

# A MODEL FOR ASTROLOGY

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## *Abstract*

*This paper takes Jung's concept of meaningful coincidences and uses it to develop a model for astrology. In the first chapter, criteria are given for meaningful coincidences within an astrological context, and some problems that arise are discussed. In the second chapter, the astrological model is developed by comparing the actual practice of astrology in the Hellenistic era with the modern era. It is argued that central to Hellenistic astrological practice is the concept of a transcendent power, and that this concept has not been replaced by modern astrologers. In the third chapter, the methodology used by astrologers is considered in detail, in an attempt to elucidate the way in which astrological meaning is derived. One conclusion drawn is that astrological signification is, in part, culturally relative. In the final chapter, the purpose of the model and whether the astrology derived from it has value are considered. One suggestion is that an important component of the astrological experience is a numinous experience.*

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In his discussion on theories of astrology Geoffrey Dean gives the following criteria for a useful theory: that it should explain the observations, (or else it is useless), lead to testable outcomes, (or else it is untestable), improve on existing theories, (or else it is pointless), and not contravene known science, (or else it is dubious).<sup>1</sup> He then proceeds to survey many existing theories of astrology and, for a variety of reasons, dismiss them in turn. Dean believes that “If astrology is to gain the respect of scientists and the academic community, then theories of accuracy are needed...”<sup>2</sup> However, this is only the case if astrology is seen as a science amenable to the empirical process. It is my contention that the empirical process is antithetic to most forms of astrology currently practiced. If this is the case theories of accuracy for astrology are inappropriate.

In a previous paper I have suggested that by considering Jung’s concept of meaningful coincidences – the coming together in an acausal manner of events which have meaning – within the context of astrology “we are likely to come closer to understanding, or even explaining, the astrological process.”<sup>3</sup> In this paper I use Jung’s concept to develop an astrological model which, I believe, does elucidate the astrological process. The approach I take is historical: by considering the actual practice of astrologers in the Hellenistic era I adapt the criteria of meaningful coincidences to create a model which includes the essential features of Hellenistic astrology, and, by comparing this to the practice of astrology in the modern era, I develop the model in an attempt to explain what astrologers are doing when they engage in astrology. The emphasis is always on what astrologers actually do, and not on any beliefs that they hold. Therefore, a particular type of astrology will only be excluded from the model if the actual practice required by the astrology is incompatible with the model, and not if the beliefs held by the astrologers practising it are incompatible with the model. For reasons that will become clear, this model cannot be empirically tested and, therefore, cannot be considered a theory of accuracy, which is why, to avoid confusion, I call it a model and not a theory. Consequently, the purpose of my model is not to test astrology, which would be the purpose of Dean’s theory of accuracy, but to elucidate the astrological process. What our model achieves will be considered in the last chapter of this paper.

For many astrologers my approach to the astrological process will be radical. Within an astrological context the coincidence of a ‘meaningful coincidence’ consists of the moment of time for which an astrological chart is drawn, and an event, or psychological process, which

may happen at the same time, but may happen at a different time. This coincidence is given meaning by an astrologer, using the rules of astrology, who will connect the astrological chart with the event. For an astrologer it is what happens when a particular horoscope describes an existing situation, or provides help to a client, or gives guidance for the future. By suggesting that this is central to the astrological process we are viewing astrology as a series of unique coincidences in which chart, event, and astrologer, are brought together in a way that we cannot rationally explain. We are making no claims that astrology will occur outside these occurrences where chart, event, and astrologer are brought together. Many astrologers, and perhaps most lay people, view astrology as a continuous flow, with the planets revolving round the earth, sending their rays, or influence, to the sub-lunar sphere, which, in turn, affects life on earth. The manner of this influence remains obscure, and it is never clear whether or not it is meant to be causal, but it would, perhaps, be accurate to say that many astrologers, who believe that they see it ‘working’ on a daily basis, tacitly assume that it is causal, or else why would they see it ‘working.’ In contrast to this, the concept of a meaningful coincidence suggests a snap shot taken at one particular moment in time; it implies an acausal connection between the astrological moment (chart) and the events, because if it was causal it would not be a coincidence. There is no obvious contradiction between a snap shot – enough snap shots become a flow – and a flow – which when stopped becomes a snap shot – but there is a contradiction between an acausal view of astrology and a causal view. It is worth clarifying what we mean by causal, and non-causal, in this paper. For something to be causal two conditions must be met: first, there must be a cause, and second, there must be empirical support for that cause; that X actually is followed by Y. Astrology which has empirical support, but for which there is no apparent cause, I call empirical. By empirical support I do not mean the working experience of astrologers, but empirical tests, conducted in accordance with accepted scientific practice.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, if astrology has empirical support there will be good reason to believe an astrological statement and conclusion.

A non-causal approach to astrology is not new,<sup>5</sup> and a divinatory approach is popular in some circles. However, many, probably most, astrologers still have difficulty with this approach, because it seems to contradict their own experience of an astrology which works on a daily basis. I will argue that in practice both approaches fit into my model, and that the only types of astrology which do not fit are an astrology which relies on empirical evidence to develop its rules and procedures, and an astrology which is necessary, by which I mean that

universal laws underlie it, so that it works at all times.<sup>6</sup> This inevitably leads to the question of how, without empirical support, we can justify our model. This issue will be discussed in Chapter Four of this paper.

## **Chapter One: Coinciding acausal events in astrology**

### **Section One: Jung's concept of meaningful coincidences**

Although Jung termed the phrase “meaningful coincidence” he makes it clear that the coincidences do not have to occur at the same time,<sup>7</sup> and within an astrological context they rarely will occur at the same time. Therefore, to avoid confusion, in this paper I will term the phrase “meaningful occurrences.” To have a meaningful occurrence, or occurrences, in astrology the following criteria should be met:

- a) We must have a moment of time to draw an astrological chart. An accurate astrological chart or horoscope is a map of the sky at a particular moment in time.
- b) We must have an astrologer. Without an astrologer there is no one to make a connection between the moment of time, for which the astrological chart is drawn, and the event.
- c) We must have astrological rules. It is the astrological rules which will give the astrologer a reason to connect the event – past, present, or future – to the moment of time. Without astrological rules it might be possible to connect the moment of time with an event or psychological process – ‘he’s frightened of noises because the moment he was born they started drilling next door’ – but one is not using astrology to make that connection.
- d) There must be an event or psychological process. Clearly, if there is to be a coincidence between acausal events there must be an event, or events, which can make a coincidence with the moment of time for which the astrological chart is drawn. However, in a sense, this criterion is redundant; we are not tying the event, or events, to a particular moment of time, so we are never going to be without an event which could be a coincidence with the astrological chart.

## Section 2: Meaning in meaningful coincidences

With the criteria we are using meaningful occurrences in astrology are only given meaning by an astrologer using the rules of astrology. However, we must clarify what we mean by ‘meaning’ because for Ayer, and others, unless a statement can, by observation, be determined to be true or false it is a meaningless statement. This is not a ‘common sense’ view of meaning, but a view that meaning requires verification.<sup>8</sup> The type of meaningful occurrence we are considering, however, is a unique occurrence and cannot be repeated. Even if the same astrologer meets with the same client, to consider the same astrological chart, in order to discuss the same event, which may or may not have happened, it is not a repetition because the client’s life will have moved on, so the context will have changed. The meaning we are considering will only apply within the context in which the occurrence takes place. It is not possible for us, from one unique event, to make any universal statement, or to claim that it has any universal meaning. Often, it will be possible to verify whether or not the statement made by the astrologer is true. The astrologer might say, ‘You were hit on the head when you were seven,’ which the client can say is true or false, or the astrologer might say, ‘Take this job; it will improve your finances,’ which can be determined to be true or false at a future date. These statements have meaning within the context that we are considering, and can be verified by observation.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, one is in a position to say that the statements were accurate. However, from this one occurrence we cannot make any further claims about the universal accuracy of astrological statements.

In other cases, it will not be possible to determine whether the statement by the astrologer is true. The astrologer might say, ‘In your last life you were a soldier,’ which is something we will never be able to determine the truth of. If the client believes in reincarnation such a statement may have significance for him/her and, consequently, may have meaning, in the common sense way that we use the word, but there is no way to determine whether the statement is accurate; indeed, unless one also believes in reincarnation, and in the efficacy of the astrological rules being used, there is no reason to believe it is accurate.

With this understanding of meaning we are able to answer one of Dean’s criticisms of Jung’s concept of meaningful coincidences. Dean says, “As for meaningfulness, anything

worth having should show repeatability...”<sup>10</sup> Dean is claiming that unless the meaning found in an individual case can be repeated on a universal basis it is not worth having. The above cases show that it may be worth having. Dean would, perhaps, argue that unless you can show repeatability there is no good reason for assuming that any astrological prediction will be accurate. This point will be considered in the last chapter of this paper.

There are, however, two other serious problems. The first is that many astrologers do claim that the statements they make, and the astrological rules they use, are based on empirical support. They may not be explicit about the causal nature of astrology but, often, they are explicit about the empirical basis of astrology.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Jupiter is a benefic planet because “on the basis of experience {the original astrologers} concluded that some planets were friendly, and others unfriendly, towards their enterprises.”<sup>12</sup> This would appear to contradict our position. If we are saying that astrological statements do not need repetition, or empirical verification, to have meaning, then it is, surely, contradictory to claim that the rules on which these statements are based are empirically derived. The second problem is that, as it stands, our model allows for any astrological rules to give meaning in a given context. If any astrological rules are possible, then for any given context – in which astrologer, client, and the moment are the same – any meaning is possible. To consider these problems we must first consider the actual practice of astrology. At the same time we will be able to determine what changes are necessary to the model so that it can describe this practice.

## **Chapter Two: The practice of astrology**

I do not intend to detail all the astrological techniques used, or to conduct an historical survey. My purpose is to consider what astrologers were, and are, trying to do, in order to understand the methodology that they used, and why they believed, and believe, it has validity. I will first consider Hellenistic astrology, by which I mean astrology practiced between the second century BCE and the sixth century CE, and then modern psychological astrology as currently practised.

### **Section One: Hellenistic Astrology**

The first Hellenistic astrological texts<sup>13</sup> were probably composed during, or shortly after, the reign of Ptolemy Philometer (182-145 BCE).<sup>14</sup> They were a fusion of Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek influences, to which a number of entirely new techniques were added.<sup>15</sup> Holden believes that the corpus was invented by one or more individuals all at once, or, possibly, over one or two generations.<sup>16</sup> Whether or not one accepts this view, it appears, to me at least, to be incontestable that this system was not created as a result of empirical observations. There is no extant body of empirical data that could have been used to justify the techniques which make up the system. Babylonian observations, that Mars in a certain position in the sky is likely to lead to a certain result, cannot be used to justify why, in a natal chart, Mars behaves in a more malefic manner if the Sun is above the horizon at the time of birth than it behaves when the Sun is below the horizon at the time of birth.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, there is no extant body of evidence from 200 BCE until 2003 CE which could be used to justify this procedure, or rule.

There remain only a few scattered quotations from the original 2<sup>nd</sup> century astrologers, which are found in the works of later astrologers, in particular Vettius Valens (120-175c).

Therefore, any statement about the astrologers of the second century BCE has to be made with the caveat that we cannot be sure of what they were thinking, because we are basing ourselves on texts that were written over one hundred years later. However, in trying to understand why the Hellenistic astrologers chose the techniques and procedures which make up Hellenistic astrology we can make certain observations:

- a) Some of the techniques are based on observations of the real world. The position of the planets in the sky<sup>18</sup>, the motion of the planets in the sky<sup>19</sup>, the ascensional times of the signs of the zodiac<sup>20</sup>, the planetary periods,<sup>21</sup> and the system of planetary rulerships,<sup>22</sup> were all based on actual observations of the sky.
- b) Greek myth<sup>23</sup> and some Greek philosophical concepts, which may have been considered to be natural laws underlying the structure of the world, are of importance.<sup>24</sup> The Pythagorean, or metaphysical, concept of numbers is probably one of the ideas behind the aspects;<sup>25</sup> the Greek idea of opposite qualities co-existing in mutual attraction or tension can be seen in the gender of the planets, and the important differences in day and night births; while the four Aristotelian elements were used to divide the signs of the zodiac into groups of three.<sup>26</sup>
- c) The doctrine contains many bits of astrological lore that appear to have been drafted in from older sources. One example is the use of the Egyptian concept of the 36 decans, in which the rising decan will give an overall picture of the native's destiny.<sup>27</sup> However, there are plenty of other examples.<sup>28</sup>
- d) Certain parts of the doctrine appear to make no rational sense. No one has yet been able to provide an adequate rationale for the bounds,<sup>29</sup> but they are of extreme importance in Hellenistic astrology, being used for a variety of matters, including length of life calculations, and the delineation of planets.<sup>30</sup> Other parts of the doctrine, for example the lots,<sup>31</sup> can be explained rationally, in the sense we know how they are created, and can say what they are doing, but we cannot explain why what they are doing should be significant.<sup>32</sup>
- e) The individual techniques which make up the 'system' are often simple but the overall 'system' is complex. For example, every planet is conditioned, in part, by the following factors: whether the chart being considered is nocturnal or diurnal; aspects from the malefic and benefic planets; house position;<sup>33</sup> speed and direction; and the

condition of its four rulers.<sup>34</sup> However, the rulers are, in turn, conditioned by the same factors, which make a complicated and intricate methodology.

- f) The original texts are not always clear, and the astrologers who came later had problems in interpreting them.<sup>35</sup>
- g) The later astrologers did change astrological techniques and procedures. Vettius Valens tells us, “I advanced, then, all the teachings that seemed to me to be true by experience, along with explanations.”<sup>36</sup> Elsewhere he tells us, “I am putting these things together after having tested them myself.”<sup>37</sup> We can see at least three ways in which Valens was prepared to do this. First, he is prepared to advise on procedures when they are confused.<sup>38</sup> Second, he is prepared to recommend one technique in place of another technique as a result of his experience. Thus, he tells us how “he traversed Egypt”<sup>39</sup> and “spent much time wretchedly”<sup>40</sup> looking for a method that was successful in predicting future events.<sup>41</sup> And third, Valens is prepared to completely change a technique when he does not believe that it will produce useful results. In book nine of the *Anthology* he details a technique of prediction which takes the planets in the same order for every natal chart. Valens did not believe that such a simple technique would produce any useful results, so he changed it, allowing the planet ruling the sign in which the Moon was placed to be the first planet, which was followed by the planet ruling the next sign in zodiacal order. In this way, the starting planet for each nativity would be different.<sup>42</sup>

## **Section Two: The purpose of Hellenistic Astrology**

From the above we can conclude that there are many different reasons which explain the astrological procedures found in the extant works of the Hellenistic astrologers. Of particular importance are observation of the night sky; Greek philosophical thinking, which included certain natural laws which were probably thought to underpin the reality of the world; the astrological tradition as it existed in Alexandria during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE; and the experience, and interpretation, of the later Hellenistic astrologers.<sup>43</sup>

When we consider the way that Vettius Valens used his astrological experience to adapt the procedures that had been passed down, it seems likely that the original system was constructed, and then fine tuned over the years by various practising astrologers. Whether one complete intelligible system was created out of all of the factors mentioned above, or whether a Greek system, which was not fully developed, was created, which sat by side with existing astrology from other traditions, so that they eventually became fused into the lore that we currently have, is something we cannot know.<sup>44</sup> If we consider why such a system, in whatever form it took, was created, it seems reasonable, given the type of society in existence in Alexandria during the second century BCE, to assume that the gods would be central to it. Given the preponderance of divinatory systems available at that time, and their popularity,<sup>45</sup> it seems reasonable to suppose that this system would have been constructed to allow for communication with the gods.

It is probably that Valens was a stoic<sup>46</sup> and it is often assumed that an interest in divination meant a belief in a world in which your fate was fixed.<sup>47</sup> However, there is an alternative view of divination in which one seeks information about the future in order to change one's fate rather than to accept one's fate. According to Xenophon, Socrates,<sup>48</sup> when discussing the gods, says, "Then there is their direct assistance in a sphere in which we are incompetent-that is, in foreseeing our future interests. By means of divination they {the gods} reveal to those who consult them what is going to happen, and explain how it can be turned to the best advantage."<sup>49</sup> There is no question here of accepting our fate as something fixed. Socrates believed that through divination one could learn the future and, as a result, change one's fate. The corollary of this is that there was a moral dimension to the enquiry. Socrates is clear about the honour we must show the gods, which he associates with sacrifices and worship, "...one must not fall short of one's own capacity; when a man does this, it is surely obvious that he is not honouring the gods. So if he consistently honours the gods to the best of his power, he may feel confident and expect the greatest blessings."<sup>50</sup> In the absence of animal sacrifices the modern equivalent is arguably respect and humility. Socrates was also clear about what information we might obtain, and what information it was (morally) incorrect to obtain, "he also said it was superstition to consult diviners about questions which the gods had enabled us to decide by the use of our wits (for example, supposing one were to ask whether it is better to engage a qualified or an unqualified driver for a carriage, or helmsman for one's ship), or to which the answers can be found by calculation or measuring or weighing. People

who put this sort of question to the gods were, in his opinion, acting wrongly. He said that where the gods have given us power to act by the use of our intelligence, we ought to use it; but where the outcome is concealed from human beings, we should try to discover it from the gods by divination; for the gods communicate to those whom they favour.”<sup>51</sup> That the gods might not favour us, that the information we want might not be forthcoming, is implicit in Socrates’ approach.

The Socratic approach requires communication with the gods. A stoic approach may also allow that communication, but it is not a requirement. There is, for example, no doubt that for Valens the divine was central to the astrological model. At times he suggests that one does converse with the gods, for example, in the Preface to Book Seven of *The Anthology* he says, “when I met with the divine and venerable theory of the heavens, I wished to purge my character of all evil and all stain and form a conception in advance of the soul as immortal. And from this point on, things divine seemed to converse with me, and the intellective part of me gained a sober {manner} of investigation.”<sup>52</sup> However, elsewhere he sees it as a gift from the gods, “the support of this learning is sacred and venerable as something handed over to men by god in order that they may have a share in immortality through prognostication...”<sup>53</sup> The reason for the gift is clear from an earlier quote, “But those occupied with the prognostication of the future and the truth, by gaining a soul free and not enslaved, think slightingly of fortune, and do not obstinately persist in hope, and do not fear death, but spend their lives without disturbance by training the soul ahead of time to be confident, and neither rejoice excessively in the case of good nor are depressed in the case of foul, and are content with what is present.”<sup>54</sup> From this stoic position it is a relatively small step to say that your destiny is fixed at birth, so that reading a nativity is simply a matter of skill. Thus, in Preface to Book 7, Valens does not say that we must ask appropriate questions, or seek the favour of the gods, but exhorts the reader “to keep these things secret, and not to impart them to the unlearned or the uninitiated...”<sup>55</sup> It is easy to see how this stoic view could become mechanistic; and if it is mechanistic there is a contradiction with the Socratic view, because communication with the divine is no longer necessary, what matters is reading the system given to us by the divine correctly.<sup>56</sup>

Robert Schmidt, who has translated more Hellenistic astrological works than anyone else, believes that the system was a Platonic construct. He has not yet published his own thoughts<sup>57</sup> but my understanding of his position is that Hellenistic astrology was invented by

one, or a few, astrologers who believed that there is a cosmic soul which has a cosmic body. Celestial phenomena are an expression of the mind of the cosmic soul, while activities on the sub-lunar sphere are the cosmic body. The cosmic body must conform to the thoughts of the cosmic soul – they are the same entity – so that astrology is by definition necessary. The purpose of the astrologer is to interpret the workings of the cosmic soul and consequently astrology is not divination.<sup>58</sup>

This may be a correct interpretation of the beliefs of the Hellenistic astrologers. In the *Timaeus* Plato outlines a belief in the cosmic soul and, as we have argued above, in part the procedures are based on natural laws which, it may have been thought, give order to the cosmos. A system constructed along these lines could be read like a book by an astrologer who had the required skill. However, an alternative explanation is also possible. This system could be used as a language to communicate with the divine, because whether or not a cosmic soul exists, astrologers, here on the sub-lunar sphere, are using celestial phenomena to obtain information about the future.<sup>59</sup>

From our point of view it does not matter what the Hellenistic astrologers believed, which is not something we can know, because what matters is what we put into our own astrological model. The Socratic approach requires a dialogue with the divine: the divine will provide signs to be read, and might choose to withhold favours. The stoic or Platonic approach might involve a dialogue with the divine but it is not a necessary requirement, because the divine may simply be providing a system for the astrologer to read. If we choose a stoic or Platonic model we will face at least three problems. First, we have no way to explain how these astrological rules were devised. They are a human construct – no one claims they were revealed by a divine power – but if we claim they are deduced from natural laws which give order to the cosmos they will, if they are going to be accepted by modern society, have to be empirically tested. Presumably, the only way that this can be done is to test the resulting astrology, which, for reasons which will become clear, is something we want to avoid. Second, Hellenistic astrological rules do not appear to be based on natural laws which conform to a coherent system<sup>60</sup> and they do require continual human judgement.<sup>61</sup> If human judgement is required, then it becomes an essential part of the astrological process, and it will be immensely difficult to separate the astrological system – however that is derived – from that human judgement. This, in turn, will make it extremely difficult to show that an infallible, or necessary, astrology exists. And third, an infallible system will exclude divinatory astrology,

an important area of astrological practice in Hellenistic as well as modern times.<sup>62</sup> These problems are unnecessary because if you are communicating with the divine, what matters is not whether the metaphysical concept of numbers, or any other ‘natural’ law, is correct, but that they are a way of viewing the world which can be used as the basis of a language for that communication. Therefore, as we will argue later, the Socratic model does not exclude the stoic or Platonic approach<sup>63</sup> but a stoic or Platonic approach may exclude a Socratic approach.

For these reasons our model will take the Socratic position, which requires a moral approach, and recognises that what is happening during the astrological process is not only down to human endeavour, or skill, but relies on the favour of the gods.

### **Section Three: Modern Psychological Astrology**

I would like to consider two aspects of modern psychological astrology: first, the techniques actually used, and second, the meanings derived from those techniques.

We can make the following observations on modern astrological techniques:

1. There have been many changes since Hellenistic times but the original principles, on which all techniques are based, although adapted, remain surprisingly intact:
  - (a) The same houses are used.
  - (b) The same aspects are used, although now aspects are by degree and not sign, and other aspects have been added.
  - (c) The same planets are used, although more planets have been added.
  - (d) The same signs of the zodiac are used.
  - (e) Lots, although rarely used, are known.
  - (f) Solar returns,<sup>64</sup> again rarely used, are known.
2. Procedures for fixing the time of future events have changed. The time lord<sup>65</sup> procedures evident throughout the *Anthology* have largely disappeared, while the use of the rising times of the signs of the zodiac to time events is almost completely unknown. Profections<sup>66</sup> are known but rarely used; transits<sup>67</sup>, which were used in the Hellenistic

era, along with secondary progressions,<sup>68</sup> which in their modern format were not, have become the main method of making predictions.

3. Many new techniques have been added. For example, mid-points<sup>69</sup> and astro-cartography<sup>70</sup>.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the changes to the actual techniques used in modern astrology, although substantial, have kept to the tradition started by the Hellenistic astrologers. Given that, with the exception of Ptolemy and Firmicus, the process of translating the extant Greek works into English only started in the early 1990's, and that the astrological tradition has passed through many different cultures,<sup>71</sup> this is, in some ways, quite surprising.

However, when we consider the meaning derived from these techniques we find an entirely different picture. Elsewhere I have argued that the meaning of the houses has been completely changed in modern times,<sup>72</sup> and that modern planetary meanings are barely recognisable from their Hellenistic antecedents.<sup>73</sup> The modern meaning of Leo is closer to the Hellenistic meaning of the Sun than the modern meaning of the Sun;<sup>74</sup> Saturn and Mars are no longer seen as purely malefic, while Jupiter and Venus are not purely benefic; the squares and oppositions are now seen as 'opportunities for growth.' I have argued elsewhere,<sup>75</sup> that although astrologers pay lip service to keeping to the tradition, what they are really interested in doing is obtaining information that is going to be useful in their practice, which will depend on the culture of the society in which they live and that, consequently, the information elicited from very similar astrological techniques can be completely different. An example of this can be seen with the houses. Modern man/woman in Twentieth Century culture requires the possibility of personal growth, and consequently, in modern psychological astrology, starting with the first house, "growth has entailed distinguishing ourselves from the unbounded and universal matrix of life out of which we first emerged," until, finally, in the twelfth house, "the twin process of the dissolution of the individual ego and the merging with something greater than the self is felt and experienced..."<sup>76</sup> The signification derived from seeing the houses in this way is completely different to the signification derived from the very same houses in the Hellenistic era,<sup>77</sup> but, presumably, this information is more useful to the astrologer when dealing with the requirements of Twentieth Century clients.

This conclusion, that the techniques of modern astrology are similar to those of Hellenistic astrology but the signification derived from those techniques radically different, is

an issue which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three of this paper. However, for the moment we must concern ourselves with wondering what modern psychological astrologers think they are doing with astrology, and why they think it works. We are clear that the Hellenistic astrologers placed god or the divine at the centre of their astrological system, and we must now consider in what way the divine has been replaced by the modern astrologer.

#### **Section Four: The Modern approach to the Divine in the Astrological Model**

From Ptolemy to the end of the Seventeenth Century Aristotelian physics was at the centre of the astrological model, with different religious approaches sitting side by side with this ‘scientific’ explanation.<sup>78</sup> Since the collapse of Aristotelian physics during the Seventeenth Century astrologers have been trying to find other theories to put at the centre of their model.<sup>79</sup> There have been attempts to put scientific theories at the centre, for example, by McGillon<sup>80</sup> and Seymour.<sup>81</sup> However, so far none of these attempts have been successful. Some astrologers have used Jung’s concept of synchronicity, along with an almost causal explanation using archetypes, but with very little success.<sup>82</sup> Since the 1970’s, and the availability of computers, astrologers have spent an enormous amount of time researching their subject in an attempt to come up with empirical evidence to support it. They have had some success, the Gauquelin<sup>83</sup> results being the most notable. However, many of the results have been disappointing, and insufficient empirical evidence has been found to support the astrological techniques, and procedures, that astrologers actually use in their practice<sup>84</sup>. The consequence of this failure to find an alternative theory is that most modern astrologers either ignore the issue, or have their own personal theory which will not stand up to scrutiny.<sup>85</sup> This leaves us in

the position that, so far, nothing has been suggested which can take the place of the divine in the astrological model, which, in turn, leads to three separate issues, all of which we must discuss:

1. Is it possible for another theory to replace the divine, in the astrological model?
2. What do we actually mean by ‘the divine’?
3. If we put the divine at the centre of our model are we simply making astrology non-falsifiable; is it no more than a conjuring trick to avoid the criticisms of the ‘researchers’<sup>86</sup> in astrology?

1. Is it possible for another theory to replace the divine, in the astrological model?

It, obviously, is possible that a natural theory could be found, which would support astrology and possibly explain how and why it works, and that empirical evidence could then be found to support that theory. However, if this is ever achieved it is likely that it will only justify certain astrological techniques, and procedures, which will leave those astrologers who do not use those techniques with no adequate theory to justify what they are doing. It is worth noting that Michel Gauquelin’s empirical results show no influence for the Sun and Mercury in the birth chart and, as a consequence of this, he recommended that these planets were dropped from the natal chart.<sup>87</sup> The Gauquelin results are the strongest empirical results that astrologers have to support their practice but no astrologer has taken any notice of Michel Gauquelin’s recommendation, and they all continue to practice as before, using both the Sun and Mercury.

In addition to this problem, there is a related point. If a naturalistic rational explanation is found for astrology, there can be no objection to that explanation, but it will not explain the practice of a modern astrologer with Socratic values. If astrology is an attempt to communicate with the divine, then providing a rationalist, or scientific, explanation is not going to explain what an astrologer communicating with the divine is doing. It is not going to be an adequate description of his/her practice because they are doing something in addition. Of course, the rationalist could say that our Socratic astrologer is mistaken, he/she is not communicating with the divine, but their rationalist explanation is not going to explain the experience of that astrologer, because he/she will have the experience, which we can call ‘communicating with the divine’, whether or not any communication is taking place.

## 2. What do we actually mean by the divine?

It is clear that Socrates saw the divine as god, and it is equally clear that Christians and Muslims will see the Divine as God. However, it is not necessary to see it in this way. Postulating a God or gods involves many things which are not necessary for an astrological model. All that it is necessary for us to postulate is that there is a transcendent power by which we mean, to quote *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, “transcending human experience”, and “existing apart from, not subject to the limitations of, the material universe.” For many people this might imply a God, but it is not necessarily the case that it has to imply a God; God is supremely powerful, and our transcendent power does not need supreme power. It also allows for a ‘scientific’ explanation which is currently outside our comprehension.<sup>88</sup> It follows that by postulating a transcendent power we do not have to accept any of the morality that comes with organised religion. However, implicit in our model is the requirement to show humility, and respect, for this transcendent power. For Socrates it was a two way relationship in which man/woman had to make an effort, show respect, and then hope for favour from the gods: “He used to say that in every sphere of action those people were best and most favoured by the gods who did their work effectively...while the man who did nothing effectively was neither good for anything nor favoured by the gods.”<sup>89</sup> Many modern astrologers still find this important, and will take time to quieten the mind, meditate even, prior to astrological work.

## 3. Are we making astrology non-falsifiable? And is this just a conjuring trick?

Dean et al. are quite clear on spiritual theories of astrology, “In general, spiritual theories view astrology as soul stuff, dealing with things other than the material. In effect such theories put astrology into the purely spiritual domain, which is perfectly valid provided no claims are made for astrology other than spiritual ones. But in practice this is rarely the case.”<sup>90</sup> They would also believe that any model which puts a transcendent power in the centre is non-falsifiable, and therefore is not a useful method to obtain knowledge. The issue of knowledge and validity of astrology will be dealt with in the fourth chapter of this paper, and is a subject I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>91</sup> For the moment, we need to concern ourselves with the suggestion that spiritual theories should only be spiritual, and the complaint that it makes astrology non-falsifiable. It is not clear why any theory which postulates a spiritual, or transcendent power,

should not be involved with the physical. We live in the physical world, we are concerned with physical matters, and there is no necessity to split any spiritual life that we have from our physical lives. Presumably, the point that Dean et al. wish to make is that if a spiritual, or transcendent, theory makes claims in the physical world then those claims must be subject to empirical verification along with the claims of any other theory. If this is what they mean then there is nothing wrong with their proposal. It will depend on what claims are made. So far we have not made any claims which require empirical verification, nor do we intend to make such claims. The complaint that by postulating a transcendent power we are making astrology non-falsifiable is, of course, correct. But it would be incorrect to assert that this was a neat conjuring trick; it is an attempt to explain what astrologers do when they actually practice astrology. If the practice of astrology is a way to communicate with a transcendent power, even if those practicing it are not aware they are communicating with that transcendent power, then the fact that it is non-falsifiable is simply a statement about astrology. To try and define astrology in material, or natural, terms, and then to determine whether it is true or false, is an enterprise which has no bearing, one way or the other, on an astrology which refers to a transcendent power.

### **Section Five: A Model for Astrology**

We are now in a position to compare our criteria for meaningful coincidences in astrology with actual astrological practice in order to develop our model.

The three criteria we considered indispensable for meaningful occurrences in astrology were:

1. An astrologer.
2. A moment of time/chart.
3. Rules of astrology.

We must now add to these criteria a transcendent power, which, in effect, provides an explanation of why meaningful coincidences actually occur.<sup>92</sup> In this way we can propose the following model:

1. Transcendent power: with a requirement of humility and morality from those attempting to communicate with it.
2. A chart: this can be seen as a ritual.
3. Astrology: Rules and procedures are required. What we have found is as follows: a) rules and procedures are loosely based on observation, tradition (which in itself might be seen as a ritual), and Greek philosophical concepts, which we might loosely call ‘natural laws’; and b) the meaning derived from those rules depends on the culture, and requirements, of the society interpreting them.
4. Interpretation: an astrologer.

All these points will receive further discussion later in the paper, but we should clarify one issue concerning Point Two above. We are not providing a rationalist explanation of astrology so there is no obvious reason why the time of the chart we take for a particular matter is important. Why should we use the moment of birth for a natal chart? Perhaps some other moment would do just as well. However, astrologers go to great length to find a time of birth, and this includes those astrologers who do not, necessarily, believe that an exact birth time is important. Using the method that has been used throughout the extant history of natal astrology, and going to some effort to try and find the correct birth time, shows a respect for tradition, and a reverence for the practice, which is an essential part of our model. Why it is important will be discussed later in the paper.

There are now two further questions that we must ask:

1. Does this model conform to astrological practice? In other words, is it an accurate model?
2. Is there any reason to suppose that this model will produce greater success than other models?

## **Section Six: Conforming to Existing Astrological Practice**

In this section we will not survey different areas of astrology – horary, natal, and mundane – but consider different approaches to astrology which might be found in any of these areas.<sup>93</sup> We will be concerned, not so much with whether the approach to astrology is appropriate for our model, but whether the actual practice of those who use the different approaches conforms to our model.

(i) The Empirical Approach to Astrology

There is one very important area in which astrological practice does not conform to the above model, and that is when empirical evidence is used to develop astrological rules. By empirical evidence I mean, as I have indicated above, an attempt to remove subjective factors and consider only raw empirical data in a manner which would be accepted by the scientific community. This excludes the type of fine tuning conducted by Vettius Valens. The fact that Valens found an astrological technique “true from experience” will only convince those who value astrology and Vettius Valens in particular. It is the same with the modern astrologer who reads two biographies, finds that the subjects have difficult love lives, and that they both have Saturn conjunct Venus. He/she might conclude that Saturn conjunct Venus leads to a difficult love life, and use this conclusion in their practice, but he/she is not entitled to draw any universal conclusion without consulting a great many more nativities.

However, there is a very clear example of an attempt to derive astrological rules from empirical data. In an article called *Besiegement in Sport*<sup>94</sup> Lee Lehman and Bernadette Brady use the castle besiegement rules of Guido Bonatti (c1210-1295) to try and determine the winner of The Ashes, when England play Australia at cricket. Bonatti was interested in whether one army would successfully capture a castle from another army. Lehman and Brady apply that concept to The Ashes in which one country is trying to recapture The Ashes from the other. In essence, they take each of Bonatti’s rules and assign a score to it, either negative or positive, so that from looking at the chart for the start of each Test match, they can determine which country has the highest score, and therefore will win that match<sup>95</sup>. By keeping the results of all past matches on a computer data base they are able to adjust the rules, or the scoring, until they can, in theory, produce a model which will give them the success rate they are looking for, which is 55-65%.

At first it may not seem that this approach contradicts our model, because it does not exclude the possibility of a transcendent power providing the cause. However, despite this, both the approach, and the actual practice, is contradictory to our model. Lehman and Brady make it clear that they have, as far as possible, eliminated the astrologer from the process, “We have coded this system into the Access database because we did not want this test to involve any judgement calls, except what choices we made in determining which factors to include in the model, and how many points to assign to them.”<sup>96</sup> Clearly, an astrology which removes the astrologer cannot fit into our model, because our model requires an astrologer to make an interpretation. This point is worth looking at in more detail.

The astrologer is an active participant of our model because he/she communicates with the transcendent power, which is a necessary component of it. In the Lehman and Brady model, the transcendent power may remain hidden in the background providing the ultimate explanation but it is not a necessary requirement, while the astrologer is not required once the rules have been set. Therefore, the astrological experience is very different. If we follow the Lehman and Brady model then all our rules should be made on the basis of the empirical evidence found. One starts off with a set of rules which were, presumably, constructed by Bonatti from the existing astrological tradition, then one drops, or changes, those rules if empirical evidence suggests that this will produce more accurate results. Thus, they tell us that “Saturn in Detriment or Fall scores points for the team it signifies, but a malefic in Rulership or Exaltation blocks the team from success. This is not supported in the writings of Bonatti, but it is strongly supported by the results of the Tests and all the other sporting models with which we have worked.”<sup>97</sup> If we take this to its logical conclusion there is no room for the astrologer. The astrologer must choose the rules which have empirical support, and reject those rules which do not have it: an astrological judgement is not required. This is what makes it incompatible with our model, which requires an astrologer to make an astrological judgement.

According to Lehman and Brady, “We have explored in this model the *Technique* of astrology, not the *Art*. We have dealt only with objective factors, not subjective ones. {By which they mean matters like the quality of players, the pitch conditions, and astrological aspects to the individual naticities of the players.} These elements also lie in the zone. Thus, we are brought to the rather satisfying conclusion that we can demonstrate that there is room for both objective and subjective considerations.”<sup>98</sup> The problem with this assertion is that

*Technique* seems to have eliminated *Art* when it comes to the judgment of a horoscope. *Art* is left to decide what goes into *Technique*, although the deciding factor is empirical support.

However, if our model implies that we should not make our astrological rules by considering empirical data, which goes against everything astrologers have been trying to achieve over the last thirty years, we might wonder how we can justify our position. If we consider something like a Test match between England and Australia then we can immediately see that any astrological model will have a problem. Test matches between England and Australia are not a level playing field. When the best Australian players defected to Kerry Packer's International Cricket Circuit, England had an advantage and won the Ashes. For the last few years Australia have had much better cricketers and were much more likely to win the Ashes. I did not need the help of astrology to predict that Australia would win the 2002/3 Ashes series, and nor did any of the other sports writers in the British (or Australian) press. Unless the system takes this into consideration it will not produce accurate results. Therefore, a system which bases itself on past empirical evidence will only be accurate if that empirical evidence accurately reflects the matter being considered. If the probability of England winning the Ashes varies from series to series one will require a different model from series to series. If one is relying on past empirical evidence one may achieve a reasonable accuracy, but the model will keep on changing until the probability of England winning the Ashes is constant. Even if this model levels out at predicting 55-65% of the matches with accuracy, which will be useful for someone who wants to bet on sports matches, it is of very little use for an astrologer who uses our model. Within the context of meaningful occurrences, the rules of astrology will provide the appropriate meaning. It makes no sense to say that this meaning will only be accurate 55% of the time when what we are looking at is a unique occurrence.

This is an important point. Empirical evidence may be a useful method to develop astrological rules when a 55-65% success rate is satisfactory; perhaps when investing in financial markets, or when gambling. However, it is an inappropriate procedure for developing the rules and procedures of our model, because we are considering a unique astrological occurrence with chart and client, which is not something which can be usefully considered in terms of percentages. This does not mean that one should only follow tradition and never change astrological rules. Valens changed the rules in light of his own experience, as have other astrologers throughout history. Rules need to conform to the experience of astrologers; they must work in practice, or they are of no use. However, this is a subjective analysis

conducted by the astrologer in light of the meaningful occurrences brought together by a transcendent power during his/her practice. The astrology only has to ‘work’ in these cases. To ‘work’ in an individual case it is not necessary to show that it will ‘work’ on a universal basis. This point will be considered in more detail in chapter four. However, there is another equally important point: in some way astrology which relies on repetition, on building a data base, contravenes the ‘humility and morality’ which we made a condition of our model. To consider this in more detail we must look again at what we mean by ‘humility and morality’ and why it matters.

(ii) Humility and morality as part of the astrological model

We have put a transcendent power at the centre of our system. It is not a causal law in the sense that ‘Mars rises’ therefore ‘you will be hit on the head’. We cannot make that sort of universal claim because the information we obtain relies on the transcendent power giving it to us. That we have no right to the information, that the information we want might not be forthcoming, is implicit in our system. We need a relationship with the transcendent power, which means behaving with respect, only trying to obtain information that we could not have worked out for ourselves, and behaving in a morally correct manner. This moral requirement is normal in divinatory systems, as Alfred Huang makes clear in his book on the *I Ching*, “{the *I Ching*} is not a book used merely for telling fortunes. It gives advice as to what one should do and what one should not do. All through the ages, the Chinese have never consulted the *I Ching* lightly. People have always been instructed to adopt a correct attitude in divination. The purpose of divination is to resolve doubt and confusion. When one knows what one should do according to common sense and moral principles, then one should not consult the *I Ching*. Divine only for important questions and events, never for mean purposes or with selfish motivations.”<sup>99</sup>

Whether or not sports matches and financial markets are appropriate areas for an astrology which requires a moral approach is one matter, but the important point is that the empirical approach is completely contradictory to our approach. As Socrates makes clear, in the quotation we used in section two of this chapter, if “the answers can be found by calculating or measuring or weighing,” in other words empirical evidence, then one should not ask the question in the first place. To look at a collection of charts of similar events, or

nativities, in order to develop empirically based laws is, in effect, an attempt to make a causal law out of a transcendent power. If we put a transcendent power at the centre of our model, and admit that information gained from astrology is a gift from a higher power, then it is inconsistent to attempt to make that transcendent power into a causal law. Trying to make a transcendent power into a causal law is only consistent with a belief that astrology consists of empirical laws, and that the transcendent power is the ultimate provider of the system. For this reason the empirical approach is the antithesis of our approach. The moment that you take an empirical approach it will fall apart, because you cannot be sure that the transcendent power will respond. The moment you start testing, the tests may no longer work.

### (iii) The Historical Approach to Astrology

In the first section we made the point that our conception of astrology, freeze framing a particular moment in time in order to make various statements about matters which are connected through the astrology of that particular moment, is not the usual conception of astrology. The planets are in continual movement round the earth and many people believe that they have a continual influence on our lives. Thus, when Uranus moves into a new sign of the zodiac it means something real on the earth, and astrologers will make a series of predictions about what will happen while it remains in that particular sign. This does not create a problem for our model because an astrologer could make exactly the same predictions by taking the ingress of Uranus into a particular sign as the moment of time, and connecting it with likely future events. It is not necessary to postulate planetary rays affecting the sub-lunar sphere, or anything else. Therefore, although the conception of the two astrologers is different the actual practice is not contradictory. It is our contention that these planetary rays do not exist, and that both astrologers are relying on a transcendent power for any information obtained about the future and, consequently, the astrology of the first astrologer conforms to our astrological model.

However, some astrologers do not only make predictions when Uranus enters a new sign; they try and map out how the movement of various planets correlate with historical events.<sup>100</sup> It may be possible to correlate various inventions, or other historical events, with Uranus moving through Aquarius, or some other planet moving through some other sign, but it is going to be extraordinarily difficult to show that this is a real affect in the sense required by

science. One may be “utterly thrilled to find Giotto painted the Padua frescoes in 1305 on a Uranus (enlightening) and Neptune (spiritual/artistic) conjunction” and find that “Blissfully, next time around in 1482, they witnessed Botticelli and Perguino painting the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel.”<sup>101</sup> This is what we expect to happen. Astrologers find meaning in planetary cycles and can correlate them with events on earth. But what, exactly, is one trying to show? All art in that period was ‘enlightening’, ‘spiritual’, and ‘artistic’; it would not be difficult to find examples of similar art painted when Uranus and Neptune were not in conjunction. A personal example might illustrate the problem: at the moment that the Sun entered Libra in September 2002, Mars was rising in a square<sup>102</sup> relationship to Pluto on the nadir (IC) of the chart. It was, therefore, straight forward to make the prediction that there would be various secret scandals of a sexual nature which would come into the open during the following six months.<sup>103</sup> When the John Major and Edwina Curry secret love affair hit the news, followed by the rape allegations against John Leslie, and the Angus Deayton scandal, I could claim that I had made a correct prediction. However, there is a very large step from my claim that I made a correct prediction to any claim that anything real, in an objective sense, actually took place. I would have to show that sexual scandals of this nature are more likely to take place when Mars and Pluto are square and angular, than at any other time. We might find that sexual scandals do not always come to light when Mars and Pluto are square and angular, or we might find that they are always coming to light even when Mars and Pluto are not square and angular. A sceptic is not entitled to argue that no prediction was made, but could argue that it is not an interesting prediction, because sexual scandals, of one kind or another, are exposed every week-end in the News of the World.

It is clear where the problem lies. An astrologer, or sceptic, may ask, ‘But does Mars square Pluto, on angles, at an ingress, mean ‘secret scandals of a sexual nature’ or not?’ By ‘mean’ they usually mean, does this configuration of planets *always* mean ‘secret scandals of a sexual nature.’ This is not a question one can answer, nor should one try to answer. Each judgement must be made separately by the astrologer, and will depend on the horoscope, which may be similar to previous horoscopes but will never be exactly the same, and the context of the matter, which may be similar to past cases but will never be exactly the same.<sup>104</sup>

For this reason it is one matter to correlate planetary movements with historical events and quite another to claim a real, or objective, connection. If such a connection could be shown then the next step would be to build empirical laws on which astrological rules could be

based, which would not fit into our astrological model. However, so far no such connection has been shown. The belief behind this astrology, that there are empirical laws underlying it, is antithetical to our model, but the actual practice is not: one might look at a previous historical period, to see what happened when Uranus entered Pisces, in order to predict what will happen this time around when Uranus enters Pisces, but although the events we notice from the last historical period will have the nature of Uranus in Pisces (or we would not notice them), and the events we predict this time will have the nature of Uranus in Pisces (or we would not predict them), there is no reason to assume that exactly the same Uranus in Pisces matters will occur this time as occurred last time. In the end the astrologer has to make a judgement, and one is no more guaranteed of making a correct prediction by using past experience to make that judgement than by using an alternative methodology.

#### (iv) The Neo-Platonic Model of Astrology

There is another group of astrologers<sup>105</sup> who believed that empirical data will be found to support astrology, but also put a transcendent power at the centre of their model. They believed that there is a world soul,<sup>106</sup> and that underlying the reality of the way the world works are a series of planetary cycles; a horoscope will depict a planetary cycle at a particular stage of its development, and will “be a picture of that moment of time and a picture of the implications of that moment in time, for the process of that cycle and the cosmos as a whole.”<sup>107</sup> “Each phase in a cycle is an expression of a particular numerical archetype.”<sup>108</sup> Given that any horoscope will freeze-frame a series of different planetary cycles, all in different phases, the overall picture may be immensely complicated. It was Charles Harvey’s hope that, “By the systematic plotting of the numerous cycles for every capital and major population centre in the world it should be possible to identify the major build-up of potential at any particular time, and develop ways of assisting society to express these in the most ideal, beneficial and constructive manner.”<sup>109</sup>

This neo-Platonic view of astrology may be a more accurate conception of the practice of the early Hellenistic astrologers than our, more divinatory, conception.<sup>110</sup> There is nothing necessarily contradictory between this view and the astrological model we have developed. If

future research shows that the rules developed by Harvey and Addey are empirically viable,<sup>111</sup> and of use to society, then that is not a problem for our model, because the rules, like some of the rules of our model, are based on ‘natural laws’ which are meant to underpin the structure of the world. What is a problem for our model is that if the underlying principles do not produce the expected empirical results, then instead of ignoring the empirical results, and relying on the underlying principles, one starts changing the underlying principles so that they can produce ‘better’ empirical results. It is our contention that this will be self defeating. Implicit in our astrology is the possibility that the transcendent power will not allow you to obtain information about the future, which makes empirical test work unreliable. The problem with claiming that your underlying principles will be supported by empirical evidence, is that if they turn out not to be supported by empirical evidence, you have unnecessarily put yourself into a corner. In 1955 John Addey set out “to discover and demonstrate, if possible, a secure scientific basis for astrology.”<sup>112</sup> This has not been achieved, so one is left with three possibilities: one can keep on hoping that empirical evidence will turn up; one can drop one’s belief in the efficacy of astrology or in the Platonic principles which underlie it; or one can take the position we are taking, that empirical evidence is irrelevant. It is obviously more difficult to take this last step if you started out believing that it was of extreme importance.

#### (v) Mid-point theory and the astrology of the collective

If we consider this neo-Platonic view of astrology in more detail then we can, perhaps, understand why astrologers find difficulty with our conception of astrology as meaningful occurrences brought together by a transcendent power. It was Charles Harvey’s view that astrological principles work on a “continual basis. We can see them at work within the collective all the time.”<sup>113</sup> Thus, if one meditates, the images which come to one’s mind will reflect the planetary transits at the time of the meditation<sup>114</sup> and one can, by watching certain mid-points go over the angles of a horoscope see the “planetary pictures” unfold.<sup>115</sup> In this way astrology is a continual influence on our lives, it never stops working, which is contrary to our conception, where what we are looking at is a series of individual horoscopes.

However, there is a distinction to be drawn between the actual technique an astrologer uses and the underlying belief that the astrologer holds. Thus, there is nothing contradictory between our model and mid-point theory. Mid-points were developed by a German astrologer, Alfred Witte, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in an attempt to create a more ‘scientific’ theory of astrology. Witte based the meanings of the various mid-points on his own experiences and case histories, but the meanings he ascribed to them did not stand up to the scrutiny of his fellow astrologers. These meanings were updated, and given a psychological profile, by Reinhold Ebertin in his book *The Combination of Stellar Influences*.<sup>116</sup> Ebertin tells us “Since the publication of the post-war edition of {COSI} in 1950 many of the earlier findings have been repeatedly confirmed.”<sup>117</sup> Thus, the meanings given to the planetary combinations are based on the experiences of astrologers, and are accepted in their entirety by Harvey and Harding in *Working with Astrology*, who found, in their own practice, that they were valid. However, this validity is based on the subjective experience of astrologers; it is not empirically or scientifically based, because no empirical tests have been conducted to determine whether they remain valid under test conditions. The only part of our model which this could conflict with is the requirement for humility and reverence which implies a respect for previous tradition. That the new theory of mid-points did not conflict with this requirement is implied by the experience of these astrologers who found that mid-point theory was useful in their practice.<sup>118</sup> They ascribed meanings to the various mid-points and, from the moment for which a mid-point tree is calculated, used those meanings to describe events taking place at that moment, and future events which lead on from that moment. This practice conforms to our model.

Therefore, the issue becomes not whether mid-point theory, or any other astrological technique based on the subjective experience of astrologers, conforms to our model, but whether the belief that we are continually affected by astrological influences is either necessary or correct. We have already argued, when we discussed the stoic view in Hellenistic astrology, that it is not necessary. It is our contention that the actual practice of astrology is described adequately by our model, which does not require an astrology which continually works in all cases and in all circumstances; it does not require universal astrological laws which govern what happens on the sub-lunar sphere. However, to the astrologer, very often astrology does appear to be working continually, in all cases, and in all circumstances: whenever an astrologer erects a horoscope for a moment in which some event takes place, he/she tacitly

assumes that it will describe the event, and invariably finds that it does describe the event. This is why this view of astrology is so persuasive. However, this is exactly what we would expect with our model. The act of erecting a horoscope is an appeal for information from a transcendent power. If the astrological language that astrologers have created is useful, then it should provide information on important events that are taking place in the sub-lunar sphere.

But is this persuasive neo-Platonic view correct? If we consider the example of a meditation in which the images, or thoughts, that come to the mind, are meant to reflect the actual planetary transits, the problem remains that during those few minutes of meditation, all over the world, there were people living their lives in a variety of different ways, influenced by a variety of different matters, many of whom would appear not to be affected by the particular planetary transits taking place at that time. If someone is murdered on the street outside my house when I am reading Plato's *Symposium*, or even doing nothing much at all, we might expect the murder to be described by a horoscope erected for that moment rather better than my own experience. The argument that the astrological symbolism may also describe my experience is not persuasive; most astrologers would expect to be able to read 'murder' in the horoscope, and not 'nothing much at all'. We cannot resolve this issue, but we can make the following point: astrologers can believe what they want, but to assert that astrology works on a continual basis in obedience to unknown natural laws makes a claim about astrology which is not necessary, and which, currently, cannot be supported.

### **Section Seven: Empirical evidence and astrology**

Astrologers, in general, would like to use empirical evidence to support their statements and, as we have seen, often claim that they have it. One reason for this is that they confuse their own experience with what is required for empirical support. They see astrology 'working' on a daily basis, and believe that this is some sort of proof that astrology 'works' in an objective way, or that it will be easy to confirm their experience through empirical tests. However, to

prove that there is an effect that can be shown to be the result of an objective astrology is a difficult and arduous process in which one must avoid statistical errors and human judgment biases.<sup>119</sup> Consequently, when astrologers find something which they think provides empirical support for their subject they, naturally, draw attention to it. In the issue of the *Astrological Journal* which published the Lehman and Brady article referred to above, the Editorial claims, “The article details an objective, scientific and therefore eminently testable way of proving astrological techniques. It may also give sleepless nights to those who would see astrology relegated as a dangerous superstition.”<sup>120</sup> However, invariably they are disappointed and quickly brought down to earth. As Dean points out, to prove something, Lehman and Brady would have to settle on a set of rules and then test them against matches which were not used to develop the rules in the first place.<sup>121</sup>

When it comes to natal astrology I can think of no existing empirical evidence that even begins to support the kind of procedures that astrologers use and the statements they make. It may be true to say that astrologers would like empirical support for their subject, but they are not waiting for that support to be found before actually practising. It is my contention that the actual practice of astrology has very little to do with empirical evidence, as opposed to personal experience, and that the only reason that astrologers pretend that it has something to do with it is that scientific evidence, which effectively is empirical evidence, is the main criterion used to judge matters in the modern world. Without it your subject is unlikely to be taken seriously.

### **Section Eight: Success and accuracy as measurements of the model.**

If our criterion of success, or accuracy, is that of empirical evidence, it should be clear that it is an inappropriate test of our model. Our model is based on the unique one off experience, so the moment that you apply the necessary test conditions to determine whether the evidence is objective, you run the danger of destroying the unique one off experience and, given our requirement for humility and morality, you can no longer be certain that you will receive accurate answers.

There is, of course, another argument against testing accuracy. When astrologers try to predict the future, usually, the person for whom the prediction is made is involved with the process, which will determine whether or not that prediction will come true. If an astrologer says, “You will earn plenty of money at this job,” there is an underlying assumption that the client will actually turn up to work, and try his best to do a good job. If the astrologer is really saying, “You will earn plenty of money at this job, if you work hard, and put plenty of effort into it,” it becomes very hard to separate the part of the client’s financial success which is due to ‘fate’ from the part which is due to his own effort. If you cannot make this separation, then, there would seem to be no way to test for the accuracy of astrology. You can say after the event, “it was an accurate statement”, but you cannot say, “the astrology was accurate,” because it may have been accurate despite the astrology.

For these reasons, success in terms of accuracy is not something that we can measure, nor should we even try to measure. To approach our astrological model in this way is to make a similar mistake to Jung with his astrological tests. Jung thought synchronicity consisted of acausal events coinciding, and wanted to use his astrological experiments to prove it. If his experiments had showed any empirical support for astrology, which they did not, then using his definition of causality<sup>122</sup> he would have showed that synchronicity is causal, whereas it was meant to be an acausal principle.<sup>123</sup> We might disagree with his definition of causality, but if you are proposing an acausal principle it is futile to try and show that it is causal; it is more sensible to leave it as acausal. Of course, if it is acausal, one might ask, ‘why should we believe it will be successful?’ And if it is successful once, why should we assume that it will be successful again?’ These, and related issues, will, as we have already mentioned, be addressed in the fourth chapter of this paper.

## **Conclusion**

We have argued that the empirical approach to astrology is excluded from our model, but that most forms of astrology are not empirical. Astrological rules and procedures are not empirically based, there is little evidence to support them, and when supporting evidence does exist – Gauquelin – it has not influenced the rules and procedures actually used. This

conclusion allows us to answer the first part of the first problem that we raised in the first chapter of this paper. The problem was that there is a contradiction between the claim, which is made by many astrologers, that their subject is empirically based, and our assertion, that repeatability, which implies empirical evidence, is not required to provide meaning in a unique astrological context. In answer to this we can now say that the astrology of our model is not empirically based, nor should it be empirically based. Our model specifically excludes astrology which tries to derive its rules from empirical evidence. We accept that most astrologers would like to find empirical evidence to support the rules that they use, but it is our view that they rarely do this, and what they actually do is to use their own experience to justify their practice. Our model also excludes astrology which is necessary, in which there is no room for astrology not working. It may be true that many astrologers believe that it is necessary, although there is no empirical evidence to support such a view, but, in practice, this might only mean a disagreement on whether a horoscope drawn for the moment my neighbour hammers his wife to death while I laze in the garden, necessarily describes my experience as well as his.

The second problem we set ourselves – that as our model currently stands, any astrology is acceptable, and, therefore, any meaning is possible – will be addressed in the following chapter in which the methodology of astrology is considered in more detail.

### **Chapter Three: Astrological Methodology**

#### **Section One: A comparison of Hellenistic Methodology with Modern Methodology**

The Hellenistic astrologers were trying to obtain information about the future, while a large part of modern astrology is aimed at providing counselling help for those with psychological problems, and advice for individuals on how to fulfil their potential. Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect the methodology used by the modern astrologer to have changed from the Hellenistic era, because different information is required. In this section I intend, first, to consider the principles behind the Hellenistic model, and to determine the extent to which those principles have been violated by modern astrologers. Then I will compare the principles behind the Hellenistic method of analysing an astrological moment, or chart, in order to obtain meaning from it, with the modern method. The purpose will be to determine what type of astrological methodology can, and cannot, be accommodated by the model we are building.

When we consider the observations we made on Hellenistic astrology earlier in the paper we can, I think, find at least three general principles which lay behind their practice:<sup>124</sup>

1. Observation: in astrology, the signs are read from the physical solar system, so that the physical positions of the planets, and whether they appear to be moving forwards or backwards, or rising or setting, is important.
2. Tradition: we saw how the body of Hellenistic astrology included astrological lore which had been absorbed from other traditions, while the importance of myth shows that the ancient stories were considered to be a lexicon of knowledge which could shed light on human behaviour.
3. Greek philosophical concepts which, possibly, indicate an underlying truth to the world, but do provide a way in which one can perceive the world. For example, the metaphysical concept of numbers; the idea that each property co-exists with its opposite, so that we have feminine and masculine, positive and negative; and the elements.

If we now consider the extent to which modern astrology has violated these principles we can, I think, draw the following conclusions:

1. Observation is still important, but there is now much greater emphasis on accuracy and less emphasis on what we actually see in the night sky. However, modern astrologers

still write books about retrograde planets,<sup>125</sup> while planets on an angle (rising and setting) are still considered to be strong.

2. Many of the older astrological rules have been dropped by the modern astrologer but tradition is still important: even when modern astrologers change the meaning of the planets they still like to believe that they are only expanding the traditional meanings.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, myth has become of extreme importance in modern astrology. The ancient stories from the past are now considered to be “the richest sources of knowledge we have about these archetypal forces which are present in all people.”<sup>127</sup>
3. Greek philosophical concepts are still important. The four Aristotelian elements are used,<sup>128</sup> and the metaphysical concept of numbers is important, especially when considering the meaning of aspects.<sup>129</sup>

We can, then, conclude that the modern system has not violated the principles of Hellenistic astrology. The emphasis has changed but it, probably, would not be an exaggeration to say that the three most important factors in the modern interpretation of a birth chart are myth, the elements, and the metaphysical concept of numbers. All these have been derived from the Hellenistic era and in this, at least, we can see continuity. An astrology which violates the principles above would, I think, be an astrology which could not fit into our model. An astrology which does not take the actual positions of the planets, or which uses six elements, would be working on different principles and would be a different type of astrology. Thus, our model would exclude an astrology which only uses hypothetical planets.<sup>130</sup> That is not to say that it would be impossible to create a similar ‘hypothetical astrological model;’ in this model the planets would be found by clairvoyance and the transcendent power would be expected to respond to these hypothetical planets. However, with no necessity to observe the physical planets, we would lose both our requirement for observation, and the ritual connection with the past. Similarly, Chinese astrology uses the five Chinese elements. Our model is a model for Western astrology. For those wanting to develop a model for Chinese or Indian astrology it might be possible to remove the Greek philosophical concepts, and replace them with Chinese or Indian philosophical concepts.

When we consider the way the Hellenistic astrologers analysed a chart it is, I think, possible to find the following principles:

1. It seems to be based on the idea of two contrasting properties. Thus, planets are masculine or feminine; births are nocturnal or diurnal; we have two malefic planets and two benefic planets; we have good and bad houses; the aspects were good or bad<sup>131</sup>; the planets were either oriental or occidental<sup>132</sup>. There is always a balance, with the possibility of being negative or positive.
2. Planets are responsible for certain areas of the zodiac through rulership. It is through rulership that planetary power, and influence, is expressed.
3. The houses demarcate areas of life, but not in a systematic way. Children, for example, are found in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> houses, whereas in modern astrology they have been reduced to the 5<sup>th</sup> house. It is Schmidt's view that "Hellenistic astrologers had, in their house system, a marvellously sophisticated language for identifying and distinguishing the manifestations of fate in every area of life."<sup>133</sup> If this is correct, then the houses become a way of looking at good and bad fortune.

The idea of contrasting properties introduces the possibility of yes/no answers to a variety of matters. Complex matters can be broken up into their constituent parts, good/bad indications can be provided, allowing one, if necessary, to rebuild the constituents parts and deal with the complex issue in a clear and precise manner. This enables one to obtain specific information about the future but also to tackle the immensely complicated matter of a human life and the many matters that can occur in it.

The second principle, which is of planetary influence, inter-connects different areas of the horoscope. We have already mentioned that every planet was conditioned by certain factors, and that one of these factors was its planetary rulers, which in turn are conditioned by their planetary rulers, so that every point in the zodiac becomes interconnected. You might look at one degree of the zodiac, but that degree may have four ruling planets. Each of those ruling planets may have four ruling planets, quite apart from any other consideration. In this way Hellenistic astrology was a fully integrated system, with every area of life impinging on other areas of life.

The houses bring in the idea of fate. If the purpose of astrology was to determine one's future, what fate had in store, then one would expect that system to incorporate fate. Thus, the 5<sup>th</sup> house is good fortune, while the sixth house is bad fortune; the 11<sup>th</sup> house is good spirit, while the 12<sup>th</sup> house is bad spirit. The meanings of the houses are not always precise and, as

we have already seen, they can overlap. In this way the idea of one's fate becomes immersed with the interpretation of the other astrological factors in the chart.

When we compare this system with the modern system we can see substantial changes:

1. The balance has been lost. The outer planets have been introduced and they have taken many of the malefic qualities of Mars and Saturn,<sup>134</sup> while Mars and Saturn are now seen as more than simple malefics.<sup>135</sup> Squares can be seen as an opportunity for personal growth, while trines can be too easy. The reason is clear. Modern astrologers are interested in psychological truth, solving psychological problems, and helping people to fulfil their potential. If this is the objective, then, there is no future in viewing Saturn as a malefic; you will not be able to help someone fulfil their potential unless you view Saturn as a learning tool, something which will help you grow as an individual. The balance we find in the Hellenistic system, which allowed for precise answers, is considerably less important if, rather than trying to obtain information about the future, you are trying to indicate a new approach to life.
2. To some extent the interconnectedness has been lost. It is true that modern astrologers believe that the chart should be viewed as a holistic whole, and will complain if those researching into astrology isolate one technique, or statement. However, the fact that those researching astrology are able to isolate these techniques suggests that what we have today is a plethora of techniques which sit side by side and must, somehow, be synthesised. For example, in modern astrology it might be possible to evaluate what Mars in Cancer might mean, by looking at Mars in Cancer, and the house position of Mars. In Hellenistic astrology it would be necessary to consider the house position, aspects, the sect of the chart, and all four rulers of Mars and their condition. It becomes much more difficult to isolate an individual part of the chart.<sup>136</sup>
3. The houses no longer describe fate but are a process of psychological growth.<sup>137</sup> Again, the reason is clear; fate is of secondary importance to someone who is interested in developing their individual potential.

We can conclude that modern astrologers do not analyse a chart in the Hellenistic manner because they are interested in obtaining different information from the astrological model. What has been lost is precision, what has been gained is an ability to address the

individual psychological temperament. We can see this change when we consider how the planets are now used. I have argued above and elsewhere<sup>138</sup> that the malefic and benefic natures of Saturn, Mars, Venus and Jupiter, were part of a system intended to enable precise astrological interpretations to be made. We find in Valens that Jupiter only has benefic characteristics,<sup>139</sup> whereas in myth Jupiter was anything but always benefic. Therefore, the modern meaning of Jupiter, which relies heavily on myth, is more complex than the Hellenistic meaning, and contains much of the contradictory nature of human behaviour, which allows the modern astrologer to derive the ‘psychological truth’ from the planetary gods. If moral and psychological issues are found in the Greek myths, then there is much less need to worry about finding precise answers to specific matters. To obtain a psychological understanding, a full exploration of the myths involved will often be sufficient.

## **Section Two: Astrological meaning**

The information that you obtain from an astrological system will depend on the meaning you ascribe to it. These meanings will be changed in accordance with the culture and requirements of society. For example, prior to the discovery of the planet (or asteroid) Chiron the concept of ‘the wounded healer’ was not, as far as I know, used in astrological consultations. Now, as a result of the myth of Chiron, the planet Chiron has been ascribed with the meaning of ‘the wounded healer,’ the place in one’s life where the wound never heals<sup>140</sup>. Many astrologers find this to be a useful concept in their astrological consultations, but although it may be a useful concept for late 20<sup>th</sup> century, early 21<sup>st</sup> century, society, astrologers from previous eras were able to do without it, although, presumably, their clients were just as likely to have an area of their life in which the wound would never heal.<sup>141</sup> If the culture of our times has a place for the concept of the wounded healer then astrology can find a way to provide that meaning in the birth chart. In this way astrology is culturally determined and each culture will have an astrology which attempts to meet its requirements.

However, it does not follow from this that any astrology is possible. That would imply that you can ascribe any meaning to the astrological system but, if you want your astrology to conform to our model, this is not the case. There are, at least, four areas in which one must

follow certain rules, or guidelines, to conform to our astrological model. We will detail these four in order, and follow each with our justification for including it.

1. It is necessary to follow the general principles of our model.

If your meanings go against the general principles, which we have mentioned above, that form part of our astrological model, then you are practising an astrology which is not covered by our model. For example, to ascribe the number 3 with the meaning of ‘conflict’ so that the triplicities do not work together, and the trine is conflict rather than co-operation, is contrary to the Greek meta-physical concept of the number 3, and is contrary to our model. It is possible that an astrologer, somewhere, does ascribe 3 with the meaning of ‘conflict.’ If he/she does, then that astrology is excluded from our model, because it is based on a different set of principles.

We are not making any claim that the general principles of our model exist in the real world, or underlie reality as we know it. There may be a Platonic realm in which there is an archetypal number 6, which means harmony, or something similar, but we are not making that claim, because we do not know how the reality of such a realm could be established, one way or the other. We also recognise that other types of astrology, perhaps Indian astrology, Chinese astrology, or Japanese astrology, may work off a different set of principles, which could replace our general principles. However, we do claim that our principles are one way of looking at the world. To conceive a connection between what happens in the natural world (the sky) and the sub-lunar world, and that there are certain natural laws which underlie how the sub-lunar world operates, is a consistent way of looking at the sub-lunar world. Ultimately, it does not matter if these principles are correct, but that we use them, and the transcendent power responds to them. They form the basis of our astrological language, which will not necessarily be the same language as the language used in Chinese astrology. We are, then, proposing the use of our principles for two reasons. Firstly, they make communication with the transcendent power easier; they are clear principles from which it is possible to read information concerning a whole life; and secondly, they are a ritual, established by long practice.

2. In general one should follow established rules and procedures. Care should be taken one when you ignore existing rules.

Sometimes it will be very clear when, if you want to follow the astrological model we are creating, you must follow the existing rules of astrology. To say that Saturn means life and not death, or Mars means peace and not war, goes against astrological practice in an obvious way. An astrologer who uses Mars in this way is not following astrological rules: Mars is god of war, not peace. However, sometimes the line between following established practice and using a different technique, or ritual, which would appear to be more appropriate, is unclear. For example, the established practice among British astrologers is to use the Union of Great Britain with Ireland on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1801, as the astrological chart which has most relevance for the affairs of the United Kingdom. In his *The Book of World Horoscopes*, Nick Campion says, “I have found that this horoscope is the most useful for the United Kingdom.”<sup>142</sup>In this way, the use of this horoscope becomes a ritual. However, whenever I consider this horoscope, I wonder why Pitt’s decision, taken for security reasons during the war with France, to amalgamate the existing Union of England, Scotland and Wales, with Ireland (although the Catholic population of Ireland remained disenfranchised), should have any relevance today, when Eire is a separate country. It would ‘make more sense’ to use the horoscope for the time in 1922 when Eire became independent, but no one uses this horoscope. To start using it might be ‘more accurate,’ but it would go against established practice.

There are, at least, two reasons why it is important to follow existing rules. The first is clarity. The rules of astrology were not revealed by a divine power. They are a human construct. It has been our argument that they were not constructed in accordance with empirical evidence, and their purpose, as far as our model is concerned, is to enable communication with a transcendent power. If this is their purpose then the rules need to be clear, so that the responses can be understood. If astrologers ascribe different meanings to the same astrological configurations the language of astrology becomes unclear, and the responses will be harder to interpret.

The second reason is that our model requires morality and humility; ignoring established practice can show arrogance which conflicts with this. There can be no clear guidance on this. Rules, and the meanings ascribed to them, do need to change to reflect the requirements of society, but changes should be made with an understanding of established practice and, where possible, be made with this in mind.

### 3. Ascribing interpretations to astrological configurations should be avoided.

If you say, ‘You have your Sun at 22 degrees Cancer, the murder degree, so you will be murdered,’ then very soon you will be shown to be incorrect. The most that you can say is that, ‘You have your Sun at 22 degrees Cancer, which is the murder degree.’ You can then make an interpretation based on that. This example is clear: no system is going to work if it suggests anyone with the Sun at 22 degrees of Cancer will be murdered, because they are not. However, confusion between meaning and interpretation is common. ‘You have Mars square the Sun, you will be argumentative,’ might appear to be a meaning ascribed to this configuration, but is an interpretation based on one’s understanding of the nature of the Sun, Mars, and the square relationship between them. It is common to find this sort of interpretation in astrology books, where the author has done the interpretation for the reader. This does not matter, as long as the reader treats the interpretation as something to be used in an overall interpretation; it is a problem if the interpretation is applied directly to the astrological context.

There are two reasons for this. The first is that an interpretation implies an outcome which will be valid in all applicable cases. A claim along these lines is something which can be tested, and should be tested, or else there is no reason to accept the claim. However, our model is only concerned with the unique occurrence, so an interpretation is inappropriate unless it is directed at the particular occurrence being considered. What matters is not whether a particular meaning is true in all cases, but the astrological interpretation of each individual, unique, case. For example, we have already mentioned that Vettius Valens ascribes only benefic qualities to Jupiter: his Jupiter has no malefic qualities. This cannot be realistic, in an empirical sense, because any empirical test on what Jupiter means (or what anything means) will not come up with only benefic qualities. These unrealistic

qualities are used along with other astrological factors to make an interpretation for an individual, unique, case. The fact that the meanings which Valens ascribes to Jupiter can be shown to be empirically false does not matter, because those meanings help to create the interpretation, they are not the interpretation.

The second problem is that an interpretation removes the need for an astrologer, but our model requires an astrologer. We are postulating a dialogue between a transcendent power and an astrologer, so both are essential; the astrologer must read the signs that the transcendent power provides. How these signs will be interpreted will depend on the context of the matter being looked at. They may be interpreted in the light of past experience, but this is not necessarily the case, because each situation is unique; no situation repeats a previous situation in exactly the same way. If you put interpretations into the model then you remove the need for an astrologer; you stop the communication between astrologer and transcendent power. For this reason, using a computer programme to print out an astrological interpretation does not conform to the astrology of our model, because one is not making an interpretation for a unique occurrence.

4. The meanings that are ascribed to the model must enable the information that is required to be obtained.

There are two points to be made here. The first is that the meanings we ascribe to the astrological model become part of the language between astrologer and transcendent power. If that language is unclear, vague, or imprecise, you will receive vague, imprecise, information; if you ascribe contradictory, or unclear, meanings the information you receive will be contradictory.

The second point is that the methodology you use must reflect the complexity of the matter you are looking at. If the only astrological factor to which you ascribe the meaning of children is the domicile ruler of the 5<sup>th</sup> house, the information you receive, about children, will be much simpler than that of an astrologer who follows the Hellenistic practice of ascribing meaning of children to four houses, three lots, and several planets. It follows that it is necessary to find a balance, so that one can receive sufficient information to deal with the complexities of life in the society in which one lives, but not so much information that it becomes impossible to draw any conclusion. This fine tuning, finding

an appropriate methodology, is what we saw Valens trying to do, and is what all astrologers attempt to do. There may be more than one acceptable methodology, but it does not follow from this that all methodologies will be equally successful; often one is able to say that the results obtained from a particular methodology will be too simple. Taking the signification of children only from the domicile ruler of the 5<sup>th</sup> house is an example.

In this way we can see that our justification of astrological methodology is largely in terms of our own model, but is also dependent on the requirements of the society in which one lives, and on the complexity and context of the matter being considered. In particular, two requirements underpin this model: the dialogue between the astrologer and the transcendent power; and the moral attitude, respect for ritual, which is required. The appeal we have made to factors outside our model, that it should provide information in response to the demands of the prevailing society, and that it should be relevant to the subject being considered, makes a methodology that conforms to our model, in part, culturally relative.

The original question we asked was: if astrological rules are not empirically based, then on what, exactly, are they based? We would answer that question as follows: the rules of our model are an attempt to allow for a dialogue with a transcendent power, and to obtain information about the future from that transcendent power. They have been adapted by astrologers over the years, as a result of the demands of the societies in which those astrologers worked and practised. We are also in a position to respond to the second problem that we set ourselves: if any astrology is acceptable, to our model, and any meaning can be given to that astrology, then any meaning can be derived from our model. However, we can now say that it is not the case that any astrology will fit into our model. We have already specifically excluded astrology which develops its astrological rules only from empirically based tests, and astrology which does not conform to our general principles. In addition, we can say that it is not possible to ascribe any meaning that one wants to the astrological model. The meanings that you ascribe to it must conform to the principles of the model; in particular, they must show respect for the existing body of rules, for existing ritual, and they must allow for a dialogue between the astrologer and the transcendent power. Finally, the methodology one uses must enable you to obtain the information you require from the model.

However, these principles do show considerable flexibility, which will allow many different kinds of meaning to be derived by our astrological model. This is necessary, because the demands of astrology will change as the culture and society using that astrology changes. We are, however, still left with two questions unanswered. The sceptic might ask, 'How do you know that your model will work, or produce astrology worth having?' And, the astrologer might ask, 'How do you know that your model will be more accurate than my model?' Given that the generally accepted criterion for 'working', or 'worth', is accuracy, which consists of conducting empirical experiments, in test conditions which eliminate the possibility of artefacts, and we have already claimed that this approach is the antithesis of our approach, we cannot give a simple 'yes', or 'no', answer to these questions. They are issues which will be taken up in the last chapter of this paper.

## **Chapter Four: The Validity and Justification of the Astrological Model.**

### **Section One: The Astrological Model repeated**

I would first like to detail the astrological model as we have developed it. Our model has four basic requirements with several corollaries:

1. Transcendent power (this power brings meaningful coincidences, our conception of astrology, together.) The corollaries are: we must have the correct moral approach, a respect for ritual (what has gone before us), and an understanding that the information we want to obtain from the transcendent power is not ours by right, and that we will not necessarily receive it.
2. Horoscope (the moment of astrology): we conceive this as a ritual. There is no causal requirement to take the moment of birth for a natal horoscope, but this is the practice, the ritual. The corollary is that we should be careful not to change a ritual without good reason.
3. The astrologer: we are conceiving astrology as a dialogue between the transcendent power and the astrologer. The corollary is that there must be a dialogue; that the astrologer ascribes meanings to the astrological model, and then interprets those meanings when he/she considers the horoscope. The second corollary is that those meanings must conform to this model, and must be sufficiently clear to allow a dialogue between transcendent power and astrologer.
4. The astrology: a body of rules is required to give meaning to the events brought together by the transcendent power. This is intimately tied in with the astrologer; it is the practising astrologer who creates, or defines, the astrology through his/her practice. The rules of astrology, if the astrology is to conform to our model, should be based on the following principles: a) Observation of the sky; b) Greek philosophical concepts; c) existing tradition. If the astrology does not conform to these three conditions, then it does not fit into our model for Western astrology.

We obtain information from this model by ascribing meaning to it. However, we can only expect to obtain useful information from it if we observe the following:

1. We must respect the principles of our model. We cannot ascribe meanings that are contradictory to these principles.
2. We must respect the dialogue between astrologer and transcendent power. If we reduce the importance of the astrologer, there can be no astrological interpretation.
3. We must respect the existing rituals, by which we mean the existing astrological doctrine. If the rituals are no longer relevant to the requirements of the society in which we live, we can change them, but we must be careful in any changes that we make.
4. We must be aware that the information we receive from the model will only be as clear, and therefore as useful, as the meanings we ascribe to the model. The astrologers, by ascribing meanings to the model, create a language between themselves and the transcendent power and, therefore, must ensure that language is an effective means of communication.
5. The methodology must reflect the complexity of the matter being considered. If it is too complicated, it may be impossible to draw a conclusion; if it is too simple, the conclusion may be inadequate.

Having restated the model in this way we are now in a position to address the issues that we have left pending.

## **Section Two: The Value of Astrology**

Value is subjective. It is possible to say that Mr Smith values something for the wrong reasons – a work of conceptual art, perhaps – but it is not possible to say that Mr Smith does not value that conceptual art, if we assume he is telling us the truth. Therefore, there could be many subjective ways for an individual to obtain value from astrology.<sup>143</sup> One might find reading an astrological sun sign column in the morning a calming experience; one might find that a psychological astrological counselling session elucidates and clarifies many problems that one believes one has; one might find advice one receives from an astrologer on, say, the merits of

accepting a particular job useful, when making the decision to accept that job. There are many different ways in which an individual might obtain value from astrological advice.

The argument that sceptics of astrology tend to use, is not that one values astrology for the wrong reasons, although they believe that, but that astrology has not been shown to exist, that there are good non-astrological reasons to explain why an individual might believe what an astrologer tells them, and consequently when one visits an astrologer one is not having an astrological experience, one is, in reality, having some other sort of experience and valuing something else, perhaps, the consultation skills of the astrologer.<sup>144</sup> This enables them to say, ‘there is no value in astrology, it does not exist, you are valuing something else.’ The problem with this argument is that in the unique situation we are considering, if the astrologer is practising astrology in accordance with our model, and the client values what the astrologer is doing, then the client is valuing the experience of astrology. The astrology ‘works,’ or has value, if the client experiences that it ‘works’ or has value. It does not matter how many experiments you have conducted in astrology to show that it does not exist, because your other experiments cannot repeat the unique situation of astrologer and client that we are considering, and consequently cannot prove that the experience of that unique situation is invalid.<sup>145</sup>

It is easy to see how this error in thinking arose. An example, from outside astrology, can, perhaps, illustrate the confusion. My understanding is that it is a well known phenomenon to receive a phone call from a family member who is dead.<sup>146</sup> If I have the experience of receiving a phone call from my father, who is dead, then the experience of this phone call may appear to be exactly the same as the experience of a phone call from him when he was alive; it sounds like him, he uses the same phrases, and knows things about me that no one else knows. However, because he is dead there remains a nagging suspicion that this phone call is only a figment of my imagination. Therefore, the total experience is not exactly the same; in some important sense it is different, because I cannot be certain that it is the ‘real’ him at the other end of the line. I might want proof that it actually is him, that it is a ‘real’ experience; of course, this proof will never be forthcoming, so all that I can have is the experience. It is the same with astrology. Dean et al. believe that if they can show astrology does not exist, by which they mean it does not have a supporting body of empirical evidence, then they have showed that the astrological experience is invalid, leaving only the experience which can be explained away in some non-astrological manner. However, they have shown nothing of the kind. They can only show this if, like the case of the phone call from my father, they can show

that the existence of this body of astrology is an essential ingredient of the astrological experience. But our model does not postulate an astrology which exists in the manner meant by Dean et al. It does not postulate an astrology which consists of an empirically supported body of knowledge. The only astrology which ‘exists’, as far as our model is concerned, is the coming together of horoscope and event, which are given meaning by an astrologer using the rules of astrology. To experience that unique occurrence is to experience the working of astrology. Unlike the phone call from my father it does not require anything in addition to make it a more ‘real’ experience. We should, perhaps, point out that many astrologers believe that it is important to prove that astrology exists, in the way meant by Dean et al. and, consequently, it is easy for the sceptic to find a quotation from a well known astrologer, which they can then dismantle. The astrologer may claim, correctly, that failure to find empirical evidence in one particular area does not show that astrology does not exist, but if you follow this logic and are unable to find evidence to support astrology, eventually such a position becomes less and less tenable.<sup>147</sup>

However, a problem does arise if the astrologer wants to argue that because astrology ‘works’ in this particular case, and in many other cases that he/she has experience of, it is always going to work. Even if the astrologer knows of many cases where Mars on an angle leads to a cut on the head, and has, in the past, made successful predictions from this placement of Mars, he/she is not in a position to make a universal law out of that placement of Mars. Our model of astrology, which uses the concept of the unique occurrence in which various factors are brought together by a transcendent power, does not require, nor even allow, this kind of statement.

However, this leaves open another problem: if there is no empirical reason for believing that astrology will work, why should we visit an astrologer, or take it seriously? For the moment, we will leave this question to one side, as there are still further matters which need to be discussed on the value we obtain from astrology.

### **Section Three: The numinous in astrology**

We have put a transcendental power at the centre of our astrological model, and claimed that the dialogue between astrologer and transcendental power is a necessary condition of any astrology which conforms to our model. Therefore, it would be very strange if this sense of the numinous did not form an important part of the astrological experience.<sup>148</sup> We must first clarify what we mean by a ‘sense of the numinous.’ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines numinous as follows, “of a numen {defined elsewhere as a local presiding deity}; spiritual; indicating presence of a divinity; awe-inspiring.” Therefore, numinous usually means something spiritual, but it does not necessarily have to mean something spiritual; it could mean that something awe-inspiring, wonderful, or enchanting, has taken place.<sup>149</sup> In a similar manner to our conception of a transcendent power, it is not necessary for ‘the numinous’ to mean the presence of a God or a god. The experience of the numinous may involve a God or gods, but it may only be a human experience, and there may be good psychological reasons to explain why we have it.

Numinous is a word that many people use to describe an experience of wonder when they seem to be lifted out of everyday existence into a higher realm. It is fairly common for the word to be used to describe the experience of listening to music, especially opera; it can be an aesthetic experience, which is similar to the religious experience. But what exactly is it, and why is it important to us? It is Roger Scruton’s view that the aesthetic experience, which is subjective, “goes hand in hand with an implied idea of community,” so that it becomes a “lived encounter between object and subject, in which the subject takes on a universal significance.”<sup>150</sup> Later he gives one reason why it is important to us, “The subjective viewpoint, as we encounter it in aesthetic or religious experience, is not a retreat from others, but a search for the community in which we are truly at one with them. All that is most ‘inward’, ‘private’ and ‘holy’ in our experience is in reality most outwardly directed, most urgent and plaintive in its search for the order to which we belong, and in which we may lose ourselves.”<sup>151</sup>

We do not have to make any claim about the existence of God to accept that this experience, as Scruton describes it, as an important experience for many people. Scruton is interested in aesthetics and religion, but his thoughts apply remarkably well to the astrology that we have conceived. We are looking at astrology as a series of unique occurrences, an experience which is subjective, but through this experience you become part of a greater whole, the constantly moving planets in the solar system. When astrology ‘works’ the

individual experiences their own concerns as part of a greater order; as part of something which is both awe-inspiring and enchanting; it can be a magical, wonderful, moment, and is the reason that many people practice astrology and why many people visit astrologers. It is not, of course, a rational experience, because we cannot prove it in a rational way, but any rational explanation misses the point. As Scruton puts it, “We cannot refer it to our empirical nature, but only to the reason that transcends empirical nature, and which searches the world for a meaning that is more authoritative and more complex than the fleeting purposes of life.”<sup>152</sup>

With this in mind, we can now see why ritual is so important to our model. On the one hand it connects us to the past, to a whole community who have practised as we have practised, which connects us to something greater than ourselves.<sup>153</sup> On the other hand, because the astrology that we practice is defined by the procedures that we use, and because we are conceptualising those procedures as rituals, the actual rituals become part of the experience of astrology. If we ignore rituals we ignore our practise, we ignore our community, and something is lost. That something may, or may not, be important, but if one is not even aware of the possibility of it being important, if one simply ignores existing tradition, then not only will you lose the numinous experience, but you will be showing a lack of respect for the astrological process, and the transcendent power which we are postulating.

#### **Section Four: Rational and non-rational reasons for visiting an astrologer.**

It is not very difficult to find rational reasons to consult an astrologer. We have already said, following Socrates, that a large part of astrology is concerned with trying to obtain information about the future which cannot be obtained from empirical science, by “calculation or measuring or weighing.” Astrology is not in competition with science. If science can be used to obtain the information we want, then we should use science, and not astrology. If we are using astrology to find out about matters which we can not otherwise know about, it makes rational sense for someone who wants to find out about such a matter to consult an astrologer, or other diviner, because he has no other way of finding out anything about it. If it is January, and I want to hold a garden party on either July 30<sup>th</sup> or July 31<sup>st</sup>, and want sun rather than rain, the weather forecasters will be of little use. In such circumstances I am no worse off using

astrology. Even if I believe there is nothing in astrology, it would be worth consulting an astrologer, because I may be wrong, there may be something in astrology, and if I am not wrong I am no worse off. There are many other rational reasons along these lines: my friend found it useful, so, even though I don't believe in astrology, I might find it useful.

However, this line of argument does not deal with the kernel of the matter. It may be a rational argument, but it is not persuasive; there must be a much stronger reason for us to visit an astrologer. We have said that the astrological experience often includes a numinous experience, in which the subject can feel enchanted, or part of a greater whole. We have not said that there is higher realm behind this experience, it may only be a figment of our imagination, but we do say that it is important for the individual who experiences it.<sup>154</sup> If astrology can provide this experience then it is a very good reason to consult an astrologer. We do not know how many people, if they visited an astrologer, would find value from the resulting experience. In my own study, of a small service company based in Middlesbrough, about 49% of the participants expressed some belief in astrology.<sup>155</sup> If other questionnaires support this level of belief in astrology, and if it could be shown that one of the main reasons for this belief is a desire for something mystical or enchanting in life, then it could be that that a very substantial minority of the country would find value in the astrological experience. They might find that through the astrological experience they felt connected to a greater whole, to a community, or, to borrow Scruton's words, "the order to which we belong, and in which we may lose ourselves." One advantage of the astrological experience is that it does not bring with it all the trappings of an organised religion, but can accommodate different religious positions. Modern commentators are derogatory about New Age spiritualism, "often a pick-and-mix involving some tincture of astrology, feng shui, herbalism, and much more besides,"<sup>156</sup> without, apparently, understanding that many people still feel a need for the kind of numinous experience described by Scruton.

### **Section Five: Belief in astrology**

These are reasons why one might consult an astrologer, but they are not reasons to believe in astrology. The issue of belief is a complex one. You can have a rational belief, in which you

refer to a set of facts, but if someone shows you a different set of facts, you will change your belief. I might believe the Battle of Hastings took place at Hastings, until I visit the actual site of the battle and discover it took place at Battle. Equally, I could have a rational belief, based on a set of facts, which I will not change even if shown another set of facts, because there is no accepted criteria on what set of facts will answer the question. Arguments about the best player in a soccer team fall into this category. Then there is religious belief which is, usually, not based on rational criteria. When we consider astrology, the criteria that seems to have been agreed, around thirty years ago, by both astrologers and scientists, is the criteria of empirical evidence. Apart from the quotation from John Addey earlier in this paper, Dean et al. quote from the Urania Trust, “which holds that “Astrology is in fact one of the great primary sciences. Once developed, astrology holds a key too many of humanity’s most pressing problems: in holistic medicine, in psychology, in economics, in meteorology, in sociology, in international affairs, and in many other areas.”<sup>157</sup>If astrology is a science, then scientific criteria, empirical evidence, presumably, has to apply.

The astrology of our model rejects this criterion for reasons that should be clear. Therefore, we will never reach agreement with those who are only prepared to use empirical evidence as a rational basis for belief. We cannot say to them that they should believe in astrology, because their criteria are different to our criteria. What, then, are our criteria? We do not know why people believe in astrology; I do not know why 49% of those questioned in my study believe, at least a little, in astrology and, consequently, I am not in a position to give criteria for belief in astrology. However, I can give criteria of what might be involved for someone who believes in the astrology of our model. We have put a transcendent power at the centre of our astrological model, claimed that the dialogue between astrologer and transcendent power is an essential part of it, and argued that an important part of the astrological experience is a numinous experience. The criteria for a belief in such a system would seem to consist of at least two things:

1. A disposition to believe that such a transcendent power could exist, and that it would be possible to have a dialogue with it, even if that dialogue is only through signs.
2. A willingness to accept that the experience of the numinous actually occurs during the astrological process.

We might say that if you accept, or believe in, these two criteria it would be rational to accept our astrological model. If you reject the first criterion and dismiss the second criterion, or claim never to have experienced it, then there is no reason for you to believe in the astrology of our model. For those, who accept the first criterion, but have never experienced the second, we can suggest that they will experience the second if they consult an astrologer who practises the astrology of our model. And finally, to those who have experienced the second, but do not accept the first, we would ask them to explain how their astrology actually works.

We have, however, still avoided two issues. First, with this conception of astrology as unique occurrences, in which empirical evidence has no part to play, why should we assume that if X has a consultation with Y which ‘works’, that when X has a consultation with Z it will also ‘work’? And second, why will this model give better results than any other astrological model? These are issues which concern the worth and purpose of our model as a whole, and I would like to consider them in the next three sections.

### **Section Six: The practical use of the model**

It was mentioned in the introduction that our model was not a theory of accuracy and that it is our contention that a theory of accuracy is inappropriate. We agree that many astrologers do, apparently, believe that a theory of accuracy for astrology is important, but contend that because astrological rules and procedures are not empirically based, a theory of accuracy will not accurately describe the astrological process. This will, using Dean’s criterion, make it “useless” as a theory because it fails to “Explain the observations.”<sup>158</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to propose a model which will accurately describe the astrology that is practiced. The purpose of our model is to explain two things:

1. What the astrological process consists of. What astrologers are actually doing when they engage in, and practice, their astrology.
2. To explain how the rules of astrology have been derived, and the basis for determining what is an acceptable rule and what is not an acceptable rule.

The use of such a model is clear: it gives clarity to the astrological process, so that a serious discussion can take on a variety of matters, from what type of astrological inquiries are appropriate, to what type of rules are likely to produce the information required. The problem of the model is also clear. We have no apparent way to determine whether the model will be accurate over a long period of time, and no apparent way to determine whether one rule is right and another rule is wrong. These are the two issues that we have so far avoided, which we must now address.

### **Section Seven: Should we expect astrology to ‘work’?**

I have claimed that in an individual occurrence we can determine whether the astrological advice given is accurate, but that we have no right to draw any universal conclusions. Therefore, it could be argued that even if one individual occurrence is accurate, it does not follow that the next, similar, occurrence will be accurate, and there is no rational reason for me to believe that it will be accurate. We have all known, since Hume, that if X is followed by Y, it does not logically follow that next time X will be followed by Y. However, for most people empirical evidence is sufficient to say that something is rationally certain to occur. Definitions of what is certain will vary but for most people it is certain that if one drops a pen it will fall to the ground, although it is not logical certain. However, we have made it quite clear that the astrology of our model is not causal, and that it is not certain. Therefore, we cannot be certain that next time X meets Z the astrology will ‘work’. Our belief that it will work is not based on an empirical study of the number of successes versus the number of failures in the past<sup>159</sup> but on a view of the world that contains, at least, the first criterion of the two criteria mentioned above for a belief in our astrology: a belief that there is a transcendent power which will make it work. That belief is not an irrational belief, pulled out of thin air, but a conception of the world that rests on our experience of the world. This experience will include our own personal experience of astrology working, and our own understanding of the universe, but as we cannot insist that others accept our own subjective experiences, ultimately, to borrow Scruton’s words, this conception is one which “transcends empirical nature, and which searches the world for a meaning that is more authoritative and more complete.”

### **Section Eight: Distinguishing between different models of astrology.**

We justified our methodology by referring to our own model, to the matter being considered, and to culture of the prevailing society. Therefore, we can legitimately use the rules and procedure of our model to exclude from it astrology which does not conform to our requirements, but we cannot use these rules and procedures to say that our rules are right and their rules are wrong. This point we concede. However, we argued, in the third chapter of this paper, that any methodology must be able to provide information which is relevant to a particular astrological matter being considered. The methodology should be neither too complicated nor too simple. This requirement was incorporated into our model. It is a requirement for relevance and for a capacity to provide appropriate answers, or information, to the astrological matter being considered. Therefore, it is not dependent on our model and is a criterion that we can use to distinguish one astrological methodology from another astrological methodology. We can insist that all astrological methodologies should be able to show that they are able to provide information relevant for a particular astrological matter. I may not be able to say ‘that rule breaks the Greek principle of 3 and is therefore wrong,’ but I can say, ‘with those rules you will not be able to determine when Mary will marry,’ if the rules being used are incapable of making that sort of prediction. Equally, I can say, ‘those rules will bring contradictory results.’

We have said that empirical evidence shall not be used to develop astrological rules, but we have argued that personal experience should be used to fine tune one’s methodology. This is what Valens did and is what all astrologers should do. In her review of astro-sleuthing contests T. Patrick Davis says, “...I was distressed to find that, when methods had clearly failed, astrologers continued to use them as though nothing had happened, while methods showing superiority were ignored.”<sup>160</sup> We have said that the astrology of our model may not work under test conditions, but entering an astro-sleuthing contest, as a way to hone your skills, will not fail the morality criterion that we set. Socrates makes it quite plain that, to repeat a quotation used above, “Nothing that is really good and admirable is granted by the gods to men without some effort and application.”<sup>161</sup> However, Joanna Ashmun’s review of

astrology on the internet suggests that this does not happen. The standard of intellectual debate appears to be very low and, according to her, “Nothing is resolved or changed. No standards of practice are worked out. The way astrologers treat researchers and sceptics is just the way they treat other astrologers who disagree with them – continuing on as if they and their disagreements never existed.”<sup>162</sup> This then, is one criterion that we can use: it is not acceptable for astrologers to say, ‘it works for me’, and ignore everything that goes on around them. The methodology that an astrologer uses must be able to provide information which is relevant to the matter being considered.

### **Section Nine: Final thoughts on the transcendent power.**

Postulating a transcendent power in a secular world, within an academic context, creates an uncomfortable feeling because it is a claim that can never be proved. However, if we are going to explain the astrological process it is one that I believe is necessary. A material cause has not yet been found to explain astrology, and it is my view that one is unlikely to be found.

Equally, I do not believe a natural, or psychological explanation, can be used to explain the astrological process. It might be possible to explain a religious experience in psychological terms, but the astrological process, as I have conceived it, includes the coming together of a horoscope and certain events, which are given meaning by an astrologer using the rules of astrology. This cannot be explained in a psychological manner, because the rules of astrology, although relative to the model we have created, and the prevailing culture, are objective to the astrologer.

It might be possible to provide an explanation of astrology which explains the coming together of these occurrences as meaningless coincidences and a psychological explanation for the astrological experience. However, the problem with this as an explanation is that the only way that these occurrences can be considered as meaningless is if you take verification on a universal basis as your criterion of meaning. We have argued earlier that we can have meaning within the context of a unique occurrence, which is only applicable to that context. Therefore, I do not see how this meaning can be explained away by a universal criterion of meaning. For example, a horary astrologer might, in answer to a query about a lost cat, say ‘your cat will be

found in the barn' and the cat is found in the barn. One can say that this has no universal meaning by referring to similar cases when the cat is not in the barn, or, possibly, other examples of horary which do not work, but it does not explain why it had meaning in this individual case, or what happened in this individual case where the astrology worked.<sup>163</sup> I might argue that an example of horary astrology working is not proof of astrology, but that argument is not an explanation of an individual case where the astrology does work. If all I can do is to dismiss it, explain it away, then I am not providing an explanation of that occurrence, I am saying that occurrence is irrelevant, has no meaning outside that occurrence, which is something different. If this is the case, if it is impossible to give a natural explanation of the individual case of astrology working, then given that we have argued that the astrological process consists of these individual occurrences in which astrology does work, it follows that one cannot provide an adequate explanation of astrology without postulating a transcendent power.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper we have used Jung's concept of meaningful coincidences to develop an astrological model, which describes the astrological process, and clarifies the way in which astrological rules are constructed. We have argued for a non causal astrology which is not guaranteed to work, in which the astrological process consists of a unique moment where events are brought together by a transcendent power, and given meaning through the rules of astrology. This is contrary to the 'continual influence' model preferred by most astrologers, but we have argued that it describes the astrological process which most of those astrologers engage in. Our approach to astrology is antithetical to an empirical approach to astrology. This has the advantage of avoiding the sceptical attack on astrology, which is only concerned with whether it has empirical support, but has the disadvantage of making astrological rules relative to the principles used to construct them, and allows for no universal claims for the accuracy of astrology. We have argued that it does not follow from the former that any astrology is acceptable, and that the latter has no impact on the actual astrological experience. The value that individuals find in astrology is subjective, but we have suggested that, often, an

important component of that value is a numinous experience in which the individual has the experience of being connected to a wider community.

[21,140 excluding abstract, table of contents, and quotations.]

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Xenophon. *The Persian Expedition*. Trans. Rex Warner, London, Penguin, 1949.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Dean, “Key Topic 3- Theories of Astrology”, *Correlation*, vol.15, no. 1, pp17-52.

<sup>2</sup> Dean, *ibid*, p20.

<sup>3</sup> Brockbank, “Jung’s theory of synchronicity”.

<sup>4</sup> What is accepted scientific practice is never completely clear. Perhaps, the best summary of what is required can be found in Dean’s *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology*, p88-117.

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Cornelius’ book, *The Moment of Astrology*, which takes a non-causal divinatory approach to astrology, was originally published in 1994.

<sup>6</sup> If astrology is necessary it is probably true to say that it must have empirical support, or else there would be no way to determine the existence of any universal laws which underlie it. Therefore, there may only be one type of astrology which does not fit into my model.

<sup>7</sup> See Jung’s *Synchronicity: An acausal Connecting Principle*, p110.

<sup>8</sup> For the full theory see Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*; for a shortened version see Ayer, *The Central Questions of Philosophy*, pp22-43.

<sup>9</sup> When an astrologer makes a statement about the future of someone’s life, there is a complication in the verification process, because that person will be involved in determining whether or not the statement becomes true. However, verification is still possible.

<sup>10</sup> Dean, *Correlation*, Vol. 14, No.2, p17.

<sup>11</sup> There are many examples of this claim in astrological literature. Perhaps, the clearest statement of this claim is Julia Parker’s in her 2002 Carter Memorial Lecture,... “it is very reassuring that we can confidently tell any sceptic or client that every statement we make has the backing of empirical research...” *The Astrological Journal*, Vol.44 No. 5, p8.

<sup>12</sup> Elway, *Cosmic Loom*, p89.

<sup>13</sup> The most important of these texts were attributed to Nchepso and Petosris, a sixth century BCE Egyptian king and priest respectively, and to Hermes Trismegistus.

<sup>14</sup> This is the view of Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, p427. There seems to be general consensus on this timing.

<sup>15</sup> See Holden, *A History of Horoscopic Astrology*, p12-14 for a summary.

<sup>16</sup> Holden, *ibid*. p12.

<sup>17</sup> This is the concept of sect. If the sun was above the horizon at the time of birth, the birth was considered to be diurnal, if the sun was below the horizon at the time of birth, the birth was considered to be nocturnal. Mars was considered more malefic for a diurnal birth than for a nocturnal birth. See Hephaistio, *Apotelesmatics*, Bk 2, p91.

<sup>18</sup> A planet is stronger if it is rising, culminating, setting, or at the nadir.

<sup>19</sup> A planet was considered to be stronger if its apparent motion in the sky was direct, as opposed to backwards, and if it was moving quickly.

<sup>20</sup> The time that it took a sign of the zodiac to rise past the horizon was used in order to time predictions. See Vettius Valens, *The Anthology* Bk 7.

<sup>21</sup> Each planet had a minor time period: Saturn 30 years; Jupiter 12 years; Mars 15 years; the Sun 19 years; Venus 8 years; Mercury 20 years; the Moon 25 years. These were important for the timing of events, and do have an astronomical basis. See Hand, *Introduction to Vettius Valen’s Anthology Book 2*, p (v).

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<sup>22</sup> We can only speculate on why the Sun was said to be the ruler of Leo and the Moon of Cancer. However, given this starting point it is clear the rulers for the balance of the signs are determined by correlating the distance of the signs from Leo/Cancer with the distance of the ruling planet to the Sun. Thus, the closest planet to the Sun, Mercury, rules the closest signs to Cancer/Leo, which are Gemini and Virgo. In this way Venus rules Taurus and Libra; Mars rules Aries and Scorpio; Jupiter rules Pisces and Sagittarius; while Saturn rules Aquarius and Capricorn.

<sup>23</sup> In determining the signification of the planets we cannot ignore myth. Thus, Mars rules wars and Venus rules love. However, myth is not the only determinant of planetary significance in Hellenistic astrology. See Brockbank, "Planetary signification from the second century until the present day."

<sup>24</sup> See Holden, *A history of horoscopic astrology*, p13.

<sup>25</sup> For the Hellenistic astrologers, planets were in aspect if they were two, three, four, or six signs apart. Unlike later astrologers, the Greek astrologers used aspects by signs and not by degrees. The malefic aspects are determined by the numbers four, (square), and two, (opposition), whereas the harmonious aspects are determined by the numbers three, (trine), and six, (sextile). The idea of using whole numbers to determine aspects and, to some extent, the meaning of those aspects, was drawn from the Pythagorean concept of numbers, in which numbers are given mystical or occult meanings. An elucidation of this can be found in Book 3 of Thomas Taylor's *The Theoretical Arithmetic of the Pythagoreans*. However, this Pythagorean concept of numbers is not the only explanation of the meaning of aspects. Probably more important are the characteristics of the signs of the zodiac. The sextile is harmonious because it links masculine signs with masculine signs, and feminine signs with feminine signs, while the trine is benefic because it links signs of the same elemental nature. In contrast, squares are malefic because they are linking signs of a different elemental nature, and a different gender. However, neither this, nor the Pythagorean concept of numbers, can be used to explain the opposition, because the number 2 was considered to be harmonious, while the opposition links signs of the same gender. To explain the opposition we have to refer to what can be seen in the sky. The opposition was disharmonious because the two planets were physically opposite.

<sup>26</sup> Aries, Leo and Sagittarius were considered fire signs; Gemini, Libra and Aquarius air signs; Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn earth signs; Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces water signs.

<sup>27</sup> Each sign was divided into three segments of 10 degrees. Each different segment meant a different destiny.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Hephaistio, *Apotelesmatics Book 1*, pp53-58, where the procedures seem to be derived from ancient Egyptian sources. In Vettius Valens we find much lore about the Moon which does not fit well with the rest of his system. It could derive from Hellenistic times but it could be much older.

<sup>29</sup> Each sign was divided into five unequal parts ruled by Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn in a variety of different orders.

<sup>30</sup> See Firmicus, *Ancient Astrology Theory and Practice*, p163, for an example.

<sup>31</sup> A lot was formed by the distance between two points, usually planets, being projected from a third point, usually the Ascendant. The new point, or lot, was significant for an issue concerning the two planets used to construct it.

<sup>32</sup> The arc between the two planets used to construct a lot has significance when projected from a third point. However, it is not clear why it should have significance.

<sup>33</sup> The twelve houses were responsible for various areas of life, such as, marriage, work, and home. The original system had the first house as the sign in which the ascendant fell, and thereafter the other houses correlated with the signs in zodiacal order.

<sup>34</sup> Planets might rule a part of the zodiac in four different ways. Firstly, domicile rulership, the Sun and Moon ruled one sign, and the other planets two signs. Secondly, exaltation rulership, with each of the planets ruling one sign through exaltation. Thirdly, triplicity rulership; the signs were divided into four groups of three called triplicities, depending on the element they were meant to correlate with, and each triplicity had three planetary rulers. And fourthly, bound rulership; all the planets, except the Sun and Moon, ruled a certain part of each zodiacal sign, by bound rulership. In Medieval astrology there was a ranking of importance between the different types of rulership, but in Hellenistic astrology they all had equal power.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Valens tells us in *The Anthology Books 5 and 6*, p63. “I have arranged together many and astonishing things from the ancients, which have the power to persuade those who read them, repeating that the ancients set forth many teachings which are hard to solve and enigmatical...” Or, in *The Anthology Book 2, Part I*, p74, where he says, “Since the ancients wrote obscurely about the matter of injury, we will give a clearer explanation.”

<sup>36</sup> Vettius Valens, *ibid.* p 1.

<sup>37</sup> Vettius Valens, *The Anthology Books 5 and 6*, p28.

<sup>38</sup> For example, if the Mid-heaven, which is normally associated with career and reputation falls in 9<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> whole sign houses, which are normally associated with other matters then, Valens tell us, the house in which the Mid-heaven falls, be it the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> house, will, in addition, take on the characteristics of the Mid-heaven. See, Valens *The Anthology Books 5 and 6*, p30.

<sup>39</sup> Valens, *The Anthology Book 4*, p 22.

<sup>40</sup> Valens, *ibid.* p23.

<sup>41</sup> Valens preferred method is profections, in which the planets are moved forward by one sign each year. See Valens, *ibid.* pp23-32.

<sup>42</sup> Murphy, “The Nine-Year Time-Lord System,” *The Mountain Astrologer*, Feb/Mar 2000.

<sup>43</sup> Of particular importance to the astrological tradition is Ptolemy (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE), as his *Tetrabiblos* was extremely influential. However, it is likely that Ptolemy was attempting a complete rationalisation of astrological techniques and procedures, and therefore may not reflect the sort of astrology actually developed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Schmidt, who has translated many of the Hellenistic astrologers, believes that one complete intelligible system was created.

<sup>45</sup> For interest in mystery cults, oracles and magic during this period see Green, *Alexander to Actium*, Chapter 33. According to Green “many oracles took on a new lease of life during the Hellenistic period.” And at Delphi, “...private consultations, no less predictably, sky rocketed.” P593-4.

<sup>46</sup> We find Valen’s stoic views throughout the *Anthology*. For example, from *The Anthology Book 5*, p7, “For the divine, having wished man to know the future ahead of time, has brought forth into light the knowledge through which each who has foreknowledge about that which concerns him is more cheerfully restored to the good, and more nobly delivered to evil...At any rate, on this view those who are being initiated into this study because they desire foreknowledge will be helped by not being wearied with vain hopes, and by accepting painful, sleepless trials, and by not being frivolously in love with the impossible, or again by the achieving of expectations in the benevolence of time though they are carried away with eagerness.”

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<sup>47</sup> One example is Green in *Alexander to Actium*. He lists questions popular at Delphi, “Am I to be divorced from my wife? Have I been poisoned? Shall I get my property?” And then concludes, “In an uncertain world, where men were increasingly loath to be responsible for their own decisions, and indeed often felt themselves mere puppets, jerked from point to point by the requirements of a Fate as inscrutable as it was inflexible, divine oracle fiat was one way of having the future mapped out on the individual’s behalf. What was fixed by Fate could, given especial skills or insights, be predicted. It might not be what one wanted to hear; but forewarned at least was forearmed.” However, you can only draw this conclusion if the answers given were in a matter of fact ‘Yes/No’ form. It would be possible to respond to these questions (with the exception of the case of poison which is about a past event) in a way that would not give the person asking the question a fixed future, but would enable them to take charge of their own lives and to work with fate. ‘Yes, the gods will look on you with favour if you try and get your property, but you will have to do X, Y, Z, if you are going to be successful.’ Green, who is completely dismissive of divination and mystery cults in general, does not tell us what replies the oracles gave.

<sup>48</sup> In this paper, when I refer to Socrates, or Socratic, I am referring to the Socrates we find in Xenophon. The various essays we find in *Conversations of Socrates* do read as if Xenophon is trying to represent the views of the real Socrates, but we know, from *The Persian Expedition*, how important divination was to Xenophon, so it is possible that he has misrepresented Socrates position.

<sup>49</sup> Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates*, p193

<sup>50</sup> Xenophon, *ibid*, p 194.

<sup>51</sup> Xenophon, *op cit*. p70.

<sup>52</sup> Valens, *The Anthology, Book 5 and 6*, p63.

<sup>53</sup> Valens, *The Anthology, Book 5 and 6*, p22.

<sup>54</sup> Valens, *ibid*, p21.

<sup>55</sup> Valens, *The Anthology, Book7*, p2.

<sup>56</sup> It is not clear exactly what Valens position was. He says, on page 21 of *The Anthology, Book 5*, “it is impossible to gain a total victory over some original foundation {of the nativity} with prayers or sacrifices...” which seems to imply that you can change part of your destiny by prayer and sacrifice. The techniques he uses are anything but mechanistic because they require continual human judgment. For example, Valens tells us that a house is significant for its own matters and for the matters for the house opposite (*The Anthology Book 4*, p34), but if the MC does not fall in the 10<sup>th</sup> house, but the 9<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> house instead, then it will also be significant for the matters of that house as well as the 10<sup>th</sup> house, (*The Anthology Book 5 and 6*, p30; also see footnote 38 above) and, although he does not say so, presumably the house opposite that. In this way a planet in a house could be significant for up to four different house meanings. This is anything but mechanistic in its approach.

<sup>57</sup> Schmidt has been working on his book, *The System of Hermes*, and a 48 x 90 minute tape set for several years.

<sup>58</sup> This synopsis of Schmidt’s view is made from various tapes of his on Hellenistic astrology that I have listened to. It is likely that his latest position has changed, and I am not confident that I understand how Schmidt defines divination. He appears to distinguish between reading signs and participating in a larger consciousness. An astrologer is reading signs and not participating in a larger consciousness and, therefore, is not divining. However, whether or not we can participate in a larger consciousness is something we do not know, and whether there is a divine entity is something we do not know. Therefore, what we actually mean by divination,

here on earth, is the reading of signs, which we assume, correctly or incorrectly, have been given to us to read by a divine power.

<sup>59</sup> Xenophon makes it clear that Socrates believed the divine does communicate with us in the sub-lunar sphere. When talking of omens “Socrates asserted what he actually believed: he said that the divine does the communicating.” *Conversations of Socrates*, p68-9.

<sup>60</sup> It is possible that Robert Schmidt will show that there is one coherent system behind Hellenistic astrology but, as footnote 23 shows, actual techniques and procedures seem to have been influenced by many different ideas. In addition, there is considerable lore which has no apparent rationale basis. For example, it is hard to see what natural law would give rise to the importance of the bounds.

<sup>61</sup> Apart from the example of Valens in footnote 54 above, consider how the ‘condition’ of a planet was determined, which is detailed in the main text. There will be many different ways to interpret the astrological rules.

<sup>62</sup> In divinatory astrology, to the Greeks katarche but to the modern horary astrology, a horoscope is not always considered fit to be judged; there are elaborate rules to determine whether or not a horoscope is “radical.” If some charts cannot be judged, then it is difficult to see how the practice could conform to universal ‘Platonic’ laws. It is possible that this is why Ptolemy, who put the four Aristotelian qualities at the centre of his model, does not include divinatory astrology in the *Tetrabiblos*, while Valens’ *Anthology* contains no rules for katarche astrology, although he does mention inceptions, in which one chooses a moment to start an appropriate activity, which is a form of katarche astrology. However, it would be incorrect to assume that divinatory astrology was unimportant in the Hellenistic era. Dorotheus (1<sup>st</sup> century CE) includes a chapter on horary in his *Carmen Astrologicum*, while Book 3 of Hephaestio’s *Apotelesmatics*, which has not been translated into English, is on horary.

<sup>63</sup> For example, there is nothing that Valens does in his astrology which conflicts with a Socratic model of astrology.

<sup>64</sup> A chart drawn each for the moment that a native’s sun returns to the same degree as at the time of birth is meant to give information on the following year.

<sup>65</sup> From an explanation of some of these systems see Brockbank, “Time Lords in Hellenistic Astrology, part 1” in *The Astrological Journal*, vol. 43, no 3, May/June 2001, and “Time Lords in Hellenistic Astrology, part 2” in *The Astrological Journal*, vol. 43, no 4, July/August 2001.

<sup>66</sup> See footnote 41 above.

<sup>67</sup> Planets in the sky at the same degree as a planet in a natal chart are said to be transiting that planet.

<sup>68</sup> A method of moving the natal planets through the zodiac in order to make future predictions.

<sup>69</sup> Finding significance in the mid-point between two planets.

<sup>70</sup> A technique which has arrived with computers and prints which maps the lines on which the planets are rising and setting throughout the world.

<sup>71</sup> For a good summary of this process see George, “A Golden Thread.” *The Mountain Astrologer*, Aug/Sept 2003.

<sup>72</sup> Brockbank, “The Succedent Houses.”

<sup>73</sup> Brockbank, “Planetary signification from Ptolemy to the present day.”

<sup>74</sup> Brockbank, *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Brockbank, *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Sasportas, *The Twelve Houses*, p98.

<sup>77</sup> For Valens on the houses see *The Anthology Book 4*, p32-33. The significations that he gives for the 1<sup>st</sup> house are, “life, helm, body, breath” and for the 12<sup>th</sup> house “place of foreign

countries, enmities, slaves, injuries, dangers, courts of judgment, ailments, death, weakness.” For all the house meanings used in the Hellenistic era see Schmidt, “Facets of Fate: The Rationale Underlying the Hellenistic System of Houses”, *Mountain Astrologer* Dec 1999/Jan 2000.

<sup>78</sup> Brockbank, “Planetary signification from Ptolemy to the present day.”

<sup>79</sup> For a critical overview of these theories see Dean, “Key Topic 3- Theories of Astrology”, *Correlation* Vol.15 No1

<sup>80</sup> McGillon, *The Opening Eye*, which suggests the pineal gland prior birth, could sense the signals from the planets.

<sup>81</sup> Seymour, *Astrology: The Evidence of Science*, which suggests that there is resonance between planetary tides and the magnetosphere.

<sup>82</sup> See Brockbank, “Jung’s theory of Synchronicity.”

<sup>83</sup> Gauquelin found, for example, that eminent sportsmen, had a higher than expected chance of having Mars rising in their natal chart

<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately there is no one place where one can find all the empirical experiments on astrology, and there is no study which considers them in detail to determine what these experiments show and whether they test what the experimenters claim that they are testing.

<sup>85</sup> A recent example can be found in Marjorie Orr’s *The Astrological History of the World*, p7-11. In trying to explain how astrology works she says “that one part of the explanation for astrology must be geophysical or astrophysical” and concludes that “mystical mathematics may yet prove to be the ultimate answer.” This, in effect, says that we do not know how it works, so we are left with her first assertion, where she relies, as so many astrologers do, on empirical evidence, “Modern mainstream science in its arrogance assumes that what cannot be explained does not exist. This book says: look at the evidence.” The problem is that her evidence will not be accepted by empirical scientists as evidence of anything.

<sup>86</sup> By ‘researchers’ I am referring to Dean et al. and the other contributors to the *Astrology and Science* web-site.

<sup>87</sup> Gauquelin, *Neo-Astrology: A Copernican Revolution*.

<sup>88</sup> For a non-causal, but scientific, explanation, see Roberts “Going with the Flow: the Message of Astrology” in *Correlation* Vol.21 No 2. In this article Roberts “argues for a non-causal explanation of the working of astrology and bases his argument on the evidence of ‘entanglement’...”

<sup>89</sup> Xenophon, *Conversations with Socrates*, p163.

<sup>90</sup> Dean et al. *Correlation*, Vol. 15 No 1.

<sup>91</sup> Brockbank, “The Sceptical attack of Dean et al. on astrology.”

<sup>92</sup> Jung did not postulate a transcendental cause for his theory of Synchronicity because it is not demonstrable. See Jung’s *Synchronicity: An acausal principle*, p30. However, all his attempts to provide a natural explanation of synchronicity fail. See Brockbank, “Jung’s theory of Synchronicity.”

<sup>93</sup> However, some of these approaches are, I believe, inconsistent with horary astrology.

<sup>94</sup> Lehman and Brady, *Astrological Journal*, Vol.39 No.3.

<sup>95</sup> They have a separate set of rules to determine whether the match will be drawn.

<sup>96</sup> Lehman and Brady, *ibid*, p43

<sup>97</sup> Lehman and Brady, *ibid*, p33.

<sup>98</sup> Lehman and Brady, *ibid*, p43.

<sup>99</sup> Huang, *The Complete I Ching*, p3.

<sup>100</sup> Marjorie Orr’s book, *The Astrological History of the World*, is an attempt to do this.

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<sup>101</sup> Marjorie Orr, *ibid*, p7.

<sup>102</sup> Both were on an angle, making them very strong, and were 90 degrees apart which is considered a malefic square.

<sup>103</sup> Using medieval rules of astrology the Libra ingress would have an influence of six months. Mars square Pluto can involve sex and violence, and Pluto can uncover secrets.

<sup>104</sup> Perhaps, if there is a next time, one will judge ‘terrorist attack (Mars on the Ascendant), using nuclear bombs (Pluto on the IC)’.

<sup>105</sup> In particular I am thinking of John Addey and Charles Harvey.

<sup>106</sup> See Harvey’s book, *Anima Mundi*.

<sup>107</sup> Harvey, “Cycles in Practice”, *Mundane Astrology* p209.

<sup>108</sup> Harvey, *ibid*, p199.

<sup>109</sup> Harvey, *op.cit.* p208.

<sup>110</sup> It should be pointed out that the cycles of Harvey and Addey are completely different to the procedures used by the Hellenistic astrologers. I know from personal discussions with Charles Harvey that he thought these cycles were underlying truths which had always been in existence but, whether or not this is true, the fact remains that they are a modern idea and, therefore, a modern construct.

<sup>111</sup> So far empirical support has not been found.

<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Dean et al. “Key Topic 3: Theories of Astrology,” *Correlation* Vol. 15. No 1.

<sup>113</sup> Harvey, *Anima Mundi* p37.

<sup>114</sup> Harvey, *ibid*, p 44-45.

<sup>115</sup> The most persuasive examples can be found in *Working with Astrology* by Harvey and Harding.

<sup>116</sup> Ebertin, *The Combination of Stellar Influences*, p28-33.

<sup>117</sup> Ebertin, *ibid*, p248.

<sup>118</sup> It is worth pointing out that for Charles Harvey, and probably for most astrologers who use them, mid-points supplement existing techniques, they do not replace them.

<sup>119</sup> What is required is outlined in the various articles by Dean et al. cited in the bibliography. Some statistical problems are presented in Dean’s *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology*, pp23-35, while problems with human judgment can be found in Dean et al.’s “Discourse for Key Topic 4 – Astrology and Human Judgement,” *Correlation*, vol.17, no. 2.

<sup>120</sup> Heath, “Editorial, Rattling our cages?” *Astrological Journal*, Vol. 39 No 3.

<sup>121</sup> See Dean’s letter “Sleepless nights yes, but for whom?” in *Correlation* vol.16, no.1, pp 59-61, for problems with the Lehman and Brady model. However, we should point out that these are only problems if one is trying to prove something about astrology. Lehman and Brady are not trying to do that: they are trying to develop a model which will be successful in predicting the outcome of sports matches, which is a different matter.

<sup>122</sup> For Jung, a causal law was a natural statistical law; it does not require a cause. See Jung, *Synchronicity: A Acausal Connecting Principle*, p5.

<sup>123</sup> Brockbank, “Jung’s Theory of Synchronicity.”

<sup>124</sup> It is Robert Schmidt’s view that Hellenistic astrology was conceptualised along the lines of an Athenian law court. The Greek words used in astrological texts are the same as those used in rhetoric, and in legal cases. Unfortunately, Schmidt has yet to publish his ideas so it is difficult to know whether it would be necessary to change our three principles. It is likely, however, that our principles will remain intact, whether or not the system was conceptualised as Schmidt suggests.

<sup>125</sup> Sullivan, *Retrograde Planets*

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<sup>126</sup> See Brockbank, “Planetary Signification from Ptolemy to the Present Day.”

<sup>127</sup> Harvey, C and S, *Principles of Astrology*, p67.

<sup>128</sup> See Valens, *The Anthology Book 4* p 12-13 where he uses the elements in a way which is very similar to the modern manner

<sup>129</sup> It would probably be accurate to say that the metaphysical concept of numbers is more important in modern astrology than it was in Hellenistic astrology. See footnote 23 above. Charles Harvey used the metaphysical concept of numbers extensively in his astrological practice, and would apply the number 5 to the 5<sup>th</sup> harmonic and to the quincunx aspect. I know from personal correspondence with him that he believed he was going back beyond the Hellenistic astrologers to Platonic laws which underpinned the universe. However, by doing this he ignored the other factors which, as we have argued above, the Hellenistic astrologers included when they derived their understanding of aspects.

<sup>130</sup> Hypothetical planets were invented by Witte. According to Ebertin, Witte ‘found’ them as a result of his own research, but experience of later German astrologers did not confirm them. See Ebertin, *The Combination of Stellar Influences*, pp28-29.

<sup>131</sup> Strictly speaking the conjunction was not considered an aspect, leaving sextiles and trines as good, squares and oppositions as bad.

<sup>132</sup> The rules were not consistent, but the intent was to determine planetary strength by the position of the planet in the sky, whether it was in the east or in the west.

<sup>133</sup> Schmidt, “The Facets of Fate: The Rationale Underlying the Hellenistic System of Houses”, *The Mountain Astrologer*, Dec/Jan 2000, p 83.

<sup>134</sup> See Lehman, *Essential Dignities*, pp102-108.

<sup>135</sup> See Greene, *Saturn a new look at an old devil*.

<sup>136</sup> It would probably be the argument of Dean et al. that the human mind is not capable of making the sort of synthesis required by Hellenistic astrologer. For a discussion of this, in my opinion, mistaken view, see Brockbank, “The Sceptical attack of Dean et al. on astrology.”

<sup>137</sup> See Sasportas, *The Twelve Houses*

<sup>138</sup> Brockbank, “Planetary Signification from the second century until the present day.”

<sup>139</sup> Valens, *The Anthology Bk 1*, p3.

<sup>140</sup> Reinhart, *Chiron and the Healing Journey*.

<sup>141</sup> It is interesting to note that, according to Maggie Hyde, the horoscope of Nicholas Culpepper (1617-1654) the astrologer and herbalist, who was a physician and carried a Civil War wound, and consequently literally ‘a wounded healer,’ has very close contacts with the discovery chart for Chiron. See “Chiron and Culpepper”, *Company of Astrologers Bulletin* No. 59. Thus, the idea of the ‘wounded healer’, which is a 20<sup>th</sup> century idea, can be applied to historic examples.

<sup>142</sup> Campion, *The Book of World Horoscopes*, p392.

<sup>143</sup> For a fuller discussion of this issue see Brockbank, “The Sceptical attack of Dean et al. on astrology.”

<sup>144</sup> The argument is rarely stated in these stark terms, but can be gleaned from the various articles by Dean et al, and Kelly.

<sup>145</sup> This argument, although presented here in a different form, has been borrowed from Curry *Astrology, Science and Culture*.

<sup>146</sup> For an interesting discussion from someone who had this experience, but still refused to accept that it was a real experience, see Dodman, “The Next Room.”

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<sup>147</sup> For example, see the Editorial, “Good scientific practice in astrological research,” by Pat Harris, in *Correlation*, vol.21 No.2, in which she says, “if my research fails to support such claims, I cannot conclude that astrology does not exist.”

<sup>148</sup> If one reads any magazine devoted to astrology one will come across various references to the spirit. An example from, at the time of writing, the most recent issue of the *Astrological Journal*, July/Aug 2003, Vol. 45, can be found in Darby Costello’s “Desire and the stars” in which she says, “...it reminded me again of what happens when we do a chart – soul, spirit and body resonate to something numinous.” Usually, astrologers do not attempt to explain what they mean by numinous and spirit but Costello does, and in my view she does it very well, “...there is a sense of peace, in mind, body and soul....The longing, which is time-deep in each of us, is for a moment returned to the stars from which it, and we, came.”

<sup>149</sup> The term numinous was first used by Rudolf Otto in his book *The Idea of the Holy*. He derived the word from the Latin numen which meant divine power and used it to describe that part of religious experience which cannot be described in rational terms. Therefore, for Otto the word was closely associated with religion. However, today numinous is often used in non religious contexts, especially in the arts and aesthetics, to describe that moment when one feels lifted to a higher plane. One can experience such feelings whatever one’s religious beliefs. Indeed, given that we cannot know whether a divine entity exists, and that all we can know is that we have an experience which we call ‘experiencing the divine’, there seems to be no reason why one cannot have a similar experience which we can call ‘numinous’, in which one believes there is no religious content.

<sup>150</sup> Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, p453.

<sup>151</sup> Scruton, *ibid*, p494.

<sup>152</sup> Scuton, *ibid*, p443.

<sup>153</sup> We see the importance of this in all aspects of life. The two Edinburgh soccer teams are discussing, (summer 2003), the possibility of a ground share which, naturally, has upset both sets of supporters. According to the football magazine, *When Saturday Comes*, this has led to “a swell of emotional attachment...to established pre-match rituals...” Going to the pub before a match, walking the same route to the ground, sitting in the same seat, are all important rituals for soccer fans, as they create a sense of continuity with the past, and enables one to identify with a greater whole, the fans, and club, past and present. If one took a purely rationalist approach, one would develop a new ground outside the city, and amalgamate the teams, so they would have a chance to compete against the Glasgow teams that dominate the Scottish Premiership, but something would be lost.

<sup>154</sup> For example, the religious experiences that William James describes in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* sometimes read like a mild form of neurosis, but they are undoubtedly important to the individuals concerned.

<sup>155</sup> Brockbank, “An Evaluation of “The Effect of Horoscopes on Women’s Relationships” and a new Awareness of Astrology Questionnaire.”

<sup>156</sup> The full quote is: “Many people have given up the older religious traditions and substituted a Babel of New Age religion and quasi-religion in its place, often a pick-and-mix involving some tincture of astrology, feng shui, herbalism, and much more besides (usually in short-lived bursts, between the shiatsu and the low-fat diet) - because life has become lifestyle and the shopping-mall ethos applies as much in philosophies as in footwear.” Grayling, *What is Good?* p211. Grayling’s anti-religion, pro-science stance is, in my view, undermined by a complete failure to understand, or even address, why anyone might believe in God.

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<sup>157</sup> Quoted from Dean et al. “Key Topic 3: Theories of Astrology,” *Correlation*, Vol. 15, No.1, p19.

<sup>158</sup> Dean. “Key Topic 3 –Theories of Astrology”, *Correlation*, vol. 15, no.1.

<sup>159</sup> If an astrologer has been successful in the past with his/her predictions one might argue that although it is not ‘rationally certain’ that he/she will be correct in this instance, it is rational, or reasonable, to believe that he/she will be correct, in the same way that we might believe a weather forecaster who was accurate the last time we wanted to know how the weather would turn out. However, although this is a reason, it may not be rational. There might, for example, be an empirical test on the accuracy of different weather forecasters in which our man/women did badly, and our experience of his/her prediction was the one time he/she was correct.

<sup>160</sup> Patrick Davis, “Research for the Working Astrologer: Astro Sleuthing Contests”, *Correlation*, Vol.16 No.2.

<sup>161</sup> Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates*, p107.

<sup>162</sup> Ashmun, “Astrology on the Internet,” *Correlation* Vol. 15. No. 2, p41.

<sup>163</sup> One might argue that if you give monkeys enough time eventually a Shakespeare play will be written, so if you ask enough Horary questions eventually your cat will be found. But this is a very poor analogy. We are not interested in a hypothetical world in which one will ask horary questions for every cat which ever goes missing, whatever the circumstances. We are interested in a certain case where a cat has gone missing and has been found through horary astrology. We want to explain what happened, why he/she was found, and reference cannot be made to an experiment which has never taken place, and probably never will be taken place. If Smith plays for the village cricket team, has an average of 14, and then scores 100, we might dismiss, or explain away, his achievement by claiming, ‘Anyone will score 100 if they play enough,’ but it is not an explanation of what took place on the cricket field. That Smith played with a straight bat, that he eliminated his normal cross bat technique, that they bowled badly, that the pitch was true, would be attempts at an explanation.