

**Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions**  
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**Chapter 2**

**Astrology: The Celestial Mirror**

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*Whatever is born or done at this particular moment of time has the quality of this moment of time.*<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental premise of astrology is reflective: that the earth is a mirror of heaven, in the sense of the celestial realms, and vice versa. This is also a core tenet of cosmology across the ancient and medieval worlds. As Xiaochun Sun put it, in China, 'The universe was conceived not as an object independent of man, but as a counterpart of and mirror of human society'.<sup>2</sup> Trudy Griffin Pierce, writing of native North American cosmology, talked of a 'patterned mirroring' between sky and earth.<sup>3</sup> The classic statement of this interdependence is found in the Islamic text known as the *Tabula Smaragdina*, or *Emerald Tablet*, which was probably written in the Middle East about the year 800, and contains sentiments which would be as familiar in China, as much as India, Europe, Africa and the Americas. The Tablet's opening words, 'That which is above is from that which is below, and that which is below is from that which is above, working the miracles of one, as all things were from one', are cited to this day as a rationale for astrology in the simplified form 'as above, so below' - as in the sky so on earth.<sup>4</sup> A popular series of astrology books in the 1970s were even marketed under this title.<sup>5</sup> In ideal terms, earth and heaven reflect each other. In real terms, though, the two may be out of step and both sky and earth are subject to unpredictable events, which once included comets, shooting stars and eclipses above (although eclipses occur in

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<sup>1</sup> C.G. Jung, 'Richard Wilhelm: In Memoriam', in *The Spirit in Man, Art, And Literature*, Collected works, Vol. 15, trans. R.F.C. Hull, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 53-62; see the frontispiece of Margaret Hone's influential, *The Modern Textbook of Astrology*, (London: L.N. Fowler, fourth edition reprinted 1973, [1951]) for an example of the use of Jung's phrase.

<sup>2</sup> Xiaochun Sun, 'Crossing the Boundaries between Heaven and Man: Astronomy in Ancient China', in Helaine Selin (ed.), *Astronomy Across Cultures: the History of Non-Western Astronomy*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 425.

<sup>3</sup> Trudy Griffin-Pierce, *Earth Is My Mother, Sky Is My Father: Space, Time and Astronomy in Navajo Sandpainting*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Roob, *Alchemy and Mysticism*, (London, New York and Cologne: Taschen, 1997), pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Oken, *As Above, So Below: A primary guide to astrological awareness*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1973).

patterns which are predictable, given sufficient observational data) and human wilfulness below. In the modern world, thanks to astronomy, most astrology is based almost entirely on predictable celestial patterns. The function of astrology, from anthropomorphised celestial myths and the rules of horoscope interpretation, calendar rituals and magical intervention, is to keep the respective images and their reflections on earth and sky as synchronised as possible. If this enterprise is successful then political stability and economic prosperity are maintained. Failure, by contrast, results in social collapse, financial disintegration, foreign invasion or, in the modern west, personal crisis.

There are few reliable scholarly books on astrology, as most discussions of the subject are distorted by either an overly hostile or uncritically sympathetic perspective. Roy Willis' and Patrick Curry's *Astrology, Science and Culture* is a rare attempt to consider modern astrology from an anthropological and philosophical perspective.<sup>6</sup> Lynn Thorndike's eight-volume *History of Magic and Experimental Science* remains the starting point for histories of western astrology from the late classical period to the seventeenth century and my own two-volume *History of Western Astrology* extends the story back to prehistoric origins and forward to the present day.<sup>7</sup> There is an abundance of primary material from which the technical fabric and interpretative processes of both western and Indian astrology can be learnt. Margaret Hone's *Modern Text Book of Astrology* is a sound guide to the basic calculation and reading of birth charts in the modern western style, and a good basis for going on to explore other applications of astrology, as well as traditional practices.<sup>8</sup> There is no single equivalent for Indian astrology, although B.V. Raman's collected works could provide a similar function. Derek Walters' *Chinese Astrology* is the only general introduction to the Chinese art in English translation, while the Mexican astrology of the Maya and Aztecs is awaiting a suitable treatment.<sup>9</sup>

There are two kinds of astronomical phenomena. First is the ordered and predictable, observed in the periodicities of the sun, moon and stars and expressed through calendars and their attendant rituals and the form of astrology which developed in Mexico, China and the Hellenistic world, the latter of which became the basis of Indian and western astrology. Second is the exceptional and unpredictable as manifest in the changing appearance of the sky and celestial bodies (such as whether the moon is

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<sup>6</sup> Roy Willis and Patrick Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 Vols., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923–58); Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology*, 2 Vols, (London, Continuum, 2008–9).

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Hone, *The Modern Textbook of Astrology*, (London: L.N. Fowler, fourth edition reprinted 1973, [1951]).

<sup>9</sup> Derek Walters, *Chinese Astrology: Interpreting the revelations of the Celestial Messages*, (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1987).

surrounded by a halo, shooting stars and thunder and lightning (which occur in the sky and so were included as celestial omens in many societies), as well as another class of phenomena such as eclipses and planetary motions, which were originally thought to be random but were later found to be ordered and predictable. In many cultures order was evidence of the cosmos' benevolent nature and the close attention to calendar rituals was required to maintain the protection bequeathed by this order through the benign flow of the seasons, and hence of survival. Disorder was evidence of a supernatural threat, against which astrological prediction, magic and prophylactic rituals might be employed. In Hellenistic astrology, and its Indian and western descendants, unpredictability was gradually removed from the astrological cannon, and no modern astrologer pays any attention to meteor showers and the clarity of the moon: order and predictability in the raw data of the astrologers toolbox are everything.

This all takes us to the question, to which there is no more certain answer than to that about religion: what is astrology? Here again, inclusive definitions serve us best. Narrowly, astrology has often been defined as a peculiarly Hellenistic practice, combining the use of horoscopes (mathematical constructs intended to represent the heavens and used to gain insight into past, present and future), with an Aristotelian theory of celestial influence. This view, which pervades the historiography on the topic, is only now being abandoned by younger scholars on the grounds that it rules out some varieties of practice (such as an astrology based on signs - omens revealed in celestial patterns) and denies the practice of astrology to any other culture, which lacks a theory of influence. It's not the mechanics which define astrology, but the practice. An inclusive, suitably broad, though by no means final, definition of astrology is this: the search for meaning or significance in celestial events and an assumption of their importance for affairs on earth. To this we may add the resulting traditions of practice. The varieties of astrology in the classical world give us some idea of its diversity.<sup>10</sup> It could be rationalised through theories of celestial influence, divine warnings, sympathies or correspondences (in which celestial bodies had sympathy with, or corresponded to, animals, people, plants and minerals through their essential natures), or correlations, in which terrestrial and celestial events were connected purely because they occurred at the same time, what C.G. Jung was to term acausal synchronicity. (The concept of astrology as a matter of influences or effects in which object a impacts on object b as an independent agent is unknown until the twentieth century, and remains a minority view.) As a complex system of interlocking correspondences, this scheme, in which essence of everything we can see, touch or imagine is connected by a web of Stoic 'sympathies' or 'correspondences', was named by Arthur Lovejoy, the Great Chain of Being.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology*, Vol. 1, The Ancient World, (London: Continuum, 2009), esp. chaps. 4, 13.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, (Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1936).

Astrology might be used to analyse personal destiny, assess the soul's chances of salvation, cast magical spells, apply celestial myths to everyday problems, shed new light on history, find lost objects, predict the outcome of a battle or find the most auspicious time to launch a new enterprise, perform a ritual act or construct a sacred calendar. It could be more or less deterministic, but invariably required active human participation. If the sky is a dramatic stage set for telling stories about human affairs and the passage of the year, then the cosmos requires active participation by human beings as actors in the drama, an expression of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *participation mystique*, if we can maintain the concept of deep and active engagement with the cosmos while rejecting Lévy-Bruhl's view of it as primitive.<sup>12</sup> Every form of astrology begins by assuming a level of fatedness, in which human beings assume a lack of control over their lives, but then set out to create choice, to negotiate with nature, to enter into a dialogue with time. Such negotiation may take the form of magic, prayer or ritual or, in the modern world counselling or therapy in order to achieve the ancient classical goal of self-awareness.

From the inclusive perspective, there is no culture which does not have an astrology. The name, itself, though is often a problem, encumbered as it is by the anti-astrology rhetoric of the scientific Enlightenment. Various solutions have been proposed to this problem. Edgar Laird suggested the term 'Star Study', Roger Beck 'Star Talk'.<sup>13</sup> We might also use Ed Krupp's term, 'Sky Tales'.<sup>14</sup> I have suggested Star Stories, which can include the stories Stars tell about humanity as much as the ones which people tell about the stars. Astrology is fundamentally a narrative, a discourse. It has its believers in the literal truth, and in the objectivity of its truth-claims, but it still functions as a conversation, its participants being people – astrologers and their clients – and the cosmos – time, eternity, pattern, rhythm, and fate in its many forms. As a language astrology speaks in symbols. It relies on metonymy, so that when the modern western astrologer utters the word 'Mars', her, or his, colleagues hear the words 'anger', 'danger' and 'energy'. When astrology says 'Venus' it does not mean 'Venus' but love, peace and desire or, in Aztec and Maya culture, war and violence. Some of its adherents claim its language is universal, which it clearly isn't: in the Greek tradition the Moon is the symbol of womanhood, in the Babylonian the Moon-god, Sin, was a man, as was the Egyptian Thoth. Its symbols are, though, like any other, polysemic: they have multiple meanings and require interpretation, proof, if any were required, that astrology cannot conform to a modern scientific paradigm.

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<sup>12</sup> Lucien Lévi-Bruhl, *How Natives Think*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Roger Beck, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), esp. chap. 8; Edgar Laird, 'Christine de Pizan and Controversy Concerning Star Study in the Court of Charles V', *Culture and Cosmos*, vol. 1, no. 2, (Winter/Autumn 1997), pp. 35-48.

<sup>14</sup> E.C. Krupp, 'Sky Tales And Why We Tell Them', in Helaine Selin (ed.), *Astronomy Across Cultures: the History of Non-Western Astronomy*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), pp. 1-30.

Different varieties of astrology may be distinguished by their technical complexity. In fact, we may, simply identify a simple astrology from one which is so complicated that its rules may never be applied in totality. Simple astrology includes the use of star stories in order to convey messages about appropriate behaviour, or sacred calendars which are based on lunar and solar cycles and used to measure auspicious times to perform significant rituals. Although such astrology may be technically simple, it can be rich in meaning. This is the kind of astrology which occurs in every human culture. Complex astrology occurs wherever intricate systems of rules have developed for deriving exact statements concerning the exact time of events, precise forecasting of the future, and certain management of the present (which is astrology's ultimate function, to which understanding of the past and knowledge of the future are mere adjuncts). We know of three such systems. One emerged in Mexico, probably in the first millennium BCE if not earlier and is still not well-understood. Another developed in China and appears in the historical record mainly during the first millennium BCE. The third, the evidence suggests, owes its origins to third millennium BCE Mesopotamia, and achieved something like its recognisably modern technical form in the fifth to second centuries BCE during the encounter between Babylonian, Greek, Persian and Egyptian culture. This is the ancestor of what was to become the astrology of both European and Indian civilisation.

Certain of the assumptions that underpin astrology are universal and can be reduced to the notion that the entire cosmos is alive, and/or all its parts are interdependent. Sky and earth are therefore related and the fortunes of one can be read in the other. The details, though, are far from universal, with the exception perhaps of the Sun's role as representative of supreme divine and political authority. For example, it is well known that the Aborigines had a radically set of constellations to those which evolved in China, Babylon and Mesoamerica, evidence in itself that there are no universals in the way that the sky is perceived and used. The physical appearance of the celestial bodies and the mathematical measurement of their apparent movement is not negotiable but, apart from the measurable solar and lunar influences, all other aspects of astrology and applied cosmology are local and culture-specific. The majority of modern western astrologers agree with this view. Perhaps the most influential was Dane Rudhyar, the most respected American astrologers of the twentieth century. He wrote that,

Astrology of itself has no meaning than algebra. It measures relationships between symbols whose concreteness is entirely a matter of convention, and does not really enter into the problems involved — just as the symbols of algebra,  $x$ ,  $y$ ,  $n$ , are mere conventions... In other words, the astrological realm of moving celestial bodies is like the realm of logical propositions. Neither one nor the other has any real content. Both are purely formal, symbolical, and conventional...<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Personality*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970 [1936]), p. 48.

Rudhyar was no cultural relativist though and he believed that, while the rules of astrological interpretation are cultural conveniences, the spiritual truths they reveal are absolutes. As Claude Lévi-Strauss considered, astrological classifications are totemic. Their logic, he argued 'works rather like a kaleidoscope, an instrument which also contains bits and pieces by means of which structural patterns are realized'.<sup>16</sup> Lévi-Strauss's structuralism would probably have made sense in Rudhyar's Platonic world, with its concept of geometrically defined archetypes, even if he might have rebelled against structuralism's excessive rigidity. The psychologist C.G Jung, who described astrological symbols as 'mythological motifs', 'categories of the imagination' or 'primordial thoughts', might also have disapproved of Lévi-Strauss's mathematics, but not his quest for underlying patterns.<sup>17</sup> Jung was himself an enthusiastic astrologer, for whom astrology worked because time itself was an organising principle, controlling the mutually satisfying relationship between celestial symbols and human psyche, a theme which will recur throughout this book. 'Whatever is born or done at this particular moment of time', Jung wrote, 'has the quality of this moment of time'.<sup>18</sup>

The diversity of astrology in different cultures, and its development over time, suggests the need for a typology. With regards to omens, messages from the stars, we can distinguish those which are variously described as intuitive, natural, unprovoked or inspired on the one hand, and inductive, artificial, operational deductive or provoked on the other.<sup>19</sup> The former rely on spontaneous messages from the gods, as in unpredictable events, such as shooting stars, while in the latter the astrologer undertakes a specific act in order to obtain information, such as casting a horoscope. The Roman writer Pliny was the first to distinguish **to** kinds of divination. The first he called 'artificial', or 'by art', an insight into the meaning of our modern word. This, he insisted, required the analysis of empirical or observed data and proceeded by clear rules of deduction. Entrail divination was artificial, as was astrology. The second was defined as 'natural' in that it proceeded from human nature unmediated by external data. Prime examples of natural divination included dreams, 'mental excitement' and 'frenzy'. The famous oracle at Delphi would have been classed by Cicero as 'natural'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972) p. 36. See also p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> C.G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Collected Works, Vol. 9.1, trans. R.F.C. Hull, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1959), paras. 87-110, 115.

<sup>18</sup> C.G. Jung, 'Richard Wilhelm: In Memoriam', in *The Spirit in Man, Art, And Literature*, Collected works, Vol. 15, trans. R.F.C. Hull, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 53-62. See the frontispiece of Margaret Hone's influential, *The Modern Textbook of Astrology*, (London: L.N. Fowler, fourth edition reprinted 1973, [1951]) for an example of the use of Jung's phrase.

<sup>19</sup> Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology*, Vol 1. The Ancient World, (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 197.

<sup>20</sup> Cicero, *De Divinatione*, trans. W.A.Falconer, (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, London, 1929); I.vi.12, xviii.34, xix.37, lv.124, lvi.127, II.iii.9, II.xi.25; Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. H.N. Fowler, (Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1914), 244.

Recently natural astrology has been redefined as that which deals with natural cycles, such as lunar patterns, as opposed to judicial astrology, in which the astrology has to reach judgment based on the judgment of what may be a complex range of interpretative factors. The use of the horoscope, a schematic diagram of the heavens set for a precise time and place, is the classic application of judicial astrology. In medieval Europe judicial astrology was divided into four branches: natal or genethiological (the use of horoscopes for individuals based on, usually, the moment of birth, mundane, or revolutions (the analysis of history and politics), electional (the selection of auspicious moments to launch enterprises) and horary, or interrogations (the use of horoscopes cast for specific moments to answer questions asked at those moments).

We might also consider the reasons for star stories. Do they encode information about the world?<sup>21</sup> Is the power the motive? Perhaps. Were they looking for patterns which might make the better management of the world? Anthony Aveni argued that 'The paramount goal of the astronomically and mathematically knowledgeable scribes was to use what they saw in the sky to pattern time'.<sup>22</sup>

Astrology, as Roslyn Haynes said of Aboriginal astronomy, locates the stars in social context and value system: 'Like the Newtonian-based system of Western science, it represented an attempt to construct a view of the universe as an ordered and internally consistent system, and hence to obtain some sense of control over the natural world.'<sup>23</sup> She continued:

Their careful astronomical observations were motivated not by inherent curiosity but by their belief that the stars had an intimate pragmatic and relational role in their culture. One role was economic: the need to establish predictive correlations between the position of the constellations and other natural events important to the survival of the community such as the availability of particular foods or the onset of particular weather conditions. A second function, equally necessary to preserve the group's identity, was a socio-moral one: the association of the various constellations with a complex system of moral guidance and education in tribal lore. Thirdly, the Aborigines regarded the stars as an integral part of both the physical landscape and a philosophic system, each

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<sup>21</sup> E.C. Krupp, 'Sky Tales And Why We Tell Them', in Helaine Selin (ed.), *Astronomy Across Cultures: the History of Non-Western Astronomy*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Anthony Aveni, 'Introduction: Making Time', in *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Roslynn D. Haynes, 'Astronomy and the Dreaming: The Astronomy of the Aboriginal Australians', in Helaine Selin (ed.), *Astronomy Across Cultures: the History of Non-Western Astronomy*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 53. See also p. 56.

element of which helped to explain, reinforce and legitimate the others and guarantee their continuity'.<sup>24</sup>

Keith Thomas also considered whether astrology had a function in the development of historical thought. He concluded that it did, adding that the sociological world view has at least partial roots in the astrological. In his words,

During the Italian Renaissance astrological doctrines about the recurrence of planetary conjunctions had helped to form the concept of a historical 'period... In their [the astrologers] confident assumption that the principles of human society were capable of human explanation, we can detect the germ of modern sociology'.<sup>25</sup>

Stephen McCluskey argued that 'Astronomical observation and knowledge were, for the Aztecs, signs of sacred power and status'.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps ancient star myths and modern astrology are both means of transmitting culture.<sup>27</sup> In this case, Bauer and Dearbon refer to Inca astrologers as 'folk-astronomers', suggesting that their function was to convey astronomically-derived social, political and agricultural information to the population at large.<sup>28</sup> This might ring true of the ancient world and oral culture but does the modern astrological consultation, with its use of archaic symbolism, bind both practitioner and client into an otherwise forgotten world of magic and shamanism? That's a question I don't think we are yet equipped to answer. Are astrologers better described as 'calendar priests'?<sup>29</sup> Are their modern descendants the equivalent of the Peruvian 'calendrical shamans' who, Anthony Aveni imagined, travelled from village to village with their books of prognostications tucked under their arms'.<sup>30</sup> It is certainly

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<sup>24</sup> Roslynn D. Haynes, 'Astronomy and the Dreaming: The Astronomy of the Aboriginal Australians', in Helaine Selin (ed.), *Astronomy Across Cultures: the History of Non-Western Astronomy*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 60.

<sup>25</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Peregrine Books, 1980 [1971]), pp. 386-7.

<sup>26</sup> Stephen McCluskey, 'Native American Cosmologies', in Norris Hetherington (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Cosmology*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993), p. 429.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Rowlands, 'The Role of Memory in the Transmission of Culture', *World Archaeology*, vol. 25, no. 2, Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society, (Oct., 1993), pp. 141-151.

<sup>28</sup> Brian S. Bauer and David S.P. Dearbon, *Astronomy and Empire in the Ancient Andes*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), pp. 56, 137.

<sup>29</sup> Michael D. Coe, *The Maya*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), pp. 43-4.

<sup>30</sup> Anthony Aveni, 'Introduction: Making Time', in *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 5.

possible. Talking of astrology's increasing popularity in the 1980s, Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas wrote:

The astrological consultant has, willingly or not, been usurping what was once the role of the priest, the physician, and the psychiatrist... And with due respect to those readers who may be members of the clergy or of psychiatry, (the) client with psychological problems may often fail to find the tolerance or depth of understanding that the clergy might justifiably be expected to provide, receiving meaningless aphorisms instead; or may fail to obtain the insight into symptoms and the openness to discuss them without clinical labelling which the orthodox medical establishment sometimes finds rather difficult to offer.<sup>31</sup>

Does this mean that astrology itself is a religion? Here again, the answers are mixed. Some historians assume that it was once, when it was an accessory to the worship of celestial deities, but may not be now. Bartel van der Waerden was following the consensus when he argued that 'Babylonian astrology depended on astral religion... The guiding concept of astrology, that the gods of the sky rule our lives, was a religious concept. Very right were the Fathers of the Church to condemn astrology!'<sup>32</sup> The German philosopher Bernulf Kanitscheider, thinks astrology still is a religion: 'Astrology', he wrote, 'must be seen in its origins as a religion based on the stars'.<sup>33</sup> For Joseph Needham, astronomy itself was derived from religion or, perhaps better to say, it was an application of religion. In his opinion, 'astronomy was a science of cardinal importance for the Chinese since it arose naturally out of that cosmic "religion", that sense of unity and even "ethical solidarity" of the universe'.<sup>34</sup> Modern critics of astrology likewise tend to argue that it must be a religion in the very grounds that its claims are false, and some astrologers accuse their fellows of using it as a religion in that it becomes an answer to every problem, from grand questions of human existence to the best time to make phone call.<sup>35</sup> A few western astrologers, though, do regard astrology's role as religion as a good thing. In 1927 Julius Bennett, writing in *Astrology*, the journal of the Astrological Lodge of the Theosophical Society, claimed that the 'combined science and religion of

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<sup>31</sup> Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, *The Development of the Personality: Seminars in Psychological Astrology*, (London: Arkana, 1987), p. xii.

<sup>32</sup> Bartel Van der Waerden, *Science Awakening*, 2 vols, II: The Birth of Astronomy, (Leyden and New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), Vol. 2, p. 59.

<sup>33</sup> Bernulf Kanitscheider, 'A Philosopher looks at Astrology', *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, vol. 16, no. 3, (1991), p. 259.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 3: 'Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and Earth', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 171.

<sup>35</sup> For astrology as religion and therefore necessarily false, see Rodney Stark and William Simms Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization. Revival and Cult Formation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 34.

the New Age' would be astrology.<sup>36</sup> Some modern astrologers agree. Pam Crane, a well known British astrologer and minister in the theosophically-inclined Liberal Catholic church concludes:

With the discovery of the Outer Planets, we man and women have taken a lot of spiritual power for ourselves. Nowadays it is unfashionable - even in some quarters unacceptable - to conceive of ourselves as truly children of an almighty being we call God, that this being is a person, and that He sent his Son into incarnation to teach us how to love, and to die for love of us. At this time in our history when hubris has rendered us desperately vulnerable to self-created disaster, is it not time we reconsidered? Look at all I have shown you here. Is not Christ coming to us over and over again, in every conceivable way, as he always promised?<sup>37</sup>

Is Crane putting God at the centre of the cosmos, or humanity? Brian Warner cited Dominique Zahan in *The Religion, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa* to the effect that astrology's characteristic earth-centre cosmos is 'Geocentric, or, more embracingly, egocentric'.<sup>38</sup> What exactly is it that astrology says about the nature of personhood? This is the question asked by Stephen Kemper in his study of Sinhalese astrology.<sup>39</sup> There is indeed something egotistical about astrology, as many modern astrologers will agree: the birth chart, the map of the heavens for the moment of birth, is calculated with the infant at the centre of the entire universe. In this sense, if all astrologies in the world have anything in common, it is that the focus of all creation, the sum total of space and time, is placed on the individual as the act of astrological interpretation proceeds. The centre is not where God is, or the Goddess, or the gods: if astrology has a religion, it is, no matter what its temporary ideological affiliations, humanism. I advance this as a hypothesis, which the following chapters of this book may confirm or challenge.

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<sup>36</sup> Julius R. Bennett, 'The Aquarian Age, and the Evidence of its Inception', *Astrology*, vol. 1, no. 5, (Winter 1927), pp. 39, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Pamela Crane, *The Birth of Christ*, (Faversham: Shoestring Publications, 1994), p. 24.

<sup>38</sup> Brian Warner, 'Traditional Astronomical Knowledge in Africa', in Christopher Walker (ed.), *Astronomy before the Telescope*, (London; British Museum Press, 1996), p. 306.

<sup>39</sup> Kemper, Steven, 'Time, Person, and Gender in Sinhalese Astrology', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 7, no. 4, (Nov. 1980), pp. 744-58.