

# The Planets

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*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).<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

**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.

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1. C. G. Jung, “The Psychology of the Child Archetype,” in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, par. 301, 179.

2. The following descriptions of the planetary archetypes are also available on the *Archai* website ([www.archaijournal.org/fundamentals/planets.html](http://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 intuitively feels, 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.”

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.<sup>3</sup> 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-compassionate 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."<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.

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