

The Mountain Astrologer is proud to feature an excerpt from Richard Tarnas's much anticipated new book, *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*, with concluding comments written exclusively for TMA readers.

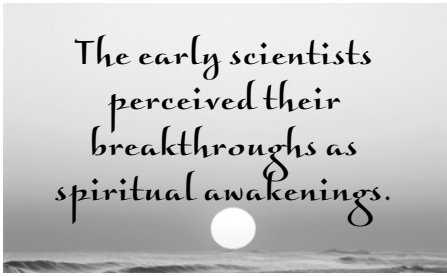
The Dawn of a New Universe

by Richard Tarnas

It must have been a breathtaking experience to have been among those earliest scientific revolutionaries of the modern era, Copernicus and his immediate successors — Rheticus, Giese, Digges, Bruno, Maestlin, Kepler, Galileo — as they first began to grasp the stupendous truth of the heliocentric theory. The sense of cosmic upheaval and wonder would have been nearly inexpressible. A view of the Earth and its place in the universe that had governed the human mind virtually without question for untold thousands of years was now suddenly recognized to be a vast illusion. We in the twenty-first century, long accustomed to living in the new universe those Renaissance visionaries first revealed, must call upon a profound act of the intellectual imagination to enter again into that dramatic moment of transition between worlds. To have it suddenly dawn upon one that the great Earth itself, the most obviously stationary and immovable entity in the cosmos, upon which one had lived in changeless solidity all one's life, was in fact at that moment moving freely through space, through the heavens, spinning and circling around the Sun in an immensely expanded universe — no longer the absolute fixed center of that universe, as had been assumed since the beginning of human consciousness, but rather a planet, a wanderer, an exalted celestial body in a new cosmos whose dimensions and structure and meaning were now utterly transfigured: Such a revelation must have filled the mind and spirit with an awe seldom known in human history.

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Yet it is not just the sheer magnitude of the Copernican revelation that so easily escapes us today. We also tend to forget, and conventional histories of the Scientific Revolution tend to overlook entirely, the degree to which the original discovery was charged with intense spiritual significance. The early scientific revolutionaries perceived their breakthroughs as divine illuminations, spiritual awakenings to the true structural grandeur and intellectual beauty of the cosmic order. These were not merely abstract conceptual innovations or empirical findings of purely theoretical interest. They were not, as had been the case in astronomy since classical antiquity, merely instrumentalist mathematical constructs, epicyclic elaborations ingeniously devised for the purpose of marginally increasing predictive accuracy. The new discoveries were triumphant fulfillments of a sacred quest. For thousands of years, the celestial and terrestrial realms had been regarded as unalterably separate realities, as incommensurable as the divine was to the human. Because of their extreme complexity, the true nature of the planetary motions had come to be seen as fundamentally beyond the capacity of the human intellect to understand. Concerning heavenly and divine matters, it seemed, only the Bible could reveal the truth; human astronomy could produce nothing but artificial constructions, as through a glass darkly. But now the true reality of the divinely ordered cosmos had finally been revealed. The deep mysteries of the universe were suddenly unfolding within the awestruck minds of the new scientists through the grace of a sovereign Deity whose glory was now dramatically unveiled. The stunning mathematical harmonies and aesthetic perfection of the new cosmos disclosed the workings of a transcendent intelligence of unimaginable power and splendor. In that very epiphany, the human intelligence that could grasp such workings was itself profoundly elevated and empowered.



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The heliocentric discovery thus became the source and impetus for a tremendously magnified confidence in human reason. It revealed the human being's divinely graced capacity for direct, accurate knowledge of the world at the most encompassing macrocosmic level, something never before known in the entire history of Western astronomy. It was specifically this unprecedented claim to cosmological truth, the claim to represent the objective reality of the great universe, not just a useful instrumentalist fiction, that made the Copernican revolution so revolutionary, so emancipatory, as the very paradigm of modern humanity's new power of self-definition and cosmic illumination through reason.

Moreover, contrary to the human-decentering consequences later drawn from the Copernican shift, all of the great Copernicans from Copernicus through Newton were deeply convinced that the cosmic order was expressly created to be known and admired by the human intelligence. Here and now, after millennia of dark ignorance in an exile that had been as much spiritual as intellectual, the human mind had finally achieved direct contact with the true cosmic order as the divine mind had long intended. Only thus can we understand the full exaltation of Kepler, the pivotal figure of the Copernican revolution, as he announced his discovery of the third law of planetary motion, which completed the early mathematical foundation of the heliocentric theory:

Now, since the dawn eighteen months ago, since the broad daylight three months ago, and since a few days ago, when the full Sun illuminated my wonderful speculations, nothing holds me back. I yield freely to the sacred frenzy; I dare frankly to confess that I have stolen the golden vessels of the Egyptians to build a tabernacle for my God far

from the bounds of Egypt. If you pardon me, I shall rejoice; if you reproach me, I shall endure. The die is cast, and I am writing the book — to be read either now or by posterity, it matters not. It can wait a century for a reader, as God himself has waited six thousand years for a witness.

A new universe had dawned, and the Sun, whose luminous centrality Copernicus and Kepler perceived as the very image of the Godhead, seemed to shine on the world a new light of divine intelligibility. Yet, as Kepler's words remind us, these first discoverers were altogether alone in their new cosmos, alone in a way we today can hardly comprehend. Now that Copernicus and Kepler and the rest are seen as but the first of millions to recognize the new universe, it is easy to forget how supremely isolated they were. During their lifetimes, there were no millions, but rather just one or two, later a handful, who wrote letters to one another between countries to secretly encourage each other in their scarcely believable conviction. To put ourselves in their position, we would have to imagine that we had made an epochal discovery that would be rejected out of hand not only by the untutored masses but by virtually all the major intellectual and cultural authorities of the time — all the most distinguished university professors, the most respected scientists, the Nobel Prize winners, the pope and other religious leaders, the most prominent philosophers, the scholarly contributors to the *New York Review of Books* and the *Times Literary Supplement* — all the conscientious and learned guardians of the cultural world view. For decade after decade our new conception of the cosmos would be, when noticed at all, forthrightly condemned by just about everyone who counted — dismissed and ignored as absurd nonsense or, if necessary, attacked and suppressed as a dangerous heresy.

Copernicus himself had anticipated such a reaction. In his preface to the *De Revolutionibus*, he predicted that as soon as certain people heard of his thesis they would “cry out that, holding such views, I should at once be hissed off the stage.” Recalling the Pythago-

reans' habit of imparting their "noble and arduously won discoveries" only to an inner circle of friends and intimates, Copernicus stated that he had long hesitated to publish his work lest it be despised by those too unintelligent or prejudiced to comprehend it. And despised it was, by even the most advanced and innovative thinkers of the time. History textbooks have long made us aware that the major religious authorities of the time, first Protestant and later Catholic, vehemently opposed the Copernican theory. Even before the *De Revolutionibus* was published, Luther is reported to have said, "People gave ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the Earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the Sun and the Moon ... This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the Sun to stand still, and not the Earth." And in his *Commentary on Genesis*, Calvin wrote: "Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?" Yet secular intellectuals were equally dismissive: "No one in his senses," said the influential liberal philosopher Jean Bodin, "or imbued with the slightest knowledge of physics, will ever think that the Earth, heavy and unwieldy from its own weight and mass, staggers up and down around its own center and that of the Sun; for at the

slightest jar of the Earth, we would see cities and fortresses, towns and mountains thrown down."

The new theory conflicted not only with common sense, and not only with literal interpretations of certain passages of the Bible, but with the most cogent and long-established principles of physics and cosmology. Most of the leading academic scientists of the day thought the idea so implausible as not to require serious examination. Impressive scientific arguments (for example, concerning falling objects on the Earth) and rigorous astronomical observations (such as the absence of annual stellar parallax) strongly contradicted the heliocentric hypothesis. In the light of scientific assumptions then current, the new idea seemed altogether unreasonable. Arguments we find compelling today were not compelling then. Without an entirely new cosmological framework and new principles of interpretation through which to view the data, all the arguments and evidence for a moving Earth lacked force. Both physically and philosophically, the new theory was "impossible." Though it depended in part on hard-won conceptual advances made by the Scholastics of the medieval universities, its implications radically challenged the entire medieval world view. Today we can easily lose sight of what a bold, almost reckless act of faith supported the revolutionaries' belief in their new world. It certainly was

not empirically "proven." Little wonder that to bolster their fledgling hypothesis and give themselves encouragement, the early Copernicans repeatedly brought up the names of every ancient authority they could — Aristarchus, Heraclides, the Pythagoreans — as precursors of their own view.

It was not primarily empirical considerations nor, in the narrow modern sense, "rational" factors that were decisive in persuading the early Copernican revolutionaries to pursue and elaborate the heliocentric hypothesis. These were necessary but not sufficient conditions for such a radical change. It was, above all, powerful spiritual and even aesthetic intellectual predispositions that made the crucial difference. And it was these predispositions — influenced by Renaissance Humanism and Neoplatonism, Hermetic esotericism, and Christian mysticism, all supporting a vastly expanded mystical-mathematical cosmology — that effectively transformed the significance of the rational and empirical factors. To conceive and propose the new vision of the cosmos required a new Humanist confidence in the world-completing, self-realizing power and role of the human being, capable of grasping and articulating the true forms of the divinely created universe. To be attracted to the heliocentric conception required as well a Platonic-Pythagorean conviction that

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the Creator of the universe expressed the divine intelligence through mathematical forms and geometric harmonies of an eternal, transcendent nature, and that the problem of the apparent planetary motions, bewilderingly complex, veiled a simpler, elegant truth. It further demanded a Neoplatonic apprehension of the Sun as a visible reflection of the central Godhead, a living metaphor of the divine creative principle, whose luminous radiance and glory made it the most appropriate body in the heavens to be the cosmic center. To adopt the Copernican idea in those first decades took, above all, an overriding passion for a certain kind of intellectual beauty and precision, a sensibility that so valued elegance, harmony, simplicity, and coherence as intrinsic qualities of the divine heavens that one would be willing to ignore both the evidence of the senses and the arguments from contemporary physics against the movement of the Earth, confident that in time adequate explanations could be found.

The first Copernicans had experienced a kind of inner conversion. Their epiphany was at once intellectual and spiritual, psychological and cosmological, and all their research and thinking

served the new vision by which they were happily possessed. Their intuition ran ahead far in advance of all the theoretical and empirical work that had to be done before the new theory could be fully justified and grounded. Even a century after Copernicus, in the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, Galileo underscored this point:

You wonder that there are so few followers of the Pythagorean opinion [that the Earth moves] while I am astonished that there have been any up to this day who have embraced and followed it. Nor can I ever sufficiently admire the outstanding acumen of those who have taken hold of this opinion and accepted it as true: They have, through sheer force of intellect, done such violence to their own senses as to prefer what reason told them over that which sensible experience showed them to be the contrary. For the arguments against [the Earth's rotation] we have examined are very plausible, as we have seen; and the fact that the Ptolemaics and the Aristotelians and all their disciples took them to be conclusive is indeed a strong argument of their effectiveness. But the experiences which overtly contradict the annual movement [of the Earth around the Sun] are indeed so much greater in their apparent force that, I repeat, there is no limit to my astonishment when I reflect that Aris-

tarchus and Copernicus were able to make reason so conquer sense that, in defiance of the latter, the former became mistress of their belief.

For the Copernican hypothesis to be made reasonable, an entirely new conception of "reason" itself had to be forged: new ways of deciding what counts as truth, new ways of recognizing patterns, new forms of evidence, new categories of interpretation, a new understanding of causality. Long-established rules of scientific methodology had to be overturned. An entirely new epistemology and ontology had to be formulated. The nature of the Copernican revolution was so fundamental that what had to be rethought was not only all the conventional scientific theories but the entire established hierarchy of humanity's place in the universal scheme of things: its relation to the rest of nature and to the cosmos, its relation to the divine, the basis for its morality, its capacity for certain knowledge, its historical self-understanding.

Such a radical transformation could not happen overnight. For the cultural mind and psyche to support that transformation, the passage of entire generations was required, including the deaths of the many intellectual authorities who were incapable of escaping the hold of the reigning paradigm. The required change was not just physical but meta-

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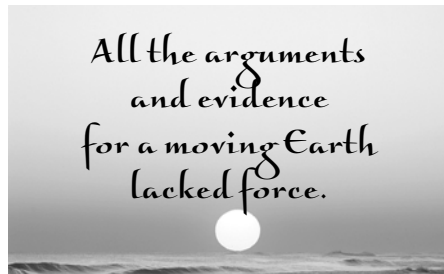


physical: The entire world needed to be revised. In the end, the implications of the great shift — cosmological, religious, moral, epistemological, psychological, existential — were so far-reaching that it would take centuries to work them out, even to become conscious of them.

Gradually, the passage of time, and heroic efforts against powerful opponents and entrenched assumptions, brought about the complete triumph of the Copernican shift. Yet, as the modern age progressed, the passage of yet more time brought forth, with what now seems a fateful inevitability, a succession of new consequences and elaborations out of the deep matrix of the Copernican revolution that could scarcely have been more paradoxical, revealing implications often sharply antithetical to the cosmological vision of its originators. Its larger meaning has been transformed with each succeeding age, and is, today, still unfolding.



I began my book with a look back at the Copernican revolution, as I believe that this extraordinary event in human consciousness provides a key to understanding many aspects of the great intellectual and cultural drama we have seen unfold in the course of the modern era. Both in its origins and its con-



sequences, the heliocentric revolution entirely transcended its scientific aspect; as we have seen, it bore the marks of a kind of religious revelation in itself. It began at a pivotal moment of history, in the heart of the Renaissance, and synchronistically coincided with many other powerfully transformative cultural phenomena that were crucial in the journey to our present moment: the opening of the entire planet to itself through global exploration and conquest, the enormous religious revolution of the Reformation, the rapid spread of the printed book as a new medium of international communication, the awakening of a recognizably modern sensibility in a host of individuals — from Leonardo, Pico, and Machiavelli to Montaigne, Shakespeare, Bacon, and Galileo — and finally in Descartes with his epoch-making *cogito ergo sum*, “I think, therefore I am.”

From a larger historical perspective, we can see that the Copernican revolution represented the cosmic ratification of the great solar dominance within the Western mind and spirit that had been

continually growing since its ancient Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian origins. From this perspective, the Copernican revolution represented, on a cosmic scale, the great Promethean theft of the solar fire from the heavens. It tremendously empowered the modern self, who became like a god, a divine hero, a new Sun, an incarnation of the Solar Logos, as the modern mind brilliantly illuminated the entire universe, nature, and the Earth as if from a transcendent position high above the flux of the empirical world. A great psychological and archetypal shift thus occurred: The modern rational self identified itself with the all-illuminating Sun, the heroic solar center, and in a fundamental way disidentified itself from the Earth, from Mother Earth and the realm of nature, from what the ancient cosmology regarded as the sub-lunary realm of change, chaos, and mortality. The solar modern self asserted the conquest by the light of reason over the darkness of the ancient night, of superstition and ignorance, of myth, mystery, and the unknown. Thus came “the Enlightenment.”

The Copernican revolution thereby proved to be the central event not only in the forging of the modern self in a new cosmological context, and in the modern mind’s conviction of its own unparalleled superiority, but also in the radical disenchantment of the world. With the full ascension of the modern

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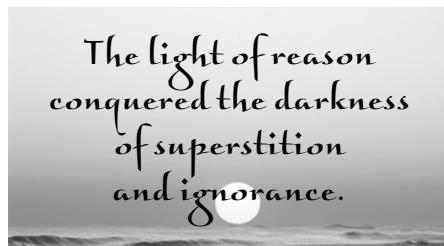
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mind, the world was no longer informed by numinous powers, gods and goddesses, archetypal Ideas, or sacred ends. It no longer embodied a cosmic order of meanings and purposes with which the human self sought to be aligned. Rather, the world was viewed as a neutral domain of contingent facts and potential means to our secular purposes. In Max Weber's famous term at the beginning of the twentieth century, which developed Schiller's insight of a century earlier, the modern world was "disenchanted" (*entzaubert*): It was voided of any spiritual, symbolic, or expressive dimension that provided a cosmic order in which human existence found its ground of meaning and purpose. Instead, the world was viewed entirely in terms of neutral facts, the detached rational understanding of which gave the human being an unprecedented capacity to calculate, control, and manipulate that world. And this in turn set the stage for the emergence of the full existential plight of the modern soul, which experienced itself as cast adrift on a lonely peripheral planet in a universe of vast meaninglessness — a purposeful being in a purposeless cosmos. The Copernican dawn of a new universe set into motion an entire life-trajectory for the modern self. And that great solar birth and ascent has now, inevitably, led to a great solar descent.

But life is complex and full of paradox, and there is another reason for us to look back now at the Coperni-



can revolution. For today, five hundred years after Copernicus, a remarkable situation has begun to emerge which bears certain uncanny resemblances to that epochal transition between ages and between worlds. Again, new evidence from the heavens and a new interpretation of that evidence provide a potential basis for a fundamental transformation of world view. Again, an ancient though long-rejected intellectual tradition has preceded and anticipated the new understanding. And once again, that tradition and understanding could hardly be more likely to be scorned and rejected by the major cultural authorities of the era. Indeed, nothing could be less respectable or less expected to serve as a legitimate focus of our culture's cosmological transformation than astrology.

Yet, once again, a marginal but growing group of researchers and scholars — a group that now includes philosophers and physicists, psychologists and physicians, theologians and historians — has been pursuing the examination of a body of evidence that suggests the need for a radically revised conception of the relationship between the cosmos and the Earth, and points toward an equally radical shift in our understanding of the human self. As before, both technological and intellectual advances — the

telescope, the discovery of the outer planets, the computer, the computation of exact planetary positions for centuries into the past, new historical scholarship, the development of depth psychology and the archetypal perspective — have opened new categories of data and new horizons of research. As before, the new perspective is part of a much larger paradigm shift taking place in our time, affecting many fields, disciplines, and areas of human experience. As before, the new body of data requires the forging and legitimizing of new principles of interpretation, new ways of recognizing patterns, new forms of evidence, a new understanding of causality, a new epistemology and ontology. Again, beyond the purely scientific and empirical grounds there are many other factors — historical, cultural, psychological — that have made possible the emergence of the new perspective. Again, spiritual and aesthetic dispositions are critically involved in embracing or rejecting the new paradigm. Finally, the new evidence and perspective bear surprising implications for our understanding of the Copernican revolution itself, placing it in a new light both as to its larger cosmological meaning and as to its still emerging historical significance. They recontextualize that pivotal event in a richer, more complex vision of the cosmos and suggest a new basis for interpreting humanity's place in the larger scheme of things.

In many religious traditions — mystical, esoteric, shamanic — there are two births: The first birth is the literal one, from the maternal womb into the physical world, and the second



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birth is a spiritual one. If the Copernican revolution mediated the first birth of the modern self, its literal birth into a new physical universe out of the ancient-medieval cosmic womb, I believe that the emerging astrological revelation of our own era may help to mediate a second birth for human consciousness, a spiritual birth, bringing a new identity for the human self with a new conception of an evolving cosmos of profound meaning and purpose.

Today, the heroic solar modern self appears to be at the end of its long day's journey: It descends and enters into the lunar ground, into its unconscious, the depths of psyche, the night sky, the *anima mundi*, the soul of the world. There, if the myths of many ages be true, the solar self will die to its old identity and be transformed, conjoined with its polar opposite, made whole again on a new level, and reborn. Of course, the night sky and *anima mundi* constitute the realm of the astrological cosmos par excellence. Astrology offers to the modern mind and soul a *via regia*, a royal road, across the threshold of the disenchanted universe into a living cosmos of profound unfolding meaning and purpose. Moreover, because it comes at the end of the solar journey of the modern self, the astrological awakening of our time offers not only a recovery of the ancient *anima mundi* but a new relationship to that *anima mundi*. In the course of modernity, a self-reflective autonomous self has been painstakingly forged. Each of us can now recognize ourselves as autonomous yet embedded participants in a larger cosmic drama, each of us a creative nexus of action and imagination. Each is a self-responsible microcosm of the creative macrocosm enacting a richly, complexly coevolutionary unfolding of reality. Astrologers in particular bear today a great historical responsibility, as well as a great honor: to help mediate a collective awakening to a cosmos ensouled by archetypal powers and informed by creative intelligence, scarcely conceivable in magnitude and mystery, yet in which the human self could learn to participate, intelligently and consciously, in the co-creation of its still-to-be-determined future.

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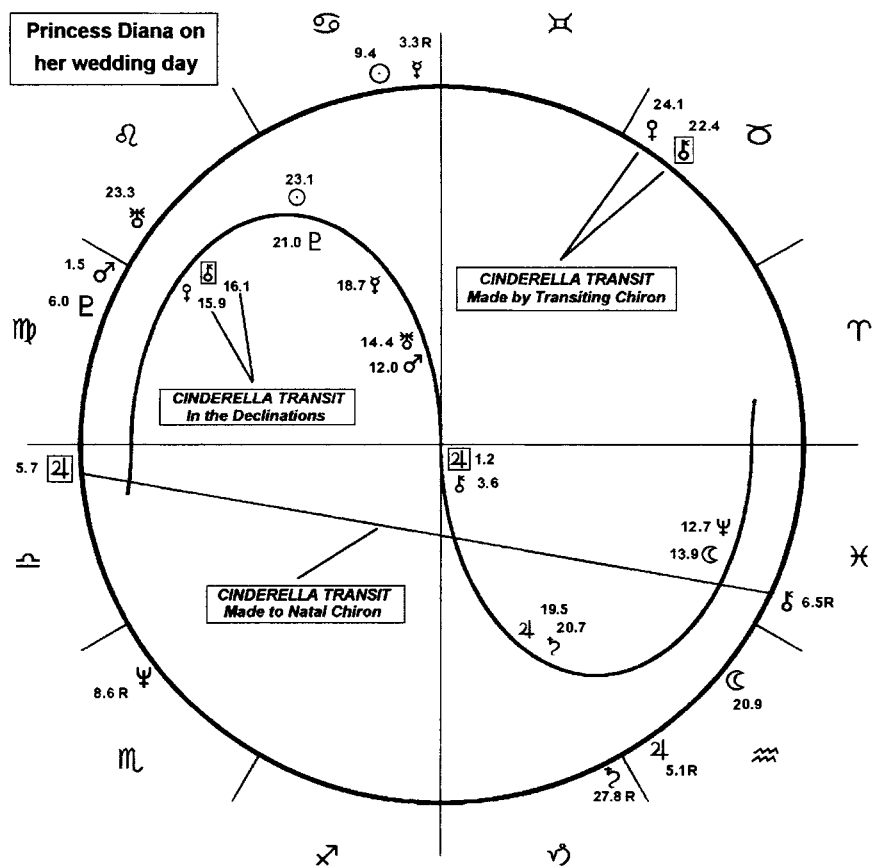
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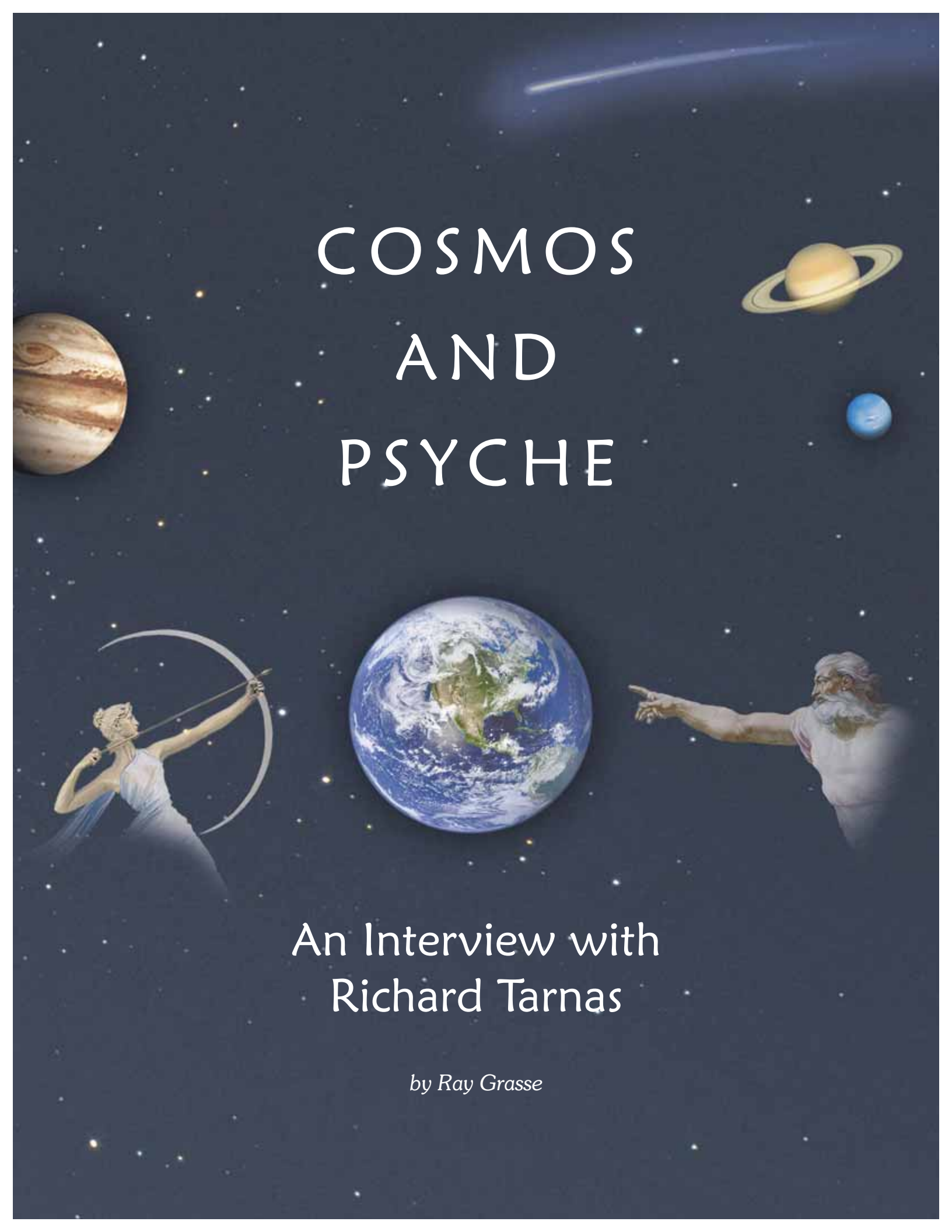
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COSMOS AND PSYCHE

An Interview with
Richard Tarnas

by Ray Grasse

In 1991, Richard Tarnas burst onto the literary scene with his book, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, an epic overview of Western thought from the ancient Greeks and Hebrews to the present. With sales of more than 200,000 copies, it drew praise from academic and literary quarters alike for both its insights and its eloquent style. Mythologist Joseph Campbell wrote that it was the “most lucid and concise presentation I have read, of the grand lines of what every student should know about the history of Western thought. The writing is elegant and carries the reader with the momentum of a novel ... It is really a noble performance.”

What virtually none of its readers back then could have realized was that Tarnas’s book had originally been intended to be a multi-chapter historical and philosophical introduction for a far-reaching work on astrology. Books often have a mind of their own, however, and these chapters grew to be a full-sized independent book on the history of the Western world view, which Tarnas published separately as *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*. As soon as he finished that task, he continued work on the astrological book, and this January it will be published by Viking. Titled *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*, this book is the result of 30 years of research and represents Tarnas’s own unique contribution to the growing body of cutting-edge astrological evidence and philosophy. What makes the release of this volume such an anticipated event in both the publishing and astrological communities is Tarnas’s standing in mainstream academia. His first book, *Passion*, has become a standard text used in many universities in the United States and Europe, and Tarnas is often invited to speak at scholarly conferences around the world in fields other than astrology.

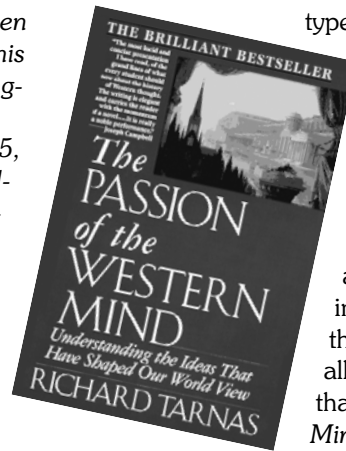
Tarnas was born in 1950 in Geneva, Switzerland and is a graduate of Harvard University and Saybrook Institute. For ten years (1974–84), he lived at Esalen Institute, where he was director of programs. Since 1993, he has been a Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at the California Institute of In-

tegral Studies, often co-teaching with his colleague and long-time friend, Stanislav Grof. In 1995, Tarnas’s short volume on the astrological Uranus, *Prometheus the Awakener*, was published by Spring Books, receiving glowing reviews from numerous astrological publications, including *The Mountain Astrologer*. I spoke with him recently about his new work.

TMA: You once referred to your first book, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, as a “Trojan horse,” in terms of laying the groundwork for your astrological writings for a general public. What exactly did you mean by that?

Richard Tarnas: In 1978–79, I wrote a monograph entitled *Prometheus the Awakener*, which by 1980 grew into a full book. But in the course of doing a final revision of the book for James Hillman’s Jungian press, Spring Publications, I came to the decision that I should not publish it. That was because the book was directed too much toward the astrological (and Jungian–transpersonal) community, and it focused too much on just one planet, Uranus. I felt that what I really needed to do was engage the whole planetary pantheon, all the planets, and write the book in such a way that it could serve as a bridge to the much larger world of intelligent readers who had not yet been initiated into astrology and who could not imagine taking astrology seriously.

Later, I did publish a shorter monograph version of *Prometheus the Awakener*. But as I took up the larger task of writing a book that could serve as a bridge to the non-astrological public, I started writing about the necessary concepts and the history of those concepts that I felt readers would require to grasp the evidence I would be presenting. I felt that people would need to understand the nature of arche-



types, starting with Plato, and then how Aristotle’s view shifted that understanding, and then the role of Christianity, and how the Copernican revolution shaped modern cosmology, and what depth psychology and Jung brought into the unfolding drama, and so forth. But as I started filling in the larger narrative to provide that kind of a history, it eventually turned into a book in itself, and that was *The Passion of the Western Mind*. In that book, I didn’t explore or defend the astrological perspective; rather, I included it in the narrative, just as any good intellectual history of the West would discuss the role — the quite important role — that astrology has played in that history. But I did not examine the history from an explicitly astrological point of view in that book.

When *Passion* was published in 1991, it was taken up by many universities and colleges as a text. At this point it’s used in — well, I stopped counting quite a while ago, after 80 or 90 colleges and universities were using it. And yet many professors and students who are using it would never guess that it was written by someone with an astrological perspective on all these developments. In a way I never expected when I was writing *Passion*, I ended up being invited to lecture at many universities and colleges, graduate schools and seminars — sometimes even to give commencement addresses. So, in that sense, the book has become a kind of Trojan horse because it has been embraced by thousands of people who would not regard themselves as being the least bit open to astrology and its possible validity. But many of them have been writing me for years, asking when the next book is coming out. They’re really interested. So when this comes out, at least to some extent there will be some surprises ...

TMA: Tell me, how did you get into astrology?

RT: It happened in stages, and then rather dramatically. When I was at Harvard, a Jungian analyst who was on the faculty of the Harvard Divinity School happened to be the therapist for my Radcliffe girlfriend; we became friends

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and met once a week for conversations about Jung and Freud and European ideas and culture. He had been trained by Jung and was Swiss by nationality. One week, he came in and must have asked me my birth data, because he started sharing with me something about my chart and where my planets were. I had no interest in what he was saying — this was just at such a different level of intellectual conversation than what we usually enjoyed, when we talked about what I regarded as more intellectually sophisticated and exciting topics. So, at that point, I steered the conversation as quickly as possible back to the usual channels of discussion. [laughs] After that, I had no significant exposure to astrology for several years.

My interest in astrology was really catalyzed during the years that I was studying and living at Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. As I was working with Stan Grof there on my doctorate, we discovered, to our utter astonishment, that the most reliable indicator of the kinds of experiences that people would have when they were undergoing major psychological transformations or non-ordinary states of consciousness — whether through LSD therapy (Stan's specialization as a psychiatrist for 20 years) or other powerful forms of experiential psychotherapy — was transits to the natal chart. No other method of psychological testing, such as the MMPI or the Rorschach or TAT, had proved of any value for that purpose. So, that was what initially began my research, and after that it just grew. From early 1976, I started studying everyone who was at Esalen, both those who lived in the community and the people who were coming through for seminars. I did hundreds of analyses in the earlier years and then extended the scope of my research to famous individuals like Freud, Jung, Nietzsche, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Newton, Galileo, and so on.

Finally, I expanded my research to include a systematic examination of cor-

relations between the outer planetary cycles and major historical events and cultural trends, reflecting the archetypal dynamics of the collective psyche. To see how consistent those correlations were was probably the most astonishing — well, it's hard to say what was the most astonishing — but it radically extended the range of correlations for me and expanded the power of the astrological perspective and its implications. It wasn't just an individual phenomenon; it was an extraordinarily vast orchestration of cosmos and psyche, linking the planetary movements with the archetypal dynamics of the collective psyche. In the meantime, I became close friends with Charles Harvey, the president of the British Astrological Association in England, and Rob Hand, both of whom visited me several times at Esalen. Their friendship and support of my work from the beginning was important for me, still in my twenties at that point. I only wish Charles were still alive today — he waited so long and patiently for this book.

TMA: On the surface, your book appears to be especially concerned with that aspect of things, the astrological cycles of history. But on closer examination, it's clear there are actually several different concerns unfolding simultaneously. How would you summarize these?

RT: Well, the survey of historical correlations with the outer planetary cycles definitely constitutes the largest set of evidence that I present in this book, though I also discuss quite a few natal charts and personal transits. But the book is actually dealing with a number of things at once. On one level, it's a sequel to *The Passion of the Western Mind*, so to a certain degree, it's extending that analysis by looking at how our modern understanding of the world was formed, how it developed. The new book looks at the crisis of the modern world view in our time, and how the disenchantment of the universe was connected with the forging of the modern self, so that the modern cosmos and the modern self actually arose together.

And a great price has been paid for the forging of the modern self. A kind

of spiritual crisis has been produced by the disenchantment of the universe, and that spiritual crisis takes different forms. One of these is the sense of existentialist desolation we see underneath the surface of modern life, the result of living in a random, meaningless cosmos. Another is the fundamentalist religious antagonism to modern science and modern culture, the reactive rigidity that we see so strongly right now, the unwillingness to fully engage in the spiritual adventure of our time. Another enormous consequence of this disenchantment is at the ecological level, the global ecological crisis we see taking place, where the entire planetary biosphere can be viewed by corporations and policymakers as just an exploitable resource rather than something possessing spiritual value, something that has moral value, something to be regarded with a degree of reverence and respect, even religious awe.

So, the book explores how the development of the disenchanted world view and the crisis of the modern self are coming to a climax in our moment in history, and I discuss the possibility that the astrological evidence may have tremendous implications for that crisis of disenchantment. For one, it would suggest that the disenchantment of the universe is actually a temporary and local phenomenon. It's a paradigm that emerged at a certain time and place in history and has had a powerful grip on the modern mind, but it's not absolute. It's not the last word, science's final decision, the end of the story. The book sets out an analysis of the deeper metaphysical and cosmological drama of our time, and it seeks an understanding of our history that will make this crisis intelligible. I don't think this enormous historical development has simply been an accident: It's serving something larger in our collective evolution. So, the book is simultaneously a look at the metaphysical and cosmological drama of the current time, and it's also a look at our long, unfolding history and the evolution of human consciousness.

TMA: You mentioned earlier about the book possibly serving as a "bridge" to the larger, non-astrological community.

RT: I think most astrology books are written for the astrological community, and are written with a framework of assumptions and a language that are familiar to the astrological community and to that community alone. What I tried to do was to write a book that I felt could serve as a bridge between the astrological community, on the one hand, and the larger general public of intelligent readers, on the other — those readers who have never encountered sufficient grounds for accepting the possibility that astrology has any value or validity.

One other major impulse informing this book is that, as the evidence unfolds and we explore different historical phenomena — like the revolutionary decades of the 1960s and the French Revolution during Uranus–Pluto alignments, or the great epochs of spiritual awakening and births of new religions that have coincided with Uranus–Neptune alignments, or the historical crises and contractions of the Saturn–Pluto cycle — the book serves as a kind of deep exploration of the

human psyche itself. We see how everything, from scientific breakthroughs and cultural creativity to terrorism and apocalyptic beliefs, is shaped by powerful archetypal complexes, which have both positive and shadow sides that are enacted in history and individual lives. The existence of these archetypal complexes points toward larger spiritual dimensions of the human psyche and of collective human experience. So, in some ways, the book is also a psychological and spiritual exploration, as well as an historical analysis and a cosmological hypothesis. It's a work with several different levels of motivation going on at once.

In a sense, you could say I had four overlapping goals with the book: I wanted it to provide a helpful initiation, for as many people as possible, first, into astrology; second, into a spiritually informed world view and cosmology; third, into the archetypal dynamics of the collective and individual unconscious; and fourth, into a view of history as an evolution of consciousness that is itself an initiatory drama.

TMA: In addition to its potential impact on our collective world view and on more practical matters like ecology, astrology also holds fairly profound implications for the individual, too, doesn't it?

RT: Yes. I think it provides the individual, first of all, with a new level of self-understanding, as it provides a new order of intelligibility for grasping the shape of one's life, the major themes of one's personality and psychological development. All sorts of diverse particulars in a person's life and character are suddenly revealed to have a coherent relationship to each other and to the cosmos. Things that may have seemed random or arbitrary are now seen to be part of a larger unifying pattern of meaning, which in turn is somehow grounded in the cosmos itself. The astrological perspective reconnects the individual to the cosmos. Many people who have entered deeply into astrology have the unmistakable sense that the cosmos is in some way meaningfully centered on the individual human

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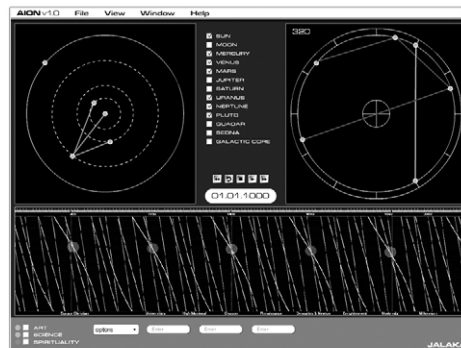
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being — and simultaneously centered on many individuals, on all individuals, on the Earth community. The individual person, as well as the Earth itself, is seen as a moving center of cosmic meaning in a much more mysterious universe than conventional modern science had assumed. So, one is freed from the typical alienated modern condition of being radically decentered in a random universe; instead, one feels that he or she is a genuine focus of unfolding cosmic purpose and meaning.

Such a perspective can be a great aid in psychological self-understanding. For example, we can recognize tendencies to project certain meanings onto situations or people, so we could be more on guard against those tendencies when they get in the way of living fully and authentically. Our capacity for critical self-reflection can be empowered in a new way, because we have more tools

— we have the language of archetypal psychology, basically, but an archetypal psychology that has now been given a radically expanded context because of the archetypes' cosmic association with the planets.

What astrology does is to connect the findings of the depth psychological tradition all the way from Freud and Jung right up to archetypal psychology and transpersonal psychology — it takes that entire tradition of insight, which is really one of the great contributions of 20th-century culture, and connects it to the cosmos. The result is, you can both understand your own unique participatory inflection of these universal principles, *and* you can also get a sense for the timing of them — when a particular archetypal field will unfold in your life, the periods when they are more problematic and challenging — like an ongoing archetypal “weather report” on your life. It’s a kind of surfing, in a sense — knowing your transits gives you a handle on how best to encounter the particular set of archetypal waves that are coming, how to ride them, when

you would need to be cautious about something, when you would want to be aware of highly creative windows of time, and so forth.

TMA: You saw the tragedy of 9/11 as serving as a benchmark of sorts in our collective attitude toward astrology, didn't you?

RT: Yes. That is something that a number of the advance readers of my new book have mentioned to me. Generally speaking, astrologers over the last several decades have become much more aware of the importance of the larger outer-planet cycles as they are correlated with the dynamics of the collective psyche, as they're evident in history. For example, when Saturn opposed Pluto in this most recent alignment of the Saturn–Pluto cycle, when it coincided with 9/11 and everything that happened afterward, there was a vivid awareness in the astrological community about the relevance of that planetary combination to the specifics of what was happening. This was different than in earlier years, when

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there was much more focus on the individual natal chart. Often it was just the personal horoscope, progressions, and transits that were attended to, with relatively little focus on the larger picture except in that subgenre of astrology called mundane astrology, which was not generally given the same attention as was natal astrology with its focus on the individual. I think this was part of the whole individualistic and humanistic culture of modernity with its overriding, and quite understandable, focus on the individual human being.

But what has happened in the last 15 or 20 years has been a gradually rising awareness of the relevance of the *Zeitgeist*, the collective archetypal situation, and therefore the relevance of the outer planetary cycles. This reflects the deepening transpersonal awareness of our era. So, a number of my readers have mentioned how they were able to look at their own lives in terms of the major outer-planet cycles mentioned in this book, particularly those of the last half-century, such as in 1968–69 when there was a triple conjunction of Jupiter, Uranus, and Pluto; these readers could see correlations that were not as evident to them before, because they had been thinking more in terms of the individual chart and personal transits rather than the world transits relevant to the collective psyche.

TMA: In the past, you've used a phrase that I think is useful for all astrologers to keep in mind when reading charts, or even looking at mundane (historical) patterns: "Astrology is archetypally predictive, not concretely predictive." What did you mean by that?

RT: I first used that phrase around 1980, when Rob Hand and I were attending an NCGR conference where a speaker got up and made a comment about how anybody who had planets at a certain degree of a certain sign was virtually certain to experience sexual assault or abuse of some sort in the course of their life. I was aghast at both the astrological misconception and the psychological harmfulness of such a statement. I watched a woman not far from me in the audience turn pale as

The nature of astrology is to be archetypally predictive, not concretely predictive.

she heard this. I was so offended by the speaker saying this and so concerned by the effect of her remark that, at the break, I went up to the woman in the audience and said that I believed that the speaker who made this statement was fundamentally misunderstanding how astrology works, because the nature of astrology is to be archetypally predictive, not concretely predictive. That is, when we know what a particular planetary alignment is, there is a wide range of ways in which that particular transit or natal aspect can manifest in our life and still be precisely reflecting the archetypal principles involved. But you cannot predict *exactly* which way it's going to come out in advance on purely astrological terms.

I believe that an understanding of astrology as archetypally rather than literally predictive is both more true to the reality of astrology and more empowering in its support of human autonomy. It supports the evolving capacity of the individual human being, with her free will and reflective consciousness, to bring forth the highest potential manifestation of a given archetypal complex, rather than simply be a puppet of it. The beauty of the astrological perspective and the gift it represents is that it provides us with a capacity to know what energies are constellated at a given time; this gives us a greater freedom to express these energies and embody them in a more intelligent and life-enhancing way, rather than just react or "act out" the archetypal complex in a predetermined or fatalistic way.

The deterministic view was more characteristic of earlier eras, though by no means was it universal even then. And to some extent, it still influences a certain number of astrologers today. Considerable harm is being done today by astrologers in counseling situations when they presume more knowledge

than they have, and they issue definite, concrete predictions about what's going to happen, or what a person is going to be like, or what kind of relationship they will inevitably experience. Such predictions represent abuses of astrology, which can be quite destructive in their consequences. I strongly urge the astrological community to embrace an epistemological humility, to recognize that the limits of astrological prediction are closely intertwined with the greater richness of the archetypal understanding and the affirmation of human freedom. This issue underlies, at a deep level, one of the principal resistances that the modern mind has felt toward astrology — a healthy resistance, I might add. The modern mind (and the Christian mind before it) wanted to preserve human freedom, and astrology seemed to deny this.

It is possible to combine purely astrological cognition with some kind of clairvoyant or divinatory faculty to make a more concrete prediction. This was, I believe, more characteristic of earlier eras and of those astrologers in India (and a few in the West) who continue to practice in that manner. In the divinatory epistemology that Geoffrey Cornelius has explored, using horary astrology as a basic model, we have a helpful reflection on some aspects of this issue. But I believe that the practice of most astrologers today in the West, and the most influential texts of leading astrological authors, are better described in terms of archetypal understanding rather than literal prediction.

TMA: One of the great delights of your book was coming across some of the fascinating synchronicities through history that I hadn't been aware of before, such as those centering around Herman Melville and his book, *Moby Dick*, or around the story of the mutiny on the *Bounty*.

RT: Yes. Well, let's take the latter as an example. One of the major patterns I've been examining over the last 30 years is the Jupiter–Uranus cycle. It's one that really stood out in the course of history in an almost brilliant way: Every time Jupiter and Uranus came into conjunction or opposition, there has been

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this extraordinary wave of cultural phenomena having a quality of either Promethean rebelliousness in society and politics or creative breakthrough in the sciences or the arts. It's astonishingly consistent, and I devote several chapters to that cycle in the book.

Many years ago, after studying the Jupiter-Uranus cycle as it manifested throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, I thought it would be really interesting to go back further and see what was going on in July of 1789, when the French Revolution began with the fall of the Bastille. Back then, in the 1970s, we didn't have personal computers or ephemerides that preceded 1800, so I had to wait each time for the mail to arrive with the charts I would order from Neil Michelsen for distant dates prior to the 19th century. When the chart for July 14, 1789 arrived, I discovered to my delight that there was in fact a Jupiter-Uranus conjunction within 2 degrees of exactitude. This aspect actually started late in 1788 and went through 1789, right up to September — the entire 14-month period that commenced the French Revolution.

I then noticed that in the spring of 1789, when Jupiter and Uranus were also closely conjunct, the mutiny on the *Bounty* took place, when Fletcher Christian and the mutineers rebelled against Captain William Bligh soon after they left Tahiti. As many people are aware, it's the most celebrated maritime rebellion in history. And the fact that this would have occurred precisely under the same Jupiter-Uranus alignment as the most celebrated political rebellion in history (namely, the Fall of the Bastille and the beginning of the French Revolution) seemed to me a marvelous synchronicity.

But apart from the astrological significance of this correlation, such a coincidence suggested something else: It pointed to the validity of Jung's basic conception of a "collective psyche," in which a particular archetypal complex can emerge in the collective psyche simultaneously in different places within

the experience of different people, with no conventional causal connection between them. For example, there were plenty of rebellions happening throughout much of Europe right after the fall of the Bastille, under the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction, but these could be seen as having been at least indirectly set in motion by news of what had happened in Paris. But that's not what was happening in Tahiti in the South Pacific, since the *Bounty* had set sail from England in 1787. There was of course no way then that any communication could take place between England and the South Pacific. So, the evidence suggests that there can be the simultaneous emergence of a powerful archetypal complex in different places of the world, as if there were in fact something like a collective psyche.

TMA: These correlations even continued unfolding afterward, didn't they?

RT: Yes. As the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction was happening, Uranus was also moving into a long-term opposition to Pluto, which occurred through most of the 1790s. This opposition between Uranus and Pluto, which might be thought of as the "Full Moon" version of what we had in the 1960s under Uranus *conjunct* Pluto, signaled a time of extraordinary revolutionary upheaval, sustained empowerment of the rebellious impulse toward freedom, artistic creativity and intellectual innovation, overthrowing constraints of all kinds, and so on. These things were happening right across the board in the 1790s as well as during the 1960s. And what's quite striking is that, following the mutiny on the *Bounty* situation, we saw this other side of the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex emerge, where you have not just Pluto empowering and intensifying the rebellious, emancipatory impulse of Uranus, but you have it the other way around, with the Promethean impulse of Uranus liberating and activating the Plutonic forces of the libido and the id and the violent instincts. So, the period of the French Revolution witnessed a sustained eruption of violent impulses as well as an erotic emancipation very much like

the sexual revolution and the violently rebellious era of the 1960s. But what happened with the mutineers after the mutiny is that Fletcher Christian and the mutineers went with a number of Tahitian women and men to another island, far away from Tahiti, called Pitcairn's Island; there, utterly isolated from the rest of the world during that entire Uranus-Pluto opposition in the 1790s, they went through a sustained period of intense conflict, violence, murder, jealousy, and power struggle, which was a microcosm of what was going on in Europe and in France, half-way across the world, under the exact same planetary alignment. The result was a kind of laboratory case of a continuing parallel synchronous emergence of the relevant archetypal complexes.

TMA: In the last century, there have been some major revolutions in astrology due to developments like modern psychology and the advent of computers. Rather than ask you to try and predict what sorts of developments may lie ahead for astrology — that's a tough one when you consider that someone in 1850 could hardly have predicted either the advent of psychology or computers — I'll ask you this instead: What developments would you like to see take place in astrology over the next 50 to 100 years, to help take it to the next level, as it were?

RT: Well, I'd answer that on two different levels — one more practical and the other more philosophical.

On the more concrete level, there are a couple of very promising developments that have begun. During the Uranus-Neptune conjunction that occurred in the 1990s and that we're really just coming out of now, we've seen a rebirth of esotericism in many forms; among these can be included the movement of astrology into higher education and the universities. This has been happening both in England and the U.S. During the past decade, I've taught many graduate seminars in archetypal astrology for the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco and at Pacifica Graduate Insti-

tute in Santa Barbara, both of which are accredited graduate schools. These courses, many of which I've co-taught with Stan Grof, have been extraordinarily popular with the students and have influenced the rest of their studies in psychology, philosophy, or cosmology. Over in England, Nick Campion and Patrick Curry have introduced astrology into the Bath Spa University College, where they have accredited master's and doctorate degree programs, just as we have at CIIS — in their case, with a focus on cultural astronomy and astrology. Liz Greene is now joining them there as well. And we have Kepler College here in the U.S.

This is the first time that astrology has been integrated into higher education and the university system since the end of the Renaissance and the early Enlightenment. That's an enormous development, and I believe it will happen more and more because, at its best, astrology represents an intellectually rich and rigorous mode of inquiry that can shine a light on many aspects of our history and culture. And the more that intelligent, educated people find this a central part of their educational experience — in many cases, one of the most exciting parts of their higher education — the more it's going to shift the cultural attitude toward astrology. It's not going to happen this year or next year, but I believe there will be a real shift within the next generation or so. Astrology's going to have a different cultural status than we are accustomed to now. Also, the work of Rob Hand, Robert Schmidt, and Robert Zoller over the same period represents another important development: recovering the classics of astrology and translating them from the various ancient languages into modern languages. This is a tremendous act of historical retrieval, not unlike what happened in the Italian Renaissance when the Humanist scholars were recovering Greek manuscripts and translating them into Latin and Italian and so forth — basically bringing them into the contemporary culture in such a way that it helped to catalyze



the Renaissance itself. This is an enormous enrichment that began under this Uranus-Neptune conjunction and will undoubtedly continue.

TMA: What would be the more philosophical level of what you'd hope to see ahead for astrology?

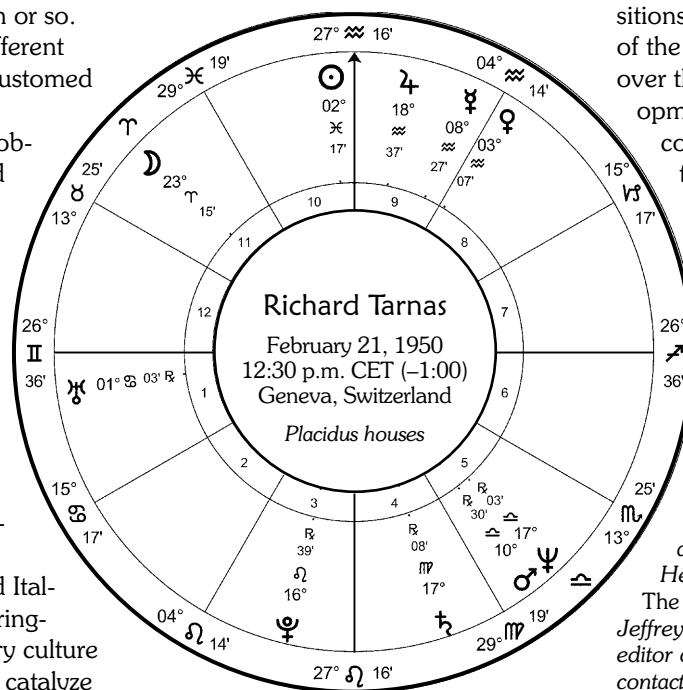
RT: Well, using what we already do see emerging, what I would *hope* to see would be a more profound grasp of the richness of the archetypal perspective in relation to astrology. The archetypal perspective in many ways empowers astrology to reach a depth of understanding that is not possible through

mere "keywords," which has been the tendency in the past — you know, the 6th house rules work, health, servants, pets; Jupiter rules riches, travel, philosophy, priests, and so forth.

In turn, astrology can empower the archetypal perspective that has been developed in post-Jungian psychology, so this isn't just something you're trying to discern only through your dreams or your active imagination or analysis of contemporary films or whatever. These archetypal dynamics, your dreams, contemporary films, and the rest can all be illuminated by knowing what planets are in alignment at what time, what kinds of geometrical alignments are being formed with respect to individual natal charts, and what similar archetypal phenomena have been observed with the same planetary aspects in other eras or other individuals.

I think the more that this power of the archetypal perspective (particularly, its multivalent and multidimensional nature) can be explored and developed within the astrological community, the more it will go a long way toward moving astrology out of the ghetto where it's been imprisoned. This ghetto of isolation and scorn has been created partly by the disenchanted modern cosmos and the skepticism of the modern mind, but to some extent it's also been a self-created ghetto, sustained by some of the basic intellectual presuppositions and methodological limitations of the way astrology has been practiced over the years. I believe that the development of an archetypal perspective could emancipate astrology from that self-enclosed ghetto so that it can begin to move into the center of culture, where it belongs.

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Ray Grasse is author of *The Waking Dream: Unlocking the Symbolic Language of Our Lives* (Quest Books, 1996) and *Signs of the Times: Unlocking the Symbolic Language of World Events* (Hampton Roads, 2002), a study of the emerging Aquarian Age. He recently contributed to the anthology, *The Astrology of Film* (eds. Bill Strett and Jeffrey Kishner). He is currently an associate editor of *The Mountain Astrologer* and can be contacted at jupiter.enteract@rcn.com