious was discovered in precisely the same historical period that brought forth Nietzsche’s proclamation that “God is dead.” At almost the very moment when the modern self found itself inhabiting an external cosmos in which all trace of the divine had seemingly vanished—a cosmos utterly devoid of spiritual meaning and purpose—human consciousness immediately plunged into the unsuspected interior depths of the unconscious psyche. In this newly discovered inner world, it became apparent that the ancient gods, although long forgotten and unrecognized, lived on. Thus Jung, in a famous passage, remarked:

We can congratulate ourselves on having already reached such a pinnacle of clarity, imagining that we have left all these phantasmal gods behind. But


what we have left behind are only verbal specters, not the psychic facts that were responsible for the birth of the gods. We are still as much possessed by autonomous psychic contents as if they were Olympians. Today they are called phobias, obsessions, and so forth; in a word, neurotic symptoms. The gods have become diseases.\(^\text{14}\)

The “gods” had not permanently disappeared, they had just become invisible to the modern mind, with its gaze directed outwards, and its vision blinkered to any other psychological reality save for that of its own conscious awareness and rational volition. Without a vital living mythology, the modern mind did not and could not readily discern the activity of those powerful dynamic forces formerly conceived as gods. It seemed, in fact, that the only way modern ego-consciousness could be alerted to the existence of autonomous factors outside of its own control was in the form of psychological or physical pathology. And so it was, through depth psychology’s exploration of the symptoms and causes of this pathology, that the “gods” were rediscovered, no longer of course as exalted Olympians or celestial powers, but now as wholly intrapsychic factors to be approached through human interiority. “All ages before ours believed in gods in some form or other,” Jung explained. “Only an unparalleled impoverishment in symbolism,” he added, “could enable us to discover the gods as psychic factors, which is to say, as archetypes of the unconscious.”\(^\text{15}\)

The discovery and exploration of the unconscious exposed the rationalistic fallacy of the belief in the sovereign power of the conscious ego and of willpower in self-determination. The psychology of the unconscious discredited the psychologically naïve view that we are “masters of our own house,” that we have a singular conscious will, centered upon the ego, and that this will is the unassailable determining factor in our lives. Depth psychology demonstrated that we do not have just one will, consciously controlled, but many motivational centers that move us often unconsciously and that may at times work at cross-purposes. The ego, the center of conscious awareness, is just a small part of the total psyche; it is one psychological complex among many, albeit a singularly important one. Depth psychology, in general, demonstrated that much of human life is determined by unconscious factors beyond our control, and Jungian analytical psychology, in particular, articulated the collective, universal, and mythic nature of the multiple archetypal centers in the unconscious—a perspective that was directly comparable to, and subsequently influential on, the archetypal astrological vision.

During the course of his work, Jung had observed that the fantasies and dreams described by his patients could not all be traced back to their own personal histories. Rather, some fantasy images were populated with motifs and symbols that appeared to be drawn from

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the mythological traditions of our collective past. As Jung examined more closely the content of such dreams and fantasies, he found evidence of a meaningful order within the human psyche, of a previously unrecognized dimension of the psyche that structures and organizes human imagination and cognition. He became convinced that underlying the individual human mind there must be a deeper collective level. Jung postulated that the Freudian model of the unconscious—of a personal unconscious consisting of repressed memories and socially unacceptable impulses, desires, and fears—rests upon an additional, deeper transpersonal “layer,” which he later called the collective unconscious or objective psyche. He discovered that human life was not only motivated by instinctual drives rooted in human physiology and psychological material repressed into the personal unconscious, as Freud thought, but that it was also shaped by universal mythological ideas and archetypal patterns in the collective unconscious. This deep foundation and collective stratum of the psyche, in Jung’s view, serves as a “storehouse” or “repository” of the instincts and dynamic forms behind human existence, but it is also “the matrix of experience,” the pre-existent ground from which the individual personality centered on the ego-complex emerges.

Existing within the collective unconscious are archetypes such as the hero, the shadow, the anima, the animus, the wise old man, the child, the Great Mother, and the Self. These were conceived by Jung as innate structuring principles and dynamic psychic forms behind human life, principles that are both instinctual and spiritual, both natural and transcendent. Indeed, such is the complex character of the archetypes that Jung felt it necessary to employ a wide variety of terms to describe them: “formative principle[s] of instinctual power,” “conditioning factors,” “ruling powers,” “gods,” “universal images,” “unconscious dominants,” “patterns of behavior,” “primordial ideas,” “a priori ideational pattern[s],” “transcendently conditioned dynamisms,” “organizing forms”—to give but a few examples. He suggested, furthermore, that the archetypes are “active, living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions.” Jung therefore situated his theory of archetypes firmly in the mythic-Platonic tradition. Like the mythological gods, the


19. “Within the limits of psychic experience,” Jung proposed, “the collective unconscious takes the place of the Platonic realm of eternal Ideas. Instead of these models giving form to created things, the collective unconscious, through its archetypes, provides the a priori condition for the assignment of meaning.” See C. G. Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis, 2nd ed., 1955–1956, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 87. What is in question here is exactly what the “limits of psychic experience” are. If the psyche, as Jung suggested elsewhere, rests on a transcendental background and is fundamentally connected to nature and the external world, then Jung’s theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious, in its later formulation, is closer to the Platonic position than has generally been assumed. This implication is strongly reinforced by Jung’s observations of synchronistic phenomena.
archetypes are the formative principles, supraordinate to human consciousness and will, that structure, order, and animate our life experience.

Despite echoes of the mythic language of the Greeks, Freudian psychology presented a deterministic and reductionist model of the human psyche, one that rejected any kind of spiritual or transcendent value to human experience: Human nature could be understood in terms of unconscious instinctual impulses, rooted in biology, and in causal-historical terms as the consequence of repressed trauma from early biographical experiences. For Jung, however, the complexes of personal biography were ultimately based upon the collective archetypes, which were spiritual factors, possessed of numinous charge and instinctual power, that wrought radical evolution and transformation in human experience, and impelled the psychological developmental process that he called individuation. And it is these archetypes, in their deepest form, that are the primary focus of archetypal cosmology.

If the Greek vision provides the philosophical foundations for archetypal cosmology, its more immediate antecedents and foundations lie here, in depth psychology, particularly in the line running from Jung to James Hillman and Stanislav Grof. In many respects, archetypal cosmology represents a continuation of some of the major contributions of these three theorists, marking a further development in our understanding of the place and significance of archetypes and the unconscious psyche both in human experience and in the universe at large.

Jung’s research into the phenomenon of synchronicity had alerted him to the possibility that archetypes are not just intrapsychic images apparent in dreams and fantasies since, under certain conditions, archetypes also seem to find expression in external events and circumstances. Synchronicity, according to Jung’s most precise definition of the term, is the “meaningful coincidence” of an external event and an interior, subjective experience, occurring simultaneously, in which the external event is clearly related to the individual’s psychological state at that moment.20 Synchronicity is the unexpected, uncanny, and often numinous collision of the inner and outer worlds at a specific moment in time for which there seems to be no linear causal explanation, and which calls into question the radical Cartesian division between mind and matter that has been so influential on the modern world view. In instances of synchronicity, the usual division of mind and matter is transcended, revealing, Jung suggested, the underlying unity of the inner and outer worlds. Psyche and cosmos, he reasoned, appear to be two aspects of a cosmic psyche or unus mundus, a single undivided reality.21 The unconscious, from this perspective, is not to be conceived as a collective layer of the individual human mind, but as something more like a universal field within which we live, one that is inextricably connected to nature and the external world. And the archetypes, at their deepest level, appear to be dynamic ordering factors of this field, the formative principles of a single universal psyche.

The planetary archetypes recognized in astrology seem to relate most especially to Jung’s conception of the archetypes *per se*, foundational forms existing behind the archetypal images, whose core meanings can only be intuited, never fully grasped by the intellect. They relate also to Jung’s notion of the “psychoid” basis of the archetypes, by which he sought to convey something of their complex essence as principles that are at once both material and psychological, manifest in the materiality of the cosmos yet giving rise to archetypal images and mythic motifs in the psyche. The astrological archetypes associated with the planets are universal principles lying behind the more specific archetypal images identified by Jung. The astrological Moon, for example, which is associated with the emotions, the urge to care and be cared for, and with the receptive, feeling-based dimension of the human personality, includes within its more general, universal meaning at least three Jungian archetypes: the anima, the mother, and the child, which are all connected to the Great Mother archetype, the whole, the matrix of being. These archetypal images, which are overlapping and mutually implicated, are best understood as derivative expressions of the underlying planetary archetypes, as are the gods and goddesses of mythology, which appear to be personified forms and inflections of these deeper universal principles.

Certain aspects of Jung’s mythically informed vision were taken up by James Hillman in the late 1960s as he developed his own self-styled “archetypal psychology.” Inspired by Renaissance Neoplatonism, Hillman’s psychology, which is allied with the work of Henry Corbin, more explicitly articulated and championed the imaginal life of the soul in all its nobility, pathos, beauty, and mythic diversity than even Jung’s work had. Although Hillman rejected Jung’s Kantian notion of archetypes as unknowable reified entities existing behind archetypal images (seeing such theorizing as just another type of archetypal fantasy, one not to be taken literally), he affirmed and expanded Jung’s larger vision of the pluralistic archetypal nature of the psyche. Following Jung, Hillman granted to the imaginal world its own vital reality, honoring the multifarious productions of the psyche—its pathology, its mythic figures and fantasies—in their own right. Contrary to monotheistic conceptions of the divine, and challenging the humanistic idea that the psyche is a function of the singular human self, he believed that the psyche is home to many “persons,” and many gods and goddesses, and the ego should therefore give up the illusion of sole occupancy. The realization of the pluralistic or polytheistic nature of the psyche, Hillman suggested, could be achieved by adopting a metaphorical way of experiencing—by cultivating an “archetypal eye” to see through the concrete literalisms of contemporary life to the deeper mythic realities this concealed.

22. For an exploration of Jung’s concept of the archetype *per se* or archetype-as-such, see Frey-Rohn, *From Freud to Jung*, 281–299.
24. See Tarnas’s delineation of the archetypal meanings associated with the Moon in this issue of *Archai* (“The Planets,” 38). See also the descriptions of the planetary archetypes on the *Archai* website (www.archaijournal.org/fundamentals/planets.html).
approach, he hoped, could provide a way out of the repressive autocratic control of the modern ego, which he associated with monotheism, and give the soul more authentic expression in modern life. Hillman realized, moreover, that psychological conditions such as depression and neurosis are not simply something to be treated, corrected, and cured, as in the standard medical model of psychotherapy; rather, such symptoms, he argued, are essential expressions of the depths of the soul and the psyche, which, if affirmed and explored, could provide gateways to a richer, more meaningful life.

Finding myths and archetypes in evidence wherever he looked, Hillman also turned his archetypal eye to the wider culture, in the hope that this might restore a more aesthetic and mythic mode of being. Through Hillman’s work, according to Murray Stein’s summary,

The doors of analysis were sprung open and depth psychology was taken out of the clinical setting into the world at large. This offered a kind of psychological re-sacralization of the modern world, as myth-making could be taken up by individuals with an eye for archetypal image and structure.

Hillman recognized that gods and goddesses pervade everything—physical symptoms, society, works of art, histories and sciences, psychologies and philosophies. As he once said in his own inimitable way, you can’t open your mouth without a god speaking.

Hillman remained steadfastly faithful, in epistemological terms, to his insight into the archetypally conditioned nature of all theorizing and psychologizing. However, in some sense for Hillman everything is imagination; reality is the metaphorical imagining processes of the psyche. What is outside the psyche and its imaginal reality, one cannot really say. Thus, although archetypal psychology transcended the anthropocentrism and, most especially, the egocentrism, of the modern psyche, because of Hillman’s outright rejection of metaphysics it has in effect left intact the more fundamental Cartesian dichotomy between self and world, psyche and cosmos, upon which both depth and archetypal psychology were implicitly founded. The psyche is rich with metaphorical resonance, full of soul, the source of all our perceptions of the world, but, lacking an explicit metaphysical framework, it is not exactly clear just how the psyche is actually related to the world. To his credit, Hillman realized that “something further was needed” and that archetypal psychology should not continue to ignore the cosmological context, metaphysical assumptions, and world-relatedness it


presupposed. What is needed, Hillman conceded, is a “psychological cosmology” that addresses the relationship of archetypal psychology (and its therapeutic applications) to its deeper cosmological or metaphysical ground.

While he followed Jung in championing the archetypal dimension of the psyche, Hillman adopted a critical stance towards other major elements of Jung’s work, such as the concepts of the Self (the center, totality, and integrative capacity of the psyche) and individuation (the process of deep psychological transformation leading to wholeness and the conscious realization of the Self), believing that these concepts supported the monotheistic and linear-developmental perspectives that Hillman was so critical of and eschewed. Both these concepts are, however, extremely significant for archetypal cosmology.

The implications of synchronistic phenomena and astrological correlations suggest that the Self might be construed not only as the center and totality of the individual psyche, but as something like the organizing and integrative principle of a universal unconscious or cosmic psyche. “The Self is not only in me,” Jung famously declared, “but in all beings, like Atman, like Tao.” Like Atman, the Self is something like an individualized manifestation of the spiritual ground called Brahman in Hinduism; like Tao, the Self is akin to a principle of cosmological order, dynamic harmony, and integration. As a unifying integrating principle of the universal unconscious, it is the Self, or something like it, that appears to underlie and orchestrate the correspondence between the planetary movements and the archetypal dynamics of human experience, impelling the evolution of human consciousness through the medium of the cosmological archetypes much as on a personal level the Self serves as an integrating and transforming teleological principle within the individual psyche. An evolutionary or developmental perspective of this kind is fundamental to archetypal cosmology. For although the orbits of the planets ostensibly describe cyclical patterns of recurrence over time, the archetypal principles associated with the planets also appear to have teleological potentials, possessing an inherent goal-directedness and evolutionary character, moving human consciousness towards wholeness and self-realization. Archetypal cosmology (particularly transit analysis), by enabling one to map the qualitative and thematic changes in human experience, can therefore serve to illuminate the dynamics of both individuation and the evolution of cultural history. “The specificity of detail and cyclical patterning [provided by transit analysis],” as Tarnas concluded in *Cosmos and psyche*, “radically enhances our understanding of cultural evolution as a vast historical development that is shaped by dynamic archetypal forces, powers that move within a collective psyche that is in turn rooted in and expressive of a cosmic ground.”

Meanwhile, at the same time as Hillman was developing archetypal psychology in the 1960s and 1970s, Czech psychiatrist Stanislav Grof was developing transpersonal psychology. Emerging out of the psychoanalytic tradition that included the ideas and therapeutic modalities developed by Freud, Jung, Alfred Adler, Otto Rank, Wilhelm Reich, and others, Grof had pioneered his own experiential psychotherapy based on the powerful healing and heuristic potentials of non-ordinary states of consciousness. These non-ordinary states, which are induced either by psychoactive substances or through accelerated breathing techniques, or which arise spontaneously during psycho-spiritual crises, provide access to progressively deeper dimensions of the unconscious within which what Grof called the perinatal domain (relating to the psychodynamics and unconscious memories of the trauma of birth) seems to be pivotal. Yet the self-exploration of the unconscious is not limited to individual biography or the birth experience. Rather, Grof found that in non-ordinary states of consciousness one can gain access to what appear to be memories of historical, collective, cross-cultural, karmic, phylogenetic, and evolutionary events. Furthermore, these memories seem to be organized archetypally and thematically in such a way that traumatic experiences from one’s own biography, for example, are connected to qualitatively and archetypally similar experiences from our collective past. Deep psychological self-exploration in holotropic states, Grof discovered, provides firsthand experience of the reality of a universal, mythic-archetypal unconscious, thereby providing direct support for archetypal cosmology. As a result of his extensive research into holotropic states, Grof now sees ego-consciousness and the human psyche “as expressions and reflections of a cosmic intelligence that permeates the entire universe and all of existence.”32 (Grof describes his model of transpersonal psychology and its relationship to archetypal astrology in more detail later in this issue of Archai).

Working together at Esalen Institute in California, where they came into contact with astrological practitioners, Grof and Tarnas began to explore whether astrology could be used to help understand the widely varying non-ordinary states of consciousness arising during experiential therapy sessions. Despite their initial skepticism, to their astonishment they found that personal transit analysis was a reliable method of illuminating the archetypal themes, stages, and experiences encountered during these sessions, far surpassing in accuracy and predictive power all other forms of psychological diagnostics. Encouraged by this successful application of astrology, Tarnas then turned his attention to the wider culture, applying methods of astrological analysis and interpretation to the study of biographies and world history. And so began his thirty-year astrological voyage of discovery in which Tarnas conducted a systematic study of thousands of individual charts and the major events and periods of world history, culminating in the publication of his groundbreaking Cosmos and Psyche.

Drawing on the understanding of archetypes from depth psychology, Tarnas effectively connected the mythic and archetypal patterns in psychology, history, art, and culture identified by Jung, Hillman, Joseph Campbell, and others to the fundamental

universal archetypal principles recognized in astrology, which, Tarnas’s research confirmed, are consistently correlated with the movements and alignments of the planets. The astrological research suggested to him that these archetypal principles, which have been described in various ways throughout the history of Western thought, are not, as the modern mind had assumed, wholly nominalistic, intrapsychic factors. They are not just categories of the human psyche unconsciously projected onto a separate external reality as Jung had thought in the early and middle periods of his career; rather, as in Jung’s later formulation of the psychoid character of the archetype per se, they are creative powers inherent in the nature of reality itself—metaphysical and cosmological principles, as well as ordering factors and archetypal images in the psyche. Archetypal cosmology thus links the insights of depth psychology to the metaphysical and mythological foundations of the ancient Greeks and in so doing provides a cosmological context to depth psychology. By bringing together Jung’s reflections on synchronicity and the nature of archetypes, Hillman’s archetypal vision and his commitment to archetypal plurality, and Grof’s expanded cartography of the psyche—and combining this with the evidence from his own extensive research—Tarnas has presented the astrological perspective in a radically different light, finding in this long-discredited ancient symbolic system something of great value to the postmodern mind, something that could, potentially, radically transform our understanding of the nature of the universe itself.

And so, having been rediscovered first as psychological factors in the human psyche, the archetypes, through this new approach to astrology, are recovering their cosmological status as something like the archai—the cosmological archetypal forms—of the Greek philosophical vision. As what appear to be both the ground principles of the psyche and the formative cosmological processes in the universe at large, the archai represent fundamental mythic-archetypal forms, styles, and dynamisms informing all experience, shaping both the world and human consciousness. And the human unconscious, having been conceived first as a layer within the encapsulated individual psyche, now, on the evidence of astrology and synchronicity, seems to be embedded in something like an anima mundi or cosmic psyche—the interiority of the cosmos itself. It is these two concepts—cosmological archetypes and the anima mundi—that are the primary focus of archetypal cosmology.

The Challenge Ahead

Tarnas and Grof are two of the central figures behind the emergence of archetypal cosmology. As faculty in the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness graduate program at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, their teaching and published work have helped many over the last two decades to look at astrology with new eyes, inspiring a diverse range of people to seriously explore the subject for the first time. Others—myself included—who had initially assimilated the Jungian, humanistic, and transpersonal approaches to astrology developed by such figures as Dane Rudhyar, Stephen Arroyo, Liz Greene, and
Robert Hand, found in Tarnas’s work ideas compatible with their own, and benefited greatly from the philosophical and historical context he brought to the field. At a more practical level, his application of astrology to many different fields, such as history, cultural movements, the arts, depth psychology, and the Western intellectual tradition, provides a powerful demonstration of the enormous potential of archetypal analysis. For Tarnas, astrology is a veritable “archetypal telescope” that can brilliantly illuminate the archetypal dynamics and universal themes across many areas of human experience.33

It was from the growing number of people interested in the archetypal-astrological perspective that in late 2007 a group of about seventy researchers, practitioners, and scholars came together to form the Archetypal Research Collective in the San Francisco Bay Area. And it is from the efforts of some of the participants of this research group that the Archai journal has been created with the express aim of promoting archetypal cosmology as a new academic discipline and bringing it to the attention of a wider audience.

It is an exciting time to be involved, at its inception, in the emergence of archetypal cosmology. The early phases of a new movement are often its most creative, offering the greatest opportunity for participants to make a telling contribution to the field and to shape its future direction through their own research and scholarship. Of course, there are many challenges ahead too. Given archetypal cosmology’s radical implications and its discrepancy from the consensus understanding of the nature of reality, those of us working in the field will inevitably be forced to swim against the major currents of contemporary academic thought, and this will be no easy task. Furthermore, as its implications might well prove to be consequential far beyond academia, scholars and practitioners in the field might also have to assume the additional responsibility of helping to awaken modern culture to the enormous potential of archetypal cosmology and, in so doing, to participate in an important way in the wider spiritual transformation of our time.

Like the psychoanalytic movement a century ago, archetypal cosmology is certain to provoke disparaging reactions from some quarters and outright dismissal from others. Yet, as with psychoanalysis, perhaps it too is a necessary corrective to the one-sidedness and limitations of the contemporary world view, a response to the evolutionary imperatives of our own time. Perhaps archetypal cosmology and the astrological perspective upon which it is based can now help to heal the damaging dichotomy between the psyche and the cosmos that has defined the modern world view. And perhaps, in time, a deeper understanding of archetypal cosmology can lead us out of the disenchanted cosmology of the modern era and help us to recognize, as the Greeks did, a living universe imbued with archetypal meaning and significance.

As I see it, there are six main challenges to be addressed by scholars in the field over the coming years: (1) through detailed research, to accumulate a body of evidence to further demonstrate the validity and efficacy of archetypal-astrological analysis to the wider culture through its application to the study of psychology, history, culture, and the arts; (2) to seek to

33. Tarnas, Cosmos and Psyche, 71.
understand and explain, in philosophical and scientific terms, the basis of astrological correlations, and to articulate archetypal cosmology’s premises and implications in a form that is accessible and persuasive to the modern mind; (3) to build bridges to other disciplines, particularly those that also challenge the dominant world view, such as Whitehead’s process philosophy, the new paradigm sciences, and the ideas of transpersonal or integral theorists such as Gebser, Wilber, and Washburn; (4) to situate archetypal cosmology in the history of ideas, by explicating its lineage in the great traditions of Babylonian civilization, Greco-Roman mythology, Platonism, Renaissance Neoplatonism, Romanticism, and depth psychology; (5) to distinguish archetypal cosmology from, and define its relationship to, other astrological perspectives, including ancient astrology, psychological astrology (in its Jungian and humanistic forms), traditional astrology (natal, mundane, and horary), cosmobiology (coming out of the Ebertin school in Germany), and the divinatory approach to astrology (developed by Geoffrey Cornelius, Maggie Hyde, and others in the UK); (6) to establish basic guidelines—practical, theoretical, ethical—relating to the use of archetypal astrological analysis as an aid to understanding the psychodynamics and complexes of personal psychology in psychotherapy, as well as in astrological chart interpretation and counseling sessions. The Archai journal will, I hope, serve as a vehicle for the realization of all these aims.
Bibliography


The Birth of a New Discipline

Keiron Le Grice


Archetypal Principles

Richard Tarnas

In an extract from his award-winning Cosmos and Psyche, the major text in the field, Tarnas introduces the fundamental concept of archetypal principles, describing their origins in ancient Greek thought, some of their key attributes, and the many forms through which they have evolved in the course of Western intellectual history.

The concept of planetary archetypes, in many respects the pivotal concept of the emerging astrological paradigm, is complex and must be approached from several directions. Before describing the nature of the association between planets and archetypes, however, we must first address the general concept of archetypes and the remarkable evolution of the archetypal perspective in the history of Western thought.

The earliest form of the archetypal perspective, and in certain respects its deepest ground, is the primordial experience of the great gods and goddesses of the ancient mythic imagination. In this once universal mode of consciousness, memorably embodied at the dawn of Western culture in the Homeric epics and later in classical Greek drama, reality is understood to be pervaded and structured by powerful numinous forces and presences that are rendered to the human imagination as the divinized figures and narratives of ancient myth, often closely associated with the celestial bodies.

Yet our modern word god, or deity or divinity, does not accurately convey the lived meaning of these primordial powers for the archaic sensibility, a meaning that was sustained and developed in the Platonic understanding of the divine. This point was clearly articulated by W. K. C. Guthrie, drawing on a valuable distinction originally made by the German scholar Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

Theos, the Greek word which we have in mind when we speak of Plato’s god, has primarily a predicative force. That is to say, the Greeks did not, as Christians or Jews do, first assert the existence of God and then proceed to enumerate his attributes, saying “God is good,” “God is love” and so forth. Rather they were so impressed or awed by the things in life or nature remarkable either for joy or fear that they said “this is a god” or “that is a god.” The Christian says “God is love,” the Greek “Love is theos,” or “a god.” As another writer [G. M. A. Grube] has explained it: “By saying that love, or victory, is god, or, to be more accurate, a god, was meant first and foremost that it is more than human, not subject to death, everlasting. . . . Any power, any force we see at work in
the world, which is not born with us and will continue after we are gone could thus be called a god, and most of them were.”

In this state of mind, and with this sensitiveness to the superhuman character of many things which happen to us, and which give us, it may be, sudden stabs of joy or pain which we do not understand, a Greek poet could write lines like: “Recognition between friends is theos.” It is a state of mind which obviously has no small bearing on the much-discussed question of monotheism or polytheism in Plato, if indeed it does not rob the question of meaning altogether.1

As the Greek mind evolved, by a process sometimes too simply described as a transition from myth to reason, the divine absolutes ordering the world of the mythic imagination were gradually deconstructed and conceived anew in philosophical form in the dialogues of Plato. Building on both the Presocratics’ early philosophical discussions of the archai and the Pythagorean understanding of transcendent mathematical forms, and then more directly on the critical inquiries of his teacher Socrates, Plato gave to the archetypal perspective its classic metaphysical formulation. In the Platonic view, archetypes—the Ideas or Forms—are absolute essences that transcend the empirical world yet give the world its form and meaning. They are timeless universals that serve as the fundamental reality informing every concrete particular. Something is beautiful precisely to the extent that the archetype of Beauty is present in it. Or, described from a different viewpoint, something is beautiful precisely to the extent that it participates in the archetype of Beauty. For Plato, direct knowledge of these Forms or Ideas is regarded as the spiritual goal of the philosopher and the intellectual passion of the scientist.

In turn, Plato’s student and successor Aristotle brought to the concept of universal forms a more empiricist approach, one supported by a rationalism whose spirit of logical analysis was secular rather than spiritual and epiphanic. In the Aristotelian perspective, the forms lost their numinosity but gained a new recognition of their dynamic and teleological character as concretely embodied in the empirical world and processes of life. For Aristotle, the universal forms primarily exist in things, not above or beyond them. Moreover, they not only give form and essential qualities to concrete particulars but also dynamically transmute them from within, from potentiality to actuality and maturity, as the acorn gradually metamorphoses into the oak tree, the embryo into the mature organism, a young girl into a woman. The organism is drawn forward by the form to a realization of its inherent potential, just as a work of art is actualized by the artist guided by the form in the artist’s mind. Matter is an intrinsic susceptibility to form, an unqualified openness to being configured and dynamically realized through form. In a developing organism, after its essential character has been fully actualized, decay occurs as the form gradually “loses its hold.” The Aristotelian

form thus serves both as an indwelling impulse that orders and moves development and as the
intelligible structure of a thing, its inner nature, that which makes it what it is, its essence. For
Aristotle as for Plato, form is the principle by which something can be known, its essence
recognized, its universal character distinguished within its particular embodiment.

The idea of archetypal or universal forms then underwent a number of important
developments in the later classical, medieval, and Renaissance periods. It became the focus of
one of the central and most sustained debates of Scholastic philosophy, “the problem of
universals,” a controversy that both reflected and mediated the evolution of Western thought
as the locus of intelligible reality gradually shifted from the transcendent to the immanent,
from the universal to the particular, and ultimately from the divinely given archetypal Form
(eidos) to the humanly constructed general name (nomina). After a final efflorescence in the
philosophy and art of the High Renaissance, the concept of archetypes gradually retreated and
then virtually disappeared with the modern rise of nominalist philosophy and empiricist
science. The archetypal perspective remained vital principally in the arts, in classical and
mythological studies, and in Romanticism, as a kind of archaic afterglow. Confined to the
subjective realm of interior meaning by the dominant Enlightenment world view, it
continued in this form latent in the modern sensibility. The radiant ascent and dominance of
modern reason coincided precisely with the eclipse of the archetypal vision.

Between the triumph of nominalism in the seventeenth century and the rise of depth
psychology in the twentieth, philosophy brought forth a weighty development, Kant’s
Copernican revolution in philosophy, that subsequently had major consequences for the form
in which the archetypal perspective eventually reemerged. With Kant’s critical turn focused
on discovering those subjective interpretive structures of the mind that order and condition
all human knowledge and experience, the a priori categories and forms, the Enlightenment
project underwent a crucial shift in philosophical concern, from the object of knowledge to
the knowing subject, that influenced virtually every field of modern thought.

It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that the concept of archetypes,
foreshadowed by Nietzsche’s vision of the Dionysian and Apollonian principles shaping
human culture, underwent an unexpected renascence. The immediate matrix of its rebirth
was the empirical discoveries of depth psychology, first with Freud’s formulations of the
Oedipus complex, Eros and Thanatos, ego, id, and superego (a “powerful mythology,” as
Wittgenstein called psychoanalysis), then in an expanded, fully articulated form with the

2. I have examined these several stages in the evolution of the archetypal perspective in the history of Western
thought at greater length in The Passion of the Western Mind (1991; repr. New York: Ballantine, 1993). For the
Platonic doctrine of archetypal Forms and its complex relationship to Greek myth, see 4–32. For Aristotle’s
contrasting view of universals, see 55–72. For later classical developments, see 81–87. For Christian, medieval, and
work of Jung and archetypal psychology. Jung, drawing on Kant’s critical epistemology and Freud’s instinct theory yet going beyond both, described archetypes as autonomous primordial forms in the psyche that structure and impel all human experience and behavior. In his last formulations influenced by his research on synchronicities, Jung came to regard archetypes as expressions not only of a collective unconscious shared by all human beings but also of a larger matrix of being and meaning that informs and encompasses both the physical world and the human psyche.

Finally, further developments of the archetypal perspective emerged in the postmodern period, not only in post-Jungian psychology but in other fields such as anthropology, mythology, religious studies, philosophy of science, linguistic analysis, phenomenology, process philosophy, and feminist scholarship. Advances in understanding the role of paradigms, symbols, and metaphors in shaping human experience and cognition brought new dimensions to the archetypal understanding. In the crucible of postmodern thought, the concept of archetypes was elaborated and critiqued, refined through the deconstruction of rigidly essentialist “false universals” and cultural stereotypes, and enriched through an increased awareness of archetypes’ fluid, evolving, multivalent, and participatory nature. Reflecting many of the above influences, James Hillman sums up the archetypal perspective in depth psychology:

Let us then imagine archetypes as the deepest patterns of psychic functioning, the roots of the soul governing the perspectives we have of ourselves and the world. They are the axiomatic, self-evident images to which psychic life and our theories about it ever return. . . . There are many other metaphors for describing them: immaterial potentials of structure, like invisible crystals in solution or forms in plants that suddenly show forth under certain conditions; patterns of instinctual behavior like those in animals that direct actions along unswerving paths; the genres and topoi in literature; the recurring typicalities in history; the basic syndromes in psychiatry; the paradigmatic thought models in science; the world-wide figures, rituals, and relationships in anthropology.

But one thing is absolutely essential to the notion of archetypes: their emotional possessive effect, their bedazzlement of consciousness so that it becomes blind to its own stance. By setting up a universe which tends to hold everything we do, see, and say in the sway of its cosmos, an archetype is best comparable with a God. And Gods, religions sometimes say, are less accessible

to the senses and to the intellect than they are to the imaginative vision and emotion of the soul.\textsuperscript{4}

They are cosmic perspectives in which the soul participates. They are the lords of its realms of being, the patterns for its mimesis. The soul cannot be, except in one of their patterns. All psychic reality is governed by one or another archetypal fantasy, given sanction by a God. I cannot but be in them.\textsuperscript{5}

There is no place without Gods and no activity that does not enact them. Every fantasy, every experience has its archetypal reason. There is nothing that does not belong to one God or another.\textsuperscript{6}

Archetypes thus can be understood and described in many ways, and much of the history of Western thought has evolved and revolved around this very issue. For our present purposes, we can define an archetype as a universal principle or force that affects—impels, structures, permeates—the human psyche and the world of human experience on many levels. One can think of them in mythic terms as gods and goddesses (or what Blake called “the Immortals”), in Platonic terms as transcendent first principles and numinous Ideas, or in Aristotelian terms as immanent universals and dynamic indwelling forms. One can approach them in a Kantian mode as a priori categories of perception and cognition, in Schopenhauerian terms as the universal essences of life embodied in great works of art, or in the Nietzschean manner as primordial principles symbolizing basic cultural tendencies and modes of being. In the twentieth-century context, one can conceive of them in Husserlian terms as essential structures of human experience, in Wittgensteinian terms as linguistic family resemblances linking disparate but overlapping particulars, in Whiteheadian terms as eternal objects and pure potentialities whose ingress informs the unfolding process of reality, or in Kuhnian terms as underlying paradigmatic structures that shape scientific understanding and research. Finally, with depth psychology, one can approach them in the Freudian mode as primordial instincts impelling and structuring biological and psychological processes, or in the Jungian manner as fundamental formal principles of the human psyche, universal expressions of a collective unconscious and, ultimately, of the unus mundus.

In a sense, the idea of archetypes is itself an archetype, an archē, a continually shape-shifting principle of principles, with multiple creative inflections and variations through the ages as diffracted through different individual and cultural sensibilities. In the course of that long evolution, the archetypal idea seems to have come full circle, arriving now in its postsynchronicity development at a place very closely resembling its ancient origins as cosmic

\textsuperscript{4} Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, xix–xx.
\textsuperscript{5} Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, 169–70.
\textsuperscript{6} Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, 168–69.
archai but with its many inflections and potentialities, as well as new dimensions altogether, having been unfolded and explored.

We can thus conceive of archetypes as possessing a transcendent and numinous quality, yet simultaneously manifesting in specific down-to-earth physical, emotional, and cognitive embodiments. They are enduring a priori structures and essences yet are also dynamically indeterminate, open to inflection by many contingent factors, cultural and biographical, circumstantial and participatory. They are in one sense timeless and above the changing flux of phenomena, as in the Platonic understanding, yet in another sense deeply malleable, evolving, and open to the widest diversity of creative human enaction. They seem to move from both within and without, manifesting as impulses, emotions, images, ideas, and interpretive structures in the interior psyche yet also as concrete forms, events, and contexts in the external world, including synchronistic phenomena. Finally, they can be discussed and thought of in a scientific or philosophical manner as first principles and formal causes, yet also be understood at another level in terms of mythic personae dramatis that are most adequately approached or apprehended through the powers of the poetic imagination or spiritual intuition. As Jung noted about his own mode of discourse when discussing the archetypal content of psychological phenomena:

> It is possible to describe this content in rational, scientific language, but in this way one entirely fails to express its living character. Therefore, in describing the living processes of the psyche, I deliberately and consciously give preference to a dramatic, mythological way of thinking and speaking, because this is not only more expressive but also more exact than an abstract scientific terminology, which is wont to toy with the notion that its theoretic formulations may one fine day be resolved into algebraic equations.7

**Planetary Archetypes**

The astrological thesis as developed within the Platonic-Jungian lineage holds that these complex, multidimensional archetypes governing the forms of human experience are intelligibly connected with the planets and their movements in the heavens. This association is observable in a constant coincidence between specific planetary alignments and specific archetypally patterned phenomena in human affairs. It is important for what follows that we understand the nature of this correspondence between planets and archetypes. It does not appear to be accurate to say that astrologers have in essence arbitrarily used the mythological stories of the ancients about the gods Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Mars, Mercury, and the rest to project symbolic meaning

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Archetypal Principles

Richard Tarnas

onto the planets, which are in actuality merely neutral material bodies without intrinsic significance. Rather, a considerable body of evidence suggests that the movements of the planets named Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Mars, and Mercury tend to coincide with patterns of human experience that closely resemble the character of those planets’ mythical counterparts. That is, the astrologer’s insight, perhaps intuitive and divinatory in its ancient origins, appears to be fundamentally an empirical one. This empiricism is given context and meaning by a mythic, archetypal perspective, a perspective that the planetary correlations seem to support and illustrate with remarkable consistency. The nature of these correlations presents to the astrological researcher what appears to be an orchestrated synthesis combining the precision of mathematical astronomy with the psychological complexity of the archetypal imagination, a synthesis whose sources seemingly exist a priori within the fabric of the universe.

Here is where the distinction between the ancient philosophical (Platonic) and the modern psychological (earlier Jungian) conceptions of archetypes becomes especially relevant. Whereas the original Jungian archetypes were primarily considered to be the basic formal principles of the human psyche, the original Platonic archetypes were regarded as the essential principles of reality itself, rooted in the very nature of the cosmos. What separated these two views was the long development of Western thought that gradually differentiated a meaning-giving human subject from a neutral objective world, thereby locating the source of any universal principles of meaning exclusively within the human psyche. Integrating these two views (much as Jung began to do in his final years under the influence of synchronicities), contemporary astrology suggests that archetypes possess a reality that is both objective and subjective, one that informs both outer cosmos and inner human psyche, “as above, so below.”

In effect, planetary archetypes are considered to be both “Jungian” (psychological) and “Platonic” (metaphysical) in nature: universal essences or forms at once intrinsic to and independent of the human mind, that not only endure as timeless universals but are also co-creatively enacted and recursively affected through human participation. And they are regarded as functioning in something like a Pythagorean-Platonic cosmic setting, i.e., in a

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8. An additional difference between Platonic and Jungian archetypes has been emphasized by classical Jungians (e.g., Edward Edinger, Marie-Louise von Franz), who regard Platonic principles as inert patterns, as compared with Jungian archetypes, which are seen as dynamic agencies in the psyche, independent and autonomous. The problem with this simple distinction is that Plato’s archetypal principles are of widely varying kinds, shifting in nature from dialogue to dialogue. While some are indeed inert patterns (e.g., the mathematical forms), others possess a spiritual dynamism whose epiphanic power transforms the philosopher’s being and whose ontological power moves the cosmos (the Good, the Beautiful). Similarly, Plato’s discussion of Eros in The Symposium suggests a psychological dynamism not unlike what one would find in a Jungian context (and, in this case, Freudian as well). There is more continuity between Plato’s Forms and the ancient gods than the inert-pattern characterization would indicate.

The dynamism of universal forms becomes fully explicit in Aristotle, but at the expense of their numinosity and transcendence. In effect, Jung draws on different aspects of the Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions, integrating these with Freudian-Darwinian instincts and Kantian categories. Jung does not, however, always keep these differing and overlapping aspects of archetypes in view or sufficiently distinguished, which has produced confusion and controversy in many discussions of Jungian archetypes in recent decades. (See note 10 and the appendix at the end of this article.)
cosmos pervasively integrated through the workings of a universal intelligence and creative principle. What distinguishes the contemporary astrological view is the additional factor of human co-creative participation in the concrete expressions of this creative principle, with the human being recognized as itself a potentially autonomous embodiment of the cosmos and its creative power and intelligence.

In Jungian terms, the astrological evidence suggests that the collective unconscious is ultimately embedded in the macrocosm itself, with the planetary motions a synchronistic reflection of the unfolding archetypal dynamics of human experience. In Platonic terms, astrology affirms the existence of an *anima mundi* informing the cosmos, a world soul in which the human psyche participates as a microcosm of the whole. Finally, the Platonic, Jungian, and astrological understandings of archetypes are all complexly linked, both historically and conceptually, to the archetypal structures, narratives, and figures of ancient myth. Thus Campbell’s famous dictum:

> It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation.  

So also Jung: “I hold Kerényi to be absolutely right when he says that in the symbol the *world itself* is speaking.”

For conceptual clarity, then, it is useful to understand these principles in three different senses: in the Homeric sense as a primordial deity and mythic figure; in the Platonic sense as a cosmic and metaphysical principle; and in the Jungian sense as a psychological principle (with its Kantian and Freudian background)—with all of these associated with a specific planet. For example, the archetype of Venus can be approached on the Homeric level as the Greek mythic figure of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and love, the Mesopotamian Ishtar, the Roman Venus. On the Platonic level Venus can be understood in terms of the metaphysical principle of Eros and the Beautiful. And on the Jungian level Venus can be viewed as the psychological tendency to perceive, desire, create, or in some other way experience beauty and love, to attract and be attracted, to seek harmony and aesthetic or sensuous pleasure, to engage in artistic activity and in romantic and social relations. These different levels or senses are distinguished here only to suggest the inherent complexity of archetypes, which must be formulated not as literal concretely definable entities but rather as dynamic potentialities and essences of meaning that cannot be localized or restricted to a specific dimension.

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10. C. G. Jung, “The Psychology of the Child Archetype” (1940), in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Collected Works*, vol. 9, part i, par. 291, 173 (emphasis in original). Jung’s reference is to Karl Kerényi’s companion essay, “The Primordial Child in Primordial Times.” Please see the appendix at the end of this article for more on the complex nature of Jungian archetypes, their Kantian background, and the important ways in which Jung’s formulation of synchronicity both retained and transcended these Kantian limitations.
Finally, alongside this essential *multidimensionality* of archetypes is their equally essential *multivalence*. The Saturn archetype can express itself as judgment but also as old age, as tradition but also as oppression, as time but also as mortality, as depression but also as discipline, as gravity in the sense of heaviness and weight but also as gravity in the sense of seriousness and dignity. Thus Jung:

> The ground principles, the *archai*, of the unconscious are indescribable because of their wealth of reference, although in themselves recognizable. The discriminating intellect naturally keeps on trying to establish their singleness of meaning and thus misses the essential point; for what we can above all establish as the one thing consistent with their nature is their manifold meaning, their almost limitless wealth of reference, which makes any unilateral formulation impossible.\(^{11}\)

It seems to be specifically the multivalent potentiality that is intrinsic to the planetary archetypes—their dynamic indeterminacy—that opens up ontological space for the human being’s full co-creative participation in the unfolding of individual life, history, and the cosmic process. It is just this combination of archetypal multivalence and an autonomous participatory self that engenders the possibility of a genuinely open universe. The resulting cosmological metastructure is still Pythagorean-Platonic in essential ways, but the relationship of the human self and the cosmic principles has undergone a metamorphosis that fully reflects and integrates the enormous modern and postmodern developments.

Our philosophical understanding of archetypes, our scientific understanding of the cosmos, and our psychological understanding of the self have all undergone a profound evolution in the course of history, and they have done so in complexly interconnected ways at each stage in this development. Our *experience* of all these has evolved, century by century, and thus our theories have as well.

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\(^{11}\) C. G. Jung, “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious” (1934), *Collected Works*, vol. 9, part i, par. 80, 38.
Appendix

When Jung made statements such as “in the symbol the world itself is speaking,” or “Synchronicity postulates a meaning which is a priori in relation to human consciousness and apparently exists outside man,” it is clear that he had transcended the Kantian epistemological framework with its decisive division between subjectively structured phenomena and unknowable noumena (things-in-themselves beyond the reach of human subjectivity). Archetypes whose meaning could be said to “exist outside man,” informing both the human psyche and the “world itself,” were clearly not bound by the Kantian structure of knowledge and reality.

Yet in his own mind, as reflected in many statements both public and private, Jung loyally upheld the Kantian framework throughout his life, and never ceased insisting on its essential relevance and validity for his findings. The paradoxes, contradictions, and confusions of the Jung-Kant relationship deeply affected important dialogues in which Jung participated in the course of his life, and have riddled Jung scholarship for decades.

Certainly Jung’s continuing loyalty to Kant was biographically understandable, given not only the enduring effect of reading Kant and Schopenhauer (his entrée to Kant) in his youth, but also the cultural and intellectual context in which he worked throughout his life. From the beginning of Jung’s career, Kant’s thought provided Jung with crucial philosophical protection vis-à-vis conventional scientific critiques of his findings. Jung could always defend his controversial discussions of spiritual phenomena and religious experience by saying that these were empirical data revealing the structure of the human mind, with no necessary metaphysical implications. But as many commentators have noted, not only did Jung often make statements with vivid metaphysical implications and assumptions, but in addition the Kantian framework became less and less capable of assimilating the discoveries and theoretical advances of Jung’s later work, particularly in the area of synchronicity and what he now called the “psychoid” (psyche-like) archetype that he saw as informing both psyche and matter, challenging the absoluteness of the modern subject-object dichotomy. As a result, his statements concerning these epistemological and metaphysical issues became increasingly ambiguous and self-contradictory.

I believe there was a further reason that the later Jung invoked the Kantian framework so often when he discussed archetypes. If I can try to sum up a complex situation briefly, it would seem that Jung unwittingly conflated the issue of archetypal multivalence with the issue of whether archetypes could be directly knowable. On the one hand, Jung recognized and often stressed the fact that archetypes are always observed and experienced in a diverse multiplicity of

14. See, for example, Sean Kelly’s insightful discussion from the Hegelian perspective in *Individuation and the Absolute* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 15–37.
possible concrete embodiments, so that the full essence and meaning of the archetype must be regarded as fundamentally transcending its many particular manifestations. On the other hand, however, he often conflated this crucial insight with the quite separate epistemological issue of whether archetypes can be directly experienced and known as principles that transcend the human psyche, or only indirectly inferred by observing the configurations of psychological phenomena which are structured by archetypes that are ultimately “unknowable” in themselves (noumena). In his understandable attempt to preserve the multivalent indeterminacy of archetypes, transcending every particular embodiment, Jung called upon a Kantian framework of phenomenon and noumenon that entailed the unknowability of the archetypes in themselves, their humanly unreachable essence beyond every diverse manifestation.

Jung seems not to have fully grasped the epistemological and ontological possibility of a genuine direct participation (in both the Platonic sense and the contemporary sense of co-creative enaction) in a dynamically multivalent archetype that in some sense remains indeterminate until concretely enacted. This theoretical limitation also informed and, I believe, helped produce Jung’s many contradictory and confusing statements about the unconscious and the psyche, and about various metaphysical and spiritual issues such as God and the God-image, that fueled his famous controversies with Martin Buber and Fr. Victor White.

Jung’s occasional unclarity about the nature of archetypes seems also to have been increased by his unconscious conflation of two different Kantian ideas in his discussions of archetypes. Jung saw archetypes on the one hand as a priori forms and categories, and on the other hand as unknowable transcendent noumena that exist behind and beyond all phenomena (a point made by de Voogd, op. cit.). Thus for Jung, archetypes were essentially fulfilling both functions in the Kantian framework-categories of experience and noumenal things-in-themselves—but he did not seem aware that he moved back and forth between these two separate functions in his various statements and formulations.

Doubtless part of the confusion underlying Jung’s many discussions of archetypes reflects the extremely complex and enigmatic problem of projection—namely, how constellated archetypes can configure our lived reality and give meaning to our experience not only by shaping and constituting our perceptions but also, at times, by deeply distorting them. This issue is connected with another, equally complex and enigmatic. For in the background of Jung’s conflicting philosophical loyalties and statements loomed his lifelong struggle with the disenchanted modern cosmos, which he both took seriously and saw through, and which had similarly shaped and confused Kant’s philosophical struggles and formulations. Against the overwhelming contemporary scientific consensus concerning the disenchanted nature of the cosmos and the workings of nature, Jung could never be quite sure how much trust he should place in his spiritually revelatory observations and intuitions concerning a world embedded with purpose and meaning, despite the fact that the data repeatedly seemed to break out of a subjectivist or psychologistic confinement. So he hedged his bets by frequent allusions to Kant’s philosophical strictures (while reminding scientists they were in no different a position
with their materialistic presuppositions). Jung's many ambiguous and contradictory statements about astrology reflect this same inner struggle with the disenchanted modern cosmos.

Since Jung’s death, the extraordinary expansion of astrological research and evidence compared with the more limited astrological data Jung was working with in his own lifetime, combined with a deeper philosophical and psychological understanding of the complex ontology and epistemology of archetypes, has helped to clarify the challenging issues with which he was increasingly confronted with each passing decade of his life and work. These issues have important philosophical implications beyond the fields of psychology and astrology. I believe that many of the major points of conflict and ambiguity within the postmodern mind concerning the social construction of knowledge, projection, subjectivism, relativism, pluralism, and participation will be helpfully illuminated by these developments in the archetypal astrological field.
Bibliography


The Planets

Richard Tarnas

In the following essay adapted from Cosmos and Psyche, Tarnas introduces the ten major planetary archetypes recognized in the astrological tradition. Describing some of the fundamental themes associated with each planetary archetype, this brief summary provides the necessary basis for understanding the archetypal analysis in this journal.

There are ten planetary archetypes that are central to astrological research today. Seven of these were recognized in the classical astrological tradition and correspond to the seven celestial bodies of the solar system visible to the unaided eye (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn); the other three correspond to those planets discovered by telescope in the modern era (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto). The astrological tradition has long held that when astronomy was originally united with astrology, the ancients named the visible planets according to each one’s intrinsic archetypal character, that is, according to the ruling mythic deity of which the planet was the visible manifestation. The earliest surviving Greek text that named all the known planets is the Platonist dialogue the Epinomis, which explicitly postulated a cosmic association between the planets and specific gods, speaking of them as cosmic powers and visible deities. Composed either by Plato himself or by a close disciple and written in the fourth century BCE as an appendix to Plato’s last work, the Laws, the Epinomis affirmed the divinity of the planets and then went on to introduce the specific Greek name for each planet according to the deity which that planet was understood to be “sacred to”—Hermes, Aphrodite, Ares, Zeus, Kronos. These Greek gods were cited as corresponding to the equivalent Mesopotamian deities whose names had long been associated with the planets by the already ancient astrological tradition inherited from Babylonia. In turn, in later centuries these planets became known in Europe and the modern West by the names of their Roman equivalents: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.

It will be useful here as a foundation for the research to be included in the Archai journal to set forth the specific archetypal meanings and qualities associated with each planet. As Jung recognized, however, the meanings of archetypes cannot be reduced to simple definitions as if they were literal concrete entities whose basic essence could be exhausted once and for all with a neat algebraic formula:

A kind of fluid interpenetration belongs to the very nature of all archetypes. They can only be roughly circumscribed at best. Their living meaning comes...
out more from their presentation as a whole than from a single formulation. Every attempt to focus them more sharply is immediately punished by the intangible core of meaning losing its luminosity. No archetype can be reduced to a simple formula. It is a vessel which we can never empty, and never fill. . . . It persists throughout the ages and requires interpreting ever anew. The archetypes are the imperishable elements of the unconscious, but they change their shape continually.  

An archetypal principle is thus not so much defined as evoked. It is better conveyed through a wide range of examples that collectively illustrate and suggest the enduring intangible essence that is variously inflected through the archetype’s diverse embodiments.

Each archetypal principle can express itself in both positive and problematic form. Each can express itself in the context of the individual life and psyche or on a collective level. Each has a potential for both feminine and masculine inflections beyond the specific gender of the Greco-Roman mythic figure associated with the planet or luminary in question. For all the planets, both those known to the ancients and those discovered in the modern era, the body of evidence I examined in Cosmos and Psyche and elsewhere points to the existence of transcultural archetypal principles that inform and encompass the observed synchronistic patterns of meaning. The specific mythic deities of the more local cultural mythologies, such as the Greek or Roman, appear to represent particular inflections of these transcultural archetypes. The Greco-Roman figures and narratives are resonant with significance for the Western cultural imagination but ultimately seem to be best understood as culturally specific embodiments of more universal archetypal principles.

Sun: the central principle of vital creative energy, the will to exist; the impulse and capacity to be, to manifest, to be active, to be central, to radiate, to “shine”; to rise above, achieve, illuminate, and integrate; the individual will and personal identity, the seat of mind and spirit, the animus, the executive functions of the self or ego, the capacity for initiative and purposeful assertion, the drive for individual autonomy and independence; directed and focused consciousness and self-awareness, the centrifugal expression of the self, the trajectory of self-manifestation, ascent and descent; the ruler of the day sky, of the clearly visible, the single source of luminosity that overcomes the encompassing darkness, the monocentric; yang; the part that contains the whole in potentia; Sol and all solar deities, the archetypal Hero in its many forms.


2. The following descriptions of the planetary archetypes are also available on the Archai website (www.archaijournal.org/fundamentals/planets.html).
Moon: The matrix of being, the psychosomatic foundation of the self, the womb and ground of life; the body and the soul, that which senses and intuits, the feeling nature; the impulse and capacity to gestate and bring forth, to receive and reflect, to relate and respond, to need and to care, to nurture and be nurtured, the condition of dependence and interdependence; the diffusely conscious and the unconscious, the anima, the immanent, the centripetal, the home, the fertile source and ground; the cycle of manifestation, the waxing and waning, the eternal round; the ruler of the night sky, of the diffusely visible and the invisible, multiple sources of luminosity within the encompassing darkness, the polycentric; yin; the whole that contains the part in potentia; Luna and all lunar deities, the Great Mother Goddess, together with aspects of the Child (puella, puer), constituting the relational matrix of life.

Mercury: the principle of mind, thought, communication, that which articulates the primary creative energy and renders it intelligible; the impulse and capacity to think, to conceptualize, to connect and mediate, to use words and language, to give and receive information; to make sense of, to grasp, to perceive and reason, understand and articulate; to transport, translate, transmit; the principle of Logos; Hermes, the messenger of the gods.

Venus: the principle of desire, love, beauty, value; the impulse and capacity to attract and be attracted, to love and be loved, to seek and create beauty and harmony, to engage in social and romantic relations, sensuous pleasure, artistic and aesthetic experience; the principle of Eros and the Beautiful; Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty.

Mars: the principle of energetic force; the impulse and capacity to assert, to act and move energetically and forcefully, to have an impact, to press forward and against, to defend and offend, to act with sharpness and ardor; the tendency to experience aggressiveness, anger, conflict, harm, violence, forceful physical energy; to be combative, competitive, courageous, vigorous; Ares, the god of war.

Jupiter: the principle of expansion, magnitude, growth, elevation, superiority; the capacity and impulse to enlarge and grow, to ascend and progress, to improve and magnify, to incorporate that which is external, to make greater wholes, to inflate; to experience success, honor, advancement, plenitude, abundance, prodigality, excess, surfeit; the capacity or inclination for magnanimity, optimism, enthusiasm, exuberance, joy, joviality, liberality, breadth of experience, philosophical and cultural aspiration, comprehensiveness and largeness of vision, pride, arrogance, aggrandizement, extravagance; fecundity, fortune, and providence; Zeus, the king of the Olympian gods.
**Saturn**: the principle of limit, structure, contraction, constraint, necessity, hard materiality, concrete manifestation; time, the past, tradition, age, maturity, mortality, the endings of things; gravity and gravitas, weightiness, that which burdens, binds, challenges, fortifies, deepens; the tendency to confine and constrict, to separate, to divide and define, to cut and shorten, to negate and oppose, to strengthen and forge through tension and resistance, to rigidify, to repress, to maintain a conservative and strict authority; to experience difficulty, decline, deprivation, defect and deficit, defeat, failure, loss, alienation; the labor of existence, suffering, old age, death; the weight of the past, the workings of fate, character, karma, the consequences of past action, error and guilt, punishment, retribution, imprisonment, the sense of “no exit”; pessimism, inferiority, inhibition, isolation, oppression and depression; the impulse and capacity for discipline and duty, order, solitude, concentration, conciseness, thoroughness and precision, discrimination and objectivity, restraint and patience, endurance, responsibility, seriousness, authority, wisdom; the harvest of time, effort, and experience; the concern with consensus reality, factual concreteness, conventional forms and structures, foundations, boundaries, solidity and stability, security and control, rational organization, efficiency, law, right and wrong, judgment, the superego; the dark, cold, heavy, dense, dry, old, slow, distant; the *senex*, Kronos, the stern father of the gods.

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The above seven archetypal principles correspond to the seven celestial bodies known to the ancients and constituted the foundation of the astrological tradition from its prehistoric origins through the early modern era. These principles were well established in their basic character from the beginning of the classical Western astrological tradition in the early Hellenistic era, from around the second century BCE onward, and their meanings continued to develop and be elaborated through later antiquity, the medieval era, and the Renaissance not only in astrological practice and esoteric writings but in the art, literature, and evolving religious and scientific thought of the larger culture.

Of the seven, Saturn was the most distant, slowest-moving planet visible to the naked eye, and its complex of meanings directly reflected that status: the ruler of boundaries and limits, of finitude and endings, of distance, slowness, age, time, death, and fate. Many ancients, such as the Gnostics and initiates of the mystery religions, believed that beyond Saturn existed another realm ruled by a greater, more encompassing deity, a domain of freedom and immortality beyond the constraints of fate and death. As we move to a brief summary of Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, of their discovery and their observed archetypal qualities, we move in time from the ancient to the modern, and in space from the orbit of Saturn to the much larger regions of space circumscribed by these three outlying planets, evocatively described by Rudhyar as “ambassadors of the galaxy.”
The Planets

Richard Tarnas

Compared with the planets known to the ancients, with their Greco-Roman mythological associations and corresponding astrological meanings, the names and meanings of the three planets discovered by telescope in the modern era present a very different situation. Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto were named by modern astronomers without any archetypal correspondences in mind. They therefore inherited no archetypal meanings sanctioned by ancient tradition, meanings that were in turn affirmed, refined, and elaborated by continuing observations over many centuries. This circumstance formed the starting point for an unexpectedly fruitful line of research whose results inform the following chapters. Based on the astrological research community’s expanding body of empirical correlations for all the planets, many insights and clarifications concerning the relationship between the planets’ given astronomical names and their observed archetypal meanings have now emerged. While correlations involving the ancient planets out through Saturn consistently suggest a definite coherence between the planets’ inherited mythological names and the observed synchronistic phenomena, correlations involving the outer three planets point to archetypal principles that in crucial respects differ from or radically transcend their astronomical names.

Uranus: For millennia, the Sun and Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn formed what the ancients considered to be an absolute cosmic structure of moving celestial bodies reflecting the primordial forces that governed human affairs. Then in 1781 the astronomer and musician William Herschel, while conducting an exhaustive survey of the heavens using a telescope of his own design, suddenly observed an object that was not an ordinary star. The object turned out to be the first planet to be discovered since antiquity. Herschel’s stunning discovery immediately transformed the dimensions of the known solar system, the new planet being twice as far from the Sun as Saturn. It also presented an unprecedented challenge to the astrological tradition. The ancient seven-planet hierarchy circumscribed by Saturn had been irrevocably disrupted, with no established archetypal meaning for the new planet. Contemporary skeptics viewed its discovery as having placed the last nail in the coffin of a discredited astrology whose demise had been caused by the Scientific Revolution and proclaimed by the Enlightenment.

Astronomers considered several names for the new planet. Herschel first proposed the name Georgium Sidus in honor of his sovereign patron, George III of England. The French, no doubt unenthusiastic about the planetary deification of an English monarch, used the name Herschel. In the end, in keeping with the planets known to the ancients, the pantheon of classical mythology was called upon. The German astronomer Johann Elert Bode had suggested the name Uranus in the year of its discovery, and it was this name that eventually received international acceptance. The logic for naming the new planet Uranus seems to have been straightforward: The mythological Ouranos was the father of Kronos (Saturn) and thus corresponded to the location of the new planet beyond Saturn in the heavens, just as Saturn was both the father of Jupiter in mythology and the name of the next planet beyond Jupiter in
the heavens. Ouranos was also the god of “the starry sky,” as Hesiod called him, thus providing what seemed to be an especially apt name for the new planet. Astrologers adopted the name Uranus as well, but the meaning they eventually came to attribute to the new planet was generally different in character from that of the mythological Ouranos.

Since at least the turn of the twentieth century, the unanimous consensus among astrologers is that the planet Uranus is empirically associated with the principle of change, rebellion, freedom, liberation, reform and revolution, and the unexpected breakup of structures; with sudden surprises, revelations and awakenings, lightning-like flashes of insight, the acceleration of thoughts and events; with births and new beginnings of all kinds; and with intellectual brilliance, cultural innovation, technological invention, experiment, creativity, and originality. In addition to the occurrence of sudden breakthroughs and liberating events, Uranus transits are linked to unpredictable and disruptive changes; hence the planet is often referred to as the “cosmic trickster.” Another set of themes associated with Uranus is a concern with the celestial and the cosmic, with astronomy and astrology, with science and esoteric knowledge, and with space travel and aviation. With respect to personal character, Uranus is regarded as signifying the rebel and the innovator, the awakener, the individualist, the dissident, the eccentric, the restless and wayward. These various qualities are considered to be so pronounced in persons born with a prominent Uranus and expressed so conspicuously in a person’s life during Uranus transits that there seems to have been no significant disagreement among astrological authorities for at least the past century that these characteristics reflect the archetypal nature of the planet Uranus.

Most of these observed qualities, however, are not especially relevant to the Greek mythic figure of Ouranos. There is nothing in the mythological Ouranos’s character suggestive of the capacity or impulse for change, rebellion, liberation, awakening, or inventiveness. The tenor of the myth is entirely different: Ouranos is the primordial god of the heavens, found in many mythologies, whose relationship to the Earth goddess Gaia forms part of the Greek creation myth. Ouranos’s role in that myth is not to initiate rebellion and change but to resist it. Where the mythological Ouranos encountered a revolt by his progeny and was overthrown, the astrological Uranus is regarded as quite the opposite: that which rebels and overthrows. Most of the other qualities believed by astrologers to be associated with the planet Uranus—freedom, unpredictability, suddenness, speed, excitement, stimulation, restlessness, experiment, brilliance, originality, individualism, and so forth—have no plausible counterparts in the myth of Ouranos. The important exception among the qualities and themes attributed to Uranus is the concern with the cosmic and celestial, with space and space travel, and with astronomy and astrology, all of which well fit Ouranos’s nature as the god of the “starry sky.” Aside from this crucial parallel, however, unlike the planets known to the ancients, the planet Uranus does not closely correspond in its mythological name with the larger range of its observed astrological meanings. In most respects, the naming appears to have risen from the conventional logic of late eighteenth-century astronomers, not from the intuitive archetypal insight that is traditionally assumed to have played a role in the naming of the ancient planets.
Remarkably, however, all of the archetypal qualities associated with the new planet do fit another figure in Greek mythology with extraordinary precision: Prometheus, the Titan who rebelled against the gods, helped Zeus overthrow the tyrannical Kronos, then tricked the new sovereign authority Zeus and stole fire from the heavens to liberate humanity from the gods’ power. Prometheus was considered the wisest of his race and taught humankind all the arts and sciences; in a later tradition, Prometheus was the creator of humankind and thus held a special relationship to humanity’s fate from the beginning. Every major theme and quality that astrologers associate with the planet Uranus seems to be reflected in the myth of Prometheus with striking poetic exactitude: the initiation of radical change, the passion for freedom, the defiance of authority, the act of cosmic rebellion against a universal structure to free humanity of bondage, the urge to transcend limitation, the creative impulse, the intellectual brilliance and genius, the element of excitement and risk. So also Prometheus’s style in outwitting the gods, when he used subtle stratagems and unexpected timing to upset the established order. He too was regarded as the trickster in the cosmic scheme. The resonant symbol of Prometheus’s fire conveys at once a rich cluster of meanings—the creative spark, the catalyst of the new, cultural and technological breakthrough, brilliance and innovation, the enhancement of human autonomy, sudden inspiration from above, the liberating gift from the heavens, the solar fire and light, lightning and electricity both literal and metaphoric, speed and instantaneousness, incandescence, sudden enlightenment, intellectual and spiritual awakening—all of which astrologers associate specifically with the planet Uranus.

Even the major theme of the astrological Uranus that was clearly relevant to the mythological Ouranos—the association with the heavens, the cosmic, the astronomical and astrological, “the starry sky”—can be recognized as essential to the Promethean myth, visible in Prometheus’s role as teacher of astronomy and science to humankind, his quest to steal the fire from the heavens, and his concern with foresight, prediction, and esoteric understanding in defiance of the established order. The same theme is evident in the essential Promethean impulse to ascend and liberate from all constraints, to break free from the weight and slowness of gravity, and, more generally, to move humankind into a fundamentally different cosmic position in relation to the gods.

The extant astrological literature does not reveal the precise basis originally used to determine Uranus’s astrological meaning in the course of the nineteenth century, when astrologers were few and texts rare. Texts from the beginning of the twentieth century imply that consensus on the basic themes and qualities had already been achieved some time before. It is possible that the unique (and, indeed, Promethean) character of the planet’s discovery itself had suggested the nature of the principle involved: the sudden breakthrough from the heavens, the unexpected and unprecedented nature of the event, the crucial involvement of a technological invention (telescope), the radical disruption of astronomical and astrological tradition, the overthrow of past limits and structures. However, the earliest nineteenth-century texts to discuss Uranus in detail referred mainly to certain qualities in persons born with Uranus prominently placed (inventiveness, independence, eccentricity, proneness to
sudden unexpected changes), implying that the study of natal charts had served as the principal basis for arriving at a definition.

More recent astrological sources suggested that the historical period of the planet’s discovery in the late eighteenth century was relevant to its archetypal meaning, reasoning that the discovery of the physical planet in some sense represented an emergence of the planet’s corresponding archetype into the conscious awareness of the collective psyche. In this regard, the parallels with Uranus’s astrological meaning were certainly clear: The planet’s discovery in 1781 occurred at the culmination of the Enlightenment, in the extraordinary era that brought forth the American and French Revolutions, the Industrial Revolution, and the beginning of Romanticism. In all these coinciding historical phenomena, the figure of Prometheus is of course readily evident as well: the championing of human freedom and individual self-determination, the challenge to traditional beliefs and customs, the fervent revolt against royalty and aristocracy, established religion, social privilege, and political oppression; the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, *liberté* and *égalité*; the beginnings of feminism, the widespread interest in radical ideas, the rapidity of change, the embrace of novelty, the celebration of human progress, the many inventions and technological advances, the revolutions in art and literature, the exaltation of the free human imagination and creative will, the plethora of geniuses and culture heroes. Here too were the Romantic poets with their great paeans to Prometheus himself. If the age of Uranus’s discovery is to be given an archetypal characterization, none seems more appropriate than “Prometheus Unbound.”

I have taken more time here in explicating the case of Uranus in the midst of these otherwise brief summaries of the planetary meanings because it was my early study of this planet and the significant discrepancies between its given mythological name and its subsequently observed archetypal associations that set in motion many of the conceptual clarifications and research directions that formed the background of *Cosmos and Psyche*. The parallels with the mythic figure of Prometheus were sufficiently suggestive that I began a systematic examination of Uranus in natal charts, in transits, and in historical cycles to see whether such an archetypal identification or association deepened my understanding of the relevant phenomena. The parallels also suggested to me the importance of carefully thinking through the relationship between planets and archetypes, between the given mythological names and the observed astrological meanings, and, more generally, between the empirical evidence of synchronistic correlations and an archetypal dimension of being to which the correlations appeared to point.
Neptune: In 1846, on the basis of unexplained aberrations in the observed orbit of Uranus, the French mathematician Urbain LeVerrier posited the existence and position of a planet beyond Uranus whose gravitational influence was pulling Uranus out of its calculated orbit. The new planet was immediately discovered in the predicted position by the German astronomer Johann Galle and named Neptune after the god of the sea. In the ensuing decades, astrologers again gradually arrived at a surprisingly universal consensus on the principal qualities and themes observed to coincide with the new planet’s position in natal charts and transits.

Neptune is associated with the transcendent, spiritual, ideal, symbolic, and imaginative dimensions of life; with the subtle, formless, intangible, and invisible; with the unitive, timeless, immaterial, and infinite; with all that transcends the limited literal temporal and material world of concretely empirical reality: myth and religion, art and inspiration, ideals and aspirations, images and reflections, symbols and metaphors, dreams and visions, mysticism, religious devotion, universal compassion. It is associated with the impulse to surrender separative existence and egoic control, to dissolve boundaries and structures in favor of underlying unities and undifferentiated wholes, merging that which was separate, healing and wholeness; the dissolution of ego boundaries and reality structures, states of psychological fusion and intimations of intrauterine existence, melted ecstasy, mystical union, and primary narcissism; with tendencies towards illusion and delusion, deception and self-deception, escapism, intoxication, psychosis, perceptual and cognitive distortions, conflation and confusion, projection, fantasy; with the bedazzlement of consciousness whether by gods, archetypes, beliefs, dreams, ideals, or ideologies; with enchantment, in both positive and negative senses.

The archetypal principle linked to Neptune governs all nonordinary states of consciousness, as well as the stream of consciousness and the oceanic depths of the unconscious. Characteristic metaphors for its domain include the infinite sea of the imagination, the ocean of divine consciousness, and the archetypal wellspring of life. It is, in a sense, the archetype of the archetypal dimension itself, the anima mundi, the Gnostic pleroma, the Platonic realm of transcendent Ideas, the domain of the gods, the Immortals. In mythic and religious terms, it is associated with the all-encompassing womb of the Goddess, and with all deities of mystical

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3. Galle and his assistant Heinrich d’Arrest discovered the new planet within 1° of the position predicted by LeVerrier, on September 23, 1846, during the first hour of their search at the Berlin Observatory after receiving his letter containing the prediction. A year earlier, the English mathematician John Couch Adams had hypothesized the existence and position of the new planet because of the observed Uranus perturbations, but his efforts to persuade English astronomers to conduct a search at that time were unsuccessful, and his estimate of the new planet’s position was somewhat less accurate than LeVerrier’s. For a discussion of recently uncovered evidence concerning Adams’s ambiguous role in the discovery, see Nick Kollerstrom, “Neptune’s Discovery: The British Case for Co-Prediction,” Science and Technology Studies, University College London, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/nk/neptune/index.htm; and W. Sheehan, N. Kollerstrom, and C. Waff, “The Case of the Pilfered Planet,” Scientific American, December 2004.

Neptune was actually first observed by Galileo in 1612, when he recorded it as a star of the 8th magnitude rather than a new planet. A similar history occurred in the case of Uranus, which was sighted but not identified as a planet several times prior to its discovery by Herschel; the earliest recorded instance was by John Flamsteed in 1690.
union, universal love, and transcendent beauty; the mystical Christ, the all-compionate Buddha, the Atman-Brahman union, the union of Shiva and Shakti, the *hieros gamos* or sacred marriage, the *coniunctio oppositorum*; the dreaming Vishnu, *maya* and *lila*, the self-reflecting Narcissus, the divine absorbed in its own reflection; Orpheus, god of artistic inspiration, the Muses; the cosmic Sophia whose spiritual beauty and wisdom pervade all.

Considered as a whole, these themes, qualities, and figures suggest that the name Neptune is both apt and inadequate in denoting a mythological figure embodying the planet’s corresponding archetypal principle. On the one hand, central to the observed characteristics is an underlying symbolic association with water, the sea, the ocean, streams and rivers, mists and fogs, liquidity and dissolution, the amniotic and prenatal, the permeable and undifferentiated. In this regard, one thinks of the many oceanic and watery metaphors used to describe mystical experience, the all-encompassing ocean of divine consciousness of which our individual selves are but momentarily separate drops, the ceaselessly flowing all-informing Tao whose waterlike fluidity evades all definition, the primordial *participation mystique* of undifferentiated awareness, the mists of prehistory, the amniotic fetal and infantile states of primary fusion, the oceanic realms of the imagination, the fluid nature of psychic life generally: the flow and stream of consciousness, the influx of inspiration, the fog of confusion, drowning in the treacherous deep waters of the unconscious psyche, slipping into madness or addiction, surrendering to the flow of experience, dissolving into the divine union, the cleansing waters of purity and healing, melted ecstasy, and so forth. One thinks here, too, of Freud’s reference to the “oceanic feeling”: “a sensation of ‘eternity,’ a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded—as it were, ‘oceanic’. . . . it is the feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole.”

Equally relevant is William James’s image of a transcendental “mother-sea” of consciousness with which the individual consciousness is continuous and of which the brain essentially serves as a sieve or filtering conduit.

On the other hand, in virtually all other respects, the original mythological character of the Roman Neptune and the Greek Poseidon—tempestuous, violent, belligerent, often ill-tempered and vengeful (thus resembling most of the other Greco-Roman patriarchal warrior gods)—is deeply incongruent with the complex set of qualities and themes that have been

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4. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), trans. W. Strachey (New York: Norton, 1989), 11–12. The term was originally employed and the phenomenon described in a letter to Freud from his friend Romain Rolland who, after reading Freud’s *The Future of an Illusion*, wondered whether the “oceanic feeling” of an underlying connection with the universe that he observed in himself and others was perhaps the true source of humanity’s religious urges.

5. William James: “In cases of conversion, in providential leadings, sudden mental healings, etc., it seems to the subjects themselves of the experience as if a power from without, quite different from the ordinary action of the senses or of the sense-led mind, came into their life, as if the latter suddenly opened into that greater life in which it has its source. The word ‘influx,’ used in Swedenborgian circles, well describes this impression of new insight, or new willingness, sweeping over us like a tide. . . . We need only suppose the continuity of our consciousness with a mother sea, to allow for exceptional waves occasionally pouring over the dam” (“Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine” [1898], in *Essays in Religion and Morality* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982], 93–94).
consistently observed in connection with the planet Neptune and that are more accurately reflected in the mystically unitive deities and archetypal figures cited above. Nevertheless, as with Uranus’s mythological association with the starry heavens and air, so also with Neptune’s association with the sea and water: the name given to the new planet was indeed poetically accurate with respect to the mythological location and element associated with that deity, perhaps a reflection of synchronistic factors playing a role in the astronomers’ intuition and choice of names.

As with the period of Uranus’s discovery in 1781, the discovery of Neptune in 1846 coincided with a range of synchronistic historical and cultural phenomena in the immediately surrounding decades, and more generally in the nineteenth century, that are distinctly suggestive of the corresponding archetype. These include the rapid spread of spiritualism throughout the world beginning in the late 1840s, the upsurge of utopian social ideologies at the same time, the rise of universalist and communitarian aspirations in both secular and religious movements, the full ascendancy of Idealist and Romantic philosophies of spirit and the imagination, the widespread cultural influence of Transcendentalism, the new popular interest in both Eastern mystical and Western esoteric traditions, and the emergence of theosophy. Here too could be cited the rise of the recreational use of psychoactive drugs in European bohemian circles, the beginning of the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, and the invention of anesthetics. The invention and cultural impact of photography and the early experiments in motion pictures, as well as the new aesthetic spirit of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, were characteristic of the Neptune archetype in its association with image, reflection, subjectivity, illusion, and multiple realities. The growing focus on the unconscious, dreams, myths, hypnosis, and nonordinary states of consciousness in the decades after Neptune’s discovery is also suggestive of the archetype. So also was the distinct collective emergence of a more socially compassionate humanitarian sensibility that was expressed in the public attitudes, social legislation, art and literature of the Victorian era and the nineteenth century generally (the novels of Dickens and Stowe, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the abolition of slavery and serfdom, the movements and laws to limit child labor and other cruelties of industrial capitalism, the first laws abolishing capital punishment, the wave of foundings of societies for the protection of animals, the growing role of women in shaping social policy, the beginning of modern nursing through the work of Florence Nightingale, the spread of care for the sick and wounded in war, the first Geneva Convention, the founding of the International Red Cross, etc.).

**Pluto:** On the basis of discrepancies observed in the orbit of Neptune and aberrations yet unexplained in the orbit of Uranus, the existence of a further planet was posited by the American astronomer Percival Lowell, which led to its discovery in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh. After much consideration among many alternatives, the new planet was named Pluto, god of the underworld. Observations of potential correlations with Pluto by astrologers in the subsequent decades suggested that the qualities associated with the new planet in fact bore a
striking relevance to the mythic character of Pluto, the Greek Hades, and also to the figure of Dionysus, with whom Hades-Pluto was closely associated by the Greeks. (Both Heraclitus and Euripides identified Dionysus and Hades as one and the same deity.) Closely analogous to Freud’s concept of the primordial id, “the broiling cauldron of the instincts,” and to Darwin’s understanding of an ever-evolving nature and the biological struggle for existence, the archetype associated with the planet Pluto is also linked to Nietzsche’s Dionysian principle and the will to power and to Schopenhauer’s blind striving universal will—all these embodying the powerful forces of nature and emerging from nature’s chthonic depths, within and without, the intense, fiery elemental underworld. Again, as with both Uranus and Neptune, so also in Pluto’s case the mythological domain and element associated with the new planet’s given name appear to be poetically accurate, but here the archetypal parallels between the mythic figure and the observed qualities are especially extensive.

Beyond these ancient Greco-Roman figures (Pluto, Hades, Dionysus) and cognate modern European concepts (Freudian id, Darwinian nature, Schopenhauerian will, Nietzschean will to power and Dionysian impulse), the archetype associated with the planet Pluto also encompasses a number of major deities outside the Western context, such as the Hindu deity Shiva, god of destruction and creation, and Kali and Shakti, goddesses of erotic power and elemental transformation, destruction and regeneration, death and rebirth.

To summarize the consensus of contemporary astrologers: Pluto is associated with the principle of elemental power, depth, and intensity; with that which compels, empowers, and intensifies whatever it touches, sometimes to overwhelming and catastrophic extremes; with the primordial instincts, libidinal and aggressive, destructive and regenerative, volcanic and cathartic, eliminative, transformative, ever-evolving; with the biological processes of birth, sex, and death, the cycle of death and rebirth; with upheaval, breakdown, decay, and fertilization; violent purgatorial discharge of pent-up energies, purifying fire; situations of life-and-death extremes, power struggles, all that is titanic, potent, and massive. Pluto represents the underworld and underground in all senses: elemental, geological, instinctual, political, social, sexual, urban, criminal, mythological, demonic. It is the dark, mysterious, taboo, and often terrifying reality that lurks beneath the surface of things, beneath the ego, societal conventions, and the veneer of civilization, beneath the surface of the Earth, that is periodically unleashed with destructive and transformative force. Pluto impels, burns, consumes, transfigures, resurrects. In mythic and religious terms, it is associated with all myths of descent and transformation, and with all deities of destruction and regeneration, death and rebirth: Dionysus, Hades and Persephone, Pan, Medusa, Lilith, Innana, Isis and Osiris, the volcano goddess Pele, Quetzalcoatl, the Serpent power, Kundalini, Shiva, Kali, Shakti.

With respect to Pluto’s discovery, the synchronistic phenomena in the decades immediately surrounding 1930, and more generally in the twentieth century, include the splitting of the atom and the unleashing of nuclear power; the titanic technological empowerment of modern industrial civilization and military force; the rise of fascism and other mass movements; the widespread cultural influence of evolutionary theory and
psychoanalysis with their focus on the biological instincts; increased sexual and erotic expression in social mores and the arts; intensified activity and public awareness of the criminal underworld; and a tangible intensification of instinctually driven mass violence and catastrophic historical developments, evident in the world wars, the holocaust, and the threat of nuclear annihilation and ecological devastation. Here also can be mentioned the intensified politicization and power struggles characteristic of twentieth-century life, the development of powerful forms of depth-psychological transformation and catharsis, and the scientific recognition of the entire cosmos as a vast evolutionary phenomenon from the primordial fireball to the still-evolving present.

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In retrospect, the discoveries of Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto appear to have coincided with the emergence of three fundamental archetypes into collective human experience in a newly constellated form, visible in major historical events and cultural trends of the eighteenth century (Uranus), the nineteenth (Neptune), and the twentieth (Pluto). The centuries of their discoveries in each case appear to have brought forth in the evolution of human consciousness the rapid development and radical heightening of a distinctive set of qualities and impulses that were also systematically observable in precise natal and transit correlations involving those specific planets for individuals and eras throughout history. Although the astrological tradition developed on the basis of the seven ancient celestial bodies and their inherited meanings, much of the evidence I examined in Cosmos and Psyche involves alignments of these three outer planets whose corresponding archetypal principles appear to be particularly relevant for illuminating the deeper transpersonal and collective patterns of human experience.

The discoveries in the past several years of small planet-like objects in the Kuiper Belt beyond Pluto, probably the remnants of a very early stage in the evolution of the solar system, are too recent for adequate assessments to have been made concerning possible empirical correlations or their potential significance. Appearing at the beginning of the new millennium, with their unusual orbits and ambiguous astronomical status, they serve well to remind both astronomers and astrologers of the still-expanding horizon of our knowledge of our own solar system.
Bibliography


Holotropic Research and Archetypal Astrology

Stanislav Grof

In the concluding article in this section, Stanislav Grof addresses the interface between transpersonal psychology and the astrological perspective, describing their collaboration with Richard Tarnas and the connections they discovered between the planetary archetypes and the psychodynamics of the unconscious. This paper, previously unpublished, presents the remarkable evidence in support of archetypal astrology from Grof’s research into non-ordinary states of consciousness over the last five decades.

Psychedelic substances, in general, and LSD, in particular, can profoundly influence the functioning of the human psyche. Depending on the personality of the individual who takes them and on the “set and setting,” their effect can be extremely beneficial or deleterious. Two people can take the same substance, the same dosage, in the same location, and yet have radically different, even diametrically opposite experiences. For this reason, since the beginning of psychedelic experimentation, researchers have attempted to find ways of predicting what impact these substances would have on the person who takes them.

The effort to discover a method for predicting the reaction to psychedelics and the therapeutic outcome was one of the objectives of a large clinical study that our research team conducted at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center in the 1960s and 1970s. We used for this purpose a battery of standard psychological tests, including the Minnesota Multidimensional Personality Inventory (MMPI), Shostrom’s Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), the Rorschach Inkblot Test, our own Psychedelic Experience Questionnaire (PEQ), and others. This research confirmed my earlier findings at the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and the conclusion from the study of professional literature, that the results of the tests developed and commonly used by Western psychology were essentially useless in this regard.

Ironically, when after years of frustrating effort I finally found a tool that made such predictions possible, it was more controversial than psychedelics themselves. It was astrology, a discipline that, even after years of studying transpersonal phenomena, I myself tended to dismiss as a ridiculous pseudoscience. I came to realize, however, that astrology could be an invaluable tool in the work with both psychedelics and with other forms of non-ordinary (or “holotropic”) states of consciousness such as those induced by powerful experiential techniques of psychotherapy (primal therapy, rebirthing, and holotropic breathwork) or occurring spontaneously during psychospiritual crises.
The radical change in my attitude toward astrology has been the result of collaboration with psychologist and philosopher Richard Tarnas, my close friend and colleague. For over three decades, beginning in 1976, we have been jointly exploring the astrological correlates of mystical experiences, psychospiritual crises, psychotic episodes, psychedelic states, and holotropic breathwork sessions. This work has shown that astrology, particularly the study of planetary transits, can predict and illuminate both the archetypal content of non-ordinary states of consciousness and the timing of when particular states are most likely to occur. Our systematic study of the correlations between the nature and content of holotropic states and planetary transits convinced me that a combination of deep experiential therapy with archetypal psychology and transit astrology is the most promising strategy for the future development of psychiatry and depth psychology.

**Astrology and Modern Western Science**

I am aware that this is a very strong statement, particularly in view of the fact that many mainstream scientists consider astrology, as I did myself, to be in principle incompatible with the scientific world view. Like many other esoteric systems, astrology was one of the victims of the rationalism and materialism of the Scientific Revolution. It was rejected not on the basis of scientific proof that its premises were false, but because of its incompatibility with the fundamental metaphysical assumptions of Western science dominated by monistic materialism. More specifically, there are several important reasons for the dismissal of astrology by materialistic scientists.

First, Western science portrays the universe as an impersonal and largely inanimate mechanical system, a supermachine that created itself and is governed by mechanical natural laws. In this context, life, consciousness, and intelligence are seen as more or less accidental products of matter. By contrast, the basic assumptions of astrology are that the cosmos is a creation of superior intelligence, that it is based on an inconceivably intricate deeper order, and that this order reflects a higher purpose. The astrological perspective closely reflects the original meaning of the Greek word *Kosmos* that describes the world as an intelligibly ordered, patterned, and coherently interconnected system with humanity as an integral part of the whole. In this view, human life is not the result of random forces ruled by capricious chance, but follows an intelligible trajectory that is in some way attuned to the movements of celestial bodies and can thus be at least partially intuited.

Second, because astrological thinking presupposes the existence of archetypes—timeless primordial principles underlying and informing the fabric of the material world—it recognizes a dimension of reality that cannot be detected using techniques of modern science. Under the influence of positivist materialism, science only recognizes the existence of hidden, invisible dimensions of reality if these can be made accessible through the use of devices that extend the...
range of our senses, such as microscopes, telescopes, or sensors detecting various bands of electromagnetic radiation. The archetypal dimension clearly does not fall into this category.

The tendency to interpret the world in terms of archetypal principles first emerged in ancient Greece and was one of the most striking characteristics in Greek philosophy and culture. The archetypes can be seen from several different perspectives. In the Homeric epics they took the form of personified mythological figures, as deities, such as Zeus, Poseidon, Hera, Aphrodite, or Ares. In the philosophy of Plato, they were described as pure metaphysical principles, the transcendent Ideas or Forms, that possessed independent existence of their own in a realm not accessible to ordinary human senses. In modern times, C. G. Jung brought the concept of archetypes into modern psychology, describing them primarily as psychological principles.¹ For all Jung’s efforts, however, and despite his attempts to formulate his theory based solely on empirical observation of the psyche, the existence of archetypes is usually either ignored or summarily dismissed by the scientific establishment.

Third, another major obstacle for seriously considering astrology is the exclusively deterministic thinking in Western science. The universe is seen as a mechanistic chain of causes and effects and the principle of linear deterministic causality is considered to be mandatory for all processes in the universe. One major disquieting exception to this rule, the origin of the universe and the question of the “cause of all causes,” is seldom mentioned in scientific discussions. Deterministic causality is the only type of influence many critics of astrology can usually imagine and take into consideration. And the idea of a direct material effect of the planets on the psyche and the world is, of course, implausible and absurd.

Finally, the emphasis that astrology puts on the moment of birth does not make any sense in academic psychology and psychiatry, which generally do not see biological birth as a psychologically relevant event. Academic and clinical psychiatrists typically use a very narrow conceptual framework limited to postnatal biography and the Freudian individual unconscious. They do not usually recognize the perinatal level of the unconscious pertaining to the deep-seated memory of the birth trauma and its powerful influence on the adult personality and biographical experiences. The rejection of the psychological significance of birth is based on the highly questionable assumption that the brain of the newborn cannot register the traumatic impact of the birth experience, because the process of myelinization (formation of the fatty myelin sheaths covering the neurons) in his or her brain is not fully completed at the time of birth.

Evidence for Astrology from Holotropic Research

Since the 1950s, however, several decades of systematic research of holotropic states have generated vast amounts of data that undermine these basic assumptions of materialistic science and bring supportive evidence for astrology. These observations reveal:

1. the existence of transpersonal experiences that point to an ensouled cosmos permeated with consciousness and creative cosmic intelligence
2. the possibility of direct experience of spiritual realities, including archetypal figures, motifs, and realms, and empirical validation of the authenticity of these experiences
3. the critical psychodynamic importance of the birth experience for the psychological development and life of the individual
4. the existence of synchronicities that represent an important and viable alternative to the principle of mechanistic causality
5. the striking correlations between the psychodynamics of the birth process and the planetary archetypes associated with the four outer planets
6. the extraordinary predictive potential of astrological transits for the nature, timing, and content of holotropic states of consciousness
7. the recognition of the profound connections between the archetypal pattern of birth charts and COEX systems in the individual psyche
8. the relationship between astrological world transits and patterns of incidence and diagnosis of psychopathology.

1. Evidence for an ensouled cosmos: The study of holotropic states of consciousness has brought strong evidence that transpersonal experiences cannot be dismissed as irrelevant psychotic products. The fact that these experiences apparently provide access to accurate new information about various aspects of existence strongly suggests that they are phenomena sui generis. We have observed innumerable cases in which subjects described information about past eras or specific historical events, or detailed subjective descriptions of animal behavior or plant life, that the individual had not known nor had access to prior to the experience, yet which proved upon subsequent research to be accurate. Challenging the most fundamental assumptions of materialistic science, transpersonal experiences suggest that human consciousness is continuous with the inner nature of the universe, which from this perspective appears to be a unified web of events in consciousness permeated by interiority and intelligence. Such experiences provide empirical evidence suggesting that the individual human psyche is part of a greater psyche that has no boundaries and is essentially commensurate with all of existence. They thus confirm a basic tenet of many esoteric systems, including astrology, that the microcosm “mirrors” the macrocosm. This notion, which appears completely absurd
from the perspective of mechanistic science, has in recent decades received unexpected support from several new theories and developments in the sciences. The development of lasers, optical holography, David Bohm’s holographic model of reality in quantum physics, and Karl Pribram’s holographic model of the brain have suggested radical new possibilities concerning the relationship between the part and the whole.²

2. **Empirical support for the existence of archetypes:** Holotropic states provide direct experiential access to spiritual or numinous dimensions of existence, including the archetypes. This is important because the concept of archetypes is essential for astrology, as it is being understood here. As we have seen, in the twentieth century, C. G. Jung resurrected the ancient idea of archetypes and introduced them into modern depth psychology in the form of psychological principles, primordial organizing patterns of the psyche. He and his followers explored and described in great detail the important role that archetypes play in the life of individuals, nations, and nature. Many professional articles and books, as well as popular literature written by authors with a Jungian orientation, suggest that our personal characteristics and behavior reflect the dynamics of powerful archetypal principles and that we enact typical archetypal themes in our everyday life.³

Most academic psychologists and psychiatrists have so far considered Jung’s idea of the archetypes to be unfounded and speculative and have refused to take it seriously. However, modern consciousness research has confirmed the existence of archetypes beyond any reasonable doubt by showing that in holotropic states of consciousness they can actually be directly experienced. I have published in other contexts case histories illustrating how transpersonal experiences involving archetypes can provide new information about mythological realities of cultures unknown to the experi ent and open new therapeutic possibilities (Grof 1985, 1988, 1992, 2000, 2006).

An important characteristic of the archetypes is that they are not confined to, and do not originate from, the human brain, but operate from transcendental realms and exert a synchronistic influence on both individual psyches and events in the physical world. The marriage between astrology and archetypal psychology based on Jung’s work represents an extraordinary advance in both fields. It brings the mathematical precision of astronomy into the interior and imaginative world addressed by depth psychology, enriching enormously the possibilities of theoretical speculations as well as clinical predictions.

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3. **Psychological significance of birth:** The work with holotropic states has corrected the astonishing misconception of much academic psychiatry that the only way that biological delivery can have any consequence for the individual’s mental condition, emotional life, and behavior is if it has caused irreversible damage of brain cells. I have observed on innumerable occasions that this challenging experience leaves a powerful imprint of emotions and physical feelings that, in interaction with postnatal events, are instrumental in the development of various emotional and psychosomatic disorders. In addition, the overall pattern of our birth also tends to be reflected in the way we handle vicissitudes in our life and approach demanding tasks and projects. There is also impressive evidence that what I have called the *perinatal matrices* in the psyche of individual people can play an important role in engaging these individuals in collective sociopolitical events and cultural movements (deMause 1982, Grof 1998, 2000). These observations bring important support for astrology, which has long attributed major significance to the moment of birth as the symbolic precursor of one’s overall life pattern. They are also related to another basic tenet of astrology that precisely defines the relationship between large-scale events and happenings in individual lives. Astrological evidence has long suggested that major movements and occurrences in human history are correlated with planetary positions and their mutual interrelations. It has also suggested that the degree and nature of participation of individuals in these collective events and the specific incidents in their lives reflect their personal planetary transits, which represent the relationship between the world transits and personal natal charts.

4. **The phenomenon of synchronicity:** The tendency to think in terms of direct causal influences is one of the major reasons why astrology has been so vehemently rejected. I remember one of my discussions with Carl Sagan about transpersonal psychology during which he heatedly told me and others: “Astrology is total hogwash; as I am standing here, I have more influence on you than Pluto.” He clearly thought about this subject in terms of masses, distances, gravitational forces, and other physical terms. This is an approach that completely misses the point. Critics of astrology like Carl Sagan do not understand that astrologers are using a sophisticated paradigm that assumes a synchronistic relation between the planets, the human psyche, and the external events. To understand astrology, we must think in synchronistic terms.

Richard Tarnas and I have jointly presented our findings concerning the relationship between the psyche and the cosmos in numerous graduate level academic courses at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco, as well as in transpersonal training workshops and public seminars. The first thing we have always sought to make clear before any discussion of this material is that in talking about correlations of experiences and events with planetary movements and aspects, we do not in any way imply a linear causal influence of celestial bodies on human psyches or occurrences in the material world.

A more plausible way one can think about astrology can be illustrated by a simple example. When I look at my watch that has the correct time and it shows that it is seven
o’clock, I can infer that all the watches and clocks in the same time zone that show the correct
time will also show it is seven o’clock. I can further assume with reasonable certainty that, if I
turn on the television set, I will be able to see the seven o’clock news or that my arrival will be
expected at the restaurant where I had made a seven o’clock reservation. This naturally does
not mean that my watch has a direct influence on other watches and clocks in the
environment, that it causes television news, or interacts with the consciousness of the
restaurant personnel. All these events are simply synchronized in relation to astronomical time,
a hidden dimension that is operating “behind the scenes” and cannot be directly perceived.

In the same way, the thinking underlying astrology suggests that in the universal
scheme of things the movements of the planets and the geometrical aspects they are making
are correlated with the hidden archetypal dynamics that shape the events in the phenomenal
world. The planets’ visibility allows them to be used to infer what is happening in the world
of the archetypes, or using the above example, what “time” it is in the archetypal world. In
turn, their angular relation to the positions of the planets in our natal chart (transits) seems to
indicate how this situation might manifest in our personal life.

The principle of synchronicity as a significant alternative to linear causality was first
comprehensively described by Jung. According to him, synchronicity is an acausal connecting
principle that refers to meaningful coincidences of events separated in time and/or space.4
While Jung had a general interest in peculiar coincidences in life, he was primarily interested in
those particular sets of coincidences in which various external events were meaningfully
connected with inner experiences, such as dreams, fantasies, and visions. He defined
synchronicity of this kind as a “simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or
more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state.”5

Because of the deeply ingrained modern belief in deterministic causality as a central
law of nature, Jung hesitated for many years to publish his observations of events that refused
to fit into this mold. He postponed publication of his work on this subject until he and others
had collected literally hundreds of convincing examples of synchronicity, making him
absolutely sure that he had something valid to report. It was also important for him that he
was encouraged to develop his concept of synchronicity by two pioneers of modern physics,
Albert Einstein and Wolfgang Pauli.

In the work with holotropic states, the occurrence of striking instances of
synchronicity is so common that it leaves no doubt about the fact that it represents an
important alternative to mechanistic causality as a connecting principle. In meditative
practice, psychedelic therapy, holotropic breathwork, and spontaneous psychospiritual crises
(“spiritual emergencies”), the fantasy material emerging from the unconscious often enters
into complexly creative interplay with various aspects of consensus reality, coinciding with

external events in ways that strongly suggest an underlying connection of meaning that is not simply being projected by the individual. This phenomenon challenges our most fundamental assumptions about reality since it calls into question the sharp distinction we usually make between the inner and the outer worlds.

A typical example is the incidence of extraordinary synchronicities in the lives of people in holotropic therapy who are involved in reliving and consciously integrating the memory of biological birth—a process that I have found to be fundamental to psychological transformation and the resolution of various forms of physical and psychological pathology. During holotropic sessions, when the process of inner exploration takes participants close to the experience of “ego death” but does not reach completion, these individuals often encounter in their everyday lives a striking accumulation of dangerous situations, injuries, and accidents. It is important to emphasize that I am referring here to events that are caused by other people or external circumstances and are not the result of self-destructive tendencies of the subjects themselves.

When these people experience full ego death and psychospiritual rebirth by consciously working through the unresolved trauma of biological birth, such situations tend to clear up as magically as they developed. It seems that at this stage of personal transformation the individual has to deal with the theme of destruction and loss, but has the option to experience it either as an inner process or as a real life event. This is exactly what astrologers observe in regard to the effect of difficult planetary transits, when the deeper roots of potentially destructive unconscious behavior patterns associated with these transits can be brought to conscious awareness and worked through in therapeutic sessions rather than encountered in one’s dealings with the world.

Equally remarkable synchronicities are also associated with various forms of transpersonal experiences. Synchronistic events frequently accompany the reliving of what are felt to be past life experiences and they are also very frequent at the time of inner confrontation with archetypal figures and motifs. For example, when people involved in intense inner process deal with the themes of Animus, Anima, Wise Old Man, the Great Mother, or the Devouring Mother, appropriate human representatives of these figures often manifest in their everyday life.

Similarly, when a person has a powerful shamanic experience that involves an animal spirit guide, this animal can suddenly appear in various ways in this person’s life with a frequency that is beyond any reasonable probability. It has also been the experience of many people that when they become involved unselfishly in a project that has been inspired from the transpersonal realms of the psyche, extraordinary synchronicities tend to occur and make their work surprisingly easy.

5. Correlations between the psychodynamics of the birth process and planetary archetypes: The first indication that there might be some extraordinary connection between astrology and my research of holotropic states was Richard Tarnas’s recognition that individuals who experienced major psychological breakthroughs and awakenings tended at those times to be undergoing major personal transits involving the planet Uranus, often in combination with
Jupiter, while those undergoing more difficult and psychologically constricting periods tended to be undergoing transits involving Saturn. Eventually, he came to realize that this simple dichotomy was part of much more complex patterns of correlation involving all the planets and a wide range of psychological conditions and stages of transformation.

One particularly notable observation was Tarnas’s realization that my description of the experiential patterns associated with the stages of biological birth showed astonishing similarity to the four archetypes that astrologers have empirically correlated with the four outer planets of the solar system. My description of the phenomenology of four basic perinatal matrices (or BPMs), pertaining to different stages of the birth process, was based on clinical observations made quite independently many years before I knew anything about astrology.

By way of very brief summary: In both its positive and negative forms, the first perinatal matrix (BPM I) is unmistakably reflective of the archetype that astrologers link to Neptune. The positive aspect of BPM I includes the reliving of episodes of undisturbed intrauterine existence, as well as the concomitant experiences of dissolution of boundaries, interpersonal fusion experiences, oceanic ecstasy, cosmic feelings of unity, transcendence of time and space, and awareness of the mystical and numinous dimensions of reality. The negative aspects of BPM I are associated with regressive experiences of prenatal disturbances. Here the dissolution of boundaries is not mystical but psychotic in nature; it leads to confusion, delusion, a sense of chemical poisoning, bizarre metaphysical distortions, and paranoid perceptions of reality. This matrix also has a psychodynamic connection with alcoholic or narcotic intoxication and addiction. All these qualities, both positive and negative, are ones that astrologers associate with the Neptune archetype.

The second perinatal matrix (BPM II) represents the stage when the uterine contractions periodically compress the baby, but the cervix is still closed and there does not seem to be a way out (hence “no exit”). Prominent features of this matrix include the preoccupation with aging and death, difficult ordeals and hard labor, depression, oppression, constriction, deficit, scarcity, and starvation. This matrix also brings feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, loneliness, and guilt. It is associated with skepticism and a profoundly pessimistic view of existence, a shattering crisis of meaning, the inability to enjoy anything, and loss of any connection with the divine dimension of reality. In astrology, all these qualities have long been regarded as attributes of the more challenging side of the Saturn archetype.

The precise astrological correspondence with the experiential aspects of the third perinatal matrix (BPM III) is particularly extraordinary and surprising since this matrix represents an unusual combination of themes characteristic of the final stage of biological birth, including the unrelenting thrust of an elemental driving force, the unleashing of titanic energies, Dionysian agony and ecstasy, birth, sex, death, rebirth, elimination, and scatology. We should also mention here the motifs of volcanic eruptions, pyrocatharsis, purifying fire, and the

6. I have recently learned that this correspondence was also independently noted by Dominique Levadoux, who has discussed it in numerous lectures in France over the years.
underworld—urban, criminal, psychological, sexual, and mythological. Astrologically, all these are regarded as attributes of Pluto, the archetype of primordial energy—the dynamic principle behind cosmic creation, the universal life force that propels evolution in nature and human society (Kundalini Shakti in Hindu mythology), as well as the energy of destruction (the devouring Mother Goddess Kali). Pluto is associated with the fundamental biological processes of birth, sex, and death, the transformative process of psychospiritual death and rebirth, and the instinctual forces in the body and psyche (the Freudian Id). It represents the chthonic elements of existence, the underworld, whether in the literal physical sense (underground, infrastructure of the metropolis), in the metaphorical sense (red light districts, organized crime), in the psychological sense (the unconscious), or in an archetypal, mythological sense in which the Roman god Pluto (the Greek Hades) was the ruler of the underworld—all themes that figure prominently in the phenomenology of the third perinatal matrix.

Finally, the phenomenology of the fourth perinatal matrix (BPM IV)—the experience of emerging from the birth canal—is closely related to the archetype that astrologers have consistently associated with the planet Uranus. BPM IV represents the final stage of delivery where the discomfort and pressures culminate and are resolved in an explosive liberation. It is characterized by such features as the unexpected resolution of a difficult situation, breaking through and transcending boundaries, brilliantly illuminating insights, Prometheus liberation and epiphany, sudden rising to a new level of awareness and consciousness, and radical freedom from previous constrictions. All these themes are associated by astrologers with the planet Uranus, representing the astrological principle of sudden change, surprise, rebellion against the status quo, revolutionary activity, liberation, spiritual awakening, and emotional and intellectual breakthrough. In addition, it governs sudden collapse of established structures, disruptive and destabilizing impulses and events, individualism and originality, revolutionary insight, creative genius, and invention. The shadow side of the Uranus archetype finds its expression in anarchy, unfruitful eccentricity, and indiscriminate acting out against limitations and laws of any kind, which corresponds remarkably to the clinical observation of perinatal experiences of BPM IV that have been inadequately processed—manic activity and inflation, irresponsible unconstrained behavior, ungrounded creative energy and anarchic acting out of various kinds.

6. Correlations between Holotropic States and Planetary Transits: Even more astonishing than these striking parallels between the phenomenology of the perinatal matrices and themes associated with the planetary archetypes was Tarnas’s discovery that in holotropic states the experiential confrontation with these matrices regularly occurs at the time the individuals involved have important transits of the corresponding planets. Over the years, we have now been able to confirm this fact by thousands of specific observations.

For example, during Saturn-Pluto transits an individual in a holotropic session is more likely to have experiences of extreme oppression and constriction, of terror and dread, of impending apocalypse, and of the conflict between instinctual licentiousness and punitive
control, guilt, and shame. These transits are also associated with the confrontation with demonic power and with overwhelming forces of darkness. Together, Saturn and Pluto are associated with both the second and third perinatal matrices, and the transition between the sense of “no exit,” judgment, and eternal damnation associated with BPM II, to the purgatorial suffering and violent death-rebirth struggle associated with BPM III. In holotropic states of consciousness occurring during these transits, the phenomenology of both these BPMs such as choking and suffocation, or the immense psychosomatic pressures associated with constriction in the womb and the passage through the birth canal, is often evident.

Under Jupiter-Uranus transits, by contrast, holotropic states are more likely to be characterized by the experience of sudden release from a difficult or oppressive situation, creative breakthroughs, the unexpected joyous emergence into a new brighter world, or the expansive sense of new vistas and new possibilities to be explored. More problematically, this archetypal combination is also associated with the experience of giddy excitement and manic euphoria that can accompany the transition into BPM IV prior to the full resolution of the psychospiritual death-rebirth process.

When we use astrology in the work with holotropic states, the complexity of the interpretations increases with the number of planetary transits happening at the same time and with the number of planets involved in them. In many instances, two or more important transits can operate simultaneously and their energies can be in conflict with each other, producing complex combinations and dialectical fusions of the archetypal forces involved. A comprehensive interpretation requires an experienced astrologer evaluating a specific situation and looking at the natal chart and the transits as a unified field and an integral gestalt. Specific case histories of these extraordinary correlations will be explored in a later issue of the Archai journal.

7. The Archetypal Basis of COEX systems: Natal and transit astrology have also provided a deeper understanding of another important concept that has emerged from my psychedelic and holotropic research. I noticed very early in this work that emotionally relevant memories of my clients were not stored in the unconscious as a mosaic of isolated imprints, but in the form of complex dynamic constellations. I coined for these memory aggregates the name COEX systems, which is short for “systems of condensed experience.” A COEX system consists of emotionally charged memories from different periods of our life that resemble each other in the quality of emotion or physical sensation that they share.

Each COEX has a basic theme that permeates all its layers and represents their common denominator. The individual layers, then, contain variations on this basic theme that occurred at different periods of the person’s life. All COEX constellations seem to be superimposed over and anchored in the trauma of birth and are dynamically related to one of the perinatal matrices, or a specific aspect thereof. However, a typical COEX system reaches even further and its deepest roots consist of various forms of transpersonal phenomena, such as collective historical experiences, past-life experiences, Jungian archetypes, conscious identification with various animals, and others.
The most recent refinement of my understanding of the COEX dynamics was the surprising discovery that the nature and content of important COEX systems in the psyche of an individual tends to show striking correlations with major planetary aspects in his or her natal astrological chart. In addition, the timing of the biographical events that constitute the various layers of COEX systems seems to coincide with great consistency with the periods when significant planetary transits were moving across precisely these natal aspects. These findings thus throw new light on the dynamic interconnections between the biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal constituents of COEX systems that I have repeatedly observed in my clinical work.

Because of these surprisingly consistent correlations, I have come to regard astrology, particularly transit astrology, as the long-sought “Rosetta stone” of consciousness research, providing an essential key for understanding the nature and content of holotropic or non-ordinary states of consciousness, both spontaneous and induced. While the correlations concerning past experiences are primarily of theoretical interest, examining current transits can be extremely useful in the work with individuals undergoing “spiritual emergencies,” and the possibility of making remarkably accurate predictions of the archetypal character of non-ordinary states based on future transits is an invaluable tool in the planning of psychedelic and holotropic sessions.

8. World Transits and Psychological Diagnostics: Theoreticians and clinicians in the field of psychology, trying to establish a fixed classificatory system of psychiatric diagnoses, have expressed their continuing frustration concerning the lack of correspondence between the description of the diagnostic categories and the actual clinical pictures they encounter in working with their patients. To date, we are currently on the fourth revised version of the official American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV). Although there are many factors behind such revisions, from an astrological point of view, the continual changeability of the clinical picture is comprehensible, at least in part, in terms of the constantly shifting archetypal dynamics of the collective psyche, which are in turn seen to correspond with the shifting angular relations between the planets studied in world transits.

As Richard Tarnas’s research has shown, when two or more planets in their respective cycles move into certain major alignments in the sky at various periods of history, the combined archetypal field associated with these planets consistently tends to give such periods a certain experiential flavor and to determine, at an archetypal level, the underlying character of its Zeitgeist. This phenomenon is particularly significant and long-lasting when it involves combinations of the outer planets from Jupiter to Pluto, as in the Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the 1960s or the Uranus-Neptune conjunction of the late 1980s and 1990s. At the time of such major planetary alignments for the whole world, the corresponding archetypal complexes can become personalized for individuals, particularly if they form major transits to

specific planets in their natal charts. Psychologically, these alignments can be reflected in tendencies towards specific emotional and psychosomatic disorders. As a result, psychiatrists from different decades do not encounter precisely the same phenomena as their colleagues from earlier or later times. Psychopathology, therefore, appears to vary according to the nature of the current world transits and the personal transits of specific individuals. This variation suggests a possible factor as to why the creation of a fixed, universally valid DSM-IV seems to be intrinsically problematic.

But that is not the whole story. In the annual courses that Richard Tarnas and I teach at the California Institute of Integral Studies, we discuss the major schools of depth psychology and analyze the astrological charts of their founders. It soon became apparent to us that the major planetary aspects in the natal charts of these pioneers—Freud, Jung, Rank, Reich, Klein, and others—closely paralleled the specific character of their psychological theories. The differences in their psychologies became intelligible as a reflection of their basic archetypal orientation, which was in turn discernible in their natal planetary alignments. Contrary to the conventional psychoanalytic self-image, it was clear that the various psychoanalytic pioneers were not able to study the psyches of their clients objectively and make general conclusions that would remain valid indefinitely. Rather, they inevitably saw the problems of their clients through their subjective perceptual stencils, or distorting lenses, corresponding to the planetary aspects in their own birth charts and their personal transits at the time of their clinical observations.8

With the exception of organically determined disorders, psychiatry does not have a fixed set of phenomena to study. The result of any research of emotional and psychosomatic disorders that are not organic is thus determined by a complex interplay of a number of factors, among which must be included the astrological chart of the researcher and his or her transits at the time of observation; the planetary aspects for the entire world that define the Zeitgeist of a particular period; and the personal transits that color the experiences of the clients.

The image of psychiatry as a discipline that possesses concise descriptions of fixed and transtemporal pathological conditions and an armamentarium of specific remedies and interventions is an illusion. The only viable approach, given the shifting archetypal context, is to describe psychiatric disorders in terms of relationships and tools that can be used to analyze the situation at any particular time and characterize it in terms of the phenomenology of the experiences of the client and its relationship to the client’s planetary transits. It is also necessary, as a corrective, to take into consideration the global planetary aspects and the researcher’s own chart and transits.

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8. For examples of this phenomenon, see Richard Tarnas’s article “The Ideal and The Real,” in Section 2 of this issue of Archai, in which he briefly explores the expression of the Saturn-Neptune archetypal complex in the work of both Sigmund Freud and James Hillman.
Implications of Holotropic Research and Archetypal Astrology

While all the above observations from transpersonal research point to a world view and personality theory that are in general consonance with astrology, the research into holotropic states has amassed a significant body of evidence that quite specifically supports the fundamental assumptions of astrology. However, modern Euro-American civilization is under such a strong influence of materialistic science that I can say from my own experience that it usually takes years of research of holotropic states and extensive personal exposure to them before one is able to break its spell and accept the radical revisions that have to be made in our understanding of the human psyche and the nature of reality to accommodate the new data. The vast array of challenging observations from holotropic states and astrology cannot be handled by a little conceptual patchwork or occasional cosmetic adjustment using minor ad hoc hypotheses. Rather, it would require a drastic overhaul of the modern world view, shattering and replacing the most fundamental metaphysical assumptions and beliefs of materialistic science.

The connections revealed by astrology are so complex, intricate, creative, and highly imaginative that, in my opinion, they strongly point to a divine origin. They provide convincing evidence for a deep meaningful order underlying creation and for a superior cosmic intelligence that engendered it. In addition, the findings of natal and transit astrology challenge the basic tenet of materialistic science that the universe is essentially meaningless and that it has no special connection with human beings.

This conviction that the natural laws offer no discernible purpose for human beings has been most explicitly expressed by cosmological physicist Steven Weinberg. “I believe there is no point that can be discovered by the methods of science,” he said in an interview. “I believe that what we have found so far—an impersonal universe which is not particularly directed towards human beings—is what we are going to continue to find. And that when we find the ultimate laws of nature they will have a chilling, cold, impersonal quality about them.”

The image of a deeply meaningful, interconnected universe permeated by superior intelligence and including every individual in its intriguing script raises a very interesting question: Is there a comprehensive world view that could integrate the findings of natural sciences and modern consciousness research and, at the same time, incorporate astrology? Over the years, and not without struggle and tribulations, I have come to the conclusion that there is indeed a world view that could absorb and explain my experiences and observations from consciousness research, as well as embrace astrology. Needless to say, however, this differs diametrically from the belief system that dominates the modern Western civilization.

I have described this world view in my book The Cosmic Game: Explorations of the Frontiers of Human Consciousness (1998) and presented it also in a condensed form in a

chapter of my book *Psychology of the Future* (2000). This vision of reality is based on experiences and insights from holotropic states and portrays the universe not as a material system, but as an infinitely complex play of Absolute Consciousness. Ancient Hindu scriptures describe a similar view of the cosmos, referring to the events in the phenomenal worlds as *lila*, the divine play. I have tried to show in my previous publications that this way of seeing the universe is becoming increasingly compatible with various revolutionary advances in new paradigm science (Grof 1985, 1998).

If the cosmos is a creation of superior intelligence and not a supermachine that created itself, it then becomes more readily plausible that astrology could be one of many different orders built into the universal fabric. It could be seen as a useful and even necessary complement to the field of science as it currently exists, rather than an irreconcilable rival of the scientific world view. Opening up conceptually to this possibility would make it possible to utilize the great potential that astrology holds as a clinical and research tool in psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy, as well as for a variety of other disciplines.
Bibliography


Section Two

Archetypal Analysis of Culture and History
Archetypal Historiography
A New Historical Approach

Rod O’Neal

In the opening paper of this second section, Rod O’Neal provides an introduction to archetypal historiography—a new approach to the study of history and culture based on planetary correlations with archetypal themes in human experience. By previewing the articles to follow, each of which is illustrative of the kind of analysis to be included in this section of Archai, O’Neal identifies three distinct but related approaches to this kind of research.

What is history? The answer to this apparently simple question is both complex and elusive. As the philosopher of history Herbert Butterfield has described the historian’s dilemma, “We may look around for the past, but it is nowhere to be seen.” Yet despite history’s ephemeral and intangible nature, the careful and accurate reconstruction of historical periods is recognized today as not only possible but valuable, yielding consequential insight into the past and thereby illuminating both the present and the future. Although an awareness of the past and the need to chronicle major events has been present to varying extents in most civilizations, the development of the kind of historical consciousness that we recognize today as “history” is relatively recent. As Butterfield points out, “Only after immensely long periods, and under the pressure of strange compulsions, did it come to be realized that a past once forgotten could be recovered to a considerable degree by research.” That realization first emerged in Western Europe during the Italian Renaissance, developing into its full form only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Some two centuries later, after much research and the development of increasingly sophisticated historical techniques and theory, historians now recognize that what is recovered of a particular historical era, culture, or event depends largely on the specific focus and theoretical framework of the historian: Different frameworks generate different questions to ask of the material used to reconstruct a particular facet of history. As a result of such theoretical differences, an entire range of well-defined fields of inquiry has emerged since the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries, from the earlier, more traditional fields of political, economic, and ecclesiastical history to more recent, specialized fields like Marxist, sociological, or cultural history. Each of these diverse approaches, also known as historiographies, has yielded invaluable new insights into specific aspects not only of particular epochs, cultures, or movements but also of the processes by which ideas, events, movements, and cultures emerge, complexly interact, and evolve as one historical period gradually gives way to the next. Precisely such a new type of historiography, offering an unprecedented perspective for evaluating history, historical processes, and cultural phenomena is what this second section of *Archai*, Archetypal Analysis of Culture and History, is intended to introduce to the larger scholarly community.

In *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*, Richard Tarnas offers an extensive body of evidence that persuasively demonstrates that many aspects of human cultural history present complex patterns of phenomena that consistently correlate with the general timing of particular planetary alignments as well as with the specific archetypal themes associated with those alignments by astrological researchers. For example, historical periods when Saturn and Pluto have formed particular geometric aspects such as the conjunction, opposition, or square (the quadrature aspects) present a range of phenomena with characteristic themes that are consonant with a dynamic mutual activation of the archetypal principles associated with Saturn and Pluto, including periods marked by intense conflict, an aura of moral gravity, conservative entrenchment and empowerment, the rise of religious and political fundamentalism, and an increased tendency to make black-and-white moral judgments along highly polarized lines of good and evil. By contrast, historical periods when Saturn and Neptune have formed quadrature alignments display a distinctly different set of characteristic themes, including a pervasive sense of cultural and personal disillusionment, skepticism, and malaise, and intensified cultural debates concerned with the dialectic between reason and faith. Not only can historical periods be differentiated in this way, but specific streams of thought within Western culture also seem to crest in major waves that display an archetypal coherence and synchrony with the cycles of specific planetary pairs. Philosophical idealism and Platonism, for example, present a cyclic pattern of emergence into cultural prominence that correlates with periods when Uranus and Neptune have formed specific

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4. I am using the term *historiography* in one of its many senses to distinguish one historical approach from others.


6. The most recent quadrature alignment of Saturn and Pluto was the opposition that was operative (within the usual orb of 15 degrees) from June 2000 through April 2004. For a detailed presentation of historical correlations with the Saturn-Pluto archetypal complex, including this most recent opposition, see Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 207–288.

7. The most recent quadrature alignment of Saturn and Neptune was the opposition that was operative from November 2004 through August of 2008. For more on historical correlations with the Saturn-Neptune archetypal complex, see Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 469–478.
alignments. On a broader collective scale, these same alignments consistently coincide with periods of major spiritual awakenings and the births of new religions. Moreover, Tarnas and many others have discerned similar patterns of correlations between significant phenomena in the biographies of prominent individuals and the archetypal complexes associated with planetary configurations in their natal charts or that are constellated during personal planetary transits.

Such patterns of correlations present a vision of human biography and culture, historical periods, streams of thought, and the evolution of ideas that contradicts prevailing concepts of a disenchanted cosmos. Near the end of _Cosmos and Psyche_, referring to the overall body of evidence from his own research and that of many others, Tarnas concludes,

> The current body of accumulated data makes it difficult to sustain the modern assumption that the universe as a whole is best understood as a blind, mechanistic phenomenon of ultimately random processes with which human consciousness is fundamentally incoherent. . . . The evidence suggests rather that the cosmos is intrinsically meaningful to and coherent with human consciousness . . . that the cosmos as a living whole appears to be informed by some kind of pervasive creative intelligence—an intelligence . . . of scarcely conceivable power, complexity, and aesthetic subtlety, yet one with which human intelligence is intimately connected, and in which it can consciously participate.

The implications of this body of evidence, therefore, are highly consequential, rendering further research and exploration eminently worthwhile, possibly of great significance. If such a vision of human cultural history and biography is valid, it should be possible to demonstrate that the defining characteristics of specific historical movements, cultural periods, and individual lives not previously researched from this perspective do indeed present recognizable patterns of significant correlations with the general timing of particular planetary alignments and the specific archetypal themes associated with those alignments. The primary goal of this section of _Archai_ is therefore twofold: first, to provide detailed historical and archetypal analysis of the major events and characteristic themes of historical movements, cultural phenomena, and personal biographies; and second, to explore how discernible themes in history appear to be correlated with the archetypal meanings associated with corresponding planetary alignments in the astrological tradition. Beyond this, the vision of history, culture, and biography revealed through such archetypal astrological analysis has theoretical implications that will be explored in greater depth within the first section of _Archai_.

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8. Tarnas, _Cosmos and Psyche_, 355–408. See, for example, the section “Romanticism, Imaginative Genius, and Cosmic Epiphany,” 382–400. Examples of major Platonic revivals include the Renaissance Platonism of Florence led by Ficino, the Cambridge Platonists of the mid-seventeenth century in England, and the emergence of Romanticism and German Idealism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.


I have elsewhere referred to these types of detailed historical studies as archetypal historiography, meaning a particular historical methodology grounded in the approach, essential parameters, and conventions established by the empirical research of Tarnas. By employing the term *historiography*, I mean a particular approach or theoretical framework that can be used to understand and write about history, in the same way that Marxist historiography has been used as a particular historical approach focused on the role that social class and economic constraints have played in determining the course of history, thereby illuminating the history of the working class and oppressed peoples; or in the same way that psychohistory has been used to enlarge our understanding of historical forces by shedding light on the role played by the psychological motivations of both individuals and social groups. These are but two examples of the many types of historiography and the valuable insights such diverse theoretical approaches have yielded for our understanding of the past and its implications for the present and the future. Like other historical approaches, archetypal historiography offers unique insight into specific aspects of history, perhaps most obviously into the overarching thematic patterns and timing of historical phenomena. What sets archetypal historiography apart as unique is the insight that the themes, events, and cycles of history appear to be correlated with the planetary order in the solar system, suggesting some kind of objective pattern of meaning informing the unfolding course of human culture.

Simply described, archetypal historiography as a methodology combines two primary modes of inquiry: historical research and archetypal analysis of correlations based on archetypal astrology. Archetypal historiography is grounded first and foremost in careful historical research marked by concern for accuracy and attention to detail, as well as by a multidisciplinary approach that includes a wide range of fields such as philosophy, depth psychology, cultural history, psychohistory, psychobiography, and analysis of the arts. The primary goal of this research is to attain a nuanced appreciation for the rich complexity of cultural periods and individual lives and the fluid interdependence of various streams of thought, movements, and historical trends. Archetypal historiography’s second mode of inquiry, the archetypal analysis of astrological correlations, is marked by the careful discernment of themes, qualities, and impulses presented by specific historical phenomena and the exploration of how these correlate with archetypal themes typically associated with concurrent planetary alignments in astrology. This type of archetypal analysis is characterized by a formal rigor, requiring adherence to an established set of procedural guidelines, and by an archetypal awareness that combines multiple ways of knowing—rational, intuitive, imaginative, somatic, emotional. As this kind of research progresses, these two distinct but simultaneous modes—historical research and archetypal analysis—inflect and inform each other in what may most simply be described as a recursive, expanding, and deepening hermeneutic circle. The archetypal themes associated with the planetary cycles continue to

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12. For the specific parameters and other methodological details used in assessing the correlations of archetypal astrology, see Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, in general and 71–138 in particular.
deepen and broaden our understanding of historical events even as the themes revealed by detailed historical research continue to expand our understanding of those archetypal complexes.

Strictly speaking, the term archetypal historiography applies to studies involving the analysis of historical phenomena, such as socio-political developments, philosophical movements, and literary and artistic trends. Broadly conceived, however, the methodology and aims of archetypal historiography can also be applied more generally to other related fields of study, such as biography and the analysis of culture and specific works of art, which contribute in important ways to shaping history and our understanding of it. Building on the research presented by Tarnas in *Cosmos and Psyche*, the articles in this section of the premier issue of *Archai* illustrate three distinctly different applications of this more general understanding of archetypal historiography. The first article is focused on the phenomena presented by a single historical movement; the second article is centered on the creative work of a single individual; and the third on the various ways in which a single archetypal complex can be discerned in the lives and works of many individuals. A brief examination of some of the highlights of each of these essays may serve to illustrate both similarities and differences among these three types of analysis, as well as reveal some of the significant types of insights that can be gleaned through the lens of archetypal astrology.

The first essay, based on my doctoral dissertation, “Seasons of Agony and Grace: An Archetypal History of New England Puritanism,” is part one of a three-part series in a detailed case study of the Puritan movement, focusing particularly on the phenomena surrounding the origins of this movement in the events of the early Reformation and its emergence in Elizabethan England. This study presents evidence that the major events, characteristics, and impulses of the nascent Puritan movement clearly reflect the archetypal themes typically associated with major alignments of two outer-planetary cycles, Saturn-Pluto and Uranus-Neptune, which had both formed opposition alignments during the period when Puritanism as a separate movement emerged out of the Elizabethan Settlement during the 1560s. As I summarize one aspect of this remarkable set of correlations,

The archetypal dynamism that exists between these two complexes represents quite well a key tension in the Puritan makeup: an almost irresolvable conflict between simultaneous impulses for, on the one hand, an optimistic search for religious awakening and spiritual liberation (Uranus-Neptune) and, on the other hand, a pessimistic fatalism grounded in the doctrines of human depravity and predestination (Saturn-Pluto).

13. Part one is a modified extract from chapters 1–3 of O’Neal, “Seasons of Agony and Grace,” PhD diss., 1–83. Part two will focus on the founding of and developments within the New England colonies and the simultaneous role of Puritanism in the English Civil Wars. Part three will examine the transformation and fragmentation of Puritanism during the Great Awakening.

Moreover, the timing of these major events occurred in remarkable synchrony with the occurrence of these same alignments. And as the subsequent two parts of this case study will demonstrate, whenever these same planetary pairs simultaneously moved into major alignment, the Puritan movement moved into cultural prominence, expressing much of the same or very similar thematic content in keeping with the archetypal complexes associated with those alignments. Such an archetypal history, I believe, therefore offers important insights into the archetypal nature of the psychosocial dynamics at the heart of this highly significant historical movement as well as into the general timing of these events as indicated by empirical correlations with specific planetary alignments.15

In the next article, “A Last Chance Power Drive: An Archetypal Analysis of Bruce Springsteen’s Song Lyrics,” by Keiron Le Grice, the focus shifts to the creative works of a single individual. This essay is the first in a two-part series exploring how major themes found in Bruce Springsteen’s music reflect the archetypal themes associated with particular planetary configurations in his natal chart. The first essay is focused on a single configuration involving Pluto, Mars, and Venus, particularly the ways in which themes typically associated with Pluto color the expression of this three-fold archetypal complex. Describing this approach to biography and the analysis of art as an “extension of Jungian depth psychological approaches to the analysis of an artist’s personality, life, and works,” Le Grice presents a wealth of evidence that the combination of these three archetypal principles are consistently evident in Springsteen’s song lyrics throughout his musical career.16 By examining Springsteen’s language, his use of imagery and metaphor, the motivations and feelings of the characters portrayed in his songs, and how “the expression of the Pluto archetype changes over time,” Le Grice is able to group Springsteen’s albums into four phases, representing a developmental arc in his musical career. Le Grice describes the early phases of that arc as “a romantic odyssey, a personal journey of creative transformation and individuation, driven and guided by the evolutionary dynamic associated with the Pluto archetype.”17 Such an archetypal exploration deepens our understanding of Springsteen’s music, opening windows onto a deeper appreciation of the psychological complexes at work in his life and the resonances many of us feel with his music. Moreover, in Le Grice’s concluding words, the specific focus on the psychodynamics of a particular archetype, in this case Pluto, also gives significant insight into the “evolutionary significance of the [Pluto] archetype in human experience,” illustrating “an

15. Although such insights are apparent for a great many phenomena throughout the three-part series, another significant contribution is the unique understanding such an archetypal analysis offers concerning the periodic nature of major cultural events known as great awakenings, for which historians have offered a number of conflicting and unsatisfactory theories. These specific issues and insights will be presented in a subsequent part of this series of essays.


underlying developmental trajectory often apparent in the lives of people who deeply engage the dimension of experience associated with Pluto.”

In the final article, “The Ideal and the Real: Saturn-Neptune,” by Richard Tarnas, the focus shifts yet again to an analysis of correlations involving a single archetypal complex, Saturn-Neptune. The first essay of this two-part series is focused especially on biographical correlations, or in Tarnas’s words, “the remarkably diverse range of ways in which a specific archetypal complex associated with natal alignments involving two planets, in this case Saturn and Neptune, could express itself in various individuals born with those particular planets in major aspect.” Tarnas begins by establishing a foundation of typical themes associated with the Saturn-Neptune complex found in the lives of William Blake, Oscar Wilde, and James Hillman. He then explores how other essential archetypal polarities of that complex are discernible in the lives of a sustained sequence of prominent individuals who are significant proponents of metaphysical skepticism. This remarkable sequence of individuals includes Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, Hume, Darwin, Marx, Freud, Russell, and Foucault—all of them born, and many also producing foundational works of metaphysical skepticism, during major Saturn-Neptune alignments. By such an archetypal analysis, Tarnas is able to “trace a developing continuum of increasing philosophical disenchantment that has deeply shaped the modern world view” and that is in remarkable synchrony and archetypal resonance with dynamic alignments of this single planetary cycle. In much the same way, Tarnas identifies a different set of Saturn-Neptune themes that he collectively refers to as “melancholic Romanticism” in the lives of another wide range of individuals. And he finds yet another set of important Saturn-Neptune themes readily discernible in the lives of such important religious and political figures as Lincoln, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, which, among other significant insights, does much to explain why such figures are so intimately bound together in the collective imagination.

As these few summary examples indicate, Tarnas’s approach in this essay illuminates important ways in which significant streams of thought like metaphysical skepticism, specific forms of Romanticism, and certain kinds of political and religious philosophies emerge and re-emerge into historical prominence through prominent individuals in close synchrony with a particular planetary cycle and how these developments are richly consonant with the archetypal principles closely associated with those alignments. Corroborating the larger body of research presented in *Cosmos and Psyche* and in the other essays of this issue of *Archai*, biographical, cultural, and historical patterns appear to be consistently correlated in both their timing and their thematic content with these planetary alignments.

In addition to supporting *Archai’s* research goals, these three articles also serve as illustrative examples of the general methodology of archetypal historiography, suggesting at least three distinct ways of applying astrological archetypal analysis to different areas of culture and history. As representative examples of the type of analysis undertaken by a community of scholars in the field over the last thirty years, these approaches present possible models for further studies involving the combination of historical research and archetypal analysis of astrological correlations focused on specific subjects. My hope is that these illustrative examples will stimulate a great deal of future research, in which the generalized methodology described here is applied in specific ways to the particular phenomena under study. I am convinced that archetypal historiography and its related approaches provide important and unique insights into the events, timing, and processes of history. They do so by an unusual capacity to identify and trace specific themes found in historical, cultural, and biographical phenomena through an intricate web of interrelationships and a series of unfolding stages, as a result of tracking the shifting alignments of the planets over time.
Bibliography


Seasons of Agony and Grace
An Archetypal History of New England Puritanism (Part 1)

Rod O’Neal

This paper, the first in a three-part serialization of a major portion of Rod O’Neal’s Ph.D. dissertation, provides an example of an archetypal-astrological analysis of a specific historical movement. Combining careful archetypal discernment with detailed historical research, this paper serves, in many respects, as a paradigmatic case study of this method of analysis, which O’Neal has called archetypal historiography. Focusing in particular on the cyclical alignments of two planetary pairs, Uranus-Neptune and Saturn-Pluto, O’Neal demonstrates that the major characteristics and historical events of the Puritan movement consistently reflect the range of phenomena associated with these archetypal complexes.

This essay is the first in a three-part series that together present a detailed archetypal history of a single historical movement, the Puritan movement, especially as it developed in New England. Despite the many critical assessments of its influence on American and British culture, Puritanism is arguably one of the more important religious movements to have emerged from the Reformation, profoundly shaping many aspects of modern Western European civilization. Most obviously, Puritanism has deeply affected the religious culture of the entire English-speaking world, its influence felt worldwide today through contemporary Christian fundamentalist and evangelical groups. Puritanism is a taproot of Pentecostalism, one of the largest and most rapidly growing Christian groups today. Beyond the religious sphere, the effect of Puritanism on world culture extends into political, economic, and intellectual spheres worldwide through the impact its many seventeenth-century institutions had on both Britain and the American colonies.

The historical importance of Puritanism has produced an enormous amount of research, making it an ideal subject for a case study in archetypal historiography. Building on the research and approach outlined by Richard Tarnas in Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View, a primary goal of this case study is to demonstrate that a specific historical movement not previously researched from this perspective presents recognizable patterns of significant correlations that are in synchrony with the general timing of specific planetary alignments and that present defining characteristics consistent with the archetypal themes


2. I have described this discipline in more detail in “Archetypal Historiography: A New Historical Approach,” Archai: The Journal of Archetypal Cosmology 1, no. 1 (Summer 2009): 68–76.
typically associated with those alignments. Such a study would thereby add to the body of data referred to by Tarnas and affirm the vision described in *Cosmos and Psyche* of profound patterns of collective human responses in synchrony and thematic resonance with the cyclic activation of certain archetypal complexes.

The major events in the history of New England Puritanism clearly fall into three distinct periods. Each of the articles in this three-part series will focus in turn on one of these periods. The present article examines the emergence of the Puritan movement out of Reformation impulses in Elizabethan England. The second article will explore the period of Puritan dominance in both England and New England during the mid-seventeenth century. And the third article will focus on the fragmentation and transformation of Puritanism that took place during the first Great Awakening in the 1730s and 1740s.

**Historical Context**

In the early decades of the seventeenth century, a large migration brought more than twenty thousand members of the Puritan religious sect from England to the shores of North America to found the original New England colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. These Puritans carried with them a specific set of beliefs and goals—both a comprehensive, systematic world view and a historical vision—that would have enormous defining influence on the institutions and thought of what would become the United States of America. That influence, traced by many, pervades not only the various religious institutions that developed in America, as one might expect, but its central democratic and religiously tolerant political institutions as well.

Religious toleration and democratic governmental institutions, however, were not the central goals of the Puritan founders, who were primarily concerned with creating a uniform religious community. The Puritan emigrants who “came to Massachusetts during the 1630s hoped to do more than merely escape from persecution: they wished to strike a blow for the

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true faith by erecting a model Christian community.\textsuperscript{6} In important ways, therefore, the New England Puritan project can be viewed as a social utopian experiment intended and designed to foster proper religious attitudes, right beliefs, right practices, and most importantly, to nurture and midwife the all-important regeneration experience known as conversion.

It is important to remember that the motive force behind the Puritan migration was not simply a flight from religious persecution, although that was certainly part of it. More dominant in their thinking was the failure of reform efforts in England, especially the harsh opposition of Charles I. Another important motivation was the isolation to be found in the new world, which would eliminate the confusion of a complex doctrinal heterogeneity that constantly exerted disruptive forces on congregations, often pulling devout members into apostasy, and forever preventing the formation of a secure center of true religious belief. That very isolation, Perry Miller observes, which they did indeed find in the wilderness of the New World, is one of the reasons why the New England Puritans form such a compelling topic for research.

The fascination of this region, for the first two hundred or more years of its existence, is that it affords the historian an ideal laboratory. It was relatively isolated, the people were comparatively homogeneous, and the forces of history played upon it in ways that can more satisfactorily be traced than in more complex societies.\textsuperscript{7}

It is more complete, therefore, to think of this large religious exodus as a great utopian experiment in which the designers and directors had clear intentions of founding an ideal religious community. Theirs was a grand mission with a life- and world-changing vision: to create an isolated, dedicated, and uniformly devout society founded on the religious principles of standard Reformed doctrines, guided always and in all matters by close and careful readings of the Bible to help formulate and constitute the proper institutions and policies for governance of individual, church, and state.

That the intention of the Puritan founders of the New England colonies was in the modern sense a social experiment is no doubt only partially accurate. It is certainly difficult to imagine them using such a concept given their absolute certainty in the guiding wisdom of the Bible and their covenant with God. But the conscious design of their intentions to manipulate society, individual, and belief toward a very specific utopian ecclesiastic goal is quite clear.\textsuperscript{8} If an ideal religious society was the New England Puritans’ formal collective goal, the purpose of that society was in service to a much more important personal goal: to foster the personal relationship with God that would lead to the transformative and regenerative

\textsuperscript{6} Bremer, \textit{Puritan Experiment}, 55.


\textsuperscript{8} See, for example, Robert McDermott, “The Spiritual Mission of America,” \textit{Revision} 16, no. 1 (Summer 1993): 18.
experience of the Holy Spirit called conversion. An almost obsessive devotion to this “new birth” was one marker of Puritans’ famous ardor.

Puritans were a “hotter sort” of Protestant, and what kept them bubbling was a religious sensibility intimately bound up with conversion, an emotional confrontation with grace borne by the Holy Spirit in the Word. This encounter formed the nexus around which Puritanism developed its strain of evangelical piety, and some have accounted it the movement’s “essence.” The emphasis is well placed. Few topics so occupied Puritan preachers as did explicating the pangs of the “new birth,” and few activities so engrossed believers as did scrutinizing themselves to discover how far regeneration had proceeded. On one level, the reasons for this concern are obvious. Puritan theology insisted that the straight and narrow path to heaven traversed the gate of conversion; those whom God had elected to salvation passed through a protracted experience of desperation and relief.⁹

In their scrutiny of “how far regeneration had proceeded,” Puritan theologians came to theorize that a process of preparation and purification helped the future saint accept the Spirit’s reconstruction of her soul, in some way making regeneration less difficult. Known as the stage of preparation, it became a familiar theological concept in New England, and in many ways an unadulterated environment for the proper preparation of a society of potential saints was exactly what the New England isolation would allow these Puritans to create. Ideological and political isolation within this context, therefore, was the means by which these religious social pioneers could create a controlled environment of communal conformity that would serve as an incubator for the maximized production of that critical religious experience sought by all good Puritans: conversion.

It is my conviction that the intense focus of the Puritans on the conversion experience in the isolation of New England created what was essentially an incubation tank, which—during the more than one hundred years of Puritan dominance—produced a general yet deep yearning within the collective American psyche for profound personal transformational experiences.¹⁰ These experiences have occurred on the individual biographical level throughout history, but they also appear in major cultural or historical waves. For Europeans on American soil, the first of these great spiritual transformational waves took place in the 1730s and 1740s and was known as the Great Awakening, a massive religious revival movement that swept through the American colonies converting tens of thousands. Since that time, major waves of spiritual and religious revival have remained a part of the human landscape in America, including other major waves peaking during the early nineteenth century.

century in the Second Great Awakening, in the explosive emergence of Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century, and, again, within the explosive growth of Pentecostal and charismatic movements of the late twentieth century, to mention just a few of the major, related phenomena.11

These major spiritual and religious efflorescences have occurred in counterpoint to the predominant trend of secularization in Western civilization that took place throughout the modern era, in which most traces of belief in supernatural agents, magical thinking, and reliance on the Christian God were gradually eliminated from the modern world view of scientific materialism. This predominant disenchanting trend is one major outcome of the cosmological shift that Richard Tarnas describes as “the Copernican shift of perspective,” involving the liberation from the ancient and medieval cosmic womb, the radical displacement of the human being to a relative and peripheral position in a vast and impersonal universe, the ensuing disenchantment of the natural world . . . a primordial event, world-destroying and world-constituting.12

That this process of disenchantment occurred in many stages is clear, however, when one follows the course of major ideas through the Renaissance to the present. A very rough outline of that process might begin with particular fifteenth-century Renaissance humanists who wrestled a certain amount of glory from the realm of heaven to give dignity to humanity’s creative earthly existence. Martin Luther’s Reformation then extracted another


12. Tarnas, Passion of the Western Mind, 416. Max Weber was one of the first and most significant writers to refer to this process by which the supernatural was removed from the cosmos as one of disenchantment. In his famous essay, The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism, Weber argues that the Protestant attitude—especially that of the Puritans of England and America—toward work as a holy vocation contributed to the rise of capitalism. (Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism and Other Writings, ed. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells [New York: Penguin Books, 2002], 8–36, 105–122.) I am not here concerned with that controversial and highly influential thesis, but another in which Weber describes how the Reformation began a process of eliminating the supernatural from the modern scientific world view. Weber refers elsewhere to this process as the “disenchchantment of the world,” a process that has produced an era in human history (our own) “characterized by rationalization and intellectualization,” from which “precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations.” (Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” in From Max Weber: Essays on Sociology, trans. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills [1919; New York: Oxford University Press, 1946], 154.) This process of rationalization and intellectualization has created a universe in which there are “no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play,” but rather a universe, in which “one can, in principle, master all things by calculation,” which “means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means.” (Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 139.)
measure of spiritual authority from the hierarchy, sacraments, and established practices of the Roman Catholic Church to vest the individual human with a personal relationship with God. Copernicus and the early Scientific Revolution tore the Earth from its central place of cosmic significance and shattered the crystalline spheres of heaven. Newton’s mechanistic physics and cosmology, Locke’s empirical psychology, and Enlightenment rationalism each provided key elements that contributed to the elimination of supernatural agents from physics and epistemology and to the relegation of God to the role of Divine Engineer and Architect, no longer intimately and personally involved in his creation. Darwin’s theory of evolution continued this disenchanting project by eliminating God from the very process that created the particular species of animal that was once considered separate from all other animals—formerly known as “Mankind,” uniquely fashioned in God’s image, now referred to as *homo sapiens*, an evolutionary by-product of environmentally selected random genetic mutations.13

The story presented here centers on a single yet critical stage in this larger process of secularization and disenchantment, specifically when adoption of the Enlightenment ideas of Locke and Newton seemed to require a separation from the medieval Christian reliance on supernatural agents to explain the physical world and how we are able to know that world. For America, that critical transition occurred during the Great Awakening, which Alan Heimert and Perry Miller describe as the “final break with the Middle Ages and her entry into a new intellectual age in the church and in society.”14

It is the evolution of the Puritan world view in this process of secularization and disenchantment that forms one of the major focuses of this case study. The changes explored here concern an evolution of ideas and viewpoints that resulted from a dialectical engagement of two types of tensions: first, internal tensions inherent in specific theological doctrines and philosophical positions within Puritanism; and second, externally derived tensions resulting from the encounter between the Puritan world view and the new ideas of empiricism, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment. Together these two sources of tension created a conceptual revolution in the Great Awakening after which it was possible to conclude that a “psychological earthquake had reshaped the human landscape.”15


Foundations and Emergence

I have provided elsewhere an overview of the major characteristics of the Puritan world view, including details of their physics, theology, and psychology, as well as an overview of the major historical events and dynamic periods in the emergence and evolution of New England Puritanism. Within the quite specific doctrinal and conceptual focus of this case study, three major periods emerged out of that examination. Although intense controversy and crisis are essential features at the heart of all three periods, providing the energy and motivation for much of what is most problematic and most creative about each, the general characteristics of each period may be distinguished nonetheless, which may be briefly summarized as follows: The first major period was one of emergence, encompassing those events leading to and surrounding the birth of the Puritan movement in Elizabethan England during the 1560s. In New England Puritanism, the second major period was one of expression and elaboration, marked by the foundation of the Puritan colonies, the promulgation of a formal statement of orthodoxy in the Cambridge Platform that defined what was known as the New England Way, and internal doctrinal controversies in the debates of the Half-Way Covenant during the mid-seventeenth century. During this same period in England, roughly 1640 through 1660, Puritans came to political and ecclesiastical power through the English Civil Wars and Cromwell’s Protectorate, with major consequences for subsequent English political, religious, and social history. The third major period was one of transformation and fragmentation, involving a revolution in the collective American psyche that resulted from the events of the Great Awakening during the 1730s and 1740s, in which Jonathan Edwards made fundamental revisions to the Puritan conceptual framework that broke apart the monolithic doctrinal cohesion of the New England Way. As previously stated, the three articles that are planned for this journal will present an archetypal historiography of each of these three major periods in turn, examining within these three contexts many of the details of these and other major defining events.

A preliminary examination of the outer planetary alignments in effect during each of these three major periods shows that all three coincided with consecutive major alignments of Uranus and Neptune (see table 1). This notable set of correlations may serve as an entry point into an archetypal historiography of this important movement. To understand what such correlations might reveal, we must first examine the characteristic themes of the archetypal principles associated with the planets Uranus and Neptune and the archetypal complex formed by their combination.

The Uranus-Neptune Archetypal Complex

The orbital periods of Uranus and Neptune are approximately eighty-four and one hundred and sixty-four years respectively, meaning that Uranus takes approximately eighty-four years to make one complete journey around the sun while Neptune takes approximately one hundred and sixty-four years to complete a similar journey. As do all planetary pairs, the combined movements of Neptune and Uranus form a cycle similar to that of the lunar cycle, which moves from new moon (conjunction, or 0° alignment) through full moon (opposition, or 180° alignment) to another new moon (conjunction). One complete Uranus-Neptune cycle takes approximately one hundred and seventy-two years.

Using an orb of 15° to delineate start and end dates for conjunctions and oppositions, the duration of Uranus-Neptune axial alignments varies from thirteen to eighteen years. Using these conventions, table 1 shows that all three major periods of Puritan history occurred in coincidence with three successive axial alignments of the Uranus-Neptune cycle starting with the opposition of 1556–1574, through the very next axial alignment, the conjunction of 1643–1658, to the second opposition of 1728–1746.

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<th>Exact</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Major Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>1563–1567</td>
<td>1574</td>
<td>Emergence of Puritan Movement</td>
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<td>(1559) Elizabethan Settlement reinstates the Act of Supremacy and institutes the Act of Uniformity.</td>
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<td>(1563) Thirty-nine Articles define official Church of England doctrine and practice.</td>
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<td>(1566) Puritan opposition coalesces into identifiable religious movement.</td>
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<td>(1646–1648) Cambridge Synod</td>
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<td>(1656–1657) Ministerial Assembly</td>
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<td>Opposition</td>
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<td>(1734–1735) Connecticut River valley revivals</td>
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<td>(1740–1742) Great Awakening revivals and controversies</td>
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<td>(1735–1746) Jonathan Edwards revises Puritan conceptual framework</td>
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The archetypal principle associated with the planet Uranus represents the Promethean impulse toward innovation, eccentricity, liberation, rebellion, illumination, and the search for truth. Tarnas has presented convincing evidence that the Uranus archetype has strong similarities with the myth of Prometheus, especially in their mutual associations with
change, rebellion, freedom, liberation, reform and revolution, and the unexpected breakup of structures; with excitement, sudden surprises, lightning-like flashes of insight, revelations and awakenings; and with intellectual brilliance, invention, creativity, originality, and individualism.\textsuperscript{17}

Also associated with the Trickster archetype, the Uranus principle typically correlates with sharp shifts in perspective and new visions of reality that occur through sudden, unexpected developments or by means of surprising insights that break through or break down established limits, definitions, rules, and structures. Representing brilliant lightning flashes of illumination or enlightenment, the Uranus archetype frequently correlates with genius, brilliant episodes of creativity, and altered states of consciousness that bring new intellectual or spiritual understanding. More problematic associations with the Uranus archetype include instability, disruption—the principle of change itself—as well as rebellion, revolution, social unrest, and challenges to the status quo, tradition, and authority.\textsuperscript{18}

The archetype associated with the planet Neptune represents the divine realm, including the transcendent realm of Plato’s archetypal Forms and the mythical and archetypal realm of Jung. The Neptune archetype represents the fount of creative inspiration for music, art, and writing; the source and locus of the mystical unitive experience; and the wellspring of mythology, theology, metaphysics, and the imaginal. Reinhold Ebertin, a pioneer in empirical research on the significance of planetary archetypes and their combinations, refers to the Neptune archetype as “the mysterious, the unfathomable,” as that which “greatly influences our spiritual life,” positively conferring “receptivity, sensibility, inspiration, contemplativeness, empathy, tendency to mysticism, all encompassing love,” as well as more problematic characteristics such as “impressionability, hypersensitivity, obscurity, confusion, deception, aimlessness, lies, deceit.”\textsuperscript{19} Tarnas finds the Neptune principle to be associated with the dissolution of strict definitions and the permeation of concrete physical reality by the “subtle, formless, intangible, and invisible,” frequently involving

the impulse to surrender separative existence and egoic control, to dissolve boundaries and structures in favor of underlying unities and undifferentiated wholes, merging that which was separate.\textsuperscript{20}

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\textsuperscript{17} Richard Tarnas, \textit{Prometheus the Awakener} (Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, 1995), 11.
\textsuperscript{20} Tarnas, \textit{Cosmos and Psyche}, 96.
\end{flushleft}
Clearly, these two individual archetypes, Uranus and Neptune, have facets in common, especially their shared associations with breaking through (Uranus) or dissolving (Neptune) distinct boundaries, established structures, or preexisting rules, definitions, and limits.

When two planets move into alignment to form one of the major aspects (the conjunction, sextile, square, trine, and opposition), phenomena observed during such periods demonstrate characteristics of both archetypes in such a way that the two archetypes associated with those planets may be thought to create an archetypal complex. Tarnas describes an archetypal complex as a coherent field of archetypally connected meanings, experiences, and psychological tendencies—expressed in perceptions, emotions, images, attitudes, beliefs, fantasies, and memories, as well as in synchronistic external events and historical and cultural phenomena—all of which appear to be informed by a dominant archetypal principle or combination of such principles.\(^{21}\)

In a sense, the two archetypes seem to activate each other, with one archetype inflecting the other in characteristic ways and vice versa.

True for each archetype individually, the combination of Uranus and Neptune is especially associated with individual and collective alterations in consciousness and shifts in existential paradigms. Ebertin, for example, describes associations with this archetypal combination as the elimination of waking consciousness; the development and growth of the subconscious powers or forces, inner vision, inner illumination and enlightenment, inspiration, idealism, an interest in spiritual subjects, religious problems, mysticism, art. Extraordinary and unusual inclinations. Mystics . . . mediums. Peculiar psychic states, inspirations, spiritual cognition and understanding.\(^{22}\)

Historical periods during which Uranus and Neptune have formed major hard aspects present a rich range of archetypal correlations on both the personal and collective social levels, including the liberation of spiritual impulses; the birth of new religious movements; revolution and innovation in spiritual, mystical, and religious matters; sudden, unexpected intellectual insights into the archetypal realm; and profound intuitive insights or electrifying breakthroughs in philosophical understanding. In particular, I draw attention to three specific correlations typically found during periods of dynamic Uranus-Neptune alignments that figure prominently in this study: spiritual awakening, religious conversion, and social utopianism.

\(^{21}\) Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 105.

The union of the Uranus archetype as the principle of the lightning flash of illumination and the sudden quickening of comprehension with the Neptune archetype representing spiritual realities and the experience of unitive consciousness quite simply represents spiritual awakening, whether that awakening takes place within the individual or the collective psyche. The Uranus-Neptune complex, Tarnas explains, is generally “associated, both in history and in personal biographies, with periods in which the archetypal—the mythic, the spiritual, the transcendent, the imaginal, the numinous—is suddenly awakened and liberated in new ways into human consciousness.”

Of particular relevance to this study, the Uranus-Neptune archetypal combination is associated quite specifically with the religious conversion experience: a sudden shift in perspective—often through an electrifying or ecstatic illumination of consciousness—that shifts an individual’s entire being into a new apprehension of divine reality and purpose and into a fuller mode of participation in that reality and purpose. In many ways identical to the sense of spiritual awakening, it is important to emphasize the particular significance of the Uranus-Neptune combination as religious conversion because of the very specific associations the term conversion frequently has with the rebirth experience emphasized by the Christian evangelical tradition.

Another sense in which the Uranus-Neptune archetypal complex is specifically germane to this study is the social utopianism that is associated with both individual archetypes but especially with their combination. Each of the Uranus and Neptune archetypes is individually concerned with social utopias: the Uranus archetype in its associations with innovative and experimental future societies that break from tradition and emphasize individual liberty, freedom of self-expression, and justice; and the Neptune archetype in its associations as the source of ideals from which utopias are conceived, the realm of idealized, perfected worlds experienced in dreams and envisioned by the imagination.

Characteristic features of dynamic Uranus-Neptune alignment periods are easily identified in the three major periods of Puritan history, which can be briefly summarized for now as follows: During the Uranus-Neptune opposition of 1556–1574, we find the birth of the important new spiritual movement known as Puritanism as well as the formal definition of Anglicanism by the Elizabethan Settlement and Thirty-nine Articles. During the very next axial alignment of Uranus and Neptune, the conjunction of 1643–1658, we find in England the rise of Puritanism to religious and political prominence as well as a profusion of new religious sects in the years during and following the English civil wars. In New England during this same period, we find the elaboration of a utopian vision of a comprehensive ecclesiastical, social, and political system that placed the religious regeneration experience as the central, most important concept; the preoccupation during this period in clerical publications and sermons with the theological elaboration of the stages and signs of religious conversion; and, related to these developments, the breakdown of the original New England Puritan orthodoxy and the

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23. Tarnas, Prometheus, 122.
liberalization of church membership in the Half-Way Covenant clerical debates. Finally, during the very next axial alignment of Uranus-Neptune, the opposition of 1728–1746, we find a period marked by mass spiritual awakenings; a major philosophical and theological revision in the works of Jonathan Edward, which contributed significantly to an enormously important cultural paradigm shift; as well as the rise of a globally important new religion in Methodism, and the birth of a new spiritual impulse in Evangelicalism generally, to mention only the most obvious and major examples relevant to this immediate history.

The Saturn-Pluto Archetypal Complex

Turning for now from these three major periods to focus instead on several of the most important specific events leading up to the emergence of the Puritan movement reveals an entirely different pattern of correlations.24 These events include the posting of Martin Luther’s Ninety-five Theses in 1517; the passage of England’s Act of Supremacy separating the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church in 1534; the publication of John Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536; the ascension of Mary I in 1553, who reestablished Catholicism in England and began an intense period of Protestant persecution, sending into exile many English Protestants who then witnessed Reformation principles at work in major continental Reformation centers; and the oppressive measures to enforce the Elizabethan Settlement and Thirty-nine Articles in 1566 that consolidated Puritan opposition into a cohesive religious movement. With notable regularity, each one of these major events took place during periods of consecutive axial alignments—conjunctions and oppositions—of Saturn and Pluto (see table 2). Moreover, each of these events presents a wealth of phenomena that are remarkably consistent with characteristic themes typically found during periods when Saturn and Pluto have formed major hard aspects.

Table 2  Saturn-Pluto Axial Alignment Dates and Major Reformation Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignment</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Exact</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>1516</td>
<td>1518–1519</td>
<td>(1517) Luther posts Ninety-five Theses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>1533</td>
<td>1534–1535</td>
<td>1536</td>
<td>(1534) Henry VIII’s Act of Supremacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1535) St. Ignatius publishes Spiritual Exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1536) Calvin publishes Institutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>1567–1568</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>(1566) Emergence of Puritan Movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. For a brief, narrative overview of these events, see chapter 2, “Historical Background,” in O’Neal, “Seasons of Agony and Grace,” 15–45.
Saturn completes an entire circuit around the sun in approximately twenty-nine years. Pluto takes approximately two hundred forty-eight years to complete an entire circuit around the sun.\textsuperscript{25} The two planets take an average of thirty-three years to cycle from conjunction to conjunction, but because of Pluto’s highly eccentric orbit and extreme variability of speed, individual cycles range from thirty to thirty-eight years. At either end of this range, the Saturn-Pluto cycle is approximately five times faster than the Uranus-Neptune cycle, which means that each complete Uranus-Neptune cycle may include up to five complete Saturn-Pluto cycles. What the Saturn-Pluto cycle gains in frequency, however, it loses in duration. Whereas Uranus-Neptune conjunctions and oppositions may remain within an active orb (15) for fourteen to nineteen years, axial Saturn-Pluto alignments typically last three to four years using the same orb. Within such contexts, the term \textit{active orb} is defined as the range of degrees surrounding exact alignment during which correlations of archetypally relevant events or archetypal activity have been regularly observed.

As with the Uranus-Neptune cycle, understanding the archetypal associations with the major hard aspects of the Saturn-Pluto cycle may be approached by examining the combination of characteristics associated with the individual planetary archetypes. The archetype associated with the planet Saturn represents the principle of form, structure, and reality—concrete physical reality, as well as social, economic, and psychological reality. The Saturn principle represents the laws, rules, and necessities inherently required in any process that must be met for something to exist and endure. It is concerned with construction, formulation, assessment, stability, endurance, and accomplishment; and is associated with professions that work extensively with rules and structures, such as law, architecture, engineering, science, mathematics, statistics, and accounting. In important senses, the Saturn principle represents the Aristotelian formal cause: the form, shape, or format that the inchoate material substrate, the material cause, assumes when anything comes into existence. The Saturn principle represents both the process of manifestation and the organizational principles and physical necessities that this process and the end result must contain and obey for that process to succeed. The Saturn archetype also symbolizes the authority and knowledge required to judge and monitor that process. Governing materialization and manifestation, Saturn is associated with crystallization and incarnation, with differentiation and definition, with boundaries and distinctions, and with individuation and separation, all entailing the necessary exclusion of other possibilities.

Problematically, the Saturn archetype is associated with loss, constriction, restriction, opposition, negation, death, and is frequently correlated with heaviness, depression, sadness, loneliness, and pessimism. The Saturn archetype governs problems and difficulties, and is associated with the challenges of maturation, with those inherent properties or characteristics

\textsuperscript{25} For more on Pluto’s official status as a dwarf planet or plutoid, see the fundamentals section of the \textit{Archai} website (www.archaijournal.org/review/astrologicalterms.html#dwarf).
that predetermine patterns of behavior, and with fate and karma. The Saturn principle is frequently personified as the taskmaster, teacher, authority figure, arbiter, judge—the Senex archetype. Positively, the Saturn archetype represents not only form and stability, definition and integrity, but also those traits that practically assist in creation: discipline, determination, discernment, criticism, judgment, wisdom, and an appreciation of symmetry, organization, order, practical stability, and proven means of accomplishment. It represents tradition and the past, status and the status quo, and reputation, accomplishment, and recognition.

The archetype associated with the planet Pluto represents primal evolutionary energies: power itself, the elemental forces of nature, and the destruction and regeneration inherent in all natural processes, including, perhaps especially, life. The Pluto archetype represents the irrepressible energies of volcanic, tectonic, nuclear, evolutionary, and psychological processes, and is typically associated with events and processes that are titanic, massive, powerful, profound, or compelling. It represents the power dynamics in politics, political intrigue, and psychological and sexual manipulation. It is Kali or Shiva in the Hindu pantheon, universe-destroyers without whom cosmic cycles could not exist; and Hades in the Greek pantheon, whose abduction of Persephone out of innocence brought the cycle of death and rebirth to the world above. The Pluto archetype represents shadow, taboo, and feared elements, including the underworld, hell, Satan, and sin; but also the strength and regeneration that comes from successfully encountering what is feared. The Pluto principle intensifies, deepens, and renders obsessive. It represents the animal instincts, sexual urges, demonic possession, and the obsessions of all intense passions, including erotic, political, and artistic. It is associated with mass or mob psychology and with large collective movements.

The archetypal complex formed by the synthesis of these two principles is particularly powerful, and characteristic phenomena associated with periods of major hard aspect alignments of Saturn and Pluto present archetypal dynamics that are extremely potent and highly complex. Both archetypes correlate with great difficulty or struggle, each associated in its own particular way with tremendous growth and learning, often through major trials and sometimes great loss. In their combination, the Pluto archetype as irresistible force meets the Saturn archetype as immovable object resulting in a titanic struggle that produces enormous structures through almost indiscernible, tectonic movement. Both archetypes contain concepts of death: Saturn through separation, ending, finality, old age, and senescence; Pluto through destruction and

26. Both the Saturn and the Pluto archetypes are associated with fate and karma. From ancient times, the Saturn archetype has been closely associated with law, determinism, destiny, and fate. The Pluto archetype’s associations with fate and karma are more closely aligned with the instinctual and psychological forces that compel behavior.


decay. Both individually hold concepts of inevitability and irresistibility. The combination in
dynamic aspect is especially associated with fate, determinism, and predestination: the absolute
and strict definition and immutability of the Saturn archetype made irresistible and
overwhelmingly compelling on an enormous scale by the Pluto archetype.

Ebertin associates the Saturn-Pluto complex with “hard labour, cruelty” and with
individuals and groups who demonstrate “tenacity and toughness, endurance,” and the
capacity to make “record efforts of the highest possible order” and perform “the most difficult
work with extreme self-discipline, self-denial, and renunciation.” He also associates Saturn-
Pluto with “a hard and unfeeling disposition, also cold-heartedness, severity.” Highly
appropriate for this case study, Ebertin’s research also discerned Saturn-Pluto associations
with “a fanatical adherence to one’s principles” as well as “achievements brought about by
large groups or masses of people.” As Tarnas summarizes important aspects of his research
regarding this archetypal complex, “the successive quadrature alignments of the Saturn-Pluto
cycle coincided with especially intense contraction,” marked by periods of “crisis and conflict,
empowerment of reactionary forces and totalitarian impulses, organized violence and
oppression,” and “an atmosphere of gravity and tension.” During such periods, Tarnas
continues, “profound transformation was a dominant theme,” with that transformation
coming “through contraction, conservative reaction, crisis and termination.”

Returning to the major events listed earlier that led up to the emergence of the Puritan
movement, we can now examine the pattern of correlations these events present with axial
alignments of Saturn and Pluto and the Saturn-Pluto archetypal complex. This pattern of
correlations begins with Martin Luther’s most famous action. On October 31, 1517, Luther
assumed his pivotal historical role as a spiritual and religious revolutionary by posting his
Ninety-five Theses, thereby starting the world-changing movement called the Reformation. As
figure 1 shows, Saturn and Pluto were within 5˚ of an exact conjunction when Luther posted
his list of complaints against various practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

The overall Reformation project and the specific events leading to the birth of the
Puritan movement present themes that are highly characteristic of the Saturn-Pluto archetypal
complex, which include the life-and-death struggle that is birth; the discernment of evil in self
and other, as well as the projection of evil onto others; social oppression and the concomitant
battle against the oppressor; and significant manifestations of mass social movements, titanic
struggles, and monumental efforts toward building something of enduring significance. Even
the term reformation is consonant with central themes of this archetypal combination, with

29. Ebertin, Combination, 188.
30. Ebertin, Combination, 188. For an in-depth exploration of historical correlations with the Saturn-Pluto
31. Tarnas, Cosmos and Psyche, 209.
32. October 31, 1517 in Old Style (Julian calendar) translates to November 10, 1517 in New Style (Gregorian
calendar). This Saturn-Pluto conjunction began in 1516, was exactly aligned in 1518, and ended in 1519.
Saturn representing tradition, status quo, structure, form, and hierarchy, and Pluto representing irresistible evolutionary forces breaking down existing or traditional structures and regenerating them in a new form. It is important to remember that in Luther’s case, while it was certainly his intention in late 1517 to reform many of the oppressive and abusive aspects of Roman Catholic doctrines and practices, it was not his intention to cause a separation or create a new religious entity. This focus on the reformation of existing structures, to strengthen them or correct them by a heightened opposition of existing tensions, rather than a focus on separation that results in an entirely new entity apart from the original one, is an important distinction for phenomena observed for the Saturn-Pluto complex in this study.33

The sequence of major events leading to the emergence of the Puritan movement continues during the very next axial alignment of Saturn and Pluto, the opposition that began in 1533 and ended in 1536 (see figure 2). During this same four-year period, Henry VIII engaged

Figure 1 Outer Planetary Alignments, November 1517

Source: all planetary alignment figures were created using Io Edition software from Time Cycles Research (www.timecycles.com).

33. Although periods of dynamic Saturn-Pluto alignments are frequently marked by intense polarization and profound divisions within existing structures, formal separations and schisms are more typically phenomena found during periods when Saturn and Uranus have formed dynamic alignments. This distinction between these two archetypal complexes will be explored in more detail in subsequent sections of this series and in future articles.
in an intense battle of wills with the pope over control of the Church of England, eventually separating from Rome by the Act of Supremacy in 1534;³⁴ St. Ignatius of Loyola published his Spiritual Exercises (1535), the foundational work of the Jesuit order, which was perhaps the most potent agent of the Counter-Reformation; and Calvin published the Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536), the foundational doctrinal statement of Calvinism that formed the heart of the Reformed Protestant tradition, which includes Puritanism as a major member.

Figure 2  **Outer Planetary Alignments of 1535**

Saturn-Pluto archetypal themes are perhaps not as evident in the character of Luther and the religious impulse known as Lutheranism that developed directly around him as they are in the character, thought, and works of John Calvin, whose life and thought were much more central to the history of Puritanism, who was born in 1509 during a Saturn-Pluto square alignment, and whose seminal work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, was published during a Saturn-Pluto opposition. Calvin’s *Institutes* provided the foundational statements for the

³⁴. The separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church is a significant example of correlations of religious separation and schism that are typical during periods when Saturn and Uranus have formed dynamic alignments. Using the usual orb of 15°, Saturn and Uranus formed a conjunction starting in June, 1531. That conjunction was exact during 1533, ending in May of 1535. For more on typical correlations with the Saturn-Uranus complex, see Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 222–223. For more on these types of correlations in Puritan history, see chapter 4, “Crisis and Controversy,” in O’Neal, “Seasons of Agony and Grace,” 104–109.
doctrinal triumvirate of Reformed and Puritan theology, which are worth examining briefly at this point to better understand essential characteristics of Puritanism.35

The bedrock belief of Calvinist and Puritan theology was the absolute sovereignty of God: the omnipresent, omniscient, inscrutable, all-powerful creator, lord and master of the universe.36 From this foundational belief, the second and more difficult doctrine of predestination, or election, logically flows. Because God is all-knowing, he knows everything that has happened and will happen. Because God is all-powerful, he ordains all that has happened and will happen, which means that he must know, and has himself ordained, which human beings will be granted salvation and eternal life with him. The third and final member of this triumvirate is the doctrine of human depravity, also known as the doctrine of original sin. According to this doctrine, the progeny of fallen Adam—all human beings—share fully in Adam’s original sin of pride, and are therefore inherently sinful, utterly depraved, and unredeemed in the sight of God. That status of utter depravity cannot be changed through any word, thought, or action of the individual.

It was an integral part of the Puritan doctrine of human depravity that the human mind, once nearly divine and capable of directly perceiving divine and spiritual reality, no longer functions properly, especially in the proper hierarchical domination of one faculty over another. Since the Fall, the faculties of the imagination and the will were capable of misleading the faculty of reason, which was no longer able to make proper judgment and was therefore often wrong or confused. Befuddled or misled, reason could no longer function properly to govern the will. Ungoverned, the will and its irrational emotions gained dominance. This consequence is crucial to this study, since according to this Puritan faculty psychology, it is only through the grace of the Holy Spirit in the conversion experience that the hierarchical functioning of these faculties is healed. The conversion experience restores reason to its proper dominance of the will and renders reason impervious to the deceptions of the imagination, making the ongoing experience of divine grace the “rational control of impulse.”37

Together, these three central doctrines—God’s absolute sovereignty, predestination, and human depravity—created a horrifying picture of the fate of most of humanity, helpless to redeem their souls in the sight of God no matter how pious. The only means by which salvation could come was through the gift of God’s irresistible grace, which could be neither earned nor refused, leaving the agonizing question hanging mid-air: who is saved?

35. This difference between Lutheranism and Calvinism reflects archetypal differences in their natal charts. Luther was born in 1483 when Saturn and Pluto were not in quadrature alignment. By contrast, Calvin was born in 1509 when Saturn was square Pluto.


37. Flower and Murphey, History, 44.
All three doctrines contain central themes that are highly characteristic of the Saturn-Pluto archetypal complex. The concept of absolute sovereignty combines the authority of the Saturn archetype with the absolute power of the Pluto archetype. And from the combination of such typical Saturn archetypal themes as moral judgment, confinement, and isolation with such typical Pluto archetypal themes as shadow, sin, punishment, and the underworld, the other two Puritan doctrines are easily derived: human depravity and predestination, or the judgment of humanity as utterly sinful by an all-powerful and terrifying God who is willing to ordain from the very beginning that a vast majority of humanity will be condemned to eternal punishment in hell. Moreover, in this combination we also find the need for ever-vigilant repression (Saturn) of our human sinful nature (Pluto), which even if successfully achieved through great personal effort will probably not be sufficient to avert God’s awful judgment.

Figure 3  **Outer Planetary Alignments of 1553**

The very next axial alignment of Saturn and Pluto was the conjunction that began in 1551, was exact in 1552–1553, and ended in 1554 (see figure 3). In 1553, the death of Edward VI and the accession of Mary I to the throne of England ended reformation efforts within the Church of England, returning England and its church to Roman Catholicism and beginning a five-year period in which English Protestants were oppressed, persecuted, executed, and exiled. While in exile at major Reformation centers of continental Europe, English Protestants encountered Reformed principles at work in dynamic congregations within thriving communities. The encounters English exiles had during this period with Reform
doctrine served to strengthen their convictions, hone their arguments, and harden their resolve for furthering reform efforts in England when the opportunity next arose. Persecution, oppression, exile, strengthened convictions, and hardened resolve are all phenomena that are characteristic of dynamic Saturn-Pluto alignment periods. These phenomena combine Saturn’s archetypal themes of authority, hierarchy, control, formal doctrinal systems, moral codes, boundaries, and resistance with Pluto’s archetypal themes of political power and the irresistible impulse and will to fight, defend, destroy, and rebuild anew.

For English Protestants at home and abroad, an opportunity to implement the convictions hardened by persecution and exile presented itself at the death of Mary I and the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558. At first, reform-minded English Protestants were optimistic that they could steer the course of the Church of England onto a path more in line with continental Reformed Churches. Elizabeth, however, held a different vision. It was during 1566 that oppressive measures intended to eradicate these reform efforts resulted in the birth of Puritanism as an identifiable movement—precisely during the very next axial alignment of Saturn and Pluto, the opposition of 1565 through 1569.

Numerous traits of the Puritan movement described so far resonate strongly with typical themes of the Saturn-Pluto archetypal complex, including: oppression and the determined opposition to oppression; an accurate discernment of evil as well as the projection of evil, the evil doer, or the sinner onto others, and onto the self; intense criticism and harsh judgment, which when directed at others can lead to recrimination and the dynamics of victimization, and when directed at the self can lead to intense feelings of guilt and shame; moral rectitude and exactitude; grim determination, hard work, and discipline; fate, determinism, predestination, and eternal damnation; restrictive, totalitarian government; the exercise of strict and comprehensive control; dictatorial tendencies within individuals or institutions; intense desire for purification and regeneration, which is either denied or obtained through arduous preparation, devotion, and purging; the erection and maintenance of rigid and secure boundaries, and an obsessive desire for seclusion and isolation to maintain purity and avoid contamination. Additional specific correlations will follow as we continue to explore the archetypal patterns revealed by the specific events and phenomena in this case study. For now, this summary list is intended to underscore the importance and pervasiveness of the Saturn-Pluto archetypal complex in the character, historical development, and ideology of the Puritan movement.

In many important ways, therefore, it is possible to view the emergence and development of the central characteristics of the Puritan movement within a dialogical matrix symbolized by the interaction of the two archetypal complexes examined so far: Uranus-Neptune and Saturn-Pluto. The archetypal dynamism that exists between these two complexes represents quite well a key tension in the Puritan makeup: an almost irresolvable conflict between simultaneous impulses for, on one hand, an optimistic search for religious awakening and spiritual liberation (Uranus-Neptune) and, on the other hand, a pessimistic fatalism grounded in the doctrines of human depravity and predestination (Saturn-Pluto). Perhaps nowhere else is this tension more symbolically potent than in the archetypal dynamics present
in the planetary configuration involving all four outer planets that was operative during the emergence of Puritanism as a cohesive movement in England in the mid-1560s.

The Emergence of the Puritan Movement

While it is not possible to assign a precise date to the birth of the Puritan movement, it is possible to identify the specific time-frame and the significant events of its emergence as an identifiable religious movement.\(^{38}\) It was after the Convocations of Canterbury and York consolidated the Elizabethan Settlement as the Thirty-nine Articles in 1563 that reform-minded English Protestants recognized the inevitability of ongoing political and ideological resistance to their ecclesiastical goals for a fully reformed English Church. Although before 1563 the question of proper clerical vestment was already generally acknowledged to be a primary and certainly the most visible point of controversy, the Thirty-nine Articles specifically established precise guidelines for ministerial dress. Certain vestments were thereby prescribed by specific royal articles, and all ministers of the English Church were required by those articles to conform in matters of dress. As a public form of silent protest against these prescriptions, a number of ministers deliberately wore vestments that did not conform to these articles and were, instead, more in line with reformed practices elsewhere.

By the end of 1564, the number of these nonconforming ministers wearing non-prescribed vestments had grown large enough to concern Elizabeth. In late January 1565, the queen composed a letter expressing her alarm at the “growing diversity of opinions” demonstrated by her clergy.\(^{39}\) While Elizabeth’s letter clearly stated her desire for ministerial conformity to the Thirty-nine Articles, she did not at this time demand actions to suppress these protests. Nonconforming ministers responded in similar vein. In March 1565, twenty nonconformist ministers sent a letter that formally requested the Queen’s tolerance of their nonconformity and their desires for greater church reform. Despite asserting desires contrary to those of the queen, the tone of this ministerial letter was undemanding, with no indication that nonconforming elements had formed a separate movement.\(^{40}\) In the months that followed, however, not only did the frequency of silent protests not diminish as Elizabeth had hoped, they grew more frequent and also increasingly vocal and critical of the queen’s merely partial reform of the English Church.\(^{41}\) It is important to note that all of these

\(^{38}\) This section on the emergence of the Puritan movement is heavily indebted to the works of Patrick Collinson, primarily his *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); as well as Collinson, *Reformation*, 123–143; Bremer, *Puritan Experiment*, 1–11; and Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 84–98, 124–134.


\(^{40}\) Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 74.

\(^{41}\) Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 75.
nonconforming clergy were ministers in the Elizabethan Church of England and that both their silent and their vocal acts of protests were meant at this point to reform the English Church from within, not to separate from it or to form a schism of any kind.

Although both the vehemence of and royal annoyance at these nonconforming protests mounted during 1565, the crisis came in London the next year, when suppression by the church hierarchy began in earnest. In late March 1566, Archbishop Parker summoned one hundred and ten nonconforming clergy to appear at Lambeth where they were required to sign documents to indicate their willingness to conform to church prescriptions regarding vestments. More than thirty London ministers declined to subscribe and were suspended, some removed from their offices and deprived of their incomes. The suspensions were soon followed during Easter season by public protests and disrupted services in a number of parishes where either conforming clergy had been imposed on reform-minded congregations to replace suspended ministers, or where no minister was now available to preach and administer the sacraments.

Soon after the suspensions, in April 1566, Archbishop Parker published the Advertisements, which provided definitive public statements of the articles prohibiting nonconforming vestments. The Advertisements, however, only strengthened the resolve of the most radical nonconforming ministers. The center of the nonconforming opposition was in London, where several ministers continued to protest both silently by vestments and vocally in sermons that openly criticized the queen, her bishops, and the woeful condition of her unreformed English Church. According to Patrick Collinson, “In these turbulent weeks, Puritanism was given definition” by these nonconforming ministers of London, who “first took the significant step of publicizing their cause in print.” Throughout this period, Robert Crowley was among the most prominent and vocal opponents of conformity, making the first open protest in late April 1566.

Archbishop Parker dealt with these problematic ministers by removing them from London, placing many under house arrest, so that by July 1566 only a small number of ministers continued to resist. While in custody from June to October 1566, Crowley collaborated with other dissident ministers to write and publish the first Puritan manifesto, his influential Briefe discourse against the outward apparell. The appearance of Crowley’s manifesto launched a publication frenzy marked by intense volleys of argumentative and accusatory documents, especially between Crowley and Archbishop Parker. The controversy grew pervasive and heated in England, marking “the end of merely fraternal disagreement,” and expanded even further during this same period to include an extensive series of correspondence with the leading centers of continental reform.

42. For the details of this paragraph, see Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 73–76.
43. Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 76.
44. Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 77.
45. For the details of this paragraph, see Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 77–82.
The earliest surviving written use of the term *puritan* occurred the following year (1567), describing the congregants of a small chapel in London who referred to themselves as “puritans or the unspotted lambs of god.”47 Moreover, it was precisely in such London radical congregations that a new and more extreme Puritan movement emerged that also clearly qualifies as having separatist intentions by going underground to establish secret and illegal congregations.48 The earliest clearly documented official discovery of such an underground, separatist congregation took place on June 19, 1567.49

It was during the spring, summer, and fall of 1566, therefore, that the loosely affiliated and largely still assimilated nonconformists known as “puritans” or “precisians” met strict disciplinary measures that were meant to bring them into conformity and suppress their protests. Instead, those measures galvanized the nonconformists into a clearly identifiable movement whose ministers began publishing polemical tracts denouncing the popery and oppression of Elizabeth and her bishops. Church authorities met this resistance in turn by an equally polemical volley of publications and a series of further suppressive actions that by 1567 drove some London groups to form underground separatist congregations who identified themselves for the first time as Puritans.50

* * * *

During much of the 1560s, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto had moved into alignment with each other in a configuration known as a T-square, which is formed by two planets in opposition alignment and a third planet in square alignment with each of the other two. The T-square of the mid-1560s was formed with Pluto in square alignment with both ends of a Uranus-Neptune opposition, as illustrated for May 1564 in figure 4. Table 3 provides more information about the timing of the three planetary alignments that formed this T-square. Note that all three alignments were within the usual active orbs (15° for oppositions and 10° for squares) from 1562 through 1570, and that the exact alignments for these three cycles occurred in three consecutive periods starting in 1563 and ending in 1572, generally the same period in which the Convocations of Canterbury and York (1563) defined the Thirty-nine Articles, heightening the nonconforming protests (1564–1565), which then deepened into a full-blown controversy and the birth of a powerful, historically important religious movement (1566–1567).

Seasons of Agony and Grace
Rod O’Neal

Figure 4  The Uranus-Neptune-Pluto T-Square (May 1564)

Table 3  T-Square Configuration Dates

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<td>Uranus square Pluto</td>
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<td>1566–1567</td>
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Such quadrature alignments of all three of the outermost planets—Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto—are relatively rare. They occur when Uranus forms a major hard aspect with one of only four Neptune-Pluto quadrature alignments during one full Neptune-Pluto cycle. The Neptune-Pluto cycle is the longest planetary cycle in duration, taking approximately 495 years to travel from one conjunction to another conjunction. Neptune-Pluto conjunctions appear to coincide with the beginnings and endings of larger historical eras. The most recent complete Neptune-Pluto cycle began with the conjunction of 1386–1411 and completed with the conjunction of 1880–1905, roughly corresponding with the modern era from the early Renaissance in Italy to the events of the late nineteenth century that laid the seeds for the global postmodern era. In the nearly 500 years between these two conjunctions, Neptune and Pluto formed quadrature alignments during only three periods: the first was a square

51. For more on the Neptune-Pluto cycle and its archetypal correlations with major historical eras, see Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 409–412, and 417–418.
alignment that lasted for twenty-two years (1559–1581); the second was the opposition, the mid-point of the cycle, that lasted for nearly thirty years (1631–1660); and the third was the final square alignment that lasted for twenty-three years (1806–1829). It was during the first square alignment of Neptune and Pluto in this particular cycle coincident with the modern period that Uranus formed an opposition alignment with Neptune and a square alignment with Pluto to form this rare T-square configuration.

In addition, Saturn moved into alignment with this T-square to oppose Pluto and square both Neptune and Uranus starting in the autumn of 1565. The alignment formed by Saturn joining the T-square is known as a grand cross, which in this case contains oppositions of both the Uranus-Neptune cycle and the Saturn-Pluto cycle, with square aspects all around. Each of these four outer planets, therefore, exists in a quadrature alignment with the other three planets in this configuration, as shown in figure 5. Starting in the autumn of 1565, this grand cross remained the dominant planetary alignment for much of the next three years. Table 4 provides more detail on the timing of Saturn’s alignments with the Uranus-Neptune-Pluto T-square of this period to form this grand cross.

Figure 5  Grand Cross Configuration (1565–1568)
That the Puritan movement was born during the period in which the three outermost planets formed exact or nearly exact alignments with each other in one of only four such quadrature configurations of the entire modern period is a notable correlation that presents a wealth of archetypal significance to which we will return. At this point, however, I want to highlight the significance of Saturn joining such a rare configuration to form a grand cross, in both its timing and archetypal significance. Consistent with the difficulties and challenges associated with the Saturn archetype and the Saturn-Pluto archetypal complex in particular, it was only after Saturn moved into alignment with this T-square in October of 1565 that the relatively amicable relationship between nonconforming ministers and Elizabeth’s ecclesiastical hierarchy shifted into a tense crisis of deliberate acts of suppression, which were met in turn by defiant acts of resistance. The first definitive acts of suppression by the church hierarchy occurred in March 1566 when Archbishop Parker required more than one hundred nonconforming ministers to subscribe to articles requiring certain ecclesiastical vestments. As stated earlier, many of the thirty-plus London ministers who refused to subscribe were denied their offices and income. When even those suppressive measures did not suffice to silence dissent and establish universal conformity, those ministers who continued to protest were physically removed from London and placed under house arrest.

Although in March and April of 1566 Saturn was not within an active orb of Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto, most of the alignments of the grand cross had previously achieved an active orb by at least December 1565 when Saturn stationed retrograde within a 10˚ orb square Neptune and within a 14˚ orb opposite Pluto (see figure 6). After Saturn’s motion turned direct in April 1566, Saturn moved within active orbs for all three alignments so that by late August 1566 the grand cross was fully formed, as illustrated earlier in figure 5.

The evidence of these events for the activated status of this archetypal configuration is consistent with the research presented by Tarnas in *Cosmos and Psyche*, supporting the convention established by him that once a planetary alignment moves within an operative, or active, orb, the archetypal complex associated with that alignment remains observably active until that alignment moves for the final time completely out of active orb, in spite of relative motions of the two planets that may temporarily cause the alignment itself to exceed an active orb. According to this understanding, nearly all archetypal complexes of the grand cross of the mid-1560s would have continued to be activated after Saturn first moved into orb with Pluto in October and with Neptune in November of 1565 even though the varying retrograde and direct motions of these

<table>
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<th>Alignment</th>
<th>Start</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saturn opposite Pluto</td>
<td>October 1565</td>
<td>1567–1568</td>
<td>July 1569</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturn square Neptune</td>
<td>November 1565</td>
<td>1566–1567</td>
<td>September 1568</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturn square Uranus</td>
<td>August 1566</td>
<td>1567–1568</td>
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four planets caused them to temporarily move out of orb in early 1566. The oppressive measures and defensive reactions of late 1565 and early 1566 confirm this convention.

Figure 6  **Outer Planetary Configuration December 1565**

Moreover, it was precisely during the period when nearly all of the aspects constituting this grand cross were exact—from the summer of 1566 through 1567—that Crowley wrote and published the first Puritan manifesto, the earliest surviving use of the term *Puritan* was recorded, and the first underground, self-identified separatist Puritan congregations appeared. And true to archetypal associations with Saturn and with the Saturn-Pluto complex in particular, the polemical nature of Crowley’s Puritan manifesto launched a highly polarized public controversy that was debated primarily through published literature. As will be seen, intense public debates carried out by means of polemical publication campaigns is a recurrent theme for periods of dynamic Saturn-Pluto alignments in this study.

It seems accurate, therefore, to consider figure 5 to be a representative illustration of the astronomical configuration that was present during the emergence of the Puritan movement in the summer and autumn of 1566. The archetypal correlations between this configuration and the character and events of the Puritan movement are symbolically rich and should take into account several archetypal complexes in addition to correlations with the Uranus-Neptune and Saturn-Pluto archetypal complexes already discussed.
The *Saturn-Uranus* archetypal complex represents the principle of crisis itself, combining the Uranus principle’s associations with sudden disruption and breakdown of the traditional forms and established structures of the Saturn archetype. The Saturn-Uranus combination also represents the impulse to establish and stabilize social structures (Saturn) that are new, innovative, rebellious, and aimed at individual freedom and self-expression (Uranus).[^53]

The dialectic between old and new forms contained in the Saturn-Uranus complex (within the spiritual and religious context of the Uranus-Neptune opposition of this period) is particularly well conveyed by Collinson, who concluded that Puritans never doubted that the interests of good order and of religion itself demanded that they should conform themselves even in their nonconformity.^[54]

The formation of separatist Puritan congregations is another important correlation that is typically found during periods of Saturn-Uranus dynamic alignments, combining the themes of revolution, rebellion, and independence of the Uranus archetype with the themes of strict authority, tradition, and status quo of the Saturn archetype.^[55]

Typical associations with the *Saturn-Neptune* archetypal complex combine the emphasis on structure, form, discipline, doctrine, and the elements of tradition, roots, the past, and returning to historical foundations and fundaments of the Saturn principle with the emphasis on the spiritual, religious, and ideal realms of the Neptune principle. Along these lines, we find correlations in Puritanism as a religion of disciplined spiritual practice—Saturn’s rigor in the service of Neptune’s spiritual purity—in its focus on the careful examination of the stages and processes (Saturn) by which one becomes more truly aligned with Spirit (Neptune), as well as in the social structure and doctrinal system (Saturn) that best foster theological and spiritual efforts (Neptune). The many detailed theological and psychological accounts of the religious regeneration experience also clearly represent the archetypal dynamics of the Saturn-Neptune complex. We also find the doctrinal position of the early Puritan movement becoming more clearly defined during the theological and ecclesiastical debates within the Elizabethan Church of England. Potent differences in theology and issues of ecclesiastical polity became apparent within both Puritanism and Anglicanism in light of the intense controversies of the 1565–1568 period.^[56] Also correlative with the Saturn-Neptune complex is the sense of loss (Saturn) felt by the Puritans.

[^53]: For a summary of many typical correlations of historical periods with the Saturn-Uranus archetypal complex, see Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 222–223.


when they realized that their idealized vision (Neptune) of a truly reformed Church of England might forever be denied (Saturn).  

Consistent with archetypal phenomena typically associated with periods of dynamic Saturn–Pluto alignments are the antagonistic political observations already noted, which became more challenging and adversarial, more absolutely defined and adamantly defended, more polarized and polemic in synchrony with Saturn moving into opposition alignment with Pluto. In addition, the Saturn–Pluto complex contains many of those traits previously identified as central to the Puritan character and Puritan beliefs: their fierce determination, their immense collective ambition, their moral exactitude, their severe judgment of self and others, and the harsh Calvinistic doctrines of human depravity, election, and predestination, to mention but a few already listed. Also present, especially during the four-year period of Saturn’s alignment to form the grand cross (1565–1568), are the rigidity and inflexibility of both sides of the Elizabethan religious debate, necessitated, or so it may have seemed, by the political and existential strait both Elizabeth and the early Puritan movement were navigating: after all, sixteenth-century England and Europe provide an intricate history of wars and executions.

Archetypal dynamics associated with the mutual activation of the Uranus and Pluto principles combine core elements of both archetypes: revolution, rebellion, innovation, instability, autonomy and emancipation, chaos and the breakdown of established structures and hierarchy that are characteristic themes of the Uranus archetype are synthesized with the titanic nature, drive for political power, destruction, and regeneration that are typically associated with the Pluto archetype. Archetypal correlations with the Uranus-Pluto complex are present during the 1560s in England in the social and political unrest of the general period, especially in the religious and spiritual (Neptune) dimensions of society with an intense focus on the ecclesiastical structure and doctrines of the Church of England. Also relevant to the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex is the birth of a movement (Puritanism) that beyond its central religious concerns would continue to exert revolutionary social and political pressures in both England and New England from its birth in 1566 through the late seventeenth century in England and considerably beyond the eighteenth century in New England, America, and the world.

In addition to those characteristic phenomena already presented, correlations with the Uranus-Neptune archetypal complex include England’s confirming itself as a country embodying the Reformation religious innovation and rebellion against established Roman Catholic authority and practices. The emergence of the Puritan movement represents the successful birth of a new and important spiritual impulse. Moreover, New England Puritanism, in particular, was centrally concerned with the theology and psychology of the religious

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57. See Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 469–478, for more on archetypal correlations found in historical periods during major hard aspect Saturn–Neptune alignments.

58. See, for example, Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, for a detailed exploration of the intense political debates on ecclesiastical matters that took place during the entire Elizabethan period both in and out of Parliament.

59. For historical correlations with the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex, see Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, “Epochs of Revolution,” 139–205.
conversion experience, a major Uranus-Neptune theme that is a prominent feature of every subsequent period in the history of Puritanism during which axial Uranus-Neptune alignments have formed, including the decades of the Half-Way Covenant crisis and the Great Awakening.

As already noted, the alignment of *Neptune and Pluto* in 1566 places the birth of the Puritan movement during the first quarter alignment of this epochal, nearly five-hundred-year planetary cycle. Consistent with the combination of these two archetypes, the birth of Puritanism represents the emergence of a spiritual movement (Neptune) of titanic, world-altering proportions (Pluto) charged with a tension that would propel it into the future to challenge the institution of divine-right monarchy (which combines the divine realm of the Neptune archetype with the emphasis on political power of the Pluto archetype) to help shape Britain’s constitutional monarchy.60 The Puritan movement would also be enormously influential in shaping yet another Promethean, world-changing institution, the United States of America. These important developments in both England and America also present central elements that clearly incorporate characteristic features of the Uranus archetype as well.

Adding now to the observations of the previous paragraph some of the more challenging associations of the many archetypal complexes formed by either Saturn or Uranus in this grand cross (in significant ways they were never absent), note that the Puritan movement was born in controversy and difficulty (Saturn) and that it was revolutionary, nonconforming, and experimental (Uranus) even as it was determined to establish a new orthodoxy and articulate and defend new doctrines of conformity (Saturn-Uranus). Moreover, it was a religious movement of massive import that was constantly critical of others and itself in its quest for the perfect and properly moral way to exist on earth in maximum contact with God for the regeneration of the individual—combining each and every one of the archetypes at once. The society that Puritans established and defined in New England was an experimental, social utopia (Saturn-Uranus-Neptune) created through a desire for political, social, and ideological isolation and purity (Saturn-Pluto), which was meant to be ruled by a morally and doctrinally totalitarian government (the totalitarian and dictatorial governmental control associated with Saturn-Pluto combined with the theological and spiritual interests associated with Uranus-Neptune) that innovatively unified religious, educational, social, and political spheres in a representative model that ironically foreshadowed the democratic and religiously tolerant institutions of both England and the United States of America.

And finally, when examined more closely, even the fundamental significance of the Puritan formulation of their primary religious goal, conversion, may be extracted from the archetypal associations of this grand cross: a sudden, often electrifying, spiritual awakening (Uranus-Neptune) that transforms and regenerates the individual’s moral and psychological faculties in a complete and utterly irresistible rebirth (Saturn-Pluto); an experience made possible through arduous preparation, involving intense self-examination, dedicated and

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Disciplined study, and strenuous work (Saturn-Pluto), which will only consummate at a moment predestined by God when an individual is possessed by the Spirit in “a blinding flash, as a devastating spiritual rape”—the blinding flash, Uranus; the spiritual rape, Neptune-Pluto.⁶¹

The tension with which the Puritan movement seems to have been charged as symbolized by the grand cross configuration coincident with its birth was an intense driving obsession to connect with divinity and the divine realm in a particular manner that, according to its doctrines, required a certain form of freedom of worship that it would be denied for decades. That denial would create increasing psychological, social, and political pressures that would eventually find release in the English civil wars in one Puritan group and the Great Puritan Migration in another, both occurring more than sixty years later during the very next quadrature alignment of Neptune and Pluto, the opposition of 1631–1660. And it was precisely when both Uranus and Saturn moved into quadrature alignments with this Neptune-Pluto opposition of the mid-seventeenth century that the major conflicts, controversies, and defining conferences of both Puritan groups took place. For New England clergy, these events were centered in the important controversies and ministerial conferences of the Half-Way Covenant crisis, which is the subject of the next article in this three-part series.

⁶¹ Flower and Murphey, History, 9.
Bibliography


“A Last Chance Power Drive”
An Archetypal Analysis of Bruce Springsteen’s Song Lyrics

Keiron Le Grice

Focusing on the expression of the planetary archetypes in the creative work of a single artist, this article explores the searing intensity and transformative power of the archetypal Pluto, in aspect to Venus and Mars, as expressed in the song lyrics of Bruce Springsteen. In the first of a two-part analysis of Springsteen’s work, Le Grice argues here that it is possible to view Springsteen’s recording career as a romantic odyssey, a personal journey of creative transformation, in which the dominant forms of expression of this three-planet archetypal complex evolve over time.

In October 1975, an up-and-coming musician from New Jersey called Bruce Springsteen was suddenly thrust into the public eye when he was featured simultaneously on the covers of both Newsweek and Time magazines.¹ Springsteen was hailed as the future of Rock ‘n’ Roll as his critically acclaimed album, Born to Run, and his rousing live performances with the E-Street Band launched him on the path to stardom. Previously, he had been characterized as the “new Dylan,” and the style of his music had partly reflected this, but on Born to Run Springsteen forged his own signature style of titanic rock epics, almost operatic in their drama, length, and power.² In the years since then, Springsteen has become an iconic figure in American culture, establishing himself as one of the most insightful and authentic musical artists of our time. Often defying the expectations of music critics and fans alike, he has remained unwaveringly true to his own creative direction album after album. In a constant stream of creative output, Springsteen’s music has done much to mythologize contemporary American life, articulating the yearnings and aspirations of millions caught up for better or worse by the promise of the American Dream.³ One of the defining voices of his generation, Springsteen speaks directly to the struggle many people face to find happiness and fulfillment in the modern world.

This paper, the first of a two-part exploration of Springsteen’s music, analyzes some of the major themes evident in Springsteen’s song lyrics by an interpretation of the archetypal significance of one of the major planetary configurations in his birth chart. In certain respects this interpretive method is an extension of Jungian depth psychological approaches to the

3. According to Puterbaugh, “Broadly stated, his [Springsteen’s] work can be seen as an ongoing commentary on the status of the American Dream as an attainable reality.” “Introduction” to Bruce Springsteen: The Rolling Stone Files, xiv.
analysis of artists’ personalities, lives, and work. Themes evident in a piece of art (whether painting, music, film, or literature), which might normally be related to Jungian archetypal images, psychodynamic factors, or biographical experiences from the artist’s life, are also connected, in archetypal astrology, to themes associated with the various sets of planetary alignments in the artist’s birth chart.

To give a little more background on this method for readers new to the field: It has been well established by astrological research that the planetary alignments at the moment of an individual’s birth are symbolically representative of the inherent qualities—or archetypal dynamics—of that moment in time. It has been established, furthermore, that the archetypal dynamics of the birth moment continue to define that individual’s personality and biographical experiences throughout the entire lifetime. And as in life, so in art, where themes associated with the archetypal patterns of an artist’s birth chart are often magnified and dramatized, writ large on the artistic canvas, finding particularly striking forms of expression. The same archetypal complexes shaping an artist’s own experiences, which are evident in the various conflicting impulses and motivations of character, provide the *prima materia*, as it were, of the artist’s work. Springsteen’s music is an excellent example of this, with the lyrical content and emotive power of his songs vividly conveying the specific combinations of the major archetypal themes of his birth chart.

**Overview**

Springsteen was born on September 23, 1949, at 10:50 p.m. (EST) in Freehold, New Jersey.\(^4\) In his birth chart, Pluto (♃) is positioned at 17° 29′ Leo and forms two major dynamic or “hard” aspects to other planets—geometric alignments that indicate a potent, mutually stimulating, and sometimes challenging or antagonistic relationship between the archetypal principles associated with these planets. The first is a conjunction to Mars (♂), which is at 10° 31′ Leo, and the second, a square aspect to Venus (♀) at 11° 4′ Scorpio. In terms of degrees of exactitude, the closer square is actually between Venus and Mars, and while an analysis of this aspect alone would be very rewarding, it is my intention to focus predominantly on the themes associated with Pluto that color the expression of this three-planet archetypal complex. These dynamics and complexes are not unique to Springsteen, of course, and others with similar charts or sharing these same planetary alignments will give expression to these archetypal complexes in widely differing ways. Yet Springsteen speaks for many, and an archetypal analysis of his music will enable us to enter deeply into the particular configurations and complexes present in his chart in a way that can illuminate their significance for us all.

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The qualities associated with the planetary archetype Mars include physical energy, self-assertion, courage, aggression, decisiveness, initiative, ardor, and action. Its meaning encompasses a complex array of themes associated with the warrior archetype. Venus, in many respects the complementary opposite to Mars, is associated with love, liking, romance, sexual desiring, the pleasure-seeking principle, beauty, and the aesthetic sense. Pluto symbolizes the experience in human life of the instinctual force of nature, a power that effects its own evolutionary transformation through an encounter with human self-reflective consciousness. The nature of the archetypal Pluto is to empower, intensify, deepen, destroy, and transform. As we will see, the combination of these three archetypal principles are consistently evident throughout Springsteen’s recording career, finding expression in his lyrics and music in a number of ways that reflect the confluence of their respective qualities, drives, and themes.

My analysis of Springsteen’s work will consist of three closely related approaches: (1) an examination of the language and metaphor of his song lyrics, including the personifications of the Venus-Mars-Pluto archetypal complex in the names and descriptions of the characters; (2) an exploration of the actions of the characters, the feelings and motivations behind their actions, and the circumstances in which these actions take place; and (3) an overview of how the expression of the Pluto archetypal principle in Springsteen’s work changes through time. I will argue that it is possible to view Springsteen’s music as a kind of romantic odyssey, a personal journey of
creative transformation and individuation, driven and guided by the evolutionary dynamic associated with the Pluto archetype. An analysis of Springsteen’s career suggests, in fact, a clearly discernible developmental pattern associated with the changing experience of the Pluto archetype over time, which I will attempt to illuminate in this paper.

With this developmental context in mind, it is possible to group Springsteen’s albums into four relatively distinct phases. In the first phase, I would situate his first three albums released between 1973 and 1975: *Greetings from Asbury Park, New Jersey; The Wild, the Innocent, and the E-Street Shuffle; and Born to Run*. Here the characters in Springsteen’s songs are empowered by the instinctual force associated with Pluto to strive for a happier, more romantic life (Venus) and, through courageous, decisive actions (Mars), to satiate their desire for an intense experience of romantic love (Venus-Pluto). As I see it, this is an early, mainly positive expression of the Plutonic drive supporting and empowering the desires of the youthful aspiring characters Springsteen portrays.5

During the second phase, the expression and release of the instinctual power associated with Pluto becomes increasingly thwarted by the demands and pressures of living in the world. The intensity of the yearning Springsteen expresses remains at fever pitch, but the powerful instinctual energy, finding no positive external outlet, turns inwards, fueling a long, painful transformation process. Springsteen now experiences this force predominantly as a negative power and his characters henceforth are railing against the imposed restrictions they encounter from society and authority, burning now as much with resentment as desire. Springsteen wrestles with this conflict for many years, but it finds its clearest expression in his work over four albums released between 1978 and 1984: *Darkness on the Edge of Town, Nebraska, The River*, and *Born in the U.S.A.*

In the next phase of Springsteen’s work, he presents a more personal, more refined, and altered expression of the Plutonic energy, focused no longer just on the satiation of desire, but also on the struggle and complexity of intimate human relationships. There is also a shift during this period toward an increasing concern with social and political issues as if the archetypal energy that fuelled his early romantic heroism had begun to find alternative forms of expression relevant to the concerns of the wider world. This phase overlaps somewhat with the previous one, but is most apparent in *Tunnel of Love* (1987), up to and including *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* (1992).6

Finally, in the fourth phase of Springsteen’s work, the Plutonic instinctual-emotional fire that burned so intensely during his early albums has gone full circle, as it were, as Springsteen returns with a new wave of music that embraces both the positive and negative aspects of life.


6. On *Tunnel of Love*, according to Puterbaugh, “Springsteen pulled back his musical focus into a more personal, smaller scale framework, honing on one-to-one relationships rather than the larger rites of community.” In addition, Puterbaugh notes, “his interviews from this period revealed an increasingly political bent.” See his “Introduction” to *Bruce Springsteen: The Rolling Stone Files*, xliii and xlvii.
What was once an exclusively personal claim to the instinctual power associated with Pluto has by this time become more universalized. The romantic desire for a particular individual, although still present, occurs in the context of a wider celebration of life in the midst of tragedy, a juxtaposition of light and dark, in a full embrace of life’s inherent polarities, although often with a significant reduction in the visceral emotional power and intensity of the songs. The overwhelming compulsion and extremity of feeling, which, as we will see, is so evident in his early albums, has at this late stage been transformed into a more conscious, socially aware mode of expression. I think this shift is most apparent on his recent albums including *The Rising* and *Magic*.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to focus in detail on all four phases of a career spanning more than thirty years, so I will concentrate here on the first two phases, covering Springsteen’s best known songs, and conclude with the transition to the third phase and the album *Tunnel of Love*.

**Phase 1 (1973–1975)**

*Greetings From Asbury Park, New Jersey* (1973); *The Wild, the Innocent, and the E-Street Shuffle* (1973); *Born to Run* (1975)

In their feel and tenor, Springsteen’s first two albums, both released in 1973, are in general a more representative expression of the lyrical wizardry of his natal Mercury-Neptune conjunction (a complex that I will explore in the next issue of *Archai*) than his Venus-Mars-Pluto archetypal complex. However, the figurative and descriptive content of the lyrics themselves unmistakably reveal the presence of the archetypal Pluto coloring the entire range of characteristics and impulses associated with Venus and Mars.

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7. In Springsteen’s birth chart there is a conjunction of Mercury, the Moon, and Neptune in Libra, all square to Jupiter, a planetary combination that is particularly associated with the soulful yearning for a more ideal life, a theme present in many of his songs. This four-planet archetypal complex will be explored in the next issue of *Archai*. 
“It’s Hard to Be a Saint in the City,” the last track of *Greetings from Asbury Park, New Jersey*, perfectly encapsulates the feeling of the Venus-Mars-Pluto archetypal combination. With a tough, urban tone of voice, the song’s protagonist proclaims:

I had skin like leather and the diamond-hard look of a cobra  
I was born blue and weathered and I burst just like a supernova  
I could walk like Brando right into the sun  
And dance just like a Casanova

With my blackjack and jacket and hair slicked sweet  
Silver star studs on my duds like a Harley in heat  
When I strut down the street I could hear its heartbeat

This passage is quintessential Venus-Mars-Pluto, combining the motifs of the battered, tough male character with a weapon (Mars), of dancing and the lover (both Venus), and the instinctual power of nature, the sensation of bursting, and the snake (all Pluto). Like a “Casanova,” Springsteen’s character has a romantic prowess and a predatory feel, almost swaggering, strutting down the street at night. The mood is hot, atmospheric, pulsating. This is the pervasive emotional tone of Venus-Mars-Pluto, one that seems to be especially characteristic of early adulthood when the drives associated with Pluto typically find more extraverted and perhaps unconscious forms of expression, impelling one to exert power and influence out in the world. The location of the song’s unfolding drama is the urban “jungleland,” which is to be the setting for many of his songs during the first phase of his recording career. This “jungleland,” which Springsteen actually uses as the title for the last track on *Born to Run*, well represents Pluto’s association with the realm of the underworld, which is in turn symbolically associated with the instinctual dynamism of the human psyche, the source of the primal, chthonic power of life, as in Freud’s formulation of the id. The wild jungle landscape symbolizes the uncivilized, untamed, “wild” aspect of human nature—themes all associated with Pluto. In Hellenistic mythology, Pluto (the Greek Hades) is the ruler of the underworld, the subterranean realm of darkness hidden from the light of the sun and, accordingly, in its archetypal meaning Pluto is associated with the dark depths of the psyche where the conscious ego fears to go. It relates to the instinctual ground of life and to that

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8. Marlon Brando also had Mars and Pluto in dynamic aspect—an opposition.
which the light of consciousness excludes and therefore casts into shadow. As Jung has shown, the shadow archetype is the compensatory counterpart to the differentiated conscious ego.9

Springsteen’s characters originate from and thrive in this underworld environment where the mythic Pluto rules. In the opening line of “Incident on 57th Street,” for example, we learn that “Spanish Johnny drove in from the Underworld last night”; and in “It’s Hard to Be a Saint in the City,” the last track on Greetings, the main character positively flourishes in the urban jungeland:

I was the king of the alley, mama, I could talk some trash,
I was the prince of the paupers crowned downtown at the beggars’ bash
I was the pimp’s main prophet I kept everything cool
Just a backstreet gambler with the luck to lose

Springsteen populates his songs with personifications of urban underworld creatures such as the “Cat from the Bronx,” the “Magic Rat,” and the “Mad Dog.” These are accompanied by street gangs and “sages from the subway” who “sit just like the living dead.”10

In Christian myth, many of the qualities of the shadow archetype and many of the characteristics of the astrological Pluto are attributed to the Devil who appears in Springsteen’s songs as a dark power of the urban underworld. In “It’s Hard to Be a Saint in the City,” for instance, the Devil (Pluto) colludes with and corrupts the male character (Mars):

The devil appeared like Jesus through the steam in the street
Showin’ me a hand I knew even the cops couldn’t beat.
I felt his hot breath on my neck as I dove into the heat.
It’s so hard to be a saint when you’re just a boy out on the street

Again and again in Springsteen’s songs the urban “jungleland” associated with Pluto is the scene of romantic adventures that arise from the interaction of the archetypes associated with Mars and Venus, of “masculine” and “feminine” energy, particularly as expressed in love relationships. However, the presence of Pluto in the Venus-Mars natal aspect gives to this complex a distinctive dark, underworld inflection. This is apparent in the overtly sexual or seedy characters Springsteen uses in his songs. The cast list includes pimps, prostitutes,

9. The planetary archetype Saturn is also related to the Jungian shadow archetype in its association with inferiority, weakness, fear, shame, and guilt. The Saturn principle is associated with repression and moral judgment; it is the principle that denies, blocks, judges, and contains. In its negating quality, Saturn is the archetypal principle that creates the shadow by denying certain elements of one’s character that are incompatible with the moral qualities, values, and persona with which one is identified. Since Pluto represents the biological instincts (the id, to use Freud’s term), which are often socially taboo, the Saturn principle creates the shadow by repressing the Plutonic instincts into the underworld of the psyche. See C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, ed. A. Jaffe, trans. Richard and Clara Wilson (London: Flamingo, 1983), 417–418.

10. Quoted lyrics from “Jungleland” on Born to Run (New York: Columbia Records, 1975) and “It’s Hard to Be a Saint in the City” on Greetings from Asbury Park, New Jersey (New York: Columbia Records, 1973).

The pimp is a classic Venus-Mars-Pluto figure, as it is typically a man (Mars) who is involved in the control and sexual exploitation (Pluto) of women (Venus). Prostitutes, nymphs, and “tainted women” all express the Venus-Pluto archetypal combination. The pure romantic expression associated with Venus is tainted by the uncivilized instincutial mire of the Plutonic underworld.

Repeatedly in Springsteen’s lyrics, he is able to bring together in a variety of ways distinctive themes associated with the combination of the Venus, Mars, and Pluto archetypes. In “Incident on 57th Street,” for example, a female character remarks, “those romantic young boys, all they ever want to do is fight.” The boys are both romantic (Venus) and they fight (Mars). Romance is energized by Mars and fighting is romanticized by Venus. Activities associated with Venus, such as romantic love, dancing, and making music, go hand in hand with activities associated with Mars, such as fighting and competing. Springsteen’s characters are “switchblade lovers” who “take a stab at romance.” Violence is sometimes described by Springsteen as a thing of beauty (“Hey man, did you see that? His body hit the street with such a beautiful thud”); or it is related to forms of artistic expression, including poetry, opera, ballet, and dance; or it occurs in connection with making love, amusement arcades, fairgrounds, flowers, and kisses—all associated with Venus. In “Jungleland,” we hear, for example, that “there’s an opera out on the Turnpike, there’s a ballet being fought out in the alley” and that “kids flash guitars just like switch-blades, hustling for that record machine”—where the fighting, the switch blades, and the hustle are related to Mars, and the music and guitars are related primarily to Venus.

When combined with Plutonic intensity and explosive power,

The hungry and the hunted explode into rock ‘n’ roll bands
They face off against each other out on the street down in Jungleland

The “hungry and the hunted” could have come straight out of the Darwinian world of “nature red in tooth and claw” with the characteristic “kill or be killed” mentality that is particularly associated with the Mars-Pluto combination. Fueled by this energy, the song’s characters “explode” (Pluto) in rock music battles, competing with each other (Mars) through their music (Venus).

11. Quoted lyrics from “Blinded by the Light” and “The Angel” on the album *Greetings from Asbury Park, New Jersey*; and “Incident on 57th Street,” “Does this Bus Stop at 82nd Street?,” and “The E-Street Shuffle” on the albums *The Wild, the Innocent, and the E-Street Shuffle* (New York: Columbia Records, 1973).
12. Quoted lyrics from “Sandy (4th of July Asbury Park, New Jersey)” on *Wild* and “Jungleland” on *Born to Run*.
13. “Lost in the Flood” on *Greetings*.
There is perhaps no better image of the coming together of the energies represented by a planetary aspect between Mars and Venus than the kiss. The kiss is an expression of love (Venus) but it is also an action (Mars). It combines both active desire (Mars) and receptive desire (Venus). However, for Springsteen, since Pluto is also involved in dynamic aspects with both these planets, the kiss is imbued with an extreme intensity and passionate heat. He describes this vividly in “Fire” on *Bruce Springsteen & the E-Street Band Live 1975–1985* (“’cause when we kiss, Fire”) and in “Candy’s Room” on *Darkness on the Edge of Town* (“We kiss, my heart rushes to my brain, the blood rushes in my veins fire rushes towards the sky”). In “Born to Run,” Springsteen declares, “I wanna die with you Wendy on the streets tonight in an everlasting kiss,” and in “Prove It All Night,” on *Darkness*, the song’s romantic hero demands “a kiss to seal our fate tonight.” Here the Mars-Venus image of the kiss is combined with the Plutonic idea of fate, a fated love, a love that cannot be resisted, in which the kiss represents an acceptance of this fate.

It is fitting that right at the start of his recording career Springsteen should draw analogy with the snake or serpent, a classic theriomorphic symbol of Pluto (“I had skin like leather and the diamond-hard look of a cobra”). Associated with the primitive instincts rooted in our inherited biology and animal ancestry, the serpent’s wealth of symbolic meaning encompasses the entire range of the expression of the planetary archetype. It suggests danger, evil, the threat of violent retaliation, and the power to inflict death. Most significant, the serpent symbolizes the instinctual power of nature that, at first unconsciously, drives Springsteen’s characters relentlessly forward in life, empowering them with an all-consuming urge to find a way to express and satiate the torrent of emotional energy associated with the archetypal Pluto. For Springsteen, this Plutonic energy is the creative daemon that is both the fuel and the consuming fire of the passion in his music.

Initially, Springsteen’s characters appear blissfully unaware of where this power might lead them. Yet the way of desire, for one and all, will in time become the way of inner transformation. For as a symbol of Pluto, the snake also represents the principle of death-rebirth, with the shedding of the old skin and re-emergence into a new life. In Hindu Yoga the snake represents the kundalini force, the coiled power residing in the root chakra. It is also the cunning manipulator of Eden, the power that leads human beings to the Fall through the knowledge of good and evil. And in another form, it is the enigmatic symbol of the *uroboros* (the alchemical symbol of the self-devouring serpent), which points to the mystery of human self-reflective consciousness inextricably bound up in a relentless cycle of life blindly consuming itself.

Springsteen identifies himself not only with the snake, but also with the tremendous, explosive power of nature. The feeling of “bursting just like a supernova,” as many with a strong natal Pluto would testify, is typical of the phenomenology of this archetype. Another metaphor often associated with Pluto is that of a volcano erupting, but both images point to the same core experience: the accumulation of such a tremendous instinctual-emotional-energetic power in the body that one feels like one will indeed physically explode. For

14. “It’s Hard to Be a Saint in the City” on *Greetings*. 
Springsteen, this experience usually occurs in connection with romantic love (Venus), desire (both Venus and Mars), and the urge to act on these feelings (Mars). Particulariy in Springsteen’s early work (1973–1975), this sense of explosion is a positive experience. The male character is so charged with energy, with a burning desire for life, with a desperate longing for the pleasure-pain of romantic love, and with the need to experience everything with an unbridled passionate intensity, that bursting seems a very real possibility. In “Night” on Born to Run (1975), Springsteen conveys a clear sense of this burning intensity. Driving cars and chasing girls provides for Springsteen’s character a cathartic release after a day’s work:

And she’s so pretty that you’re lost in the stars
As you jockey your way through cars . . .
And you’re in love with all the wonder it brings
And every muscle in your body sings as the highway ignites
You work nine to five somehow to survive to the night

All three archetypal principles associated with Venus, Mars, and Pluto are evident here, with the physical, muscular (Mars) sensation of searing energy and Dionysian ecstatic pleasure (Venus-Pluto), stimulated by the intoxicating cocktail of driving a fast car (Mars), and romance and beauty (Venus). Springsteen also combines specific words often associated with these three archetypes to convey this feeling, so we find muscles (Mars) that sing (Venus), and the highway that ignites (Pluto). This style of juxtaposing the archetypal language and metaphor is, as we have already seen, a constant feature of Springsteen’s song writing.

The conjunction of Mars and Pluto brings together the instinctual motivation to survive and exert power in the urban “jungleland” (Pluto) and the impulse to fight, struggle, to go after what one wants (Mars). It is not surprising, then, that one of Springsteen’s favorite images is that of the gun and the act of shooting. In “Spirit in the Night” on Wild, two of the characters are named “Little Gun” and “Little Dynamite,” and there are numerous references to shooting. Indeed, it is easy to lose count of the total number of references not only to guns or shooting, but also to other weapons (such as knives or axes) and explosions (dynamite, fireworks, canons, bombs) that occur in Springsteen’s first three albums. Weapons are associated with Mars, the planetary archetype of the god of war, and explosive weapons in particular encapsulate the combined meaning of Mars and Pluto.

The first clear example of this veritable armory of references to weapons comes in “Lost in the Flood” on Greetings in which the song’s central character is appropriately referred to, interchangeably, as “Gunner,” “Ragamuffin’ Gunner,” and “Gunner Man.” Here Springsteen uses a verbose overload of images that are archetypally appropriate to the Mars-Pluto complex.

15. Mars is related to desire as ardor, striving, the energetic pursuit of something. Venus is also related to desire, but as loving or liking. Pluto is connected with desire too, in its association with the id, with the repressed unconscious, with instinctual-emotional energy, and with libido.
in lines such as, “Well the blaze and noise boy, he’s gunnin’ that bitch loaded to blasin’ point.” Later, as the song draws to its climax, Springsteen provides further examples:

And now the whiz-bang gang from uptown, they’re shootin’ up the street.
And that cat from the Bronx starts lettin’ loose but he gets blown right off his feet
And some kid comes blastin’ round the corner but a cop puts him right away

As a symbol of the Mars-Pluto conjunction the gun is especially apt. In Freudian terms, of course, the gun is a phallic symbol of masculine potency, and there is certainly a suggestion of this connotation in Springsteen’s lyrics. However, there are clear associations too with the work of Stanislav Grof on the archetypal dynamics of the birth process. Pluto is the planetary archetype most closely associated with the death-rebirth process, particularly with what Grof has called the third perinatal matrix, relating to that stage of birth in which the fetus struggles through the birth canal. This phase of birth seems to symbolically replicate what occurs during the firing of a gun. Just as the Plutonic pressure forces the baby along its passage through the birth canal, out of an enclosed dark passage into the light of day, so pulling the trigger creates an increasing volcanic pressure that propels the bullet down the barrel, resulting in a forceful, single-pointed release of the bullet out into the world. Both events are also associated with destruction: according to Grof, the baby experiences the passage through the birth canal as a life and death struggle, marked by the stark encounter with powerful destructive forces; and the act of shooting is obviously also associated with destruction and sometimes death. In all these ways, the two events are symbolically resonant.

Another favorite metaphor for Springsteen, and the one for which he is best known, is the car. This conveys the essence both of Mars (of going somewhere quickly in a direct line and of moving out into the world to do something) and also of Pluto, since the movement is the result of the internal combustion of the engine, of a controlled explosion. The Pluto archetype is related to the polar extremes of absolute control and total abandonment; it is associated both with explosive force and controlled power. And Mars-Pluto is the archetypal signature of the thrust. Invariably, as suggested by the aspect of Venus to Mars and Pluto, the action is either in the company of a girl, or in pursuit of one. The archetypal energy associated with Pluto gives to the act of driving a dangerous edge and an intensity that comes from the total commitment to life even in the face of death. Springsteen’s characters drive “suicide machines sprung from cages” to escape the “death trap” of conventional life. They travel along “Thunder Road,” go “Racing in the Streets,” and drive “head first into a hurricane.” They compete (Mars) to win the love of a girl (Venus) like the hero of “Racing in the Street” on Greetings who recalls how he “blew that Camaro off my back, and drove that little girl

17. “Born to Run” on *Born to Run.*
18. “Thunder Road” on *Born to Run;* “Racing in the Streets” on *Darkness;* and “Lost in the Flood” on *Greetings.*
away.” They are on a “last chance power drive,” to quote a famous line in “Born to Run,” which has a double meaning, for the power drive relates not only to driving cars, which is Springsteen’s intended reference, but also to the Nietzschean concept of the “will to power” and Alfred Adler’s psychology of the power drive—the philosophy and psychology of Pluto.19

Running, an athletic activity expressive of the Mars archetype, is another variation on this theme.20 But again, reflecting the presence of Pluto in the archetypal complex and its characteristic association with instinctually empowered compulsion and extremity of expression, Springsteen’s characters are not just running, they are running until exhaustion; it is desperate running, with no turning back, until the heart pounds out of the chest. They are running “‘cos there’s no place left to hide.”21 And of course Springsteen’s signature song is “Born to Run,” a title in which Pluto’s association with birth (and the cycle of birth-sex-death) and Mars’s association with running are brought together.22

In “Born to Run,” touching on many of the above themes, Springsteen invites his beloved to

\[
\text{Just wrap your legs 'round these velvet rims} \\
\text{and strap your hands across my engines} \\
\text{Together we could break this trap} \\
\text{We'll run till we drop, baby we'll never go back.}
\]

Here, in addition to the overtly erotic implication of the metaphor (which reflects the combination of all three archetypal principles), Springsteen brings together the themes of immense combustive power and that of running to the point of exhaustion associated with Mars-Pluto, combining these with Venusian elements of beauty, romance, and the touch of velvet luxury—all within the context of his inexhaustible romanticism.

19. In addition, Springsteen’s description of the power drive as a “last chance” suggests the quality of fateful, death-risking action, a life-or-death outcome, an all or nothing gamble with no safety net or insurance policy, that is so characteristic of Pluto.

20. It is perhaps significant that the Mars-Pluto conjunction falls in the third house of Springsteen’s birth chart, which is traditionally associated with short journeys and the immediate environment. This might explain, from an astrological perspective, why Springsteen’s characters typically express the Mars-Pluto energy driving and running around their local environments.


22. “Born to Run” also suggests the idea that the characters are somehow fated to run. Pluto is often experienced as the power of fate and Mars is associated with running. For more on Pluto’s association with fate, see Liz Greene, The Astrology of Fate (London: Thorsons, 1997).
Born to Run is Springsteen’s third album and on it he conveys the archetypal quality of Pluto less through the verbose descriptive language and character personifications, and more through the feeling-tone of the song. The emotional fervor and power of the music viscerally conveys the experience of a positive, empowering expression of the archetypal Pluto in relation to romantic love, beauty, and pleasure (Venus) and to actions, will, desire, struggle, and daring (Mars). His music burns with a passionate intensity rarely matched by his peers.

As one might expect, the burning desire Springsteen conveys through his music is often described using the imagery of fire and heat. As we have seen, desire generally falls within the archetypal domains of both Venus and Mars, and these two archetypal principles together are especially associated with romantic or pleasure-seeking desire. Pluto, in distinction, is related to the experience of all-consuming elemental desire from the depths of nature. The Plutonic element is that of an empowering intensity and an overwhelming compulsion. Without this, the Venus-Mars aspect might still manifest as a pleasure-seeking urge, a strongly romantic inclination, a sociable and flirtatious manner, but it would lack the life-or-death intensity that usually accompanies Pluto aspects. The Pluto principle represents deep, underlying, and often unconscious motivations; it relates to that drive and urge which has us in its grip. For Springsteen, this is evidently the experience of love, the hope of finding it, the promise of escaping to a better life with the one he loves, the chance of making right the wrongs in life in one transformative moment of romantic heroism and daring.

The album Born to Run marks the high point of the first phase of Springsteen’s career, which is primarily concerned with a largely affirmative and extraverted expression of instinctual power. Especially in his titanic romantic epics such as “Thunder Road” and “Born to Run,” his characters are seeking to satisfy their Dionysian longings out in the world, with a certain girl, in a certain town, at the right moment. They struggle and risk everything to gratify their desires and to break free into a new fulfilling life.²³

²³ Much of Springsteen’s music also reflects a square alignment in his natal chart between the Sun and Uranus, which is associated with themes such as liberating heroism, identification with the role of outsider, the impulse to break free, new beginnings, and awakening to a bright new reality. I will discuss this complex in the second part of this paper to be published in the next issue of Archai.
This theme is perhaps most apparent on the song “Born to Run” itself:

Will you walk with me out on the wire,
‘Cause baby I’m just a scared and lonely rider
But I gotta find out how it feels
I want to know if love is wild
Girl I want to know if love is real.

A powerful craving for an especially deep or wild experience of romantic love is typical of the Venus-Pluto complex. The intensity of this feeling of love is such that it is able to bear all things, for it is a love supported by the limitless power of nature (relating to Pluto), a power that obviously exceeds the personal capacity of any one individual. This desire is often directed towards one particular person, the one true love, a theme explored by Springsteen in many of his songs throughout his career, such as “Rosalita” on *Wild*, “She’s the One” on *Born to Run*, and later in “Candy’s Room” and “Prove It All Night” on *Darkness*. Paradoxically, however, this complex is often profoundly impersonal, as if the particular person that is the object of one’s affections doesn’t really matter. What counts is that one’s deepest desires are stirred, that the experience of love is passionate, intense, transformative.

As we know from depth psychology, during the early adult years, prior to the differentiation of the rational ego from the drives of the instinctual unconscious during the course of individuation, people often unwittingly identify with the flow of desires and power drives surging through them, and they attempt to live out and satisfy these urges in the world. Without the critical discernment essential for dealing with the unconscious, one is likely to claim as one’s own the emotional power, instinctual charge, and titanic energy associated with the archetypal Pluto. At this stage of psychological development, there is a sincere belief that the power and intensity of one’s feelings will be sufficient in themselves to carry one away from the mundane reality of the everyday world, and Springsteen vividly conveys this throughout the album *Born to Run*.

Springsteen ends “Jungleland,” and with it *Born to Run*, with a prophetic indication of where his creative process is heading, suggested by the fate of the central character: “In the tunnels up town, the Rat’s own dream guns him down as shots echo down them hallways in the night.” Here again Springsteen expresses the combination of the archetypal meaning of Pluto and Mars. Tunnels are a subterranean place of darkness where the underground character “the Rat” (all relating to Pluto) is “gunned down” (Mars). The Plutonic force of nature, in other words, is driving Springsteen towards a confrontation with his inner darkness and a psychological death.
Phase 2 (1978–1984)

Darkness on the Edge of Town (1978); Nebraska (1980); The River (1982); Born in the U.S.A (1984); Tunnel of Love (1987)

The release of his fourth album, Darkness on the Edge of Town, in 1978, marks the beginning of a second phase in Springsteen’s recording career in which he addresses the individual’s experience of the prolonged frustration of the impulses, drives, and instincts associated with Pluto. Darkness is an album of defiance in the face of adversity, and resilience in the face of a bleak, stark reality that just does not respond to the power of feeling Springsteen’s characters experience. Instead, they have to face up to the dawning realization that, as for everyone naively driven by Plutonic power, strength of will and intensity of desire are in themselves not enough to make good the “Badlands” (to use a Springsteen song title) in which his characters live.

More than any of his other albums, Darkness explores the confrontation between individual will, courage, strength, and toughness (associated with Mars), and the overwhelming power of repressed libido (the titanic force associated with Pluto). It is the experience of romantic love (Venus) that is, once again, the primary carrier of this conflict.

In “Badlands,” the opening track of Darkness, Springsteen expresses the intensity of his desire in a world in which he is not able to find satisfaction and fulfillment of his deepest urges. He leaves us in no doubt as to how he feels:

But there’s one thing I know for sure girl
I don’t give a damn for the same old played out scenes
I don’t give a damn for just the in betweens
Honey, I want the heart, I want the soul
I want control right now
“A Last Chance Power Drive”  Keiron Le Grice

The repeated use of “I,” “I want,” and “me” make it clear who is the intended beneficiary of the Plutonic power, reflecting the insistent demands of an ego that tries to appropriate this power for its own personal ends. At the same time, the Mars energy gives a feeling of urgency to the Plutonic impulse to radically change and to take decisive control of one’s life. Once again reflecting the compulsion associated with Pluto, Springsteen’s characters are obsessively driven by a hungry, insatiable desirousness that they are powerless to resist. As Springsteen puts it in “Prove It All Night:”

Everybody’s got a hunger, a hunger they can’t resist
There’s so much that you want, you deserve much more than this

Pluto is like a bottomless pit in that it represents an inexhaustible source of life power—the energy of nature—as experienced through our own desires and drives. We can in fact never satiate or fully consume this energy, although it can easily consume us. This is Pluto as the uroboros; it is nature perpetually and blindly devouring itself.

Springsteen continues the same theme throughout the entire album. As he approaches his Saturn return in 1978, although he still believes in “The Promised Land” (representing the fulfillment of desire), the irreconcilable conflict between desire and hard reality causes the frustration and damming up of libido, building a formidable reservoir of energy that accumulates in the unconscious. Inevitably this is the cause of much anger and resentment. Springsteen protests:

I’ve done my best to live the right way
I get up every morning and go to work each day
But your eyes go blind and your blood runs cold
Sometimes I feel so weak I just want to explode
Explode and tear this whole town apart
Take a knife and cut this pain from my heart

On the album Darkness, the serpent power of Pluto now reappears “on a rattlesnake speedway in the Utah desert,” but here its presence symbolizes not worldly potency, as it once did, but the transformative potential of repressed desire, of an internalized serpent power that, like the creature itself, makes “your blood run cold.” Furthermore, the weapon (Mars), formerly empowered by the instincts (Pluto) and directed out into the world, is here turned back on

24. Writing about the album The River, Puterbaugh observes that Springsteen “delves into the emotional currents that run beneath the surface, summoning forth an emotional flood of thwarted dreams and busted desires.” (“Introduction” to Bruce Springsteen: The Rolling Stone Files, xxxiii). This description could also be applied to some of Springsteen’s other albums, especially Darkness on the Edge of Town.


the character himself to “cut the pain” from his “heart.” The explosion of instinctual power is no longer joyful and ecstatic, but is an explosion of outright rage—a theme often in evidence with the Mars-Pluto complex.

Towards the end of the album in “Factory” and “Streets of Fire,” Springsteen’s characters are beyond the point of caring with “death in their eyes.” The harsh reality of life and the limitations of material existence frustrate the life urges associated with Pluto, and, as Springsteen observes, this “eat[s] at your insides.” The life dynamic, starved of outer expression, turns inward and becomes a destructive, venomous force. The following passage from “Streets of Fire” suggests that Springsteen’s character is now encountering the purgatorial fires of transformation:

> When the night’s quiet and you don’t care anymore
> And your eyes are tired and there’s someone at your door
> And you realize you wanna let go
> And the weak lies and the cold walls you embrace
> Eat at your insides and leave you face to face with Streets of fire

In *Darkness*, Springsteen’s characters, having settled into the conventional patterns of everyday working life, discover it is not enough to simply “live the right way.” Hard work, strength of will, and good intention are insufficient to deal with the life challenges and deep transformative processes associated with the Pluto archetype. Pluto represents an impersonal force that is impervious to conventional standards of human morality and personal sensitivity. It symbolizes both a subhuman and a transpersonal power that seeks conscious assimilation and its own transformation in the light of human self-reflective consciousness.

The “streets of fire” are leading Springsteen towards a descent into hell, where the fire of his own repressed desire nature will be the agent of his own transformation and purification. However, Springsteen remains faithful to the Mars-Pluto archetypal complex by ending the album on a note of defiance, even within the “Darkness on the Edge of Town.” Having lost his money and his wife, the song’s beleaguered hero declares,

> Them things don’t seem to matter much to me now
> Tonight, I’ll be on that hill ‘cause I can’t stop
> I’ll be on that hill with everything I got

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28. “Factory” on *Darkness*.
29. “Streets of Fire” on *Darkness*.
30. This is an example of what Stanislav Grof has called *pyrocathearsis*, a kind of purgatorial cleansing and refinement of one’s character. Grof defines pyrocathearsis as “purgatorial fire.” See *Psychology of the Future*, 48.
32. See, for example, Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Personality* (Santa Fe, NM: Aurora Press, 1936), 237.
Lives on the line where dreams are found and lost
I’ll be there on time and I’ll pay the cost
For wanting things that can only be found
In the darkness on the edge of town

It is the demonic force associated with Pluto, empowering the Mars qualities of will, might, and courage, that gives a superhuman strength in the face of overwhelming, insurmountable adversity. Defiance is a compulsion that can’t be resisted.

Throughout *Darkness* Springsteen’s characters make it clear that they are willing to do whatever it takes (to “pay the price”) to bring about the life they so desperately want.\(^{33}\) This desperation, which is inherent in the experience of the Pluto archetype, can lead people under this influence to sacrifice their personal integrity by pursuing morally questionable means of achieving their desired ends. The ferocity and all-consuming nature of the experiences associated with Pluto can corrupt, such that this principle often functions as an autonomous complex that unconsciously dominates the conscious ego, usurping one’s rational judgment and overpowering one’s normal, more civilized human feelings. This is clearly evident in “Meeting Across the River” on *Born to Run* in which the central character does a last-chance gangster-like “hit” to earn money for his beloved. Some years later, under the increasing pressure of the prolonged frustration of the drive for pleasure and happiness, some of Springsteen’s characters in both *Darkness* and *Nebraska* are irresistibly drawn to the sinister path, to the darker side of human nature. They are seduced by the energy present in their own darkness and consequently suffer a loss of their innocence. In “Prove It All Night” on *Darkness*, Springsteen presents what seems to be a variation of the myth of Persephone in which the young innocent girl (Venus) is captured by the powers of darkness and taken to the underworld (Pluto).

Baby, tie your hair back in a long white bow
Meet me in the fields out behind the dynamo,
You hear their voices telling you not to go,
They made their choices and they’ll never know
What it means to steal, to cheat, to lie,
What it’s like to live and die

The “long white bow” suggests innocence and Springsteen’s beckoning plea is like the Devil or Hades whispering a seductive call to submit to the darkness. Psychologically it is the call of our own repressed life energy, associated with Pluto, here represented by the dynamo. For Springsteen, to follow this call is to experience a fullness of being and life intensity (associated with Pluto) that is lacking in the structured routines and prohibitive moral order of everyday life in modern society. In this song, to bring into play the repressed dynamism associated with

\(^{33}\) “Darkness on the Edge of Town,” on *Darkness.*
Pluto requires a moral transgression to a life of lying, stealing, and cheating. The archetypal Pluto can compel a person to use any means necessary to give expression to this energy, and this is perhaps especially true for those with challenging Mars-Pluto natal aspects when the instinctual power of Pluto is closely tied to action and the impulse to go after what one wants.

By “Atlantic City” on the album Nebraska (1981), the central character, with “debts that no honest man can pay,” does succumb to the darkness and turns to underhanded means in one last desperate gamble to escape to a more fulfilling life. “Well I’m tired of comin’ out on the losin’ end,” he explains, “so honey last night I met this guy and I’m gonna do a little favor for him.” Although this character’s “luck may have died” and “love may be cold,” his unwavering devotion, a quality often found with Venus-Pluto aspects, will not let him give up on his relationship.

A dynamic natal aspect between Venus and Pluto often suggests that it is the experience of romantic love and close personal relationships that will lead the individual down into their depths, to confront the darker side of the psyche. This can obviously put an immense strain on relationships. As Liz Greene has pointed out, Venus-Pluto aspects often indicate that individuals must forsake their cherished romantic ideals and face their own shadow side through relationship. Springsteen conveys this loss of romantic idealism in “Stolen Car,” a song that first appears on The River and was later re-released in a different version on Tracks. He laments,

I found me a little girl and I settled down
In a pretty little house and a pretty little town
We got married and promised never to part
Then little by little we drifted from each other’s hearts

The impersonal power of Pluto is at odds with the “pretty” and “little” concerns of personal human lives and it is a great challenge for the individual with a major Venus-Pluto aspect to find a way to integrate the two. Often with Venus-Pluto complexes, one’s desire for happiness is inextricably entwined with a fateful calling or vocation, with a tumultuous power struggle, or, as we have seen, with an encounter with the dark side of the psyche.

In “Stolen Car,” the decay of his marriage takes the character into the darkness of despair:

I’m driving a stolen car through a pitch black night
And I keep telling myself everything’s gonna be alright

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34. Greene explains: “With Venus-Pluto you are simply not allowed to live with others in a superficial way. You can meet someone when you’re quite young . . . and you both fall in love and want to get married and settle down. Then you buy a nice house in a nice suburb and have 2.3 children and two cars and theoretically you should both live happily ever after.” However, she continues, “those things will be shattered at some point so that you can get a glimpse of the enormously complex inner world that underlies all that nice collectively acceptable domesticity.” See The Outer Planets and their Cycles: The Astrology of the Collective (Sebastopol, CA: CRCS, 1983), 37.
But I ride by night and I travel in fear that no matter what I do or where I ride
Nobody ever sees me when I drive by

And, at a later point in the song, he expresses the fear that, “in this darkness I might just disappear.”

Sometimes a Venus-Pluto aspect manifests as a possessive or a symbiotic form of relationship of such intensity it consumes both individuals. Springsteen recognizes this in “Loose Ends,” also on Tracks:

We met out on open streets when we had no place to go.
I remember how my heart beat when you said I love you so
Then little by little we choked out all the life that our love could hold
Oh no . . .
It’s like we held a noose and baby without check
We pulled until it grew tighter around our necks

Again, there is something in the nature of the Pluto archetype that is obsessive, devouring, all-consuming, such that it can possess, totally dominate, and even destroy one’s life. With Venus-Pluto hard aspects one can often observe this pattern in romantic relationships, until such a time as the deeper roots of the Pluto power-complex can be brought to conscious awareness and worked through.

In “Streets of Fire,” the main character, with a sense of resignation, comes to the realization that “I’m dying, but girl I can’t go back,” recognizing that a death experience is inevitable and irreversible. A psychological death is required because a life without a connection to the instinctual power of the unconscious ground (Pluto) becomes shallow, empty, and desolate. Springsteen captures the sense of this:

I live now, only with strangers
I talk to only strangers
I walk with angels that have no place
Streets of fire

By Born in the U.S.A. (1984), Springsteen’s characters are hypnotically drawn to the past, looking back to happier times when they were more in touch with the instinctual basis of life. In “Glory Days,” “No Surrender,” “Bobby Jean,” and “I’m Goin’ Down,” Springsteen conveys this romantic longing for the past, which seems preferable to facing the purgatorial fires of transformation. In “Downbound Train,” the main character, desperate to reverse the seemingly unstoppable descent he is faced with, is haunted by the memory of what he once had and of the night his “girl” left him. In one last attempt to reclaim the love he has now lost he reports, “I ran through the wood . . . I ran till I thought my chest would explode.” Driven by this desperate compulsion, he continues,
I rushed through the yard, I burst through the front door
My head pounding hard, up the stairs I climbed
The room was dark, our bed was empty . . .
And I dropped to my knees, hung my head and cried

A reluctance or inability to let go of the sense of control and a vain, desperate struggle to hang on to life pleasures, romantic relationships, and personal power is often a prominent theme in the lives of individuals with major Venus-Mars-Pluto aspects. In “Downbound Train,” the desperate clinging to the past results in total exhaustion and defeat. The impersonal nature of the Pluto principle is such that to accommodate ourselves to it we have give up our rigid hold on our personal worlds and open ourselves to the greater power of life, a power ordinarily concealed from conscious awareness. Under the archetypal influence of Pluto, it is often the case that one must undergo a “descent into the underworld” to reconnect with lost energy and buried potentials, and, through this encounter, experience transformation and rebirth into a deeper mode of existence.35

To resist or deny the descent by looking back to an earlier stage of life, when the instinctual energies associated with Pluto were more vital and unimpeded, has dangerous, life-inhibiting consequences for the continuing development of the personality. Springsteen’s characters find themselves at a life juncture when they must decide whether they will stagnate and “just sit around talking about the old times,” nostalgically longing for past “glory days,” or whether they will become “rider[s] on a downbound train” and courageously assent to the transformative journey into the Plutonic realm of the underworld.36

Periodically, the fire of old desire resurfaces into consciousness, but this is now simultaneously the torturing fire of transformation. In “I’m on Fire,” Springsteen draws upon the theme of knives and stabbing, associated with Mars-Pluto, to convey his own passion and suffering:

Sometimes it’s like someone took a knife baby edgy and dull
and cut a six-inch valley through the middle of my soul
At night I wake up with the sheets soaking wet
and a freight train running through the middle of my head

35. According to Stephen Arroyo, the essential meaning of Venus-Pluto alignments is “to transform one’s entire approach to love and relationship” as the “understanding of what constitutes ‘pleasure’ and ‘happiness’ becomes refined . . . through the fires of emotional torment.” Astrology, Karma, and Transformation: The Inner Dimensions of the Birth Chart (Sebastopol, CA: CRCS, 1978), 139.

36. Quoted lyrics from “Glory Days” and “Downbound Train” on Born in the USA (New York: Columbia Records, 1984). Overall, as Parke Puterbaugh has noted, on Born in the USA Springsteen’s characters “exuded a winning, grin-and-bear-it kind of flavor.” The album, he continues, “celebrated the indomitable American spirit of perseverance and rolling with the punches.” See Puterbaugh, “Introduction” to Bruce Springsteen: The Rolling Stone Files, xI). Although these qualities reflect several of the other planetary configurations in Springsteen’s chart, they also convey something of the Mars-Pluto complex in its association with a relentlessly driven quality and the immense reserves of energy and courage required to persist with one’s life direction whatever blows of fate might come one’s way.
Only you can cool my desire
I’m on fire

The second phase of Springsteen’s recording career, as I see it, culminates in this descent into the fire. By the release of *Tunnel of Love* in 1987, Springsteen’s main character in the title track has traveled “down into the tunnel of love.” He has made the Plutonic descent through the Venusian experience of romantic love to face his shadow darkness. In this “tunnel of love,” he encounters “a room of shadows that gets so dark” and he is forced to confront “all that stuff we’re so scared of.”

In “Two Faces,” on *Tunnel of Love*, Springsteen recognizes his psychological division and bemoans the power of the “other man” (the shadow) within him to affect and possibly destroy his relationship. He notes that his “other face” does “things I don’t understand, makes me feel like half a man.” Again, reflecting the dynamic aspect between Venus and Pluto in Springsteen’s natal chart, it is his love relationship that is most threatened by the shadow, as in the final verse of the song:

> Last night as I kissed you ‘neath the willow tree
> He swore he’d take your love away from me
> He said our life was just a lie

Eventually, though, the process reaches a decisive turning point, which comes on “Valentine’s Day,” the last track on the album:

> They say if you die in your dreams you really die in your bed
> But honey last night I dreamed my eyes rolled straight back into my head and God’s light came shinin’ on through
> I woke up in the darkness scared and breathin’ and born anew

This death-rebirth experience makes possible a new beginning; it marks the start of the ascent back from the Plutonic underworld, as Springsteen embarks on a third distinguishable phase of his career, which is where we must leave our commentary.

### Summary—An Evolutionary Trajectory

As I have attempted to show in this paper, an analysis of the changing content of Springsteen’s music in terms of the psychodynamics of the archetypal Pluto can enable us to better understand the evolutionary significance of this archetype in human experience. Through the stories told in Springsteen’s songs, through his characters’ dreams and struggles...

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37. Again, the tunnel relates to Pluto and love to Venus.
at different points in time, one can, I believe, discern an underlying developmental trajectory often apparent in the lives of people who deeply engage the dimension of experience associated with Pluto. This trajectory, in summary, seems to be defined by several stages: (1) an unconscious instinctual empowerment of the ego, when the drives associated with Pluto compel the emerging individual ego to assert itself in the world, to conquer and plunder, and to exert its power and try to satisfy its instinctually driven cravings; (2) a frustration of instinct by the Saturnian context of human life (the pressures of material existence, the “hard facts” of one’s reality, the inherent limitations of life, the slow pace of change, responsibilities and duties to others, and so forth) with a simultaneous intensification of the unfulfilled drives and desires associated with Pluto; (3) an increasing schism between the ego, attuned to an outer objective reality, and the instincts, hell bent on gratification—a schism that, if too extreme, can lead to the experience of alienation or estrangement from the instinctual basis of life and with it a loss of vitality, zest, and life power; (4) a “descent into the underworld” in order for the ego to recover lost power and potentials; (5) an ensuing death-rebirth struggle through which the ego and the instincts are both transformed; (6) and finally an “ascent,” resurrection, and a commitment to the process of working towards a new, more conscious, less compulsive mode of expression of the Pluto archetype. One can undoubtedly see something of this process expressed in Springsteen’s creative journey, tacitly shaping the content of his song lyrics from album to album.

38. In Freudian psychology, this situation is depicted as the conflict between the ego, superego, and id. While the ceaseless conflict between instinctual frustration and instinctual gratification often continues unabated throughout the lifespan, for certain people, however, for reasons not well understood (but probably relating to the extremity of the struggle between the ego and the instincts, and to the individual’s “level of consciousness”), the conflict works towards some form of resolution through deep psychological transformation. As Jung has described, a transformation of both the ego and the instincts is intrinsic to the individuation process. This proceeds via a dialectical process between the ego and the unconscious and a circumambulation around a transnational center that Jung calls the Self. The dialectic, according to Jungian theorist Edward Edinger, moves between states of alienation (when the ego pole is dominant) and inflation or possession (when the unconscious is dominant). See Edward Edinger, Ego and Archetype (Peru, IL: Open Court, 1992) and C. G. Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, 2nd ed., 1966, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge, 1990).

39. The relationship of archetypal astrology to the evolution of culture and consciousness will be addressed more explicitly in future issues of Archai.
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The Ideal and the Real

Saturn-Neptune

Richard Tarnas

Through an exploration of the individual biographies, personalities, and the creative work of major figures in both popular and high culture, Richard Tarnas’s essay on the Saturn-Neptune archetypal complex gives a powerful demonstration of the multidimensional nature of the archetypes and their myriad forms of expression in the particulars of human experience. In a continuation of the method of analysis he developed in Cosmos and Psyche, Tarnas cites numerous examples from philosophy, science, politics, music, literature, and film as he explores the expression of the Saturn-Neptune complex in the lives of such diverse figures as William Blake, Oscar Wilde, David Hume, Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Samuel Barber, and Joni Mitchell.

In this paper I would like to explore the remarkably diverse range of ways in which a specific archetypal complex associated with natal alignments involving two planets, in this case Saturn and Neptune, can express itself in various individuals born with those planets in major aspect. On the one hand, in each example cited below, the two archetypal principles involved were conspicuously dominant and in dynamic interaction in the individual’s life and work. Yet on the other hand, within this commonality of archetypal presence and dynamism, equally evident was the extraordinary diversity of ways in which those were concretely embodied. The lives and personality characteristics of individuals born with Saturn-Neptune alignments were consistently marked by certain themes having a definite underlying archetypal coherence, a coherence that is easily recognizable even though the particular forms those themes took differed considerably from one person to the next.

For the sake of clarity, I will focus here only on this one planetary combination shared by many individuals, leaving aside all the other planetary aspects and combinations that they did not have in common. (In the same way, we might seek to discover a common quality among many individuals born with, say, French ancestry, leaving aside for the moment whether they are rich or poor, male or female, Christian or Jewish, and so forth.) We are abstracting out of a more complex reality just one common factor—major natal aspects between Saturn and Neptune—in order to focus on a possible common archetypal quality in the lives of those born with this natal aspect.

While this separation of one aspect from all the others in the birth chart is helpful as one stage in our analysis, in examining the biographical evidence I found that these other natal planetary configurations in each case consistently coincided with other clearly visible archetypal complexes and tendencies that seemed to exert a particular shaping influence on
how the Saturn–Neptune complex was experienced and expressed in that individual’s life. It was only by taking into account the entire birth chart with all its planetary configurations that I could glimpse something like the full richness of an individual’s life, work, and personality as these embodied the complex interplay of the various archetypal principles involved.

In the course of examining many hundreds of cases, I found that individuals born with alignments between Saturn and Neptune seemed to experience with special distinctness and potency the tensions and contrasts between two radically different existential realms. On the one side, Saturn is associated with the principle of limit and finitude, the literal material and temporal world of concrete empirical reality; with realism, hard fact, mortality, the dark and problematic aspects of existence; with the impulse towards gravity, judgment, and discipline; with contraction, constriction, and endings; and with the establishing of strict boundaries, defined structures, and tense polarities. On the other side, associated with Neptune are the spiritual, ideal, and imaginative dimensions of life; the subtle, the intangible, and the invisible; the impulse to dissolve boundaries and structures in favor of underlying unities and undifferentiated wholes; and tendencies towards illusion, delusion, and escapism. In all of the following examples, for further simplicity and clarity of analysis, we will consider only those with Saturn and Neptune in hard, quadrature aspect—conjunction, opposition, or square—so that the dialectic between the two principles is especially vivid.

As a simple first example of an individual born with Saturn and Neptune in close alignment, an opposition, we can recognize this particular archetypal polarity in the case of William Blake, with his well-known commitment to the life of the spiritual imagination in sharp contrast to the narrowed vision of conventional perception and positivist science:

May God keep us from single vision and Newton’s sleep!

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern.

In every cry of every Man,
In every infant’s cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear.

Art degraded, Imagination denied
War govern’d the Nations.
Poetry fetter’d Fetters the Human Race.
Nations are Destroy’d or Flourish in proportion as
Their Poetry, Painting and Music are Destroy’d or Flourish:
The primeval state of Man was Wisdom, Art and Science.1

We can recognize this same archetypal polarity in a somewhat different form in the case of Oscar Wilde, who was similarly born with Saturn and Neptune in close hard-aspect alignment (a square), and whose life and work consistently dramatized his heightened sensitivity to the tension between the aesthetic imagination and the drab assaults of ordinary life:

It is through Art, and through Art only, that we can realize our perfection; through Art and Art only that we can shield ourselves from the sordid perils of actual existence.2

So also, to take a more contemporary example, James Hillman, was born with Saturn and Neptune in close square alignment. Here the archetypal polarity is visible in Hillman’s sustained exploration of the contrast between, on the one side, the tyrannical constrictions of the modern mind with its literalism and shallow vision, and on the other, the soul-making depths of the imaginative and aesthetic sensibility found in the ancients, the Renaissance, and Romanticism. Thus his thesis of the “poetic basis of mind” (first set forth in his famous Terry Lectures at Yale University in 1972, when Saturn and Neptune were in close opposition in the sky) asserted that a true psychology “starts neither in the physiology of the brain, the structure of language, the organization of society, nor the analysis of behavior, but in the processes of imagination.”

Where there is a connection to soul, there is psychology; where not, what is taking place is better called statistics, physical anthropology, cultural journalism, or animal breeding.3

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1. These quotations are from The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. D. V. Erdman, commentary by H. Bloom (New York: Doubleday, 1970). In the following, page numbers refer to this publication:

“narrow chinks of his cavern”: Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1793), 39.
“War Governed the Nations”: Blake, The Lyrical Ballads (1820), 271.
“Wisdom, Art, and Science”: Blake, Jerusalem (1804), 144.

Blake was born with Mars conjoined to his Neptune opposite Saturn, visible in the highly embattled character of his assertion of the spiritual imagination over the literal, disenchanted, mechanistic vision.


Each of these several statements by Blake, Wilde, and Hillman are representative, and even fundamental, expressions of their particular sensibilities and intellectual vision. Each statement also clearly reflects the basic polarity between the two archetypal principles associated with Saturn and Neptune. In a sense, this particular planetary combination is especially instructive as an example of how the two corresponding archetypes might combine, because these particular archetypes are of such radically different natures. Their very ontologies are, so to speak, from different planets—matter versus spirit, the concretely empirical and literal versus the imaginative and the ideal, the finite and temporal versus the infinite and eternal. Yet the form this archetypal polarity took in Blake, Wilde, and Hillman, though highly characteristic of many individuals born with these two planets in aspect, was only one of several such forms I observed in which the polarity was expressed. An equally characteristic motif among individuals born with this same planetary configuration—and equally reflective of this same archetypal polarity—was a definite tendency towards metaphysical skepticism, a seemingly innate proclivity to doubt the existence of transcendent or spiritual realities (Neptune), negating these in favor of the concrete empirical world (Saturn). This tendency often took the form of a strong impulse to demystify religious belief as itself a principal cause of both oppression and illusion in human life.

For example, David Hume, the paradigmatic skeptic of modern philosophy and acute critic of religious belief (On Miracles, Dialogues on Natural Religion) was born with Saturn and Neptune in alignment, as also was Bertrand Russell, his twentieth-century successor (Why I Am Not a Christian). So also was Freud, with his psychoanalytic deconstruction of religious belief—most explicit in The Future of an Illusion in which all religion is viewed as the psychological residue of childhood projections of parental omnipotence. So too were Darwin, with his scientific dismantling of the biblical understanding of creation, and Marx with his socioeconomic deconstruction of religion (“the opiate of the people”), and also Foucault with his postmodern development of the same tendencies—all born with Saturn and Neptune in alignment.

In the latter group of individuals, the tension between the two corresponding archetypal principles seemed to be resolved through a decisive identification with one side of the polarity (Saturn) in such a way as to require the negation of the other (Neptune). The archetype associated with Saturn, governing the concretely literal and material dimensions of life, as well as the very impulse towards judgment and negation, is here expressed as a commitment to a skeptical common-sense empiricism, strict factual judgment, a fidelity to the demands of the temporal and finite—the naked truth undistorted by emotion or fantasy, a stern negation of whatever is assessed and found wanting. This Saturnian constellation of impulses is expressed as an emphatic denial of the entire archetypal gestalt associated with Neptune—the metaphysical, the spiritual, the supernatural, the transcendent, the timeless and infinite—with these here regarded as naïve illusion and wishful projection, the shadow side of the Neptune principle.
This same theme and archetypal complex was evident in major cultural figures from earlier centuries, but took a modified form according to the cultural climate of the particular era. The Saturn-Neptune conjunction takes place every thirty-five to thirty-seven years, occurring approximately three times each century. The births of Bacon and Descartes, for example, took place in coincidence with two successive Saturn-Neptune conjunctions thirty-five years apart, in 1561 and 1596, respectively, at the end of each conjunction period. In both cases, we see the characteristic themes of this archetypal complex that we observed in the cases of Hume, Russell, Freud, and others. In the case of Bacon, we see the shrewd skeptical critiques of conventional beliefs, the call for tough-minded empirical rigor against the speculations of the ancients and the Scholastics, the demand for practical scientific results rather than metaphysical imaginings, the constant impulse to unmask illusions and naïve projections. This unmasking impulse was precisely expressed in Bacon’s famous analysis of the “idols” (“idols of the tribe,” “idols of the cave,” and so forth), revealing the manifold ways the human mind can fail through prejudice and ingrained habit, linguistic confusion, perceptual distortions, and the like. Yet all these Baconian themes suggestive of disenchantment and demystification were expressed within an emphatically Christian framework, in which what was questioned was not traditional religious faith, but rather philosophical positions that Bacon viewed as empirically untenable, mere fantasies of benighted tradition, resulting from an undisciplined mind prey to the distortions of the imagination.

In the case of Descartes, born during the Saturn-Neptune conjunction exactly one cycle after Bacon, the same archetypal complex was evident, again expressed within the early modern accommodation between science and religion, but this time with a rationalist rather than empiricist outcome. We see the familiar themes of the Saturn-Neptune polarity in Descartes’s initial philosophical starting point of universal doubt, and then again in his famous resolution of that skeptical crisis by establishing a strict division between matter and

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4. 5˚44’ and 15˚33’ from exact alignment, respectively.
spirit, body and mind. What was demystified and rejected by Descartes was not religion, but rather the spiritual dimension of material reality. The outer world of matter and mechanism (res extensa) was sharply distinguished from an inner spiritual-mental world (res cogitans) that was the unique possession of the human self. In turn, in a further inflection of the same archetypal Saturn-Neptune dynamic, Descartes specifically linked the human mind with God, giving the rational self a firm, ultimately spiritual foundation for objective knowledge. The Cartesian dualism and skepticism involved a stern turning away from the subjective illusions of the imagination, and an austere disengagement from the body and nature by objectifying these as mechanistic, in order to achieve clarity and distinctness of rational knowledge in understanding the true nature of objective reality. In each of these philosophical moves and motives, the dialectic between Saturn and Neptune is readily apparent.

We can gain a further insight into the nuanced complexity of this archetypal dialectic if we revisit the three figures I first cited as being committed to the deeper truth of the cultivated imagination over the naïve apparent truth of the literal world—Blake, Wilde, and Hillman. For in all three of these individuals, one can also recognize a definite impulse towards deconstructive skepticism, a passion to strip away illusions and hypocrisies, as well as emphatically critical attitudes towards conventional philosophical and religious beliefs expressed in work after work (Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Wilde’s *De Profundis*, Hillman’s *Re-Visioning Psychology*). Yet, comparing the two groups we have been discussing so far, in the cases of Blake, Wilde, and Hillman, the underlying archetypal dialectic was engaged with entirely different imaginative orientations and spiritual consequences from the Bacon-Descartes-Hume-Darwin-Marx-Freud-Russell-Foucault form of the same complex: the former more in the Romantic tradition, broadly conceived, the latter in the Enlightenment tradition.

In a further commonality in all the individuals cited from both groups, the impulse towards skeptical judgment of naïveté, conventional belief, illusion and hypocrisy was often expressed with a certain sharpness of irony that I found to be a frequent characteristic of this archetypal complex. Jonathan Swift, for example, was born with Saturn and Neptune in hard-aspect alignment, as also was Mark Twain—both men masters of irony, skeptics of received wisdom, with sharp eyes for hypocrisy and deceit, all characteristic traits I observed among those born with these two planets in alignment. A more recent example would be Jon Stewart, whose satirical political commentary on *The Daily Show* in the United States has widely influenced contemporary public awareness and alertness to government, corporate, and media spin, propaganda, and deception.

Still others with this configuration expressed the same archetypal tensions through a marked tendency towards philosophical doubt, but a doubt resolved in neither the Baconian (empiricist) nor Cartesian (rationalist) manner but instead through a sustained underlying mood of uncertainty, tentativeness, and ambivalence. We see this in the case of Montaigne, who chose as his life motto “*Quae sais-je*?” (“What do I know?”). In this instance and many others like it, there appeared to be more of a balanced stand-off, as it were, between the two principles, a sustained tension of irresolution.
Still others with these planets in hard-aspect alignment reflected the same polarity more in the manner of Ingmar Bergman, with his compelling combination of religious skepticism, unmasking illusions, existential uncertainty, spiritual anguish, and an unflinching encounter with suffering and mortality, acutely expressed in film after film—*The Seventh Seal, Wild Strawberries, Through a Glass Darkly, Winter Light, The Silence, Persona, Cries and Whispers*, and many others—in a long journey of creative exploration of the principal themes associated with this archetypal gestalt.

Friedrich Nietzsche combined virtually all the themes we have discussed so far in a complex and evolving synthesis—the radical skepticism, the trenchant questioning of conventional beliefs, the sharp irony, the unmasking of hypocrisy and delusion, the enduring concern with honesty and deception, illusion and truth, ambiguity and uncertainty. So too with Nietzsche’s consistent hermeneutics of suspicion, his extraordinary eye for shadow, his absolute rejection of a metaphysical beyond, his unflinching encounter with cosmic disenchantment and nihilism, his spiritual struggle and anguish, his striving for spiritual fulfillment in this world without superstition or false consolation. Nietzsche was born at the cusp of one Saturn-Neptune conjunction in late 1844 (the conjunction after that of Darwin’s birth) and declared the death of God thirty-seven years later in 1881 during the very next conjunction of the Saturn-Neptune cycle. This was, in turn, the conjunction immediately prior to that which coincided with the birth of Ingmar Bergman exactly one cycle and thirty-seven years after that in 1918.

Reviewing now the sequence of philosophers and intellectuals born during Saturn-Neptune alignments, beginning with Bacon and Descartes born in coincidence with the consecutive conjunctions of the sixteenth century, and extending through Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Russell, and Foucault, we can trace a developing continuum of increasing philosophical disenchantment that has deeply shaped the modern world view. Looking back even before Bacon, it is striking that the first modern master of disenchantment, Niccolo Machiavelli, was born in 1469 during the last Saturn-Neptune opposition of the fifteenth century. The founder of modern political philosophy and, for his era, a man uniquely
unencumbered by religious beliefs, Machiavelli fully separated politics for the first time from theological considerations, while examining the actual practice of Italian political life without illusions about human nature. Moreover, he began writing *The Prince*, his most significant work, when Saturn and Neptune were again in close alignment, in 1513. So many of the qualities for which *The Prince* is famous can be recognized as paradigmatic expressions of this archetypal complex—the entirely secular realism, the “scientific attitude” and clinical lucidity with which human affairs are observed, the keen eye for shadow, the critical appraisal and unmasking of the contemporary Church’s amoral political practices, the recommended use of deception and fraud as a sound strategy to maintain power, the general tendency towards pessimism and cynicism. In many respects, *The Prince* is the master text of the hermeneutics of suspicion. One can recognize its influence from Bacon to Nietzsche.

**Spirit and Matter, Body and Soul, Disenchantment and Hope**

In all the cases cited so far as well as in many others not so well known, I found that the two archetypal principles associated with Saturn and Neptune were constellated with unusual specificity and intensity in the lives and psychological tendencies of individuals born with those specific planets in alignment. Yet a further phenomenon was also clearly visible in these same cases: In the lives of all these individuals, the two archetypes appeared to be *directly interacting and interpenetrating* in an extraordinarily complex, richly manifold way. That is, not only were these particular archetypes both highly activated in a readily visible manner, but they were also mutually acting upon each other, each in its own archetypally specific manner—sometimes opposing or negating each other, sometimes maintaining a tense equilibrium, and sometimes interpenetrating and coalescing with various synergistic results. The close geometrical relationship between the planets in the sky seemed to coincide with a close dialectical relationship between the corresponding archetypes in human experience. Yet how that dialectic was experienced—engaged, suffered, polarized, resolved, integrated—differed significantly from person to person.

For example, given Saturn’s close association not only with duality and tension but also with the problematic and shadow side of existence, with all that which is grave and difficult, it was striking how many individuals born with Saturn and Neptune in alignment expressed this same archetypal polarity between concrete actuality and the spiritual, ideal, and poetic dimensions of life in the form of a melancholic Romanticism—Coleridge and Chopin, for example, or Virginia Woolf, or Tennyson (*In Memoriam*), or Miguel de Unamuno (*The Tragic Sense of Life*). In each of these cases—and here we could include Bergman as well—a highly poetic temperament seemed to be especially confronting and focused on the disillusioning, sorrowful, or tragic aspects of existence. At issue here is the same archetypal contrast that the earlier-cited skeptical philosophers and scientists were engaged with, but in these cases with the emotional and imaginative elements highlighted, and with a poignant sense of the spiritual and existential loss involved. Moreover, the tension between the factual and the ideal that poets,
novelists, and philosophers articulated through words and language, composers born with this configuration, such as Chopin, seemed to convey in purely musical terms. Here we could also think, for example, of Samuel Barber (*Adagio for Strings, Sorrow*), or Miles Davis (*Kind of Blue, Sketches of Spain*), both born with this same configuration as well.

One can discern the same polarity expressed in words and music together throughout the many compositions of Joni Mitchell (born with the Saturn-Neptune alignment in hard aspect to both her natal Venus and Moon). A characteristic example is *Both Sides Now*, a song important both early and late in her life’s work, in which she evokes with poetic simplicity the contradictions and contrasts between life’s magic, romance, and dreams coming true on the one side, its bitter losses and disillusionments over time on the other, ending with precise Montaigne-like ambiguity:

> I’ve looked at life from both sides now
> . . . and still somehow
> It’s life’s illusions I recall;
> I really don’t know life at all.

Moreover, we see this same polarity of enchantment and disenchantment, aspiration and disillusion vividly expressed in many of the earlier examples cited: One thinks of Blake’s joyfully prelapsarian *Songs of Innocence* immediately followed by the dark *Songs of Experience*; or the tragic despair of Oscar Wilde’s last works *De Profundis* and *Ballad of Reading Gaol* (“Something was dead in each of us / And what was dead was Hope”); or Mark Twain’s late works, the deeply disillusioned *Letters from the Earth*, *The Mysterious Stranger*, and *The Great Dark*; or the pessimism and bitter irony in much of Swift’s work, increasing in his later years as well. In extreme cases, including some of the figures we have been discussing such as Virginia Woolf, I found both the Saturn-Neptune natal configuration and the corresponding complex being expressed in individuals whose lives were subject to states of deep depression, spiritual desperation, debilitating addiction, mental disturbance.

Yet by contrast, still others with the same configuration seemed to embody this archetypal dialectic in an entirely different if no less vivid manner, with lives and personalities that tended towards the ascetic and monastic—a decisive renunciation of the material world (Saturn) in favor of a spirituality (Neptune) regarded as radically separate from mundane life. In this category of cases, exemplified by such paradigmatic religious figures as the eighteenth-century American preacher Jonathan Edwards or the fifteenth-century Florentine preacher Savonarola, we can begin to see a new level of complexity in the archetypal dialectic: On the one hand, the Saturn principle can be recognized as governing that which was being depreciated, negated, disengaged from, or sublimated in the service of the spiritual and transcendent: thus the spiritual impulse to transcend the mundane world of conventional life, to separate oneself from the concerns of the temporal, to rise above or deny the material realm, the physical body, the claims of ordinary human appetites, the stubborn structures of the ego, the consensus world view of literal concreteness—all themes closely associated with Saturn.
Yet on the other hand, in these very same cases, in addition to this antagonism between the two archetypes, the Saturn principle also seemed to coalesce with and influence the form taken by the spiritual impulse associated with Neptune. Thus we see the characteristic Saturnian qualities of rigor, order, self-denial, the strict maintenance of boundaries, separation, solitude, the sustained fidelity to a serious commitment, the hierarchical structures of authority and obedience, the loyalty to a tradition. Yet these Saturnian qualities and themes can be seen as embedded entirely within the context of spirituality, idealism, and the striving for transcendence, all associated with Neptune.

We can also recognize the signs of the Saturn-Neptune archetypal combination within this mode of spirituality in the disciplined cultivation of silence and interior emptiness, the devotion to prayer and meditation, the training of the imagination to live within certain traditional structures of religious experience. We see the themes expressed as well in the striving for humility and detachment, the impulse for renunciation and sacrifice, the embrace of poverty, the contemplation of death, the experience of dark nights of the soul, the need to maintain hope and faith in the midst of spiritual disappointment and despair. So too the sober and sometimes stern ascetic ethos, the emphatic impulse towards hard judgment often combined with a high degree of spiritual anxiety, the sharp negation of the things of this world, of sensuality and frivolity, sometimes accompanied by a tendency towards moralistic humorlessness or self-punitive suffering.

Thus throughout this subclass of manifestations of the Saturn-Neptune archetypal complex, the Saturn principle can be seen both as that which is being sharply separated, judged, and negated (i.e., the material world and its conventional concerns), and also as that which is itself drawing the rigorous boundary and making the negative judgment—radically separating “this world” from the realm of the spirit. The Saturn principle finds expression in the very act of drawing strict boundaries and setting up hard polarities by which the mundane is rejected in favor of the transcendent (the same archetypal dynamic and polarity as in the case of the anti-religious skeptics cited earlier, but with the exactly reverse valuation). Finally, Saturn’s characteristic qualities of rigor, seriousness, and stern judgment permeate the way in which the spiritual dimension is being engaged and pursued. Thus within the same overall existential orientation of ascetic withdrawal from the world, the two principles associated with Saturn and Neptune can be seen as simultaneously set off against each other and yet subtly interpenetrating each other in an extraordinary multiplicity of ways.

Moreover, I often observed that this interpenetration between the two archetypes could also take a form in which the very polarity they represented was the focus of arduous integration rather than of ultimate separation. Thus I found that many individuals born with Saturn and Neptune in alignment led lives marked by a serious and disciplined but highly pragmatic and this-worldly religiosity which above all sought to bridge the gap between the transcendent ideal (Neptune) and the empirical reality (Saturn) through some form of compassionate service to the whole and direct engagement with the problems and suffering of the world. Here the dominant impulse seemed to be that of bringing spiritual values (Neptune) into practical expression and enduring embodiment (Saturn) both within and against the
resistances of concrete social and political structures (also Saturn), through hard work and disciplined pragmatic organization (also Saturn).

Thus we see such representative figures born with Saturn and Neptune in alignment as Lincoln, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, for example, or more recently Vaclav Havel.⁵ So too, in the Buddhist tradition, the Dalai Lama (born during the same Saturn-Neptune opposition as Havel) and Thich Nhat Hanh (born during the immediately preceding square alignment, the same as Hillman and Foucault). Another paradigmatic example of this same impulse was Florence Nightingale, the nineteenth-century Christian mystic and founder of modern nursing who described her spiritual experiences as a decisive inner calling to engage in outward social action on behalf of humanity. So also Father Joseph Damien, the Belgian priest who gave his life to the care of lepers on the island colony of Molokai in Hawaii.

I frequently observed that the lives and work of many individuals born with these two planets in aspect seemed to combine several of these different themes within the single personality and biography, often shifting from one mode to another in the course of life. Thus we see in Lincoln, born during the first Saturn-Neptune conjunction of the nineteenth century, not only his synthesis of concrete this-worldly political engagement with spiritual vision, as well as his commitment to the compassionate care of the oppressed, the wounded, the widowed, the orphaned, but also his tendencies towards religious doubt and skepticism, and a lifelong susceptibility to dark depressions—every one of these themes precisely reflective of the archetypal dynamic associated with Saturn and Neptune.

We can see this same multiplicity of relevant themes in Oscar Wilde. One motif and focus of his work was, as we saw, the sharp dichotomy between the aesthetic imagination and the sordid and tedious mundane world (“We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars”). Another equally pronounced Saturn-Neptune theme throughout Wilde’s life.

⁵. Compared with all the other examples so far cited, Gandhi and King are instances of natal Saturn trine Neptune, a soft or more intrinsically harmonious aspect between the two planets and principles. Similarly, Fr. Joseph Damien, cited in this same paragraph, was born with the sextile.
involved the complex interplay of truth and illusion—both comic and tragic—from essays like “The Decay of Lying” and “The Truth of Masks” to his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and then on to his plays *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Consider from the latter the double-reverse-flip irony of “I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.” Or: “The first duty in life is to assume a pose. What the second duty is, no one has yet found out.”6

And yet another theme characteristic of the Saturn-Neptune archetypal gestalt, which emerged in Wilde’s final years, involved the profound relationship between sorrow and the spirit:

How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in.
*(Ballad of Reading Gaol)*

Where there is sorrow there is holy ground.
*(De Profundis)*

Indeed, perhaps the most characteristic phenomenon I observed in all correlations between a specific archetypal complex and individuals born with the corresponding planetary alignment was that the biography, the personality, and the work and vision associated with that individual consistently reflected multiple variations of the characteristic themes for that archetypal combination. These multiple expressions of the same complex could be conspicuous at different times of life or simultaneously, in different areas of life or intricately combined within the same area.

For example, Coleridge was born during the last Saturn-Neptune conjunction of the eighteenth century (the one immediately prior to that of Lincoln and Tennyson thirty-seven years later). On the one hand, Coleridge is known for the haunting apparitions of *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*, the melancholic disillusionment and inward-turning of *Dejection: An Ode*, and the tragic marital disappointment and chronic opiate addiction that shadowed so much of his life. Yet on the other hand, he is equally notable for his philosophical articulation of a fundamental polarity and antagonism between Enlightenment empiricist rationalism and Romantic imaginative cognition (Understanding versus Reason). In stressing this essential polarity throughout his life, Coleridge closely resembles both Blake and Hillman, affirming the greater creative power of the imaginative intelligence to body forth deeper realities and discern larger wholes in both outer nature and inner experience. One also sees in many of these cases, as in Coleridge, Blake, and Hillman, a certain monastic or ascetic impulse, but here expressed not as religious otherworldliness but as a disciplined devotion to the interior life of art, culture, and scholarship, a sustained cultivation of the poetic and intellectual imagination against the constraints and distractions of conventional mundane values.

While considering Coleridge and literature, we might note that the polarity between the Saturn and Neptune principles can also be recognized in the polarity between prose and poetry.

While prose has a greater focus on imparting factual information, reflecting on matters of objective common concern, and communicating ideas with unambiguous clarity and precision (all Saturnian values and themes), the realm of poetry is specifically more concerned with the realm of imaginative vision, with exploring the ambiguities of the interior world and subjectivity, and with the creative use of language and imagery with attention to the subtle nuances of aesthetic meaning and intangible impression (all values and themes of the Neptune archetype). Significantly, Coleridge, who wrote both prose and poetry, once concisely defined the difference between the two (from Table Talk): “Prose = words in their best order. Poetry = the best words in the best order.”

Building on this definition, perhaps we could add that this is why some prose is poetic, and some poetry prosaic. What is genuinely poetic is not limited to the literal genre “poetry”; nor, by such a definition, is all poetry genuinely poetic. Even here, then, in this paradoxical complication of the Coleridgean formula, the characteristic Saturn-Neptune dialectic is visible, expressed in the act of “seeing through” the literal appearance to the intangible essence—through the prose to the possibility of its truly poetic character, and through the “poetic” to the possibility of its prosaic actuality. Here the archetypal polarity and tension is embodied in the act of seeing through the letter to the spirit, through the visible to the invisible, through the concrete surface of the conventional reality to the underlying animating principle, through the illusion to the truth.

I was especially struck by those cases of individuals born with Saturn-Neptune configurations who brought forth insightful analyses of an entire range of issues and conflicts specifically associated with this archetypal complex, sometimes devoting their lives to that task: thus the sixteenth-century writer Robert Burton, for example, with his classic treatise, The Anatomy of Melancholy; or Stendhal, with his equally classic dissection of romantic rapture, illusion, and disillusion, On Love—both born with Saturn and Neptune in alignment. So too Max Weber, who, after his own deep psychological and spiritual crisis, brought forth his penetrating analyses of the disenchanted modern mind—the word “disenchanted” (entzaubert) being Weber’s own coinage—as he explored the pervasive loss in the modern world view of a spiritual dimension that previously provided a ground of meaning for human life embedded in the cosmic order. We see yet other forms of the Saturn-Neptune complex in Weber’s analysis of asceticism in both religious and economic contexts—the “innerworldly asceticism” of Protestant spirituality, which engages the material world in order to free the self from it—and the intolerable spiritual anxiety produced by the Calvinist belief in predestination, which in Weber’s analysis eventually helped engender the secularized Protestant ethic of capitalism.

An especially notable example of an individual born with a Saturn-Neptune alignment whose lifework and philosophical vision seemed to be completely pervaded by this archetypal complex was Martin Heidegger. Here one thinks of his deep exploration of existential angst, the dread with no nameable object, the pervading consciousness of guilt and death, inauthenticity and bad faith, the spiritual plight of mortal humanity, nothingness and nihilism, the fall from Being, the “darkening of the world,” the tragic loss of the old gods. Yet by contrast, one thinks also (in line with Blake and Coleridge) of Heidegger’s philosophical
appeal to the great poets and poetry as alone capable of restoring humankind to authentic Being, or his final interview where he stated that “only a god can save us.”

Returning to James Hillman within this context, one would be hard pressed to suggest one area of his lifework and remarkable range of insights that is not eloquently reflective of this same archetypal dynamic associated with the Saturn-Neptune configuration with which he was born: his many vivid analyses of disenchantment and disillusion, the special relationship of the soul to limitation and death, to melancholia and depression, loss, abandonment, nostalgia, psychopathology, suicide and the soul, nightmares, psychic disintegration, falling apart. We see other familiar signs of this archetypal complex in Hillman’s abiding concern with ambivalence and ambiguity, healing fictions and the fiction of case histories, seeing through the literal, unmasking the projection, doubting the apparent objectivity of one’s perceptions.

Similarly, we can recognize Saturn’s characteristic tendencies towards establishing polarities and oppositions, making judgments and sensing oppression, in Hillman’s many sharply drawn dichotomies: between the Saturnian senex and the spiritually aspiring puer, between Hebraic and Hellenic, monotheistic and polytheistic, “North” and “South”—the North with its sternly didactic, ascetic, Germanic, Protestant rationalist spirit and the South with its lushly aesthetic, poetic, pagan, Mediterranean soul. Hillman’s dichotomies are asserted even within the Neptunian realm itself in his famous antithesis between “spirit” and “soul,” with his many subtle distinctions and passionate judgments concerning the potential tyranny of the spirit and the spiritual ascent over the richly unresolved life of the interior soul and its wanderings in the depths of this world.7

7. In Hillman’s articulation of a sharp distinction between “spirit” and “soul,” the Neptunian dimension is itself precisely divided into transcendent spirit and immanent soul, peaks and vales. Hillman establishes this polarity with many acute distinctions and hierarchically ranked judgments (Saturn) concerning the potential oppressiveness (again, Saturn) of the monotheistic spiritual quest that seeks to move up and out, beyond this life’s petty concerns to a centered state of elevated purity and rightness on the radiant mountaintop high above the body’s imprisonment and above the soul’s ceaseless wanderings (with the modern form of the spirit visible in the Cartesian sense of rational spirit as res cogitans, that which is closest to God and the modern form of the spirit within the Enlightenment-scientific mind.) This spiritual impulse upward and beyond is distinguished from the soul’s erratic and circular movements downward and deep, its descents into the interior darkneses, its day-to-day, moment-to-moment immersion in the embodied, animated, polytheistic and polyphonic, clouded valleys of mortal concerns, poetic imaginings, confusions, feelings, moods, symptoms, and relational complications—the vale of soul and “soul-making.” Thus Hillman gives to spirit the negative aspects of both Saturn (oppressive, confining, dry, monotheistically dogmatic, literal) and Neptune (escapist, narcissistic, self-deluding). And conversely, he gives to soul the positive aspects of both Saturn (authentic, unflinchingly confronting mortality and finitude, suffering and pathology, the actual embodied life in this world) and Neptune (rich in symbolic meaning and imaginative depths, fluid and enchanted, immersed in the invisible and intangible dimensions of life that give human existence a deeper significance).

In terms of our discussion of archetypal multivalence, it is instructive to note that the Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) makes exactly the same distinction between spirit and soul that Hillman does—but with precisely the reverse hierarchy, favoring the spiritual ascent to the high and light over the soul’s remaining in the dark and heavy. Remarkably, the Dalai Lama was born during the Saturn-Neptune opposition in 1935, which was the hard-aspect alignment immediately following the square in 1926 during which Hillman was born. For both Hillman’s and the Dalai Lama’s renderings of this important polarity, see Hillman’s “Peaks and Vales: The Soul/Spirit Distinction as Basis for the Differences between Psychotherapy and Spiritual Discipline,” in Puer Papers (Irving, TX: Spring Publications, 1979), 54–74.
Paradoxically, another form of this same archetypal dynamic is visible in Hillman’s impulse to dissolve conventional dichotomies (subject and object, outer and inner, masculine and feminine, good and evil) and to undermine the dualistic, dichotomizing compulsion altogether. The same complex is also evident in his stress on the importance of possessing or developing an “eye for shadow,” the imaginative capacity to discern the dark and problematic side of things. And it is evident, too, in the shadow of this eye for shadow: the ever-present potential for the unconsciously self-fulfilling, maya-like projection of shadow, as in paranoia, depression, and cynicism.

Even Hillman’s affirmation of the life of the soul and of the archetypal dimension of existence is pervaded by the two very different sides of this complex. On the one hand is Hillman’s call to recognize the actuality (Saturn) of the mundus imaginalis (Neptune), the imaginal world of archetypal forms. Yet on the other hand is his acute awareness of the bedazzling power of archetypal complexes in shaping the life of the soul and structuring all experience, perceptions, and ideas, potentially creating an unconscious prison of constellated fantasy within which one’s life and activities are constrained and distorted. Finally, equally characteristic of the same underlying gestalt is Hillman’s lifelong work on behalf of the return of the soul (Neptune) to a disenchanted world (Saturn), his urging of patient devotion to the long labor of “soul-making” (a term he drew from Keats, in a letter written during a Saturn-Neptune square in April 1819), and his call to engage the concrete crises of our time—social, political, ecological—with the insights and values of a cultivated interior life that does not remain sequestered within the confines of the therapeutic hour.

Recalling again the other two members whom I cited along with Hillman in the first group of individuals born with the Saturn-Neptune configuration, we can recognize the presence of this same impulse to bridge the chasm between inner and outer, invisible and visible, soul and body, in Oscar Wilde:

> By the artificial separation of soul and body, men have invented a Realism that is vulgar, an Idealism that is void.
> *(The Picture of Dorian Gray)*

And in Blake:

> Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call’d Body is a portion of Soul discern’d by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.
> *(The Marriage of Heaven and Hell)*

So also with Blake’s affirmation of a deep coniunctio between these two archetypal principles associated with Neptune and Saturn, the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal:

> Eternity is in love with the productions of Time.
> *(The Marriage of Heaven and Hell)*
Thus we see within the larger class of individuals who are born with Saturn and Neptune in hard-aspect alignment a distinct concern with the schisms between body and soul, matter and spirit, time and eternity. Yet this schism and polarity can be engaged in an extraordinarily wide range of ways that, from one end of the spectrum to the other, can include diametrically opposite philosophical positions.

In examining such correlations, we can therefore discern certain “family resemblances,” to use Wittgenstein’s term—subcategories of kindred spirits within the larger class of individuals born with a particular configuration. These familial groupings link together persons whose lives embodied closely related inflections or expressions of the larger archetypal complex, as we saw, for example, with the metaphysical or religious skepticism variously expressed in Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, Hume, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Russell, and Foucault; or the melancholic Romanticism of Coleridge, Chopin, Tennyson, Woolf, Barber, Miles Davis, and Joni Mitchell. Yet these groupings are highly fluid and overlapping, with any given individual in one of the subcategories frequently sharing significant themes in common with individuals in another group.

Freud and Virginia Woolf, for example, while representative of the two separate groupings in which they were just cited, philosophical skepticism and poetic melancholia, can nevertheless also be recognized as sharing a certain common sensibility and areas of existential concern that precisely reflect this same archetypal complex—their shared taste for irony, their sharp eye for shadow, their passion to confront life unflinchingly without illusion or self-deception, their disdainful judgment of collective naiveté and wishful delusion. The lives and sensibilities of both Freud and Woolf were pervaded with the ambiguous theme of disillusionment—at once the demystifying disenchantment that frees one from naïve delusion, and the sorrowful disappointment of hopes and ideals that would give life its meaning and purpose. We see this same archetypal gestalt in Freud’s and Woolf’s frequent bouts with depression and despondency, their imaginations at once poetic and dark, simultaneously symbolic and reductive, their shared concerns with death, illness, chronic difficult-to-diagnose mental and physical conditions, neurosis, madness, despair, the haunting of the present by the past, the suffering of the human soul.

Oscar Wilde and Virginia Wolf: literary exemplars of the Saturn-Neptune complex
Here again Oscar Wilde provides an especially potent and evocative example of how the several distinct, even antagonistic, themes and impulses we have seen as characteristic of the Saturn-Neptune archetypal complex can be expressed in one individual. I found that it was especially when a particular planetary configuration in the natal chart was being transited by an outer planet that the corresponding archetypal complex tended to be most visible, most highly activated, and that the antithetical impulses associated with that complex were most likely to be simultaneously constellated and then dynamically impelled towards a larger synthesis. Thus it was when Wilde had the once-in-a-lifetime transit of Pluto exactly crossing his natal Saturn-Neptune square during and after 1895 that he underwent the trial, imprisonment, and spiritual crisis that brought forth his final powerful works, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (“I never saw a man who looked / With such a wistful eye / Upon that little tent of blue / Which prisoners call the sky”) and *De Profundis*, his noble, often desperate, but spiritually profound apologia. In the following passage from *De Profundis*, we see the characteristic archetypal themes of the Saturn-Neptune complex, combined with themes associated with the Saturn-Pluto complex (which I have explored in *Cosmos and Psyche*) in intricate, mutually intensifying interaction:

I have lain in prison for nearly two years. Out of my nature has come wild despair; an abandonment to grief that was piteous even to look at; terrible and impotent rage; bitterness and scorn; anguish that wept aloud; misery that could find no voice; sorrow that was dumb. I have passed through every possible mood of suffering. . . . But while there were times when I rejoiced in the idea that my sufferings were to be endless, I could not bear them to be without meaning. Now I find hidden somewhere away in my nature something that tells me that nothing in the whole world is meaningless, and suffering least of all. That something hidden away in my nature, like a treasure in a field, is Humility.

It is the last thing left in me, and the best: the ultimate discovery at which I have arrived, the starting-point for a fresh development. It has come to me right out of myself, so I know that it has come at the proper time. It could not have come before, nor later. Had any one told me of it, I would have rejected it. Had it been brought to me, I would have refused it. As I found it, I want to keep it. I must do so. It is the one thing that has in it the elements of life, of a new life, *vita nuova* for me. Of all things it is the strangest. One cannot acquire it, except by surrendering everything that one has. It is only when one has lost all things, that one knows that one possesses it. . . .

I am completely penniless, and absolutely homeless. Yet there are worse things in the world than that. I am quite candid when I say that rather than go out from this prison with bitterness in my heart against the world, I would gladly and readily beg my bread from door to door. If I got nothing from the house of the rich I would get something at the house of the poor. Those who have
much are often greedy; those who have little always share. I would not a bit
mind sleeping in the cool grass in summer, and when winter came on
sheltering myself by the warm close-thatched rick, or under the penthouse of a
great barn, provided I had love in my heart. The external things of life seem to
me now of no importance at all. You can see to what intensity of
individualism I have arrived—or am arriving rather, for the journey is long,
and “where I walk there are thorns.”

Moreover, it was here, in *De Profundis*, that Wilde articulated an extraordinary
synthesis of skepticism and faith, a firm agnosticism imbued with a sense of the sacred, while
simultaneously giving voice to an overriding impulse to find the sacred and the spiritual only
in the concrete actualities of this life:

Religion does not help me. The faith that others give to what is unseen, I give
to what one can touch, and look at. My gods dwell in temples made with
hands; and within the circle of actual experience is my creed made perfect and
complete: too complete, it may be, for like many or all of those who have
placed their heaven in this earth, I have found in it not merely the beauty of
heaven, but the horror of hell also. When I think about religion at all, I feel as
if I would like to found an order for those who *cannot* believe: the Confrater-
nity of the Faithless, one might call it, where on an altar, on which no taper
burned, a priest, in whose heart peace had no dwelling, might celebrate with
unblessed bread and a chalice empty of wine. Everything to be true must
become a religion. And agnosticism should have its ritual no less than faith. It
has sown its martyrs, it should reap its saints, and praise God daily for having
hidden Himself from man. But whether it be faith or agnosticism, it must be
nothing external to me. . . . If I may not find its secret within myself, I shall
never find it: if I have not got it already, it will never come to me.9

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The Ideal and the Real

Richard Tarnas

E*ncyclopaedia Britannica, 15th edition


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