Enchantment and Disenchantment

Nick Campion

The theory:
It is argued that, in the 16th-18th centuries, under the combined impact of the protestant reformation and the scientific revolution, northern Europe (inevitably we have to talk mainly about Britain, where the impact of the scientific revolution was most intense) became 'disenchanted' (lost its sense of magic (a word which comes with its own variety of definitions), myth and wonder), in a process which can also be known as 'secularisation'. This was a very long historical process, it is argued, but it was speeded up in the 16th-18th centuries. Supporters of this theory then identify certain apparent late 19th-20th c phenomena (note my caution in the use of the world 'apparent') such as the 'occult revival', 'New Age movement', 'spiritual revolution' and growth in popularity of astrology, as evidence of a desire for re-enchantment and the need to re-endow an otherwise dead, materialistic universe with magic, myth and meaning.

Relevance: Enchantment and Astrology
Michael Hill suggested that astrology's popularity in the 1960s and 70s may have represented an attempt to restore the sacred.[1] The argument has been developed by Patrick Curry and Roy Willis in terms of astrology as a desire for re-enchantment.[2]

The Historical Theory
The theory of 'disenchantment', was developed by the sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber was an anti-Marxist, rejecting the notion that economic determinants played the primary role in the development of ideas (the historian R.H. Tawny had argued that the Protestant Reformation served economic instead of religious forces, and its function was to encourage the development of capitalism). Instead, Weber argued that ideas shaped the economy. This was his historical account and description of disenchantment:

> The increasing intellectualization and rationalisation do *not*, therefore, indicate an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives.
>
> It means something else, namely, the knowledge or belief that if one but wished one could learn it any time. Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed.

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1 Hill, Michael, *A Sociology of Religion*, London: Heinemann 1979, p. 247.

2 Curry, Patrick and Roy Willis, *Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon*, Oxford: Berg, 2004.

> Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means.[3]

Friedrich Schiller's phrase, *die Entgötterung der Natur*, the 'disgodding of nature' refered to what he saw as the 'progressive removal of mind, or spirit, from phenomenal appearances', the world we experience through our senses.[4] In 1918 Weber adapted the phrase as *die Entzauberung der Welt* ('the disenchantment of the world') to describe the spiritual plight of humanity in the modern era, using it as a leitmotif for cultural discontent: "The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.'"[5]

A number of modern historians and sociologists have followed Weber's model, in which the European west was 'disenchanted' in the 16th-17th centuries by the twin developments of the Protestant Reformation and the scientific revolution. This leads into a standard (and recently questioned) theory of history in which the 18th century was then the 'Age of Reason' and the 19th was uniquely materialistic. It is then assumed that 'superstition' died out, that, if esoteric ideas continued then this was an anachronism, and that the apparent flourishing of occultism in the 18th c should be known as a 'counter-enlightenment), late 19th c occultism was a 'revival' and the 20th c boom in 'New Age' ideas must be a 'reaction' against 'disenchantment'.

Almost every new catalogue of academic books brings a new title containing the word enchantment.[6]

It's a historical theory which may be criticised on several grounds.

- It assumes that the Protestant religious world became disenchanted by the loss of angels and saints, whereas (1) demons flourished and (2) Protestant evangelicals specialize in creating ecstatic states of mind – are these enchanted?
- There is little evidence to suggest that anyone apart from conventionally educated white men were adherents of the 'Age of Reason'.
- There is strong evidence of continuity in 'esotericism' and 'occultism'.
- Can rationalisation/intellectualization science be enchanting?

Some argue that quantitative research generates a disenchanted view of the world:

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3 Weber, Max, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Garth and C. Mills Wright, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1947, p. 139.

4 Berman, Morris, *The Reenchantment of the World*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991. p.69.

5 Weber, Max. 'Wissenschaft als Beruf,' ('Science as a Vocation') in *Gesammlte Aufsaetze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, Tubingen, 1922, pp. 524-55. Originally a speech given at Munich University, 1918, published in 19l9 by Duncker & Humblodt, Munich.

6 As an example: Taylor, Philip, *Modernity and Re-enchantment: Religion in Post-Revolutionary Vietnam*, The Jewish Publication Society 2007.

Braud and Anderson argued that conventional approaches to research in a wide range of fields are

> incomplete, contain unnecessary biases, are unsatisfactory for addressing complex human actions and experiences..[they]..yield a picture of the world, and of human nature and human possibility, that is narrow, constrained, fragmented, **disenchanted**, and deprived of meaning and value.[7]

Enchantment as a State of Mind

To be enchanted, traditionally, is to be under a spell cast by a supernatural being or person using the supernatural.

Alkis Kontis, in describing disenchantment as an anthropological-historical process as well as metaphor, has restated Weber's assertion that it is the '*spiritual* dimension of the world' which has been lost in the rationalising process of disenchantment.[8]

Oxford Concise Dictionary: 'Bewitch, charm, delight…(*cantare* sing…).
Sing – French – chanter.

A powerful definition was given by J.R.R. Tolkein

> Now, though I have touched (wholly inadequately) on elves and fairies, I must turn back; for I have digressed from my proper theme: fairy stories. I said 'stories about fairies' was too narrow. It is too narrow, even if we reject the diminutive size, for fairy stories are not normal English usage stories about fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. *Faërie* contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted… *Faërie* itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic – but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the farthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific magician.[9]

(C.S. Lewis was close friends with Tolkein. Tolkein was a committed Roman Catholic but kept all religion out of Lord of the Rings because he didn't want to alienate his readers.)

Note Tolkein's dismissive definition of magic as an inferior phenomenon.

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7 Braud, William and Rosemarie Anderson, *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (London: Sage Publications, 1998) p.6

8 Alkis Kontis p 225.

9 Tolkein, J.R.R., *Tree and Leaf*, London: Unwin 1964, pp. 15-16.

Susan Greenwood, the sociologist of religion, took a view in which magic generates enchantment

> Magic, to the outsider's eye, is concerned with mystery and beguilement; it is the stuff of enchantment, popularized and synthesized by the films of Disney and synonymous with fantasy and dreams. Real life magicians take on some of the popular image of magic, and many weave them into magical personas that are associated with other worldly power. However underneath the glitter and glamour of magic there is another more serious process of psycho spiritual transformation. Magicians' identities are formed from their relationship with the other world and part of the practice of magic as a spiritual path requires learning how to channel the forces of the cosmos.[10]

Characteristics of Enchantment, as derived by Patrick Curry from Weber and Tolkein

- 'Magic', but not the same as operational magic.
- Concrete Magic – both spiritual and material, mysterious and precise (as opposed to instrumental magic in which one is actively trying to influence the world, in concrete magic once experiences the world as magical)
- Expression of wonder. Making wonder real. Through wonder it can lead to wisdom but is non-utilitarian – it has no practical use or function. 'Glamour', as opposed to enchantment, is used in advertising of entertainment: one can find one's self in the advertisement/film, and therefore apparently enchanted, but one is really being manipulated.
- It can be created by an artist: the artist may only say 'I was writing a nice story', but nevertheless has made possible the conditions within which enchantment can happen
- It is spontaneous, like falling in love, or mystical/peak experience. One can't set out to make it happen.
- You can't live in an enchanted state for long – it is short lived.
- It may be inspired by erotic love, humour, art, divination
- It is participatory: to find one's self in a song (see Levy Bruhl)

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10 Greenwood, Susan, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthropology*, Oxford: Berg 2000, p. 2.

- It is pluralist: unbounded, open-ended, ongoing, and without adherence to a single truth.

I would distinguish Weber's historical thesis from Tolkein's identification of a state of being. To identify the latter as a real state of being is not necessarily to agree with the former.

Critiques of this theory

Of enchantment as a state of mind:

Can we really examine people's totally internal states of mind and say that one is enchanted and the other is not?
Is Weber wrong to say that an intellectual cannot enter a state of enchantments as a result of rational inquiry, or a scientist by looking through a telescope or a microscope?

Of enchantment as a historical theory

Was Weber wrong to say that enchantment gave way to rationalisation?

The immediate background to Tolkein is in the romantic novels of Sir Walter Scott (see separate notes).

Notable articles:

Hanegraaff, Wouter J., 'How magic survived the disenchantment of the world', *Religion*, 2003, Vol. 33 pp 357-380.
Abstract
This article argues that the process described by Max Weber as the 'disenchantment of the world' is compatible with the continued vitality of 'the occult' in contemporary western culture. Focusing on the example of 'hermetic' magical traditions in western culture before and after the pivotal period of the Enlightenment, the article analyses the relation between continuity and change in the development of these traditions from three angles: their *theories* of magical efficacy, the nature of their *practices* and the ways in which magicians seek to *legitimate* magic to the wider society as well as to themselves. The discussion demonstrates that the transformation of magic under the impact of modernization and secularization resulted in the paradoxical phenomenon of a 'disenchanted magic'. The article concludes by proposing a theory that explains why it is actually quite natural for magic to have survived the disenchantment of the world.

Darwin Loves You:
Natural Selection and the Re-enchantment of the World
George Levine

To read the entire book description or a sample chapter, please visit: http://pup.princeton.edu/titles/8256.html

Jesus and Darwin do battle on car bumpers across America. Medallions of fish symbolizing Jesus are answered by ones of amphibians stamped "Darwin," and stickers proclaiming "Jesus Loves You" are countered by "Darwin Loves You." The bumper sticker debate might be trivial and the pronouncement that "Darwin Loves You" may seem merely ironic, but George Levine insists that the message contains an unintended truth. In fact, he argues, we can read it straight. Darwin, Levine shows, saw a world from which his theory had banished transcendence as still lovable and **enchanted,** and we can see it like that too--if we look at his writings and life in a new way.

http://www.maxweberstudies.org/abs1.1/abs-1.htmAbstracts

Max Weber Studies Vol. 1 No. 1 (November 2000): 11-32

Disenchantment, Enchantment and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at the Millennium

Richard Jenkins

Without wishing to deny the historical reality of processes of disenchantment, this paper challenges the classic Weberian account of disenchantment as a uni-directional and universalizing tendency of modernity. This argument has a number of stages. (1) Reason and rationalization are distinguished from each other. (2) The historical relationships between modernity, Reason and rationalization are problematized. (3) The scale and scope of rationalization are questioned (it is partial and unsuccessful, almost by definition). (4) Secularization and the 'decline of magic' are distinguished from each other. (5) Enchantment and re-enchantment are placed at the heart of modernity. Enchantment and re-enchantment are both distinctively modern and a response to modernity. While disenchantment has been a stimulus to (re)enchantment, enchantment may generate its own disenchantments. The two are opposite sides of one coin. This argument is exemplified by a brief look at the contradictions, alarms and damp squibs of the recent Millennium.

Keywords: Weber, disenchantment, enchantment, rationalization, modernity, Millennium

And some discussions:

Cosmos & Psyche: Intimations of a New World View, New York: Penguin 2006

Richard Tarnas
Reviewed by Garry Phillipson
http://www.skyscript.co.uk/rev_cosmos.html
accessed 26 June 2006

Tarnas is clearly on a mission with this book, and a wholly admirable mission at that. He argues that, although many things have been gained from the modern view of the world as meaningless and inert, there has been a heavy price to pay:

'In Max Weber's famous term at the beginning of the twentieth century… the modern world is "disenchanted" (entzaubert): It has been voided of any spiritual, symbolic, or expressive dimension that provides a cosmic order in which human existence finds its ground of meaning and purpose. (p.20)'

This disenchantment is not, he suggests, the result of facing up to the reality of things. Rather it comes about because humanity has painted itself into a philosophical corner, and the times demand that we now take the leap needed to get ourselves out of it:

'One need not be graced with prophetic insight to recognise that we are living in one of those rare ages, like the end of classical antiquity or the beginning of the modern era, that brings forth, under great stress and struggle, a genuinely fundamental transformation in the underlying assumptions and principles of the cultural world view. (p.xiii)'

Tarnas contends that astrology, if it is correctly understood, has the potential to bring about the transformation that the times demand: to show that the universe is not in fact lifeless and meaningless, but that rather it is profoundly meaningful. He is, as I said, a man on a mission.

Campion, Nicholas, *Cosmos: A Cultural History of Astrology*, London: London and Hambledon 1997, draft ch. 19

The attempt to establish whether what James Webb called the 'Occult Underground' ran counter to modernism or was part and parcel of it is clearly impossible, for the lines which separate one cultural fashion from another are blurred, constantly shifting and, often misleading. Clearly Blake, Blavatsky, Leo and Papus all believed that the present worlds had fulfilled its usefulness and should be swept away by the future. Astrologers such as Zadkiel had a fascination with modern science and scientists such as the founders of the Society for Psychical Research set out to find evidence for life after death. Yet, the nostalgic search for a lost wisdom in astrology, Kabbalah and Hermeticism can only be read as a result of a profound distaste for materialism. The truth is that modernity, in the sense of a historical period characterised by materialist science and mass industrialisation has to be seen as distinct from modernism, the belief that a new

and better future must replace a corrupt and oppressive present. Modernism is a millenarian ideology which preaches liberation from modernity. The modernist future is fantastical, full of cities in the air and machines which think. But it can also have a high regard for the pre-modern. In 1908 the influential art critic Wilhelm Worringer (1881-1965) spoke of the 'spiritual dread of space' felt by primitive people 'in relation to the extended, disconnected, bewildering world of phenomena'.[11] Aware of the illusory nature of material reality, the art they created, he believed, was perfect, abstract and uniquely capable of inducing tranquillity and happiness. They lived in what Tolkein, writing in 1938, called a world of *Faërie*, or enchantment. *Faërie*, he said is magic, but not the magic of the instrumental magician or scientist, setting out with a box of tricks to control the world. It is the magic that is of a state of mind in which the individual is completely at one with a world which is glowing and alive.[12] This was the state to which so many astrologers aspired, from Sibly to Leo and the Golden Dawn. When we have put aside the mechanical cosmos of Worsdale and Comte, astrology becomes less a matter of prediction or even of knowledge, then of personal union with the One. It was, to be sure, a reaction to the disenchantment induced by the dead universe of materialist science and the grim, unrelenting horrors of industrial society, a rejection of modernity which was itself the very basis of modernism.[13] This was not, as some have claimed, escapism, or a flight from reality.[14] Quite the reverse, it was a desire to overcome the alienation from nature, to return to Eden, to attain a state of enchantment and meet reality head-on.

Ferlat, Anne, 'Pagan Movements in Russia: Postmodern Invention or Return to Tradition? A Comparison with Western Pagan Movements', PhD Thesis, University of the West of England, 2008.

pp. 13-14

"I suggest, in other words, that the phenomena described collectively as 'postmodernity' are not symptoms of systemic deficiency or disease; neither are they a temporary aberration with a life-span limited by the time required to

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11 Worringer, Wilhelm, 'From Abstraction and Empathy', in Kolocotroni, Vassiliki, Jane Goldman and Olga Taxidou, Modernism: an Anthology of Sources and Documents, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2004, p. 74.

12 Tolkein, J.R.R., *Tree and Leaf*, London: Unwin 1964, pp. 15-16.

13 Weber, Max, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Garth and C. Mills Wright, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1947, p. 139. See also the discussion in Curry, Patrick and Roy Willis, *Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon*, Oxford: Berg, 2004, Owen, Alex, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2004, and Katz, David, *The Occult Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, London: Jonathan Cape 2005, pp. 110-136.

14 Porter, Roy and Mikuláš Teich, *Fin de siècle and its legacy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, pp. 222-3.

rebuild the structures of cultural authority. I suggest instead that postmodernity (or whatever other name will be eventually chosen to take hold of the phenomena it denotes) is an aspect of a fully-fledged, viable social system which has come to replace the 'classical' modern, capitalist society and thus needs to be theorised according to its own logic**." The author speaks of re-enchanting the world: "All in all, postmodernity can be seen as restoring to the world what modernity, presumptuously, had taken away; as a *re-enchantment* of the world that modernity tried hard to *dis-enchant*" (Baumann, 1991: 3).**

pp. 7-8

Western societies are marked by egalitarianism and horizontality, without ideals or axis. People, who have no ideals, believe in nothing. For example, in social or political movements, there used to be strongly commitment (Giddens, 1990: 157). People's participation corresponded to values that they sought to defend. There were also leaders able to inspire others to great causes. Baudrillard also sees this ephemeralty when he speaks of the death of politics (1981: 44). According Jean-François Lyotard (1979: 30), the aim of life is now up to each individual's own private judgment. The great narratives have broken down (Lyotard, 1979:31). Knowledge is no longer legitimised by great narratives: "small narratives" have replaced them in the public imagination. This means, for example, that the legitimisation process by which the legislator promulgates law is no longer founded upon all-encompassing narratives, that is, on socially foundational philosophies. The situation might be equated with the loss of a sense of grandeur, with a loss of great dreams in exchange for the present, but not a present to which something stronger than itself is inherent. Along the same line of thinking, Lyotard deplores that universities only confer skills but have stopped being "life models" (1979: 79). There is no more *fundamentum absolutum et inconcussum*, according to Giani Vattimo's expression (1990:59). For Vattimo (1991: 19), this marks the end of history: "in my hypothesis, modernity ends when, for several reasons, it is impossible to speak of history as an Unitarian phenomenon. Such a vision of history implies the existence of a centre around which events gather and organise themselves". Bauman (1991: 89) claims: "In short, to cut the present off at both ends, to sever the present from history, to abolish time in any other form but of a loose assembly, or an arbitrary sequence, of present moments; to flatten the flow of time into a *continuous present*."

Bauman's flattened world of continuous presence is a disenchanted world. The fault is placed on modernity with its stated mission to free the world from magic and mystery. Rather than reason being the instrument to liberate man, it has instead resulted in depriving world of soul. Man has become one instrument, and nature another (Bauman, 1991: 4). This is the reign of chaos, in which people demand rights but accept no responsibilities for them. The net result is the dissolution and the dismantling of institutions which, during the modern era, were expected to elevate human beings into a state of perfection. According to Bauman (2003: 287), surrendering ideals is the ultimate act of liberation.

Astronomy and Enchantment

The following is an extract from the forthcoming paper Campion, Nicholas, 'Astronomy and Enchantment', paper delivered at the Sixth Conference on the Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena (INSAP VI), forthcoming September 2009.

> The enchanting experience of the sky is evidence in the pages of any newsstand astronomy magazine, and the volume of astronomy books which are either devoted to images of the sky, or dominated by them. Jerry Bonnell, astrophysicist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre explained the fascination in the May 2007 issue of *Sky and Telescope.*
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> > 'I marvelled at the image's detail and sense of depth and listened to him describe his planned, patient, and methodical approach to producing it. I later learned of Gendler's imaging philosophy and motivation…In his own words, "For me the driving force is to make images that the viewer can explore and enjoy over a long period of time. A great image is one that stimulates the imagination not just for a moment but possibly a lifetime…The writing is informative and engaging, but the images will likely have you reliving a *Year in the Life of the Universe* for many years to come'[15]
>
> There were three book reviews on the facing page. One, on telescopes represented the dominant discourse amongst astronomer, discussion of the technical tools of the trade, form pencil, paper and slide rules' to 'digital cameras and computers'.[16] The review of three handbooks by Apogee books noted the number of colour photographs, but without further comment. But the third review returned to the enchanting theme, though discreetly; constellations and clinically names 'observing targets' are described as 'celestial wonders'.[17] The following article was a double-page spread on the recent Mercury transit by David Levy. Could, Levy, asked, a Mercury transit compare with that 'experience to be treasured', a solar eclipse.[18] For the most part Levy was concerned with the technical set-up and apparatus but between the anecodotal recollection and factual discussion he revealed his motivation: 'I was filled with a sense of the solar system in motion…

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15 Bonnell, Jerry, 'Images for All Time', review of Robert Gendler, *A Year in the Life of the Universe: a Seasonal Guide to Viewing the Cosmos*, Voyageur Press 2006, *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, p. 82.

16 Goldman, Stuart, review of Michael K. Gainer, *Real Astronomy with Small Telescopes: Step by Step Activities for Discovery*, Springer 2007, *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, p. 83.

17 Goldman, Stuart, review of Ken Hewitt-White, *Patterns in the Sky: An Introduction to Stargazing, Sky* Publishing 2006, *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, p. 83.

18 Levy, David H., 'Our Memorable Mercury Transit', *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, p. 84.

Instead of watching Mercury meander across a silent backdrop, we watched it move gracefully from one solar feature to another…the closest planet to the Sun is capable of putting up a marvellous show'.[19] The technology itself facilitates the enchanted experience:

> Just after noon we took our observing positions. My wife Wendee, was at the eyepiece of the hydrogen alpha scope, while I was viewing in "white light" with a telescope equipped with conventional solar filter. Suddenly Wendee called out that she saw a little nick in the Sun's edge not far from a big sunspot. I couldn't see the tiny planet, but as Wendee described the widening intrusion, I realised that she as seeing Mercury against the Sun's chromosophere, which is clearly visible in hydrogen alpha light and extends beyond the Sun's white-light limb. About a minute later I saw mercury's first contact with the Sun's photosphere the surface visible in while light,. Experiencing that double entry was an adventure we couldn't have enjoyed before the development of hydrogen alpha filters.[20]

Levy's excitement is apparent behind his mundane discussion of the Sun's physical composition. This is enchantment, but not within the confines defined by Weber envisioned it. The experience has not been wiped out by technology. Similarly challenging for Weber is the relationship between mathematics and enchantment. Levy's observing group included Eli Maor, author of the 2006 Princeton University Press publication, *Venus in Transit*. Maor's presence added to Levy's sense that 'this would be a special day'.[21] Maor, Levy tells us, 'is as interested in how the mathematics of the solar system allow such rare events as he is moved by the physical beauty of them'.[22] It's not Weber's identification of enchantment as an experience of identity with the cosmos that is it issue here, but his contention that the experience is *necessarily* antithetical to technology and measurement. To make this condition is to deny the evidence that technology can be enchanting, or an aid to enchantment. It is to elevate technology to the position of some spirit-denying role. To dismiss experiences obtained with the aid of technology as not genuine enchantment is to adopt a position as elitist and dogmatic as that which, in the opposite direction denies the reality of experiences of the paranomormal.

Enchantment and Astrology

The following is from an early draft of Nick's PhD

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19 Levy, David H., 'Our Memorable Mercury Transit', *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, pp. 84-5.

20 Levy, David H., 'Our Memorable Mercury Transit', *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, pp. 84-5.

21 Levy, David H., 'Our Memorable Mercury Transit', *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, p. 84.

22 Levy, David H., 'Our Memorable Mercury Transit', *Sky and Telescope*, May 2007, p. 85.

Meaning

According to Mircea Eliade (1976: 61)

> the discovery that your life is related to astral phenomena does confer a new meaning on your existence. You are no longer merely the anonymous individual described by Heidegger and Sartre, a stranger thrown into an absurd and meaningless world, condemned to be free, as Sartre used to say, with a freedom confined to your situation and conditioned by your historical moment. Rather, the horoscope reveals to you a new dignity: it shows how intimately you are related to the entire universe. It is true that your life is determined by the movements of the stars, but at least this determinant has an incomparable grandeur.

Michael Hill (2000: 247) cites a quite from a newspaper article that the function of astrology is 'to keep the world sacred'.[23] James R. Lewis (1990: ??) summarised the problem: 'To understand the attraction of astrology and astrology's world view for the typical citizen of an industrialized society, one has to see that, even for many "believers", ordinary, everyday life - the world as it is experienced on a day-to-day basis - appears to be empty of significance'. As astrological columnist Neil Spencer (2000: 245) wrote, 'For astrology's many followers, the approval of physics ultimately doesn't matter. For all the tremendous successes and insights of physics, biology and the other branches of science, they remain unable to supply the answer to the questions that hang over numerous heads: "What am I doing here? What is my life for?"'.

Yet the reality can be mundane, as Gerald Pitchforth, who practiced continuously from the 1930s until the present day, stated in respect of his experiences in the 1930s, 'astrology gave clues that you got nowhere else, it told you things that you knew nothing about' (Akhtar and Humphries 1999: 112).

In this sense, Dane Rudhyar's formulation was pragmatic. While he conceded the appeal of an astrology presented in a technical, scientific manner (1970: ix-x), he regarded astrology's current popularity rested on a profound need for self-understanding, to provide a means to 'assist individuals in the solution of the personal and inter-personal problems, and especially in actualising more fully their birth potential' (1970: xi). Young people in the 1960s and 70s, he argued, 'hope to find in astrology but only answers to their poignant personal problems but even more some sort of inner security' (1970: ix). He continues,

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[23] Driver, Christopher, 'Bibles and bazookas', *The Guardian*, 17 May 1969.

> Many of them, having broken away from their family traditions and refusing to participate in a culture increasingly dominated by a de-humanised and de-natured approach to knowledge, to social organisation, and to interpersonal relationships, long to discover their place and function in a more-than-human , universal or cosmic order. They want to know where they "belong", what they "really are" when the ego games are played out.

This function of astrology, to provide a sense of meaning and to connect humanity with the divine, particularly in the context of the current historical crisis, is the foundation of contemporary psychological astrology, especially when it is closely linked to psycho-analysis, psychotherapy or counselling (Sasportas 1989a: 3). 'Meaning', wrote Greene and Sasportas (1987: xi-xiii), 'is essential for life'. When life is devoid of meaning they add, the very psychological problems may develop which are typically those which prompt clients to visit astrologers. There in such statements, born of the evolutionary spirituality of theosophy , a profound parallel with contemporary evolutionary psychology. Stephen Pinker, perhaps the most prominent evolutionary psychologist, regards 'meaning' as an essential human attribute, an argument he developed extensively in *How the Mind Works* (1997: 24-5, 329-30). In an interview in 1999 he claimed that 'We have meaning and purpose here inside our heads, being the organisms that we are. We have brains that make it impossible for us to live our lives except in terms of meaning and purpose' (Douglas 1999: 6). Krupp (2000: 43-4) argued that the attribution of meaning and order on to the heavens originated as a survival tool.

Thus, when Jane Ridder-Patrick (2000d) stated that, 'If I have any belief in relation to astrology it is that life is meaningful and purposeful, and that astrology has a part to play in illuminating this meaning and purpose', she may be pointing to astrology's satisfaction of a need which is essentially and unavoidably human. For Stephen Arroyo (1975: xv-xvi), this was the key to astrology's contemporary popularity:

> I have often been asked why astrology has witnessed such renewed popularity in recent years. I think part of the answer lies in the fact that Western culture no longer has any viable mythology to sustain it. Myth always serves as a vitalizing force in any culture by showing man's relationship to as larger, more universal reality. People have always needed a pattern of order to guide their collective lives and to infuse their individual experience with meaning. In this sense astrology comprises within itself an entire mythological framework.