

The Birth of a New Discipline

Archetypal Cosmology in Historical Perspective

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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, Stanislaw 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 Psychoanalysis, moreover, was an affront to the nineteenth century's assured belief in progress and rational self-determination. The notion that the modern human being, despite pretensions to rational autonomy, was in fact the unwitting instrument of unconscious impulses and complexes, and that the pious morality of that time concealed a seething cauldron of instincts whose sublimated expression lay behind humanity's most elevated cultural aspirations and achievements was a message both unpalatable and, seemingly, altogether untimely.²

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.

2. Freud described the id as "a cauldron full of seething excitations." See Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Standard Edition, trans. James Strachey (1933; repr. New York: Norton & Company, 1965), 84.

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

3. See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

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.⁴ 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

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

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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.

7. See Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View* (New York: Viking, 2006), 141–205.

8. Tarnas, personal communication.

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.⁹ 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).¹⁰

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 omniscient 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

9. Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 128.

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.

11. Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 73–75 and 86.

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.¹² 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."¹³ 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

12. Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 16–25. See also Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View* (1991; repr., New York: Ballantine, 1993), 416–422, for his discussion of the ramifications of the Copernican revolution, Cartesian ontology, Kantian epistemology, and Darwinian evolutionary biology for the modern understanding of the human being's place in the cosmos.

13. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science, With a Prelude in Rhymes and Appendix of Songs* (1887), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), 181; and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885), trans. Reginald J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1969), 41.

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.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.”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

14. C. G. Jung, “Commentary on the Secret of the Golden Flower” (1929), in *Alchemical Studies, Collected Works*, vol. 13, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 1–56.

15. C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 23, par. 50.

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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

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],” “transcendentally conditioned dynamisms,” “organizing forms”—to give but a few examples.¹⁸ 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.”¹⁹ Jung therefore situated his theory of archetypes firmly in the mythic-Platonic tradition. Like the mythological gods, the

16. C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961), trans. Richard and Clara Winston (London: Flamingo, 1983), 420.

17. Liliane Frey-Rohn, *From Freud to Jung: A Comparative Study of the Psychology of the Unconscious*, trans. Fred Engreen and Evelyn Engreen (New York: Delta, 1974), 96.

18. These descriptions are taken from various volumes of *The Collected Works* of C.G Jung, Bollingen Series XX, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953–1979).

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.

20. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 418–419.

21. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 537–538.

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.²² 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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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. This

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.

23. C. G. Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche* (1954), trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge, 2004), 101–102 and 110–111.

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.²⁵ 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.²⁶

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.²⁷ 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

25. See James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975; repr. New York: HarperPerennial, 1992).

26. Murray Stein, "Spiritual and Religious Aspects of Modern Analysis," in *Analytical Psychology: Contemporary Perspectives in Jungian Analysis (Advancing Theory in Therapy)*, ed. Joseph Cambray and Linda Carter (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), 211.

27. For a discussion of Hillman's antipathy towards metaphysics, see David. R. Griffin, "Archetypal Psychology and Process Philosophy: Complementary Postmodern Movements," in *Archetypal Process: Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman*, ed. David. R. Griffin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 63–72.

presupposed.²⁸ 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.²⁹

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.”³⁰ 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.”³¹

28. See Hillman’s essay “Back to Beyond: On Cosmology,” in *Archetypal Process*, ed. Griffin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 213–231.

29. Hillman, “Back to Beyond,” 220.

30. C. G. Jung, “Good and Evil in Analytical Psychology” (1959), in *Civilization in Transition, Collected Works*, vol. 10, 463.

31. Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 204.

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

32. Stanislav Grof with Hal Z. Bennett, *The Holotropic Mind* (San Francisco: Harper Publications, 1992), 18.

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.

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