

Stellar Logic: Astrology in Contemporary Culture

by Wynne Jordan

Note: the following excerpt is Chapter Two of my Master's Essay, "Enchanted Modernity: Refutations of Weber's disenchantment thesis with particular focus on the re-emergence of astrology in contemporary culture," written in 2007 for the Masters in Religion and Modernity program of the Department of Religious Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

The re-emergence of astrological thought

To recap: In this paper we are examining the links between modernity and sacrality. Max Weber infers that the disenchantment of the world is an inevitable accompaniment to modernity, and he characterizes the modern age as one that is desacralised, devoid of gods and spirits, and stripped of a magical or mystical dimension to life. Weber bases his premise on a binary science/religion dichotomy—that you cannot have one with the other. But Cristián Parker suggests that these kinds of binary categories privilege an elite view of religion and culture and are not particularly helpful in examining the social worlds of ordinary people.

The existence—and, in fact, flourishing—of astrology in contemporary Western culture offers another avenue for investigating disenchantment theory. As a contemporary practice that has both religious and scientific components to it, astrology has features which make it interesting to study. It clearly intersects with some of the same issues which the previous scholars raise, and one can draw parallels between it and the phenomena of spiritualism, occultism, and modern Western shamanism. Chapter Two of this paper explores the re-emergence of astrological thought in Western society in the context of the present discussion of disenchantment in modernity, and consists of a more

detailed treatment of astrology as a contemporary cultural phenomenon than has been done with the previous cases.

The principal assumption upon which all astrology is based is that a correlation exists between the positions and movements of the heavenly bodies and life on earth—an idea epitomized in the Hermetic dictum “as above, so below.” Astrologers believe the study of the horoscope—the map of the sky for a given location in time and place—can yield insights into the character and fate of a person, event, or enterprise on earth. In the West, the idea that certain patterns of life are reflected in the planetary cycles goes back as far as ancient Mesopotamia, where a system of divination existed from the fourth or third millennia, with the worship of planetary deities beginning around 2000 BCE.

Western astrology evolved out of a synthesis of Babylonian and Persian religion and Greek rationalism and mathematics. The worldview to which it belonged reflected the Greek concept of *kosmos*, the idea of an “intelligibly ordered patterning and interconnected coherence of the universe, with man an integral part of the whole” (Tarnas 1991: 82-83). Until the seventeenth century, the sister sciences of astronomy and astrology were considered two aspects of the same discipline. The fusion of science and religion is a fundamental characteristic of astrology that persists to this day (Tester 1987; Whitfield 2001).

Astrology’s popularity began to wane in the seventeenth century, due largely to the rise of Cartesian rationalism and Newtonian mechanism, but also aided by the demise of the scholastic educational system and the professionalizing and specialization of the sciences, which hampered its acceptance among the intelligentsia. After over two hundred years of decline, a rebirth of interest in astrology began to emerge in the West in

the late nineteenth century, beginning in England under the influences of Romanticism and Theosophy. A revival of interest in astrology in the West has been growing steadily since the late 1960s.

In any discipline, ideas thrive in an environment of exchange and debate. Because of astrology's fringe, occult, and even illegal status in many parts of the West over the past two-to-three centuries, open intellectual discussion and debate have been problematic. Much of the astrological discussion in the United States has taken place in the pages of journals and magazines and at the annual conferences of umbrella groups such as the American Federation of Astrologers (with a membership of 3500 professional astrologers), the National Council for Geocosmic Research, the Association for Astrological Networking, and the International Society for Astrological Research. In Canada, there has been even less opportunity for networking since the one national organization, the Canadian Fraternity of Astrologers, disbanded about fifteen years ago; however there are local groups in a number of Canadian cities, as well as the national Canadian Association for Astrological Education and an annual, privately organized conference in the Toronto area each year. The rise of the Internet has been an enormous boon for bringing astrologers together, and there are now literally thousands of websites that service the astrological community.

While astrologers in North America may still feel quite isolated, the situation in Britain is somewhat different; there, groups of astrologers have been gathering regularly for decades. For almost a century the members of the Astrological Lodge of London have held weekly meetings in central London. There are also a number of schools, including the Faculty of Astrological Studies (founded in 1948), which delivers classes and

correspondence courses and runs a residential summer school at Oxford University each summer. More recently, astrology has entered the academy in Britain, with university programs offered at three locations in southern England—Southampton, Bath Spa and Canterbury universities—contributing further to an environment where the exchange of ideas can flourish. The significance of all this activity is that there now exists a critical mass of astrologers—as well as enough venues and opportunities for debate and discussion—that is a prerequisite of any discipline in order for theoretical and philosophical reflection, and rigorous self-scrutiny, to take place.¹

In the following section I will discuss some of the current sociological research looking into the extent to which astrological thought has reached into modern society.

Who is doing astrology today?

Although the astrological constituency has not received a lot of scholarly attention, a few studies have been conducted in recent years which show that the number of people in the West who are interested in astrology, both personally and professionally, is now substantial. Astrology reaches into all strata of society, operating at different levels for different social classes and transcending boundaries of class, education, gender, and religious belief. The extent of its acceptance by the mainstream was revealed in 1988 with the release of a book by Donald Regan, President Reagan's chief of staff, documenting how almost every important decision made by Reagan was cleared in advance by astrologers hired by the First Lady. This included decisions on "the timing of his announcement to seek re-election, his invasion of Grenada, his attack on Libya, and

¹ Particularly valuable have been recent, thoughtful books by Elwell (1987), Tarnas (2006a), Willis and Curry (2004) and Cornelius (2003), as well as Phillipson's (2000) compilation of interviews with over thirty major figures in contemporary astrology. See bibliography for titles.

his delicate negotiations over disarmament with Mikhail Gorbachev” (Bobrick 2005: 290). But as the historian Benson Bobrick points out, Reagan is not the only political leader who has used astrology:

In August 1944, Charles de Gaulle met a regimental band leader and astrologer by the name of Maurice Vasset in Toulon and from then on consulted him until the end of his career. François Mitterand, in turn, carried on a seven-year dialogue with the French astrologer Elizabeth Teissier, while during the same period Boris Yeltsin had recourse to the Academy of Astrology in Moscow for counsel and advice. (290)

A number of studies corroborate astrology’s place as being closer to the mainstream than the fringe. In his article on astrology in French society, sociologist Claude Fischler (1974) concludes that astrology is neither solely a “fringe phenomenon,” since its influence is quite visible within conventional society; nor is it “strictly a popular phenomenon, for we see the development of an astrology of the elite, a bourgeois astrology.” Hence, astrology “ignores the notion of social class and reaches into all strata,” he says (285). This notion contradicts Robert Wuthrow’s findings in his study of a population sample in the San Francisco Bay area, in which he concludes that believers in astrology tend to be “socially marginal” in terms of education, racial ‘norms’ (i.e. non-white), employment levels, and marital status. Wuthrow deduces that astrology’s greatest appeal “appears to remain with the more traditionally marginal members of society,” and that it is “the poorly educated, non-whites, females, the unmarried, the overweight, the ill, and the lonely” who are most interested in it (1976: 167). Wuthrow’s findings are also called into question by Shoshana Feher, a doctoral candidate at the University of California, who conducted a demographical survey of the participants of the 1989 United Astrologers’ Congress in Louisiana. Far from being socially marginal, Feher found that those with a professional interest in astrology were “largely well educated, with the bulk

(93%) having at least some college education” (1992: 91). She also found that they were “overwhelmingly white,” with only two percent not in the labour force and seventy-one percent “showing job stability during the past five years.” And, using Wuthrow’s index to measure marginality in relation to the broader society, Feher’s results showed “that marginality decreases significantly as interest in astrology increases, with the bulk of the respondents falling on the low end of the marginality spectrum” (91).

In terms of actual numbers, another survey of professional astrological societies done by Gordon Melton, cited by Richard Kyle (1995) in his book *The New Age Movement in American Culture*, reveals that in 1990 there were “more than 10,000 professional astrologers in the United States, serving more than 20 million clients, in addition to those who read astrology magazines and the astrology column in the daily newspaper” (190-1). Kyle himself estimated the total number of casual and serious astrology enthusiasts in the USA to be “more than thirty million—including about twenty-five to thirty percent of the Protestants and Catholics and even ten percent of those who call themselves evangelical Christians” (191). He also makes the point that astrology’s resurgence in the 1960s and 1970s can be linked more to the nineteenth-century occult revival, and especially to Theosophy, than to the New Age movement, which at the time had barely begun. “This awakening of astrology was independent of the New Age and would have come with or without this movement,” he claims. “Yet, these two movements feed into each other and astrology has become an important practice in the New Age” (191).

Finally, according to Bobrick, a recent survey estimates that in the United States today there are approximately 15,000 full-time and 225,000 part-time working

astrologers—up substantially from the 10,000 in 1990 cited by Kyle, and therefore indicating a continuing increase in interest in astrology. Over the past three decades, says Bobrick, “polls have shown that from 30 to 40 percent of Americans (or about 100 million people) ‘believe in astrology and think their lives are governed by the stars.’ An estimated ten million people have paid an astrologer to cast their horoscope, while almost everybody seems to know their own ‘sign’” (7-8).

Wuthrow, Feher, and Fischler all agree that women are more drawn to astrology than men. Wuthrow found that “whereas 14 percent of the females in the [San Francisco area] sample said they were quite interested in their horoscopes, only 6 percent of the males did so” (160). Feher recorded a three-to-one ratio of women over men in her demographic survey of attendees at the 1989 United Astrology Congress (90). And Fischler quotes a 1963 survey in France that showed that the percentage of belief in astrology among the general population was 39 percent for women compared to 21 percent for men (288), while “68% of men and 85% of women know the sign under which they were born” (282). He states that women and youth are the best “conductors of astrology” (290). So it seems to be an incontestable fact that more women than men are drawn to, consult, believe in, and practise astrology.

From these studies we can draw the conclusion that astrology is more of mainstream interest than is commonly conceived, and that it is not just confined to New Age adherents. It attracts all levels of society, from the highest political and economic strata to the common ground of the general public. Women are more receptive to astrology than men, in ratios as high as two or three to one. Overall, the number of people interested in astrology is substantial, and this number seems to be growing.

Having established the extent of astrology's use in contemporary society, I want to now take a longer look into some of the central ideas promulgated by a number of key thinkers in astrology's re-emergence in Europe and North America in the last century. In my attempt to identify some of the main features of the astrological worldview, I aim to show how contemporary astrological thought can be seen as providing a direct challenge to the 'disenchanted' cosmology of modernity.

The astrological worldview

The following section is a distillation of some key concepts within the astrological worldview, gleaned from the words and writings of some of the major thinkers and formative voices in contemporary astrology. While one aspect of the astrological worldview can easily blend into others, I have attempted here to identify a number of discrete components in contemporary astrological thought, as expressed by the people who have immersed themselves deeply in its study and practice. My focus is confined to the intellectual stream of astrological thought, rather than its more populist expressions.

A blueprint of human potential

One of the leading figures in the twentieth-century revival of astrology is Dane Rudhyar (1895-1985), a French-born philosopher and musician who emigrated to California in 1916, where he immersed himself in the study of theosophy, Eastern philosophy, and Jungian psychology. It was his reading of C.G. Jung's earliest books that led him to develop a reformulated type of astrology which has become known variously as "person-centred" or "humanistic" astrology. In Rudhyar's most influential work, *The Astrology of Personality* (1936), he argues for a move away from the empirical,

prediction-based and event-oriented astrology of the Ptolemaic and medieval systems, and towards an application of astrology that defines the individual in more spiritual and holistic terms. He sees astrology as a symbolic language which attempts to formulate through the celestial symbols “an immensely complex structure of relationships between the universe and man; relationships which we cannot explain in other ways” (1972: 16). In Rudhyar’s view, the birth chart can be understood as a map or blueprint of human potential, outlining “not what necessarily is, but rather what should be ... [i.e.] what the universe (or God) sought to achieve by the birth of a human being at that particular time and place” (22-3). The function of the astrologer, then, becomes that of a spiritual guide in helping the person interpret this “revelation” and integrate it into his or her life.

According to Rudhyar, a horoscope is interpreted not just to understand the ‘cosmic instructions’ applicable to an individual alone, but as symbolizing a set of transpersonal collective principles whose expression is fulfilled *through* that person. Thus he ties in an individual’s life purpose with the more transpersonal ‘needs,’ or moral directive, of a higher power, which is construed by many astrologers as the universe as a whole.

Elements of Rudhyar’s thinking run through a huge swath of contemporary astrologers, especially those whose focus is on applying astrology to one-on-one personal consultation work of a psychological or ‘life-direction’ nature. The veteran British astrologer, Dennis Elwell, phrases it this way: “It is as if we are each created to be a hand, or an eye, or an ear, of the cosmos, and by becoming what we are fashioned to be, by doing what we are intended to do, by playing our part, we contribute to the welfare of the All, and at the same time secure our own development” (1987: 161-2). Like cells in a body, Elwell sees humans as interconnected cells enclosed within the great system of the

universe, and he thinks that astrology is perfectly positioned, as no other discipline, to illustrate that interconnectedness between people and the cosmos (1994: 34). To this end, Elwell believes that “our long-term happiness, our sense of meaning, even our health, may depend on how closely we adhere to nature’s blueprint for us” (1987: 163). This perception of the human being as a microcosm of the universe confers a sense for him that “every entity has unique value.” Elwell feels this to be an inherently religious perception—one which negates the damage caused by astronomical science, which sees the individual as “just a speck of dust clinging to a slightly larger speck of dust as it whirls through eternity” (1994: 35).

A similar view is articulated by Robert Hand, a New England astrologer and doctoral candidate in medieval history at the Catholic University of America. Hand has worked to revive lost astrological traditions and techniques through retrieving and translating ancient and medieval texts. “The single most important advance in 20th century astrology was the recognition that astrology actually could be used as a tool for human potential and self-actualization,” he says (2005). This was absent in Hellenistic, Arabic and medieval astrology, which were more concerned with the worldly, collective applications of what’s known as mundane astrology. These branches of traditional astrology had the tools for more individual horoscopes, he claims, but this was considered the turf of religion, from which traditional astrology had to distance itself in order to survive.

An embedded system of patterns

Through Rudhyar arose an appreciation of astrology as an indicator of what Aristotle called the formal or “informing” causes of things. Like algebra, which functions

to bind together the symbolic elements of quantitative reality, Rudhyar saw the symbolic elements of the horoscope (planets, zodiac signs, aspects, etc.) as representing the universal *qualitative* elements of life, which refer to “living processes—whether on the physiological or the psychological and super-psychological planes” (1936: 35-6, xvi). His understanding of astrology was as a coherent symbolic system which places the human life in sympathetic juxtaposition with larger transpersonal and collective cycles.

One can detect echoes of Rudhyar in Robert Hand’s conception of the individual and his/her connection with a transpersonal divinity within the universe. In his book *Horoscope Symbols* (1981) Hand writes that “the individual is the route through which the will of the universe is made manifest. I do not separate humankind from the divine and oppose the two” (20). He doesn’t see the planets operating as coercive external forces, but as “psychological, spiritual, and metaphysical energies that lie both within ourselves and within the universe.” These energies manifest in all aspects of life, from the physical and mental to the relational and ‘external.’ Hand believes that “it is our sharing of these energies with the universe that ties us to it, makes us part of it, and ensures that it is our home” (20). This monistic idea is restated by British astrologer and psychotherapist Mike Harding: “You really do see that we and our world are one, and that is something that comes across very strongly from astrology [which] just recognizes that skin is not necessarily a boundary—that our world and what happens to us are one and the same” (qtd. Phillipson 2000: 97).

Although there is no agreed-upon explanation for how astrology works, many astrologers relate it to Jung’s idea of synchronicity, or meaningful coincidence. Richard Tarnas believes that with synchronicity, “the random chaos of life suddenly appear[s] to

veil a deeper order,” one in which the individual is “not only embedded in a larger ground of meaning and purpose but also in some sense a focus of it” (2006a: 51). The Jungian astrologer, Alice Howell, describes this synchronistic working as something that is intrinsic to the structure of the universe: “Like mathematics and geometry, astrology is inherent and discernible, a ‘just so,’ a given, built into this universe. And like mathematics, geometry, and music, it is human consciousness that has revealed it to us—the great wonder is mirrored by humankind” (2006:146).

This, then, is the conviction which the majority of astrologers seem to share, that there is embedded in the universe a discernible intrinsic system of patterns which, when interpreted by a skilled practitioner, reveals the cosmic ‘intention’ for a given moment in time, and hence for anything born or created at that time. And while astrology is based on the premise that life on earth is reflected symbolically in the positions of the planets at the moment of birth, it is not the *actual* planets that are seen to create the associated worldly condition, but the universal *principle* or archetype which each planet is said to represent. Hence the planets are seen as signs rather than causes. As the pioneering British astrologer, Charles Carter, explained in 1936:

The planets with which the astrologer deals are not, in point of fact, the physical orbs which we see, but rather they are great categories of existence, animate and inanimate, operating upon all the planes of being throughout the solar system. Of these, many are in and around us. The physical planet is, so to speak, the focusing point and the symbol of its category. (5)

As “great categories of existence” the astrological planets (a.k.a. deities, Ideas, or archetypal energies) are seen to have existed *before* the physical planets were discovered and named. One theory has it that after centuries of observing the night sky, the early astronomer-priests were able to detect the traces of their gods in each planet, and hence

gave the planets names corresponding to the archetypal principles of the gods they represented (Dethlefsen 1979: 72-5).

A conscious, participating cosmos

Many astrologers feel that inherent to their worldview is the idea that the universe has a consciousness of its own. As Robert Hand explains, “Astrology makes no sense unless we postulate that life, mind and consciousness are central to the functioning of the Universe, and precede, in some meaningful way, matter and energy, or at least are coeval with, that is to say, coeternal with them. *Something is talking to us*, and things that talk must be alive and conscious” (2005, emphasis added). This viewpoint surfaces especially when astrologers describe how personal astrological consultations can leave the impression on clients that they are not entirely alone in the dilemmas of their lives, and how the effect of this knowledge can be both comforting and liberating. As Hand puts it, “Charts, astrology and the readings we give, by taking a little bit of the load off the person, and putting a little bit of it onto the cosmos, allows them to look at themselves and say, ‘This is what I am; it’s OK.’” (qtd. Phillipson 2000: 76). In the same vein, Mike Harding reflects on the idea that the horoscope “is not the chart of a person, it’s the chart for a moment in time,” and therefore it is about the nature of time itself, as it happens to be expressed *through* a particular individual. This, he feels, has the effect of objectifying the ‘blueprint’ somewhat, making it a little less personal (qtd. Phillipson 2000: 113).

In a CBC Radio interview, Richard Tarnas explained the effect that this sense of objectification had on him when he first visited an astrologer: “It’s a kind of liberation to discover I’m part of something bigger—the cosmos is part of this; it’s not just me and my arbitrary wanderings and makings of mistakes and so forth, there’s some deeper

unfolding happening” (2006b). The notion of having someone or something else co-participating in one’s life does not, however, imply that the individual is absolved from responsibility for him- or herself—a point reiterated by Elwell and others. These astrologers believe that people fulfill their obligations to the world by living the life that the universe “intended” for them. Garry Phillipson summarizes this common viewpoint gleaned from his interviews with several dozen astrologers:

The implication here is that we learn to co-operate with the universe at an individual level, so humanity will gradually come to see its collective relationship to the Earth (and its environs) as one of mutual dependency and involvement. Hence . . . the view of man as an interconnected part of the world, which supports judicial astrology, is *ecological*. (2000: 194-5, emphasis mine)

The kind of worldview that views the universe as conscious, as “talking to us,” and as participating in our lives *with* us is not one that has been sanctioned or acknowledged in the ‘disenchanted’ world of modernity. As a historian, Robert Hand believes astrologers have to go back to premodern philosophers like Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Plotinus, and the Hermetic philosophers in order to re-establish astrology’s philosophical roots, because modernity has rendered astrology “inherently impossible.” He sees the task of contemporary astrology, then, as that of modernizing the understanding of these philosophies in order to bring them forward into the twenty-first century (2005).

Empirically discernible patterns

John Addey (1920-1982) has been another formative force in modern Western astrology, but what differentiates Addey from Dane Rudhyar is the former’s interest in applying scientific methodology and empirical testing to astrology. He thus has been a role model for many astrologers of a more scientific persuasion. In 1956 Addey began researching applications of astrology to cases of longevity and polio, a disease with

which he himself was afflicted. Eventually his own quantitative work, as well as the statistical analysis of other studies, led him to the discovery that all astrological symbolism could be understood in terms of fundamental concepts of cycle and number. He began to see a ‘wave theory’ inherent in astrology, and through his writings sought to demonstrate a unifying theory in which all astrological effects can be understood in terms of the harmonics of planetary cycles. As such, his work is most reflective of that of the early Greek mathematician and mystic, Pythagoras, especially as Addey’s main interest was not to incorporate astrology into a materialist perspective of the world but to understand the material dimension of reality in terms of larger universal principles—of which, he was convinced, numbers were the prime symbols (Brau et al. 1980:1; Addey 1971: 12).

Addey was critical of the reductionism of modern science and of what he saw as a fundamental flaw in its method of “taking things to pieces to unravel their secrets.” Rather, what he felt was needed was that “the nature, purpose and interrelationships of the parts must be considered as subordinate at each stage to their governing wholes” (7). It is through the empirical observation of earthly phenomena that one can discern larger patterns at work and, in examining these in conjunction with planetary orbits, Addey felt it was possible to begin to detect a sense of “hierarchies of order, orders in which each unitive principle is the parent of a multiplicity of effects at a lower level” (8). Through his observations, he began to discern “regular cycles of events which continue to repeat decade after decade and, in many cases, century after century, in such social phenomena as economics and trade cycles and the occurrence of civil and international strife, not to mention cycles in biological, meteorological and medical phenomena.” (9). For him,

these repetitive cycles pointed to the presupposition of “some higher, unitive, regulating pattern or mechanism which the science fraternity has been loath to acknowledge” (9).

Addey’s approach to astrological research has been taken up by many astrologers, among them Pat Harris and Richard Tarnas. Harris is a British medical astrologer with a Masters in Health Psychology. She helped establish the Research Group for the Critical Study of Astrology within the school of Social Science at Southampton University in England, where she is currently enrolled in a PhD program looking into applications of astrology to health psychology and correlations between psychological and astrological factors and fertility treatment outcomes (Phillipson 2000: 212-3). Tarnas is a Harvard-trained cultural historian and astrologer who, in 2006, published the results of three decades of qualitative research in his book, *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*. In this massive study, Tarnas looked for possible correlations between historical periods of major cultural change and the planetary cycles that were particularly active at the time. He found an abundance of such correlations, which are documented in extensive detail in the book. In his research, Tarnas observed that the times of planetary alignments of two or more slower-moving planets in their periodic cycles “consistently seemed to coincide with sustained periods during which a particular archetypal complex was conspicuously dominant in the collective psyche, defining the zeitgeist, as it were, of that cultural moment” (142). He found that the dominant planetary pattern of the era matched the archetypal principles traditionally associated with those particular planets, “as if those archetypes were interacting, merging, and mutually inflecting each other in highly visible ways” (142).

According to Tarnas, these correlations suggest the idea of an interconnected, intelligent cosmos, much like the *anima mundi* of the primal worldview, which reflects “a fundamental underlying unity and correspondence between the two realms—macrocosm and microcosm, celestial and terrestrial—and thus the intelligent coherence of a living, fully animate cosmos.” Moreover, the suggestion of such a system of correspondences implies “a universe in which mind and matter, psyche and cosmos, are more pervasively related or radically united than has been assumed in the modern world view” (77).

Summary

From this brief examination of key components in contemporary astrological thought, we can begin to glimpse a worldview characterized by a strong sense that there is more to the universe than scientific materialism assumes. Whether it is Hand concluding that “something is talking to us,” or Addey positing a “higher unitive patterning” to the universe, or Tarnas suggesting an “interconnected, intelligent cosmos,” the common metaphysical perception that emerges is that of a conscious, coherent, living, intelligent and participating universe in which the whole is expressed through the parts, and the parts in turn reflect the whole. As in mathematics, music and geometry, astrologers believe there are decipherable patterns that are intrinsic to the nature of the world. And, like a revelation, this embedded system of patterns is seen to be offering up a symbolic code, reflected in the planetary movements, which can be interpreted by the trained human observer to glean a sense of meaning for whatever is being studied. The role of the individual is seen as ‘playing out’ or expressing, in some sense, the driving urge of the cosmos, and therefore participating in the ‘unfolding’ of meaning that is

taking place through time and matter. On an individual level, astrologers feel that the symbols of astrology can be used to define the individual in more spiritual and holistic terms, with the horoscope representing a map or blueprint of human potential and self-actualization. Thus, astrology sees the human being as an integrated part of one whole system, the cosmos.

It is clear from the discussion so far that the astrological worldview provides a direct challenge to the ‘disenchanted’ cosmology of modernity, in reaffirming the links between the cosmos and human culture. What comes across strongly in the foregoing discussion is the idea that astrology posits a *religiously structured* conception of the universe. It does this in at least three ways: First, it offers its adherents a sense of an overall structure of meaning for both the macrocosm of society and culture as a whole, and for the microcosm of individual life. Secondly, it claims to provide a moral directive for the individual, outlining each person’s obligations to the whole while asserting the unique value of each individual as an expression of an aspect of the cosmos itself. And thirdly, it presents what might be called an image of deity—one that is similar, in some ways, to the Judeo-Christian concept of God, but with significant differences.

The astrological image of divinity is both remarkably ancient and quintessentially modern. According to Bobrick, it actually predates that of the monotheistic religious traditions: the Judeo-Christian belief that humans are made in the image of God, he says, is “but a version of that still more ancient notion that man is a microcosm or miniature image of the cosmos, by which the power of God is revealed” (306). Bobrick cites the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*’s account which states that the earliest known symbol for deity—chiseled by humans onto cuneiform tablets—was a star. For five thousand years,

he says, “from ancient Sumeria and Babylonia to the present day, the stars have been viewed as shaping, by divine power, the course and destiny of human affairs” (6).

Not only does astrology’s image of deity predate Judaism and Christianity, but it transcends the anthropomorphic Father of the Biblical traditions in favour of a disembodied cosmos of scientifically discernible patterning, made especially accessible with the advent of computer technology. This could explain astrology’s appeal in contemporary society—after all, its meteoric (excuse the pun) rise in popular consciousness in the late 1960s, epitomized in the hit musical *Hair* and its allusion to the Age of Aquarius, coincided with the rapid expansion of the NASA space program. In an age of space travel, cyberspace, globalization, global warming, and the global village, it is not hard to see how an image of deity as Cosmos or Universe might suit the *zeitgeist* of the times better than that of an anthropomorphized (and inevitably male) Father or Son. One can speculate as to whether, in fact, this is the view of divinity which humanity requires at this stage in its evolution in order to embrace both the reality of cultural and religious pluralism and the new ecological awareness of the interconnectedness of all life. For astrology’s image of divinity has the distinction of being both rooted in the particularities of dozens of separate cultures across the globe—one would be hard pressed to find a major religious tradition worldwide that does not have in its past some connection with astrology—and also transcending cultural parameters themselves. It is a trans-cultural, spiritual science which seems to be able to adapt itself to any cultural or religious society, whether Mayan, Chinese, Hindu, Buddhist, Arabic, Jewish, Christian or pagan.

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