

# **A Response to John Heron' s Commentary on *Cosmos and Psyche***

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In a forceful critique of Richard Tarnas's *Cosmos and Psyche*, published in the Network Review of winter 2006, John Heron calls into question the methodology employed by Tarnas in his study of world transits and thus challenges the validity of the book's central thesis: that there is a correlation between planetary alignments and archetypal patterns of human experience. However, although Heron raises some valuable and stimulating points that invite elaboration and clarification of the methodology and assumptions informing archetypal astrology, I believe his critique is seriously compromised, and ultimately invalidated, by certain crucial misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Tarnas's work. Here I attempt to highlight these and to briefly respond to the various points raised. In the interests of consistency and intelligibility, I have stayed as far as possible within the structure of Heron's commentary, adopting his headings and subheadings to present my responses.

## **A. World transit correlations with historical data**

### **A.1 Doubts about world transit reliability**

From the outset, Heron's critique is built on a misrepresentation of Tarnas's position. Heron interprets Tarnas as saying that personal transits and natal aspects are "statistically unreliable" when in fact Tarnas says nothing of the sort. Tarnas simply makes the point that the study of world transits (as opposed to personal transits) can "more easily lend itself to critical assessments and historical comparisons" because cultural history as compared to individual biography tends to be "more widely known, better documented, and open to more straightforward evaluation." (137) Tarnas chooses to focus on world transits and biographies of culturally prominent individuals because in so doing readers are better able to assess for

themselves whether such correlations are indeed valid. It is not that personal transits and aspects in individual birth charts are unreliable, just that world transits, because of their more conspicuous public nature, are better suited for this kind of study.

### **A tubful in the ocean**

Heron claims that Tarnas's analysis is too selective and too limited in its scope to establish the validity of world transits: "In order to secure any kind of validity for the world transit theory, you would need to apply the same world transits to a large number of different historical traditions at different periods in different parts of the planet." While any analysis would obviously be more complete by including more data, the period of world history actually covered in *Cosmos and Psyche* is vast, stretching from the beginning of the Axial Age in the sixth century BCE to the present day, and treating in considerable detail many aspects of the cultural histories of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the U.S., medieval Europe, and ancient Greece and Rome. Although Tarnas readily acknowledges his primary focus is on the recorded history of the West, his analysis, particularly of more recent periods, also encompasses events occurring in many other parts of the world including China, Japan, India, the Middle East, and Latin America. Needless to say, a consensus on world transits arrived at through comparative studies by scholars of different cultures could only strengthen Tarnas's case (indeed he explicitly invites collaboration from historians of other traditions), but by itself the evidence set forth in *Cosmos and Psyche* presents a strong case for the transcultural nature of the archetypal principles and correlations.

While Tarnas's survey of world history is unavoidably selective both geographically and historically, Heron doesn't provide even one example of where he thinks Tarnas's selection might have distorted the analysis. It is true that transit analysis illuminates themes and patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed, but Tarnas is hardly being creative in his marshalling of historical data; his representation of the different historical periods is decidedly not controversial or unorthodox. Indeed, to provide corroboration of his archetypal interpretation of specific periods or events, Tarnas often quotes from primary sources, giving firsthand accounts from individuals central to the cultural events under examination who were, we can safely assume, writing without any awareness of astrological cycles. Of course, one can always call into question the impartiality and completeness of historical records themselves, but many scholars agree that the data Tarnas examines, much of which is relatively recent, is accurately representative of the major occurrences of the different periods of history.

Heron also takes issue with the fact that the body of research in *Cosmos and Psyche* comes, as he puts it, from just "one man, without any quoted agreement from anyone else" to support "innumerable interpretations." Tarnas's study lacks credibility, Heron implies, because it doesn't draw on the work of

other astrologers. In response to this, let us be clear, first, that it is simply wrong to suggest that Tarnas was working alone. In fact, he makes a point of stating that *Cosmos and Psyche* is a “collaborative work” (545) that has emerged out of thirty years’ research undertaken with many other researchers and scholars, and that benefited from the efforts of over fifty advance readers including several of the world’s most distinguished astrologers such as Charles Harvey, long-time president of the British Astrological Association, and Robert Hand, the dean of American astrologers.

Second, although Tarnas doesn’t directly quote other astrological texts, each interpretation of the transits is, as he points out, based on the established meanings of the planetary archetypes—meanings that have been independently identified and empirically ratified by countless other astrologers. While astrologers often differ on the specifics of interpretation (for reasons I later address)—just as happens in any other field such as quantum physics, anthropology, or medicine—there is virtually universal consensus among contemporary astrologers as to the basic meanings of the planets, and Tarnas’s analysis reflects this.

Finally, and most significant, Tarnas is effectively pioneering a new method and approach to astrology based on an understanding of the archetypal nature of the planetary principles. His is the first major study of its kind, one in which he attempts to lay the foundations for future research that might further develop this new method of archetypal historiography, as it has been called. (O’Neal, 2008) Moving beyond the conceptual limits of conventional astrology, which has tended to be more literal and concretely predictive in its approach, Tarnas has deepened the philosophical and interpretive precision of the astrological archetypal perspective by drawing from the depth and transpersonal psychology of C. G. Jung, James Hillman, and Stanislav Grof.

### **One combination at a time**

A major element of Heron’s overall critique is based on what he calls dissociation—the idea that an analysis of a single two-planet alignment independently of all other planetary alignments dissociates the analysis from its context in a distorting way. Heron argues that by focusing on two-planet combinations in isolation Tarnas sacrifices the adequacy and accuracy of his analysis in favour of simplicity and clarity. He claims “if all the many concurrent planetary aspects are taken into account then identifying correlations with historical events becomes more obscure and problematic” and that restricting attention to two-planet combinations is likely to lead to “pseudo-correlations.”

What Heron doesn’t seem to appreciate here, however, is that greater complexity doesn’t mean greater obscurity. It doesn’t follow that just because the analysis becomes more complex when it includes three or four archetypal principles rather than two that it will therefore be more “obscure and problematic.” In fact, the greater complexity of considering multiple archetypal principles actually affords greater, more nuanced

archetypal precision. This is evident where Tarnas gives examples in which he does discuss the combination of more than two planetary principles. When, for instance, he examines the three planet alignment of Jupiter, Uranus, and Pluto of the late 1960s, it is possible to discern how during specific months and years the presence of Jupiter (the archetypal principle of expansion, amplification, and successful culmination) gave a distinctive inflection to the longer-term sequences of events characteristic of the Uranus-Pluto combination that were evident throughout the entire decade, such as powerful rebellious and revolutionary impulses, technological empowerment, and mass freedom movements. Thus, in 1968-69, when Jupiter joined Uranus and Pluto in a triple conjunction, there occurred, Tarnas notes, “the peak and full amplitude of the decade’s characteristic events” as the Jupiter principle expanded, brought to successful fruition, and gave a breadth of cultural expression to the Uranus-Pluto themes: the protest movement was at its most widespread, a series of unprecedented mass music festivals including Woodstock took place, and, perhaps most notably, the triumphant culmination of the space program with the Apollo moon landing in 1969 brought a sudden, dramatic expansion of horizons on a mass scale. (303-304) We can see here, then, that the introduction of the third archetypal principle, although presenting a more difficult interpretative challenge, actually yields greater archetypal precision and, ultimately, brings greater clarity to the interpretation.

Furthermore, just because an analysis is “more adequate” if it includes more archetypal combinations, it doesn’t follow that the analysis of two-planet archetypal complexes by itself is therefore inadequate. Heron contends that an adequate analysis would have to incorporate not only outer planet aspects, but also aspects of the inner planets (Mercury, Venus, and Mars) and the luminaries (the Sun and the Moon). Failure to include these, he claims, can distort the interpretation of outer planet transits. Obviously if one takes into account all the given aspects occurring at a particular time, one would expect to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of that period. We must keep in mind, though, that not all transits are of equal weight and significance. The transits of the outer planets, often lasting for periods of several years, are of far greater import than the more fleeting transits of the luminaries and the inner planets whose activated influence is usually restricted to a few days. It is well established in astrology that the major outer-planet cycles are connected with more profound, more enduring changes in human affairs. The shorter transits provide greater definition without radically altering the overall archetypal picture. Thus, in the above example, to know that Uranus and Pluto were in dynamic alignment in the late 1960s is highly illuminating, revealing much about the archetypal energy, feel, and events of that era. Incorporating the shorter Jupiter cycle simply adds greater definition and archetypal clarity to our understanding of the main Uranus-Pluto themes.

Another related point Heron raises in this section concerns the range of meanings associated with the different planetary archetypes. Heron cites a review by astrologer Gary Phillipson who claims that Tarnas stretches the established meaning of the planetary archetypes to “breaking point and beyond.” Heron seems only too willing to accept Phillipson’s assessment, later describing what he sees as “the astrologically dubious and stretched use of only two planetary principles” in Tarnas’s book.

The Phillipson remark is based primarily on a passage in which Tarnas discusses the Uranus-Neptune conjunction of 1985 to 2001 and its connection with heightened religiosity and a shift towards more pluralistic, individualistic forms of spirituality. Although there were many positive consequences of this world transit, more problematically it also gave rise to “many New Age infatuations and eccentric cult movements while simultaneously inspiring and bolstering fundamentalist fanaticisms in many religions throughout the world.” (427) One particular and pervasive instance of this was the “widespread evangelical Christian revival in the United States, which,” Tarnas notes, “often took the political form of an unreflective reactionary conservatism.” (428)

It is to this last phrase that Phillipson objects: “No matter how I put Uranus and Neptune together,” he explains, “I don’t end up with reactionary conservatism.” Quite so, but Tarnas’s analysis of the Uranus-Neptune world transit is not intended to account for the evangelical Christian movement’s reactionary conservatism (which is typically associated with the Saturn principle), but rather to illustrate that this too is one among many instances of the more radical and pervasive pluralism of the contemporary spiritual environment. Evangelical Christianity relates to the Uranus-Neptune complex in its focus on direct spiritual awakening, revelatory shifts of consciousness, a kind of religious radicalism, its polarized reaction to secular modernity, its idiosyncratic eccentricity, and in that it is one of the multifarious forms of spirituality that became more prominent and charged during that time.

For Heron this confusion on Phillipson’s part no doubt provides further confirmation of the research studies he cites suggesting “there is no significant agreement among astrologers about the interpretation of the same astrological configurations.” However, beyond such interpretative confusions—of which there have been many, I am sure—there is a deeper reason for the differences in interpretation proffered by different astrologers for the same astrological factors: the failure to adequately recognise and understand the archetypal nature of astrology. Without the fundamental recognition that astrology is, in Tarnas’s words, “not concretely predictive but rather archetypally predictive,” (128) astrologers have tended to associate planetary alignments, signs, houses, and so forth with specific concrete particulars, or with certain unchanging character traits, or they have used astrology to make definite, literal predictions—an approach that Tarnas rightly eschews.

With a proper recognition of the archetypal multivalence underlying astrology, one can see that it is perfectly possible for two astrologers to give different interpretations of the same planetary configuration that are equally valid in that they both coherently reflect the underlying archetypal meanings of the planets involved. Tarnas himself gives many examples of this multivalence at work, and this is one of the distinctive theoretical contributions of the book. A statistical analysis of astrologers' interpretations that fails to take into account the archetypal nature of the planetary alignments will be inadequate, noticing only surface differences rather than the underlying themes connecting ostensibly dissimilar behaviour patterns. As Tarnas stresses, to properly understand and assess astrological correlations one must cultivate what James Hillman called the "archetypal eye," which is "the imaginative intelligence...that is capable of recognizing and discriminating the rich multiplicity of archetypal patterns" (70) in both individual biography and world history.

The final charge Heron levels at Tarnas in this section is that of reductionism, again relating to the analysis involving single pairs of planetary archetypes. He claims: "The integrity of a culture is disrespected when the multifaceted richness of its representative people, products and events is repeatedly reduced to interpretation in terms of only two categories." This would be true if the archetypal categories were fixed and predetermined, and if they reproduced themselves blindly and mechanically in different circumstances and time periods. However, as Tarnas is at pains to stress, the planetary archetypes are multi-dimensional and multivalent creative principles, which, although thematically consistent, give rise to a potentially limitless range of forms of concrete expression. The aim of archetypal analysis is not to squeeze experiences into predefined categories of meaning or to reduce the uniqueness and integrity of cultural history to fixed interpretations, but rather to allow each event and experience to illuminate the archetypal dynamics in potentially unique and novel ways, perhaps, in the process, deepening our understanding of the archetypal categories themselves. There is no forced imposition of meaning here; rather our understanding of the archetypal principles is open to further elaboration by exploring how they manifest in different cultures and in different historical periods. In a hermeneutic circle, the archetypal analysis illuminates the historical data, and the historical data reveals how the archetypal dynamics were expressed in a particular cultural-historical context. Archetypal analysis is intrinsically anti-reductionist.

### **Eminence as evidence**

Heron insists that Tarnas's focus on culturally eminent individuals as paradigmatic examples of archetypal complexes amounts to a "curious elitist doctrine" in which, from an astrological perspective, the experience of ordinary individuals becomes irrelevant. However, just because more culturally eminent individuals are more "conspicuous embodiments of archetypal tendencies" (136) it doesn't follow from this that, as Heron

claims, “the less eminent you are, the weaker the astrological effect.” Eminent individuals exhibit archetypal characteristics more conspicuously not because the archetypal influence applies only or more powerfully to them than to less well-known people, but because they have been able to harness and express their archetypal inheritance in a more influential way, usually having a more profound bearing on the historical process.

Far from being elitist, astrology implies that we all partake in the same basic set of archetypal dynamics. To the extent that the archetypal principles can potentially be consciously engaged with by any individual, astrology is in fact inherently democratic. There is no cultural elite to which astrology exclusively applies; it applies to everyone.

## **A.2 The problem of Eurocentrism**

As we have seen, Heron calls into question Tarnas’s claim that planetary archetypes are transcultural—that they are applicable to the entire world and not just to Western civilization. He argues that because the planetary archetypes originated from and are named after Greco-Roman deities, the archetypal categories are rooted in a “Eurocentric mythology” and that they therefore support a “Eurocentric archetypal hegemony.”

Heron is labouring here under some basic misconceptions. First, the historical source of the meanings of the planets is actually Mesopotamian, rooted in many centuries of Babylonian and Chaldean observations, and the Greeks subsequently named the planets according to the mythic equivalents in their own tradition. Second, although the planetary archetypes in contemporary Western astrology are associated with certain gods of the Greco-Roman tradition, they are not exclusively identified with them. The planetary archetypes reflect the characteristics of many different deities from many of the world’s traditions. They are more general principles of which the mythic gods and goddesses are more specific derivations or inflections. Archetypal characteristics associated with the planets are evident in human lives across all cultures: love, beauty, courage, time, death, growth, limitation, transformation, sacrifice, freedom. The archetypal principles at this more general level transcend their anthropomorphic and theriomorphic inflections as mythic deities in any one cultural tradition. Moreover, as Tarnas emphasizes, the planetary archetypes are at once transcendent (Platonic-Pythagorean), psychological (Jungian), and mythic. (86) They are not to be conceived merely as interior psychological principles that are unconsciously projected onto the planets, but rather as dynamic cosmological principles informing both the inner and outer dimensions of reality, both psyche and cosmos.

The final theoretical issue I will address in this section concerns astrology's apparent dependence on a seemingly outmoded and discredited geocentric model of the solar system. Heron points out that Tarnas draws upon astrological principles "which all originated in the era of geocentric astronomy and its Aristotelio-Ptolemaic worldview." Therefore, because the solar system is not geocentric, it would seem that archetypal astrology must be invalid. This, of course, is one of the central points of repudiation of astrology advanced by many scientists and sceptics in the modern era with the recognition that the solar system is actually heliocentric.

In fact, however, there is nothing in the astrological perspective employed in *Cosmos and Psyche* that contradicts the reality of a heliocentric solar system. Indeed, both Galileo and Kepler were practising astrologers and saw no contradiction between their heliocentric and astrological convictions. Just because the Earth appears to be a focus of cosmic meaning does not imply it cannot move in an orbit around the Sun. Moreover, the view of the universe that has now emerged, first out of relativity theory, and later confirmed in cosmology, is that all measurements of space and time are relative to the observer, and that human beings are inextricably bound to their own perspectives. It is impossible, that is, to adopt an objective vantage point outside of one's subjectivity from which to perceive the universe. Therefore, although the geocentric model has been discredited as an objectively valid cosmology, phenomenologically speaking it retains a certain validity in that we are always inescapably centred in our viewpoint with regard to the universe. Ancient astronomers, as cosmologist Joel Primack explains, "were wrong astronomically that the Earth is the centre of the universe, but they were right psychologically: the universe must be viewed from the inside, from our centre, where we really are, and not from some perspective on the periphery or even outside." (133) Thus understood, the astrological perspective, which uses charts centred on specific individuals or locations on Earth, is actually in agreement with the modern cosmological conception of an omniscient universe. We are all in a sense centres of the universe, and astrology reflects this. Furthermore, despite the immense vistas disclosed by recent telescopic exploration of space, which makes astrology's focus on the solar system seem decidedly provincial, it remains the case, of course, that the cycles of the planets in our solar system define our immediate cosmological vicinity. Centred in our own perspective, we live and breathe here on Earth in the context, first and foremost, of our own solar system.

### **A.3 The absence of rigorous curiosity**

### **Attachment to the glasses & archetypal intoxication**

Turning again to the question of methodology, Heron claims that Tarnas doesn't look for counter-evidence that might falsify his theory, in that he doesn't try to find "events that fit the archetypal qualities of an aspect but fall outside its range of influence." Heron seems to be implying here that if, for example, one were to find events fitting the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex outside of the period when that transit is supposed to be operative (i.e., in orb) then this would invalidate the transit theory. Now if Tarnas were claiming that the world only experiences Uranus-Pluto type events when the two planets are in aspect then Heron's critique would indeed be to the point. However, this is not what Tarnas is actually saying. The hypothesis advanced by Tarnas is this: World transits correspond with periods of more pronounced and more readily discernible events that reflect the constellated archetypes in which there is a concentrated activation of themes associated with those particular archetypal principles. It is not that transits correspond with sets of discrete events in time that suddenly stop once a transit has passed out of orb. In his research, Tarnas discovered that the "characteristic historical events and cultural trends" associated with specific world transits were not "suddenly turned on and then off, when the transit was over, like bivalent light switches," but that these themes "continued to unfold in diverse ways in subsequent years and decades after the alignment was over." Thus, it is perfectly possible—indeed it is to be expected—that one will observe the continuation of certain trends outside the periods when an alignment is in aspect. In a helpful analogy, Tarnas suggests that transits are better conceived as "fluidly interpenetrating quantum wave patterns" rather than "discrete atomistic Newtonian events." It is fundamental to the understanding of what he calls the diachronic patterning of human experience that the past is continually active in shaping the present. World transits show periods of intensification and heightened activation of continuing streams and waves of archetypal energies. Of course, if one found little or no evidence of the relevant activated archetypes in world affairs when the corresponding planets were in alignment, then one would be right to call into question the validity of astrological transit theory. But, in fact, what makes Tarnas's research so persuasive is that again and again the planetary alignments he lists do indeed correlate with concentrated clusters of experiences and events that unmistakably fit the meaning of the corresponding planetary archetypes.

### **Keeping within the faith & the temptation of self-rescue**

Heron contends that "the function of anomalous data is simply to alert Tarnas to his deficient astrological know-how" and that Tarnas is therefore unwilling to call into question the overall validity of astrology. Heron argues, moreover, that the inherent complexities of astrology "make it so rich in persuasive forms of self-rescue and self-protection" that one can always find some astrological factor to account for seemingly

anomalous data and thus explain away any discrepancies. While this is a legitimate concern, given the plethora of factors regularly employed in the practice of conventional astrology, what is distinctive about Tarnas's approach is that he restricts his attention to the study of the major planetary alignments, ignoring a host of other factors such as signs, houses, angles, elements, and so on, thereby eliminating many potential paths of "self-rescue." As Tarnas says, the events of world history "either obviously fit the postulated archetypal meanings [of the planetary aspects], or they do not." (137) By ignoring much of the often confusing complexity of astrological theory, the strategy of focusing on two- or three-planet combinations thus makes Tarnas's hypothesis more falsifiable. It eliminates many avenues of "escape" by which one might explain away contradictory data.

## **B. World transits in the present and the future**

### **B.1 The issue of upcoming transits**

#### **A plethora ahead & the disappearance of single aspect analysis**

Heron suggests that the "veritable plethora" of concurrent transits that have been in aspect during 2007 and 2008 makes it an impossible and ultimately futile task to conduct any kind of meaningful and reliable transit analysis for this period. In particular, he objects to what he sees as a change of tactic by Tarnas: a shift from single-aspect analysis of the past to multiple-aspect analysis of the future.

I must confess that I just cannot see why Heron has a problem with Tarnas's "Observations on Future Planetary Alignments" as, contrary to Heron's claim, Tarnas continues to discuss alignments in exactly the same way as he did throughout the book for world transits in the past. Although Tarnas does indeed note that the overlapping Saturn-Neptune and Uranus-Pluto combinations "could scarcely be more different in character," (479) he actually analyses them quite separately, dealing with Saturn-Neptune on pages 469–478, and Uranus-Pluto on pages 468 and 479–481. There is no "disappearance of single aspect analysis" here. The "complexity theory" Tarnas calls for is simply an acknowledgment that when dealing with future archetypal trends one must be particularly cautious about making any predictions, even of the most general kind, without considering all the major archetypal factors. When analysing the past, as no

prediction is being made, one is obviously on safer ground when pointing out the major correlations with a single specific planetary cycle.

## **B.2 A troubling instability**

In his provisional summary, Heron thinks he has identified a “troubling instability” in Tarnas’s book. He argues that Tarnas simplifies transit analysis of the past by using two- planet combinations and yet calls for a “complexity theory” of transit analysis of the present and future involving multiple archetypal complexes. However, as we have seen, Heron mistakenly conflates obscurity with complexity; he fails to take into account the different weighting of transits and the actual relationship between outer and inner planet transits; he downplays or ignores the instances where Tarnas does engage in multiple aspect transit analysis of the past, while he exaggerates Tarnas’s use of multiple transit analysis of the future; and he doesn’t seem to adequately comprehend the archetypal basis of astrological correlations. In sum, the trouble, it seems to me, lies not with Tarnas’s work, but with Heron’s interpretation of it.

## **B.3 The issue of indeterminacy and unpredictability**

Perhaps the most interesting theoretical questions raised in Heron’s commentary concern the nature of participatory consciousness and its relationship to the archetypal dimension of reality, which he sets forth in the four subdivisions of B.3. I cannot hope to satisfactorily address this complex topic here, but I will comment briefly on what seems to me to be a further misconception of archetypal astrology in Heron’s critique.

Tarnas’s assertion that “a fundamental recognition of indeterminacy and unpredictability is the bedrock of the entire perspective articulated here” is deemed by Heron to be fallacious. He argues that Tarnas is actually promoting the view that human experience is inherently predictable and predetermined, governed by what Heron calls a “synchronous archetypal mechanism” that operates according to “cosmic clockwork.” Heron then poses the following question, which he sees as fundamental to the entire debate:

Is our primary co-creative access to psychocosmic patterns restricted to the natal aspects and endless multiple transits of the solar system clock? If the answer is affirmative, then this primary access of ours is predetermined and predictable to a very high degree indeed. The only thing that

is indeterminate is the concrete outworking of the predetermined psychocosmic synchronicity.

There are several points one might take issue with in this section, but the main thing to keep in mind in this: To recognise the archetypal determinants behind human experience does not mean that human experience is predetermined. To say that human experience is conditioned by a set of archetypal factors that correlate with the planetary movements is in no way a constraint on human freedom because this freedom manifests at the level of enactment, not at the level of archetypal determination.

Human experience can be radically indeterminate and unpredictable at the level of concrete manifestation—the level at which human freedom of will can be exercised—and yet this indeterminacy occurs within an a priori thematic framework. The creative tension between this underlying thematic patterning and indeterminacy is the very essence of the relationship between universals and particulars. Human freedom of will is embedded within a background context of foundational but multivalent archetypal meanings. This archetypal context does not limit human freedom of choice, because this freedom is itself an archetypal pre-condition of human experience. That is to say, the impulse to be free, creative, and inventive is itself archetypal. Human freedom is not compromised by the archetypal perspective; it is based upon it.

Heron's choice of words in this section of his critique betrays what seems to me to be an erroneous understanding of the relationship between human conscious experience and the archetypal dimension of reality; it reflects what Jorge Ferrer has called subtle Cartesianism. When Heron describes "human co-creative access to certain patterns of archetypes" this seems to imply that the "co-creative" human is a separate entity that accesses archetypes outside of itself, when in fact the nature of the human subject is itself constituted by these archetypal dynamics. It is not that there is a separate human subject who participates with archetypal factors external to itself; rather, the consciousness of the participating human is already shaped by the archetypal factors with which it participates. Participation goes both ways. And when Heron writes of being able to "engage your creativity with this, that or the other predetermined configuration of archetypes," this reflects the inherent subtle anthropocentrism of his position: From an archetypal perspective, creativity is not owned by the individual human being ("your creativity"); rather, the human being partakes in the universe's creativity. Creativity is archetypally grounded. Archetypes do not have to be intentionally "accessed"; they are being lived by each of us at every moment of experience, whether consciously or unconsciously. To know about transits is to become more aware of how human subjective consciousness is partaking in the universe's archetypal dynamics.

### **Full or partial co-creativity?**

Heron ends his critique by questioning what constitutes full participatory co-creativity. He argues that because human conscious “access” to archetypes is “predefined” in accordance with planetary transits then this imposes a limitation on human intentional freedom. Tarnas, Heron concludes, offers only a partial, restricted, and predetermined form of co-creative participation.

However, Heron’s conception of full co-creative participation is limited if it does not recognise that the autonomy of the individual ego is supported and defined by the unconscious archetypal preconditions in which human life is inextricably embedded. Full participation is not the freedom to impose one’s own intentional creativity on archetypal factors external to oneself. Rather, it consists in making conscious the set of archetypal dynamics that constitute one’s very being, that are shaping one’s life experience. The realisation of true human freedom and autonomy depends upon making the archetypal dynamics conscious such that one is no longer unconsciously lived by them, but rather consciously participates in their expression. This is fundamental to the process of psycho-spiritual transformation that Jung called individuation. A deep engagement with archetypal astrology can further this transformation process. Knowing how one is related to the planets at a particular time enables one to better understand the archetypal dynamics that are prominent in shaping one’s experience at that time.

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