

ASTROLOGY IN ENGLAND IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Bernard Eccles

Dissertation, Module AC4007D

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology

Bath Spa University College

Student Number: 028351

January 2004

Abstract

This paper examines the state of astrology in England at the opening of the twenty-first century. It compares the present state of astrology to a previous assessment published in 1986, and finds that astrology's long-term survival is not as assured as was assumed at that time. Criteria for the continuance of astrology are suggested, and various options for the future are examined, most of which fail to meet these criteria. In the end, the most promising direction for astrology to take, supported by both external and internal indications, appears to be in association with ecological and neo-pagan movements.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the individuals whose correspondence appears on pages 42-3, who have given their permission for this material to be used.

Statement of Originality

This dissertation is entirely my own work, unpublished before. All quotations or references to other works are noted in the text as such and full details of such works are in the notes and bibliography appended.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The present position	
3	
3. The criteria for continuance	16
4. Astrology and psychology: an ailing marriage	
18	
5. Astrology and science: perennial enemies	20
6. Astrology and religion: no room at the inn	33
7. Astrology in academia	37
8. Ecology and paganism	41
9. Conclusion	52
Notes and References	53
Bibliography	55

1. Introduction

In the town in which I live there is a small shop of the sort which has become very familiar over the past forty years, and which can now be found in almost every town in the South of England. It sells a wide and eclectic range of books, candles, crystals, silver jewellery, incense and essential oils. Cards pinned up on a notice-board at the back of the shop offer counselling and healing by every method from acupuncture to zen meditation. It is what everybody would readily recognise as a 'New Age' shop, catering for the increasingly diverse ways in which people try to find, or express, a spiritual dimension in their lives which they feel to be lacking, and which their regular work and social life apparently does not provide.

At first glance, the joss-sticks and the ethnic rugs seem the same as they did in the 1960s, but a careful observer in 2003 will note a surprising omission, a core factor in the whole business which over the last few years has quietly disappeared.

It is this: there is no astrology for sale. There are no books, no ephemerides, no posters, and no cards on the pinboard advertising classes or consultations. There is not even a range of sun-sign birthday cards. It is as though astrology does not exist. This is a very odd state of affairs, and a most unexpected one considering that most of what the shop sells, from statues of Hindu gods through to little bottles of flower remedy essences, has links with astrology to a greater or lesser extent; but it true nonetheless.

The reason for this absence is simple and commercial. Astrology is no longer of interest to the customers of New Age shops of the kind described above, and shopkeepers do not carry stock which does not sell. Sun-sign astrology is still prominent in the popular press, but the rest of astrology, that is its more complex practice, based around the calculation and interpretation of horoscopes and all the specialised vocabulary and symbolism that goes along with it, is no longer an ingredient in the popular countercultural mix.

If a practice such as astrology, with all its attendant skills and beliefs, finds itself not only outside the mainstream culture but outside the counterculture as well, then its position becomes perilous. Unless it can find some way to re-establish itself, or is taken up by some other cultural movement, extinction seems the likeliest outcome.

This paper examines the state of astrology in England during the late twentieth century, when it enjoyed the greatest popularity it had known for over three centuries, and how it came to be perched on the edge of extinction just a few decades later. It also attempts to identify the factors both external and internal which led to its fall in popularity, and to suggest the conditions necessary for its continuance and growth. Several possible cultural environments will be examined and their compatibility with astrology assessed; and from these assessments it should be possible to plot the likely trajectories of astrology in its various forms through the first decades of the twenty-first century.

2. The present position

In order to project the likely future course of astrology, it is necessary to examine its present state. We must look at how it is practised today, and at who believes in it, uses it, or in a commercial sense consumes it. We must look at its different variants and forms, from the most simple and commercial to the esoteric and the academic. Most of all, we must stand away from it, at a sufficient distance to see the subject as a whole, and we must try to assess it without becoming too involved in it.

Commentaries on the present state of astrology are surprisingly few in number. Although hundreds of books on astrology have been published in the last fifty years, the great majority have been books on the calculation and interpretation of horoscopes, and of using astrological vocabulary to diagnose and describe the psychological state of the astrologer or his client. Some books, such as Dennis Elwell's *Cosmic Loom*, have attempted to defend astrology against its detractors and create a place for its way of thinking in the modern world; as might be expected, these efforts have been warmly received within the astrological community, but their impact on the wider world has been modest. An even smaller number of books, such as Geoffrey Cornelius' *The Moment of Astrology*, have attempted to answer the question of what astrology actually is, but even these do not try to see astrology as a whole and to consider its future direction. The best and almost the only one is Patrick Curry's lecture '*Astrology Past: A Mirror For The Future?*' which was presented as a lecture to the Astrological Lodge of London in March 1986, and published a few months later as an article of the same title in the quarterly Lodge journal *Astrology*.¹

In this short but very influential analysis Curry identified three different forms of astrology, or as he terms them, astrologies, all thriving in the middle of the seventeenth century, but only one of them still as healthy fifty years later. These were:

(1) Popular astrology. This is a mixture of lunar lore, superstition, folklore and low magic, some of it pre-Christian in origin, which was, and is, widespread in the lower classes of society. It was learned by oral transmission from older relatives, and supplemented to some extent by popular published almanacs, although many of the adherents of this form of

astrology were illiterate. This form of astrology, often combined with palmistry, lucky numbers, and other forms of fortune telling, has survived to the present day, and is still a lively part of popular culture.

(2) Judicial astrology. This requires an astrological judgement to be made, based on the positions of the planets, and therefore almost always involves a horoscope, a diagram showing the positions of the visible planets at a precise moment. This form of astrology professed to be more exact and individual in its predictions, and required certain mathematical skills. Its practitioners and their clients tended to come from the professional and mercantile classes of society, and were often urban, in contrast to the more rural followers of popular astrology.

(3) Philosophical or cosmological astrology. This used the geocentric model of the solar system and the received body of knowledge about planetary cycles to create a philosophical understanding of the universe and its nature, 'both physical and divine' (Curry). The practitioners of this form of astrology were a small but highly-regarded elite of philosophers and theologians, and their clients were prelates, princes, and kings.

Curry notes that during the eighteenth century philosophical or 'high' astrology died out almost completely, its place taken by the new natural and material science, whereas 'low' or popular astrology continued much as it always had done. Judicial astrology went into a severe decline, but was revived in the middle of the nineteenth century by almanac authors such as R. C. Smith, writing under the pseudonym Raphael, and R.J. Morrison, writing as Zadkiel. This revival grew in strength under the influence of Theosophy in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, culminating in the 'modern astrology' of Alan Leo, from which the judicial astrology of the present day is very visibly descended.

Curry's final analysis is to determine three different strands of this 'middle' astrology, and to suggest their likely future course. These are:

(a) a scientific astrology, aiming to find provably scientific truths in astrological techniques, and at the time of Curry's article centred on the use of statistical techniques to identify patterns in phenomena worth further investigation. Despite its apparent modernism and rigour, Curry felt this form of astrology was unlikely to make much impact on the

scientific establishment, and the following two decades have proven him right. In a later section of this paper several arguments will be advanced as to why this kind of astrology is doomed to failure.

(b) a psychological astrology, which in the 1980s was the commonest and most influential form of judicial astrology. This form of astrology had entered into a mutually profitable marriage with psychology during the middle of the twentieth century, giving the one an attractive veneer of modernity and the other a sense of ancient tradition. Armed with a new vocabulary of personal insight and suggested therapies of every kind from Jungian archetypes to transactional analysis played with the planets, this kind of astrology seemed ideally suited to the needs of an intellectual middle class obsessed with itself and its personal relationships. To maximise its appeal to the post-1960s generation, it had to be as all-encompassing as possible, and so took into itself a good deal of mysticism and mythology as well, from both East and West. In the 1980s this form of astrology seemed set to go on forever, especially since it envisioned the imminent arrival, probably in 2000 or shortly thereafter, of a new and more enlightened age, the so-called Age of Aquarius, during which it was anticipated that its countercultural values would become accepted norm. The promise has so far not been fulfilled.

(c) a revived form of traditional astrology, that is, an astrology from the seventeenth century or earlier, rejecting both modern science and the marriage to psychology. This resurgence of astrological fundamentalism coincided with other fundamentalist revolutions, both political and religious, worldwide; astrological analysis of these near-simultaneous events would undoubtedly be fascinating, but unfortunately lies outside the scope of this paper. The origins of what is now called the traditional revival lay in the re-publication of Lilly's *Christian Astrology* from 1647, first as a photocopy from an original three-hundred-year-old example, and later as a facsimile edition. From this sprang a renewed interest in forgotten techniques such as horary, or the astrology of interrogations, and a desire to unearth and research texts from even further back in astrology's history. Curry saw this strand of judicial astrology as being essentially a minority interest, which would either become either a quaint historical byway for those who wished to go down it, or a

vociferous little cult for those who saw the older techniques as being a form of practical magic, or divination, and wished to practise this form of astrology in that light.

Curry's analysis was clear and correct, and provides a most useful snapshot of the state of astrology in England in the mid-1980s. Since then, however, astrology in all its forms has changed quite considerably, far more than anyone at the time would have anticipated. It is therefore necessary to re-examine each of Curry's categories and see what has happened to them; from there it should be possible to suggest their likely courses in the future.

High astrology has never fully recovered from its decline at the end of the seventeenth century, and there seems little reason to suggest that this situation will change, since the political assumptions embedded in it are now out of fashion. In the intervening centuries the influential and opinion-forming high levels of society changed enormously, with the result that in the present day opinions are no longer influenced by philosophers or theologians so much as by politicians, whose views are not drawn from some unalterable creed or set of principles but change when politically expedient, and by an intelligentsia whose natural sphere lies in the new mass media such as newspapers and television.

This new elite professes a set of political values which are to the leftward end of the political spectrum. The reasons for this can be found in the political upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century, including the emergence of Soviet Russia as a superpower and the near-extirmination of European Jewry during the Second World War. A general sense of the rightness of socialist principles ensued, softened by the libertarian values of the social revolutions of the 1960s, and given both momentum and a sense of direction by the technological advances of the same period. The resulting political creed is modernist and egalitarian, but it embodies the drawbacks of those two viewpoints as well as the advantages. It lacks a sense of tradition, and prefers to make new starts rather than make use of the inheritance of the past. It rejects all forms of hierarchy and authority other than itself, particularly if perceived as politically right-wing, and through its acknowledged support and admiration for continued technological development it tends to a materialist scientific cosmology in which spiritual values are pushed to one side or ignored, and

agnosticism becomes the religious stance of the majority.

This left-wing set of values is neither good nor bad. It is what it is, a phase in the history of society, but it is so far removed from the assumptions of high astrology that there could hardly be a worse time to attempt a rehabilitation. Although it is not often explicitly expressed, astrology is firmly hierarchical and ultimately Deist as a result of its Neoplatonist roots and the Aristotelian cosmology of nested spheres which were used to explain its supposed mechanisms for so long. There is a verticality in astrological thinking, as higher influences are held to manifest themselves in the sublunary world, which is completely at variance with the horizontal network created by the concept of equality of opportunity, so central to the politically correct thinking of the present day.

Although other European countries, such as France, have a strong tradition of right-wing intellectualism during the late twentieth century, no such movement has made its mark in England, and we must therefore conclude that this most important factor for the continuance of astrology, that is, a welcoming and supportive intellectual environment to allow the re-emergence of high astrology, is not to be found at the opinion-forming levels of present-day society. Even if there were a right-wing intellectual movement, it might be too rigorous in its intellectualism to accept astrology back into the fold. There is a cold precision to all intellectualism, whether left- or right-wing, which it shares with the scientific viewpoint; astrology is both warmer and necessarily less precise, since it is a language of inference rather than definition. Intellectualism rarely sits close to spirituality, for the same reasons, and spirituality is a necessary condition for astrology's continuance.

In the three categories of 'middle' astrology, it can be seen that nearly two decades later the scientific stand is more or less where it was, with very little progress made. Statistical analyses of astrology are still presented from time to time, with varying degrees of thoroughness, but the work frequently suffers from the author only knowing one side of the subject: good statisticians are rarely familiar with the techniques of astrology, and therefore often test for meaningless correlations, while astrologers in turn are rarely good statisticians, and are often unable to judge whether their data, methods, or conclusions

contain false assumptions. Any results which appear to favour astrology are usually attacked by commentators like Dean, of whom more will be said later, but the arguments which go back and forth are usually limited to high-level astrological journals such as *Correlation*, and often have as much to do with personal animosities as the research topic itself. In general, the astrological community regards this particular branch of the art as a minority interest, and mainstream astrological practice has not taken much from it, if anything at all. The recent establishment of the Research Group for the Critical Study of Astrology (RGCSA) at the University of Southampton is an attempt to bring together those interested in this kind of research in an academic environment, and although some work is under way, mostly with research into sociological topics where there is an astrological component present, it seems unlikely that this narrow strand of astrology will expand to any great extent over the next few years.

Psychological astrology, which in the mid 1980s was the largest subgroup of 'middle' astrology, still holds that position, though the numbers have diminished considerably in the intervening years. There are several possible reasons for this. The first is that psychology itself, and the therapies associated with it, have also declined, and where astrology was previously seen as a valid and useful form of therapy, it is now seen more as entertainment. There have been significant political and economic shifts in the past two decades, and although the older generation of the middle classes, who are now fifty years old or more, are as interested in astrology and its associated mystical or spiritual philosophies as ever they were, the generation beneath them, now in their thirties and forties, are not. Opinion within the astrological community is divided on whether the next generation down are spiritually inclined or not; but even with the optimum result, which is that they are indeed interested, there is still a big dip in the demographic curve which will mean fewer people studying astrology, fewer wishing to consult astrologers, and fewer astrologers able to make a living by consultation. While astrology as a whole, as an historical entity, consists of far more than just this commercial activity, teaching and consultancy play a big part in the survival and continuance of astrology at this level. Most skilled astrologers in the present day are professionals; that is, they support themselves by teaching, writing, and

consultation. This has not always been the case.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the reverse was true, and astrology was a gentleman's pursuit; Alan Leo's invention of the duplicated horoscope available by post for a modest sum was a mould-breaking event not just because it made astrology more widely available, but because of his need to make a living from his art. The large number of professional astrologers today is a result of the social changes of the 1960s and the rise of the counterculture, followed by the hardening of that culture during the late 1980s, which meant that what for many had been a contemplative interest was forced to become a commercial one.

Another reason for the decline in the numbers of people either practising or using this kind of astrology is the development of the computer. In the 1970s, horoscope calculation was still done as it always had been, by hand. People who regularly consulted astrologers were eager to learn the techniques of calculation for themselves, and astrologers found it an easier business to run classes in basic astrological calculation than to wait for clients to call. The income was regular, and the pupils themselves created, via their friends and families, a wider and more easily accessible client base. In addition, the political structures of the day, especially in London, facilitated the administration of such classes, and so by the end of that decade an astrological enthusiast could choose between two or three venues for instruction or discussion on every night of the week. For most of these enthusiasts, the motivation was at least as much social as philosophical, and in any case very few were interested in the higher contemplative and symbolic forms of astrology. What they wanted was knowledge of themselves, their character and personal propensities, and to know the same about any prospective romantic partner. This advance information about compatibility, knowing the likely outcome of a prospective match before the event, was the preoccupation of the era. Such things have always been part of astrology's stock-in-trade, and the only difference between this and any other era was the emphasis on teaching the techniques as well as offering consultation.

The advent of the personal computer in the late 1980s changed everything. Software to enable almost instantaneous chart calculation was soon available very cheaply, and in many

cases came with a database of interpretations which could deliver a character delineation within minutes. By the end of the twentieth century almost every household had a computer, and astrological software could cost less to buy than a single consultation with a real astrologer, who would most likely be using the same software anyway. There was, and is, no substitute for individual one-to-one consultation, where what the client is paying for is exclusivity and discretion, and often a form of personal confessional; but for the great majority of those interested in astrology, where the main aims were self-knowledge and synastry, cheap software eliminated the need to spend months learning how to do the calculations. When changes in the political climate also eliminated most of the educational facilities of the previous decade, the effect on the astrological societies was very clear to see. Membership numbers plummeted, with organisations such as the Astrological Association and the Astrological Lodge of London typically recording membership numbers in 2003 of about half what they were twenty years previously.² . In addition, the economic shifts of the last two decades have changed the social ambitions of the middle classes: self-knowledge has taken second place to monetary success as the main aim, and psychological astrology, which rarely gives hard and fast conclusions, is now seen as less decisive and therefore less useful in its results. For all of these reasons, then, the whole grouping of people using psychological astrology, either as practitioners, clients, or just interested enthusiasts, appears to be ageing, dwindling in numbers, and unlikely to re-attain its former pre-eminence.

The third grouping, the traditional revivalists, have gained ground at the expense of the psychological group by offering exactly what the new mood of the 1990s most wanted to see, though this was more of a happy coincidence than a conscious intention. The revival of the techniques of horary astrology gave consultant astrology a sharper edge, and there were several horary specialists who claimed to give precise and accurate results, definite and dependable answers to questions about buying and selling property, career moves, or anything else the client might ask for. In this they were no different from astrologers of old, but for most of the preceding century astrology had been much softer, dealing in ‘tendencies’ rather than risking its reputation on a definite judgement, and horary’s new

flavour seemed much more in tune with the commercial realities of the 1990s than the woolly liberal values of the 1960s. In fact, there were legal reasons for both the old woolliness and the new attitude. The vagueness of twentieth-century astrology came not only from Theosophy, but from the two occasions when Alan Leo was prosecuted for pretending and professing to tell fortunes, which was then illegal. On both occasions the charges were dismissed on technicalities, but the experience made a powerful impact on Leo, and his astrology became much softer and more general as a result.³ The sharp edge of the traditional revivalists came not just from rediscovering the work of Lilly, who was not constrained by the same laws as Leo was, but also from the repeal and replacement of section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act in 1991, which had outlawed fortune-telling along with much else in 1824, and to some extent the replacement of the 1736 Witchcraft Act with the Fraudulent Mediums Act in 1951, which concentrated on mediums and ignored astrology altogether. It was now possible to tell fortunes, or at least to give astrological judgements without fear of immediate prosecution.

The traditional revival has been more successful than anyone could have imagined in 1986. The techniques it has rediscovered have been fed straight back into the astrological mainstream, with the result that almost every practising astrologer is now sharper in his technique and more familiar with the use of astrology's original symbolic vocabulary than he was twenty years ago. The republication of ancient and medieval texts, an ongoing process which has seen several important works made available in English for the first time, has given astrologers an understanding and familiarity with the history of their subject which was not possible before. It has also made astrology seem more grounded and rooted, though at the same time this has subtracted from its spirituality: astrology is now felt by many of its adherents to come from 'back there', that is in history, rather than 'up there' in some transcendent realm. At the time of writing (2003) this form of astrology appears to be a better tool for the consultant astrologer than the now-outmoded psychological type. A horary chart can be read faster than a natal chart, and if the client has only one specific concern at the time of the consultation, that chart can be drawn up by computer and read by the consultant in seconds - even during a telephone conversation, which is frequently the

way things are done. At the moment there is no generally available software which performs horary interpretation, so the skill of the consultant is still at a premium, but that may well change, and if the pendulum of society's moods swings back from its present materialistic emphasis to something more spiritual then it may not be easy for the horary specialists to adapt. Within the astrological schools and societies, however, the traditional revival has been fully absorbed and gratefully received, but that absorption means that this subset of astrology is ceasing to exist as a separate entity. It will continue, therefore, but as a part of the greater whole.

Popular or 'low' astrology seems at first sight to be unchanging and eternal, but in fact it is markedly different to the way it was a century ago, and in some small but perhaps telling ways different from the way it was twenty years ago. At the beginning of the twentieth century low astrology was much as it had been at the start of the nineteenth or earlier, that is, a mixture of lunar lore, low magic, superstition, and calendar rhymes, with the main printed reference being the popular almanacs. The social upheavals of the twentieth century, however, not least the increasing tendency to urbanisation, meant that the relevance of much of the lunar and calendar lore was lost. In addition, the social shift towards smaller families in general and away from cohabiting families of multiple generations meant that learning lunar lore from one's grandmother also became less common than before. Furthermore, the groups most usually associated with the practice of low magic, such as travelling Irish tinkers or gypsies, had low status within the hierarchy of the society of the time, being unwilling or unable to conform to the new suburban model of respectability; the result, by unfortunate association, was that low magic became ridiculed and rejected, a viewpoint reinforced by the modernist values of the emerging technological society. By the end of the twentieth century hardly any of the lunar or calendar lore was left: separation from the land by urbanisation, from farming or smallholding by modern farming techniques and supermarkets, and from times and seasons by electric light and central heating had removed both the need to know and the stimulus to ask one's elders. Recent research has shown that almost no lunar lore is still in use, and that weather lore is restricted to one or two old

rhymes.⁴ Very few now take note of the waxing and waning of the moon, and virtually nobody can recognise a single planet or note the rising of a particular star to mark a season's onset.

The one thing that everybody does know, however, is their sun sign. The sun sign was a conscious invention, a deliberate reduction of a complete horoscope to a single component, created to please a newspaper proprietor in 1930. The story has been well documented by Ellic Howe.⁵ The choice of the sun as the single component was made because its zodiacal position could be deduced from the reader's birthday, and this eliminated the need for any calculation on the part of either the reader or the writer; but there is an inner reasoning to it as well, in which the influence of Theosophy in the late nineteenth century is a vital factor.⁶ This probably explains why sun sign horoscopes did not appear in eighteenth century almanacs when there was no technical reason why they could not have done.

Deliberate invention or not, the sun sign has become the indisputable staple of low astrology, and its place in the popular imagination seems to be fixed for ever. There is probably nobody in the England who does not know what their sun sign is, whether or not they know anything else attributed to the sign, or read horoscopes in newspapers. Even the word 'horoscope' has come to mean a sun sign column in a newspaper rather than a map of the sky for a particular moment. This highly artificial, non-traditional body of new lore has not only eclipsed its age-old predecessor completely, but has spread its content far wider, ironically in an age where the dominant worldview denies its very existence.

By the final decades of the twentieth century virtually every newspaper and magazine had a sun sign column, usually by this time written by an astrologer rather than the sub-editorial assistant, which had been the case to begin with. Astrology in general, and sun sign astrology in particular, was enjoying a boom period such as it had not seen since the mid-seventeenth century, and for similar reasons. There was a feeling of revolution in the air; old certainties were no longer so; and whatever had previously been considered hidden or restricted knowledge was brought out into the open for free consumption. After decades of doing its duty for king and country through two world wars and several economic

depressions, all of which required the wants of the individual to be ignored or suppressed, society wanted instead to celebrate the individual, and to explore and express the inner person rather than constrain him in uniform, military or otherwise. Sun sign astrology, which takes the character of the person as its starting point, was an ideal match for the mood of the times, and it prospered. In addition, it had a pleasing sense of the exotic about it, slipping easily into the general stream of alternative - that is, Eastern - philosophies being made fashionable by the social trendsetters in California.

Although there were a few dissenting voices in the astrological community who felt that sun sign astrology was a travesty of the art and of the philosophy it enshrined, the general view was that the universal popularity of sun signs was a good thing for astrology. At the time, however, nobody thought to ask whether it was a good thing for low magic in general. Weather lore and lunar lore were already in decline, and numerology and palmistry banished to the end of the pier, though tarot cards were back in fashion as a part of the counterculture, which helped a little to redress the balance. All of these owed their symbolism ultimately to astrology; but it was their richness and diversity, as well as the way they all linked up with each other, which made popular magic and belief such a wonderful environment for the continuance and preservation of every sort of lore, from days on which to clip toenails to magical words to invoke supernatural aid. This rich compost of lore was, and is, essential to the survival of these fragmentary belief systems, each of which have their own little contribution to make to the ecology of the whole, so to speak. When sun sign astrology arrived it became the dominant force, like a new plant introduced to a garden which spreads with such vigour that the other plants simply cannot compete. Sun sign astrology has absorbed or replaced almost all the lore that went before it; should it suddenly fall from popularity, almost nothing would be left.

Two decades ago it seemed unimaginable, but there are now distinct signs that sun sign astrology in the popular press may not be flourishing in the way it once was. Several factors have contributed to this. The increasingly ephemeral nature of the popular media is one, where anything which is proven to be successful and popular then has to be re-

presented in a new and improved format, with extra features, in the belief that it will then be more successful still; when it is not, the whole idea is assumed to be outmoded, and abandoned. Sun sign astrology has had several very successful decades, but among newspaper editors now it is seen as being old-fashioned, something the readers will have seen too many times before, and therefore no longer exciting.

Another factor is the age of the editors. Twenty years ago the editors of magazines were themselves from the generation which had been part of the social revolutions of the 1960s, and so astrology was at least a familiar, if not an essential part of their own personal philosophy, and they were happy to support it. Magazine astrology in the early 1980s could frequently be seen to branch away from the monolithic format of twelve sun signs, and articles would appear encouraging the reader to calculate his or her ascendant, for example, using the simplified algorithm supplied. Despite being presented as entertainment, there was a definite intention on the part of the astrological community, whose members wrote these articles, to reach out and spread the idea of horoscopic astrology among a wider audience; like the gender politics of the day, it was a deliberate attempt at consciousness-raising, in the hope of somehow creating a more spiritually evolved and, it was assumed, better society.

Today's editors are from the generation who formed their ambitions and opinions in the early 1980s. They have a much more materialist philosophy, and see astrology as largely nonsense. They allow it to continue to be published not because they like it but because they believe the readership wants to see it, and that it will generate sales. This change in attitude, whereby the thing is done with gritted teeth because it is believed to be commercially profitable rather than through personal choice and endorsement, has changed the mood of sun sign astrology, and under these conditions it can only shrink rather than grow. In magazines for women launched on the UK market in the last decade, several have dared to omit the horoscope column altogether, a move unthinkable fifteen years ago, and one or two have actually declared that they will not feature a horoscope. The fact that they are managing to thrive suggests that magazine readers of the twenty-first century enjoy a sun sign column when one is presented to them, but do not miss it when it is absent: slowly

but steadily, low magic and popular astrology are fading away. The editors of the mass-circulation newspapers, too, are paring down the amount of space given to astrology each day. Only a few years ago a whole page would appear, containing not just the horoscope forecasts but all sorts of vaguely related material on ancient mysteries, planetary lore, lunar phases, famous birthdays and anniversaries; in other words, the very same stuff as the almanacs of the eighteenth century. Now, however, all the ancillary material, which was feeding the compost of low magic in the community in the absence of oral transmission, is being swept away. Just the twelve forecasts remain, as they did when they first started in the 1930s, reduced to a small section of a page among other, non-astrological articles. In addition, there is a growing tendency for editors to re-appoint astrologers of the 1970s and 1980s to write columns, dragging them out of retirement if necessary: the guiding wisdom is that ageing astrologers sell better to an ageing audience. The motive is entirely commercial, and underlying it is a growing belief that in thirty years' time the audience for astrology will literally have died out, and there will be no longer be a need for sun sign columns in magazines. Like knitting patterns, astrology is seen to belong to a defined generation of readers, and its eventual end is already envisaged.

A further factor has been the continuing rise of high technology. When the consciousness-rising articles and their accompanying mathematical exercises were written in the late 1980s, the general populace was arithmetically agile enough to find them entertaining. The steep decline in general standards of numeracy since then, with its accompanying decline in the ability to visualise things in mathematical terms, means that the simple calculations offered in these articles would be beyond the average reader's abilities now. And beyond his inclinations, too: digital technology has produced a culture which expects instantaneous results, and anything which requires to be thought through or worked out manually is put to one side as being too arduous. Moreover, the advent of cheap astrological software, and the development of the computer horoscope, where a character reading or forecasts are printed out from a pre-prepared database, has given rise to the idea that astrology is somehow a finite object: either it is a sun sign column, or, for a small fee and a few keys pressed, it is a larger version of the same, made more personal.

The idea that it is a dynamic thing, a language for an ongoing multiple-level dialogue between the practitioner, his values, his life as he lives it, and the sky, has been completely lost. Low astrology has become a commodity, where a similar product is available each time the button is pressed. It can only be a matter of time before the consumer tires of it.

To sum up, it is clear that astrology at the start of the twenty-first century is not at all as firmly established as it appeared to be at the end of the twentieth, and there are strong parallels between its present decline and its previous one at the end of the seventeenth century. High astrology seems unlikely to revive, and the 'middle' astrology which flourished so vividly between the 1960s to the 1980s has been much reduced, both by the social and political changes of the 1980s and by the advent of computer technology in the 1990s. Even low astrology can now be seen to be producing diminishing returns, and the subsoil of low magic and lunar lore accumulated during previous centuries which enabled it to take root so quickly is now very thin indeed. Commercially, it is seen as a limited asset, a so-called 'cash cow' to be continued with as long as it continues to generate revenue, but unworthy of further investment.

Unless astrology can find some new and revitalising influence in the near future, it seems likely that its present decline will continue. Given the speed of that decline, the example of its equally rapid decline in the seventeenth century, and the ever-accelerating pace of change in popular culture today, it is not impossible to imagine that by 2050, high astrology will be as dead as ever, 'middle' astrology will have gone the same way as phrenology and Mesmerism did, and 'low' astrology the way of the rural rhymes which gave the weather by saints' days. To all practical intents and purposes, and at all its levels, astrology will be completely extinct.

3. The criteria for continuance

On many occasions during its long history astrology has found it convenient to adjoin itself to some other philosophical or religious standpoint. For most of the past fifty years it has enjoyed the shelter and support of psychology and psychotherapy, and for some time before that it enjoyed the encouragement and nourishment offered by Theosophy and the Occult Revival, without which the 'middle' sort of astrology referred to earlier would not now exist at all.

Yet for all its diversity, adaptability and ability to survive, it seems unlikely that astrology will ever be able to stand alone. It may not ever have done so, except perhaps among the Harranians⁷; and it is probably easier to think of it as a parasite, something like mistletoe, perhaps, which grows readily in the branches of other more firmly established plants. If this is the case, then astrology needs a new host for the twenty-first century, for its present position has become unexpectedly frail in the last twenty years, as shown in the previous section of this paper.

Obviously, a new host must provide shelter, support and nourishment for astrology, but at the same time it must not attempt to devour it; astrology must make its own contribution, enriching its host in as many ways as it can, but it must also continue as far as possible to be itself, and recognisably so. Care must be taken so that little or none of its tradition and vocabulary is lost in the transition from its old hosts to its new ones.

As a guide to the suitability of any suggested new host, therefore, the following criteria are suggested. Any new home or host for astrology must support, or at least respect:

1. The forms of astrology, which are the cycles of the planets seen from a geocentric viewpoint, and the geometric figures created from those movements. A heliocentric viewpoint may be scientifically correct, but geocentric observations are still valid, and for the metaphysical and philosophical elements of astrology the geocentric view is essential.
2. The apparent truths of astrology, which are the perceived parallels between celestial cycles and terrestrial events. Character delineation, astrological physiognomy, the medicine

of humours, and the making of astrological predictions all stem from this assumed correspondence. To both the practitioner and the general public, this is the very essence of astrology, the nuts and bolts of the subject, and were this to be lost or removed in any way then what was left would not, to most people, be recognisable as astrology.

3. The higher philosophy of astrology, which uses both the forms and the apparent truths to create a vocabulary of symbols for philosophical contemplation, moral education, and as an approach to mystical experience. Without this component, astrology would be little more than a number game, a cross between a kaleidoscope and a chess set where fun is to be found in various alignments and number sequences.

If any host which can be found which can meet these criteria, then astrology's future would seem assured - if astrology and that host are willing to form a relationship. If any host fails to meet one or more of these criteria, and no mutual accommodation is possible to bridge the gap, then no matter how willing both sides may be to promote the match, the end result can only be to the detriment of astrology.

With these conditions in mind, then, examination must now be made of the most likely candidates.

4. Astrology and psychology: an ailing marriage

Astrology and psychology enjoyed a very useful and supportive union during the central decades of the twentieth century, and in the 1980s there were many astrological consultants and teachers who mixed astrological character analysis with Jungian terminology and techniques to apparently good effect. Something which is already in existence and working well should surely be encouraged; the question here, therefore, is not whether psychology can accommodate astrology, but whether there are any reasons to suppose that this arrangement cannot continue.

There are two. The first is that astrology turned inwards on itself in the last two decades of the twentieth century, rediscovering its roots and traditions in what we have referred to earlier as the traditional revival. This meant that astrology's preferred reference points, which had until then been placed somewhere at the end of the nineteenth century with the Theosophical astrology of Leo, and not far away in time from the beginnings of psychology and psychiatry with Freud and Jung, jumped back by another three hundred years to the seventeenth century, or earlier still. As well as providing a defined path leading back to the dawn of written history and the first forms of astrology, the traditional revival moved astrology's viewpoint and it found itself no longer in such close alignment with psychology. Theosophical astrology had placed the sun at a person's symbolic centre, using it as a symbol of his character or spirit, and mirroring this inner light with the moon, representing his external habits. This sun-moon symbolism showed close parallels with psychology's vocabulary of conscious and subconscious behaviour, and so the two disciplines were able to find common ground very easily. The traditional revival made the sun just one of seven planets, and placed no emphasis at all on that assumed central dimension in the person which is usually described by terms such as spirit, character, or essence. With the terms of reference no longer in such close agreement, it became clear that astrology and psychology would soon start to lose interest in each other, and this does seem to have been the case, as documented in articles and lectures within the astrological community which started to appear in the early 1990s. Although astrological consultants

who are also psychotherapists continue to practice, they are less prominent than they were, and it is noticeable that no new young specialists in this particular discipline seem to be appearing. It is also very rare now for psychological astrology to be the topic of keynote lectures at astrological conferences or seminars.

The second cause for concern is the decline of psychology itself. Thirty years ago psychology and its attendant disciplines were enjoying a wave of popularity very similar to astrology's, bound up with the desire to discover the inner self which was so much a part of the social revolutions of the 1960s, but since then changes in society have placed an increasing emphasis on material and financial gain, and psychology is seen as outmoded or irrelevant. In a series of articles in the Times in May 2003, Peter Watson claimed that: 'psychology... has failed big-time. Furthermore, it has failed not just in the sense that more people are ill or unhappy, it has failed technologically, philosophically, and is in an advanced state of decomposition.'⁸,

He continues:

'...at one stage, psychology students were the single largest bunch of graduates in the 20th century. We forget now how huge psychology was in the 1970s. Whole areas that were then looked upon as ways to transform and improve our lives have disappeared.'⁹,

Watson goes on to show how learning theory and behaviour therapy have been rejected, and how military psychology, on which huge sums were spent during the Vietnam War, is now virtually non-existent. In marketing and advertising, too, less attention is paid to the psychology of the consumer than to his economic and social background.

It is easy to see how astrology and psychology became enamoured of each other during the 1970s, and to see how most of the professional astrological community of today, who learned their astrology during that period, picked up psychology as part of the cultural mix of the time. A generation later, however, the cultural mix is very different, and with astrology increasingly preferring to use its more traditional techniques, and psychology

much less prominent than it once was, it seems unlikely that psychology has the strength or capacity to support astrology for the future. In the 1970s it looked as though astrology would eventually be seen as part of the history of psychology; thirty years on it seems the reverse is more likely, provided that astrology survives. Those presently mixing the two disciplines in their professional practice are likely to continue to do so until the end of their careers, but their numbers are small, and decreasing. Psychology was never really at ease with astrology's essentially geometrical form, nor with its higher philosophy; as the marriage starts to crumble, the differences start to become more important than the similarities. As psychology collapses, astrology needs to detach itself and move on.

5. Astrology and science: perennial enemies

Although many astrologers entertain fond hopes of one day seeing astrology recognised as a science or, as the traditionalists would have it, restored to its former status as one, few scientists share such ambitions. Astrology, as we have seen, needs to find itself a home in the third millennium where it can be understood, researched and practiced freely and where it has room to grow and develop. Science, for reasons both historical and philosophical, seems unlikely to provide this, yet still a significant proportion of the astrological community feels that it is possible, and there are one or two prominent figures from the scientific establishment, too, with leanings in this direction, though a far greater number are vehemently opposed. Such strongly held viewpoints need further explanation.

The major problem which modern science has with astrology is that the two disciplines work within different definitions of reality. An example will illustrate the point.

Let us suppose it is a crisp but unexpectedly cold day. As he walks along, feeling the chill, the astrologer remembers that Venus and Saturn are at opposition. In astrological lore, Venus brings fair weather, and Saturn brings cold. The aspect between the two creates a composite symbol of 'clear but cold', and the astrologer will be pleased to note that the cycles of the heavens, the symbolic vocabulary of astrology, and his local environment all seem to be in accord. He might even have predicted the cold snap, had someone asked him a few weeks previously; but he knows too that not every Venus-Saturn opposition coincides with a fall in temperature, though it may have done so often enough in his experience to make it worth remembering.

The key word in this episode is 'seem'. The observed parallels between the planets, the symbolism and the climate are all subjective, happening within the astrologer's mind. He is choosing to view and to comment on his experiences via a specific vocabulary formed from astronomical phenomena, and it is this which makes him an astrologer. This process, the observation of, and meditation upon, such parallel manifestations of micro- and macro-cosm, is the very essence of astrology. It provides intellectual, philosophical, and perhaps even spiritual satisfaction to those who practise it, and is therefore a highly subjective and

individual process. Each astrologer will interpret things differently, as each artist will produce a different expression in response to a given stimulus.

The inevitable variance within subjective reality is no problem in an artistic field of endeavour, but in a scientific one it is anathema. Modern science takes as its foundation and benchmark the establishment of an objective reality, a indisputable body of factual knowledge which will be true for every researcher or user and in any era. Following scientific method, it would be necessary to investigate every occurrence of the opposition of Venus and Saturn, and every cold day, in order to discover some link between the two, either a causal link between one and the other or some other phenomenon which is shown simultaneously in both. But such an effect would have to be reproducible each and every time, without exception, unless other factors were present. The one-off subjective response of the individual astrologer has no validity in this paradigm. Clearly, astrology cannot fit into such a framework, and the most natural way forward would be to let the two disciplines go their separate ways, noting as we do so that the subjective/objective divide makes science an unsuitable candidate as a host for astrology. There are, however, several factors which complicate the issue, and it is these which both feed and maintain the animosity between the two subjects, and which continue to link them almost against their own will, in the way that divorced couples continue to fight their old battles every time they meet.

The most prominent of these factors was the way that in the late eighteenth century Science unilaterally assumed the philosophical high ground, putting forward the idea that objective reality was the only reality. As the scientific viewpoint achieved supremacy, its competitors went into decline: the scriptural viewpoint, based on the teachings of the church, was the most noticeable loser, but most forms of philosophical viewpoint, including astrology and other liberal arts, also found themselves demoted from the mainstream. It is true that philosophy fought back in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but only as an academic discipline, discussed and argued within an academic framework and largely unknown to the general public. Religion, too, made a comeback at the same time, but with a new demarcation line observed between the physical and the spiritual

worlds: Science held sway over the one, the church over the other, and they have kept a respectful mutual distance since, with the exception of a few atheist materialist scientists who periodically announce that God cannot exist, and a few similarly extreme creationist evangelists who insist that the world was literally created by God in six days and that the fossil record of evolution is wrong.

After taking the high ground from all theological, hermetic and esoteric studies Science sought to distance itself from them, loudly denying its parents in the way every rebellious teenager does, and re-writing the history of knowledge in accordance with its own principles as any victorious dictator does after a successful coup.

Hermeticism is now to all intents and purposes extinct, so there is no need for Science to debunk it further; astrology, however, lives on and appears to be thriving, at least in its more populist forms. Like an wayward elderly relative, it refuses to go away and die quietly, and its continuation remains a profound embarrassment to Science, which is therefore compelled to persist in its attempts to stamp it out. It is interesting to note that when battle is joined, the area of dispute is most frequently still the point at which the two disciplines astrology and astronomy diverged in the seventeenth century, i.e. the superiority of the Copernican over the Aristotelian versions of the solar system: Professor Richard Dawkins' recent attack on astrology falls precisely into this category, as we will see later. Science has of course moved on enormously in every field of its endeavour since that first parting of the ways, but for some reason it keeps coming back to the same area of dispute, unable to let it go. Astrology, too, has moved on in the last three centuries, or at least changed its preoccupations, but this, too, is ignored. A scientist like Dawkins would say that the reason for constantly re-stating seventeenth-century arguments is to establish that logical and indisputable foundation of fact from which all else must proceed and in doing so to show that astrology, based on a geocentric worldview, is therefore falsely based; but it is probably also true to say that the dispute has all the elements of a family feud, which ignores any good that the various parties have done since the event which first split them, and instead concentrates solely on issues of legitimacy and parentage.

There is, in fact, no need for Science to continue to make its point. It has already made it,

and had it universally accepted; there is nobody in the Western world now who would seriously suggest that the geocentric solar system was physical fact, even if it still has a philosophical or cultural value. It is to be noted that astrologers and devotees of similar hermetic practices never press for the re-acceptance of the geocentric universe; they accept the Copernican view without any quibble, which leaves the scientists' continued attempts to disprove the geocentric model seem unnecessary and somewhat ill-mannered. Allan Chapman, writing in *Astronomy Now*, is well aware of this:

'...astrology does have a number of characteristics from which science could learn to its distinct advantage. For one thing, astrology does not talk down to its audience in the way that popularised science so often does. Science is concerned with trying to uncover the truths which lie behind the fabric of the natural world, yet many of the scientists involved in this meritorious enterprise display an arrogance towards the beliefs and fears of ordinary people that borders on the contemptuous.

And nowhere is this arrogance more clearly demonstrated than by certain life scientists who are quick to rubbish any points which touch upon the emotional, non-rationally demonstrable or religious aspects of Mankind, in contra-distinction to their own hard-line materialist perspective. Astrology, on the other hand, addresses those fears, dreads and aspirations of humanity which science considers not even to exist.

If science wants to communicate its message beyond the ranks of the committed amateur and professional scientists, it must set out to win hearts as well as minds. By treating ordinary people as intrinsically valuable and interesting in their own right, astrology has won a strategic lead in this battle, and scientists should take note.

Not until science recognises that there is more to men and women than proofs and demonstrations, and chooses to set a kinder face to human un-reason, will we ever be able to relegate astrology and its related follies to the intellectual graveyard where they belong.

10,

The second complicating factor in the relationship between astrology and science is

what is probably best termed the Fallacy of Celestial Influence. This is the theory that somehow the planets are direct causes of events on earth, probably via some invisible force like gravity or by energy in some frequency spectrum beyond our usual senses, as radio waves are. A great number of practising astrologers, though not all, hold this to be true, though when asked to explain its mechanism are unable to do so. Along with them, almost all of the everyday enthusiasts of astrology, the people who avidly read their newspaper horoscope and profess themselves to be typical of their sun sign, readily believe in the so-called 'celestial influence', though again they cannot provide an explanation for how such a thing might work - yet at the same time they cannot understand how astrology might work any other way. The Fallacy of Celestial Influence is irresistibly easy to imagine and believe in; it is bitterly opposed by scientists (and, if they but knew it, by contemplative astrologers too), yet ironically it actually demonstrates, and arises from, the dominance of scientific thinking in the world today.

There is no doubt that the idea of celestial influence is, in scientific terms, nonsense. There is no celestial influence, nor any force within physics which could produce such effects. The idea is an ancient one, but so is its refutation: even St Augustine (*City of God*, Book V, chapter 6) notes the difference between a genuine celestial effect such as that of the moon's gravity on tides, and a supposed celestial effect such as an astrological indication.¹¹ Yet the idea is not entirely extinct even within the scientific community, as we shall see. As with Phlogiston, the supposed hidden element of combustion sought by eighteenth-century chemists, there are some prominent scientists who feel that somehow planetary influence might yet be explainable, either by some so far undiscovered force, or by some system of harmonics and resonance within already known forces which will eventually be shown to modify the character of a person at their birth. Such theories fall into the category of pseudoscience, in that they are internally consistent and follow a recognisable logic, but are founded on principles which are either unproven or impossible.

The fact that the everyday astrology enthusiast so readily subscribes to the Fallacy of Celestial Influence shows how hard it is nowadays to think outside the physical and scientific model of the universe. Objective reality is now the only truth, and even taking one

step outside it into the world of popular astrology requires people to visualise it in mechanical terms of cause and effect, working in a way analogous to the familiar technologies of daily life. It is almost impossible now to imagine astrology in the way that the ancient or medieval mind did, as a spiritual effect, a proof that there was a Creator at work or a higher, transcendent, order of reality in existence. Science provides the only paradigm for thought most of us know, and since this contains proofs of invisible yet powerful forces such as gravity, which make the solar system work in ways which though true are contrary to the evidence of our eyes, it becomes all too easy for the Fallacy of Celestial Influence to seem not only to seem credible, but almost indisputable.

These two factors, the insistence on the superiority of objective reality which leads scientists to continue to berate and belittle astrology, and the Fallacy of Celestial Influence which leads astrologers to aspire to be scientists and prove that astrology works in a physical sense, continue to link the disciplines in a love-hate relationship which is impossible to break. In addition, as we have seen, this unholy union occasionally produces outbursts of pseudoscience, which does neither side any credit.

In examining the leading protagonists in this endless battle, it is probably better to focus attention on the scientists rather than the astrologers, because they are, at least, trying to be objective in what they are doing, and usually better organised in their arguments. Astrologers, on the other hand are usually more hopeful than intellectual, and despite all their desire to see astrology become a science have very little idea of how to go about their aim. Their 'proofs', usually based on one or two lucky coincidences, simply give more ammunition to people like Dawkins, and rightly so.

Scientists involved in the battle with astrology usually fall into one of two categories. The first is made up of Chapman's 'hard-line materialists', such as Dawkins, who reject astrology completely; the second consists of those scientists whose work has brought them into contact with astrology, whose curiosity has been aroused by some unexplainable phenomenon, and who then seek to investigate and 'prove' astrology by scientific means. In this group are such researchers as Michel Gauquelin and Percy Seymour. And outside

both of these groups, ever-ready to attack astrologers and scientists alike, stands the singular figure of Geoffrey Dean. Dean is a special case, since he is not only a scientist by training and profession, but also very familiar with the techniques and practices of astrology, which most scientists are not.

Let us start with Dawkins, who is at least candid in his opinion: 'I despise modern astrologers,' he says.¹² The qualifying adjective 'modern' is interesting: he appears to mean that ancient astrologers can be forgiven for their ignorance but that modern ones, who should know better, are wilfully misleading their public, and goes on to accuse those who take an interest in astrology of 'Pre-Copernican dabbings.' He assumes that the geocentric model of the astrologer is there from error rather than from conscious choice, and that once the correct physical model, a heliocentric Copernican system, is shown and explained, then astrology will simply collapse. To him, it is nothing more than an anachronism, a superstition based on ignorance which is now five hundred years out of date.

He also points out, in his most recent and famous attack on astrology¹³, that the constellations are made up of stars separated by billions of miles, which only appear to form their familiar shapes when seen from Earth: therefore, since they are in no way close to each other or otherwise connected, they cannot possibly exercise any sort of influence together. Bringing his argument closer to home, he then notes that precessional shift over the past two millennia has moved his own sun sign (he gives his birthday as March 26th) from Aries to Pisces. As he says,

'If astrologers were doing something that had any connection with reality, this presumably ought to make a difference. Since they aren't, it doesn't.'¹⁴

He ends his scientific dismissal of astrology by calling the retrogradation of planets an 'illusion', and adding that even when they appear to change direction, they are still nowhere near any of the actual constellations, and that even if retrogradation or moving into a sign were real phenomena, they could have no influence on human events. A planet is so far from a new-born baby that in gravitational terms the mass of the doctor delivering it would

have a greater effect on the child than the planet.

Everything that Dawkins says is completely right: yet at the same time everything that he says is completely wrong, and this apparent paradox deserves further investigation.

In the first instance, Dawkins has assumed that his viewpoint is the right one, and that there is no other light in which to examine anything at all. He is a scientist; science has shown the truth of the physical universe; therefore, what he says about the universe and all within it must also be right and true. In this, he is like a man walking through a forest at night, finding his way with a powerful torch. He will see only what the beam illuminates, and be unaware of what else might lie outside the reach of the light. Indeed, the stronger the light, the less likely he is to see anything outside its beam at all; had he been finding his way with a dimmer light in an earlier age, he would have been far more aware of the forest as a whole. He will also follow the path the beam shows him, and no other: there may well be other paths, running parallel to the one he is on, just a few feet away from him to one side, but he will never know that they are there.

So sure is Dawkins that his light is the right one to see by that he criticises astrology without bothering to see what it is about. It is clear from his arguments that he is judging purely in terms of present-day astronomy: he is completely unaware of, or at least pays no heed to, its internal assumptions, mechanics, vocabulary, usage, or practice. He seems not to know or notice that the constellations are never taken in astrology to have influence in themselves, but are simply signs in the simple sense of the word, labels for parts of the sky against which the planets may be seen by the earthbound observer. His argument about the precession of the equinoxes is given by almost every modern scientist or astronomer who wishes to debunk astrology. He adds, in a footnote:

'Many astrologers are aware of precession but, instead of updating their methods, they prefer the lazy escape of 'tropical astrology' in which one uses zodiacal constellations as labels for the patch of sky where they [the planets] would have appeared years ago.'¹⁵

In fact, tropical astrology uses divisions of the zodiac as labels for the patch of sky where the planets appear in the present day, but Dawkins's view is that the whole business of astrology is so hopelessly misguided, incorrect, anachronistic, primitive and bogus that to

pick over details of technique and terminology is irrelevant. It would be pointless to point out to him that astrologers have been aware of precession since classical times and have adapted their practice accordingly; the modern rational and scientific viewpoint, while recognising no onward limit to knowledge, has a very definite rearward limit, a line drawn immediately preceding Galileo, Copernicus and Newton, and all knowledge precedent to this is labelled primitive and wrong. The man in the forest with the flashlight never looks over his shoulder, nor does he pay attention to paths already made.

It is interesting to note that Dawkins's first argument, concerning the remoteness of the stars and the impossibility of them having any physical influence, is prefigured by something very similar in Plotinus¹⁶, eighteen centuries earlier, where he says that the stars are much further out than the planets and cannot therefore have any influence of their own. The difference between the intentions of these two authors, despite using the same argument, neatly illustrates the divide between modern science and astrology. Dawkins is saying that the stars cannot have physical influence, and that therefore astrology is meaningless; Plotinus is saying that the stars cannot have physical influence, and that therefore their meaning must be beyond or other than the physical, i.e. in the metaphysical realm.

Both Dawkins and Plotinus are insistent that there is no such thing as physical astral influence, yet this is the very thing that a layman would identify as the central tenet of astrology. The problem with the idea is its plausibility: it is in every respect a pseudo-science, a piece of knowledge which offers reasons for the inexplicable in a way which appears to make sense. For Dawkins, the Fallacy of Celestial Influence, as we defined it earlier, is astrology's great con-trick, the lie that has been peddled by astrologers to the gullible for centuries. Yet throughout astrology's history its leading practitioners have been at pains to dissuade their readers or clients that the all too credible reasoning of astral influence is simply not true. The frontispiece of William Lilly's 'Christian Astrology' is an engraving in which Lilly himself appears, pointing to a horoscope on the table before him, on which are written the words 'non cogunt' - 'they [the stars] do not compel'. Another frequently-found phrase is 'signa, non causa' - '[they are] signs, not causes'. Even in the

heart of the astrologers' own domain, far from the general public, in the rituals of the Astrological Lodge of London, there is a firm reminder that celestial influence comes from a higher source than the planets themselves:

'But let us not idolatrously suppose that our worship and veneration are directed towards the material bodies of the Planets. Rather we seek the Meanings that subsist them, and through these seemingly diverse principles we mount ever higher towards that ONE, whose symbol in Astrology is the infinite blue vault of heaven, wherein the Sun, Moon, Planets, and Stars live, move and have their being.'¹⁷

The wording of the ritual owes much the Theosophical thinking that gave rise to many of the astrological societies of the early twentieth century, but its sentiments would not be unfamiliar to Plotinus, or to any other Neoplatonist. The constant theme seems to be that despite all appearances to the contrary, and no matter how persuasive the Fallacy of Celestial Influence, the essence of astrology is not to be found in its physical or mechanical framework itself, but in the philosophies which have been inspired by it.

It is precisely because Dawkins and other material scientists do not accept the metaphysical or metaphorical aspects of astrology that it seems so misguided and meaningless to them. In their terms of reference there is only a physical reality, and in those terms then astrology does indeed seem primitive and flawed, effortlessly superseded by modern knowledge. There is also the problem that until five hundred years ago astrology contained within itself all the astronomical knowledge that was then known, as well as much of the mathematics and geometry; there was much else besides, much that was cultural and philosophical, but when a branch of science developed which cast aside all cultural and philosophical considerations, concentrating simply on the physical nature of the world and the way it worked, then those who followed the new path and adopted its viewpoint were inevitably going to proclaim their separateness from what had gone before. The peculiar hostility which continues between scientists and astrologers is to a large extent cultural, and based on the deep sense of embarrassment on the part of the astronomers that

they should be in any way related; the survival, and indeed the popularity of what they see as an outmoded worldview seems to point to a failure on their part to propagate the new, true knowledge of the universe and how it works. In other branches of science or technology, a continued interest in the earliest forms of their knowledge is seen as the proper province of historians or enthusiasts, interesting or quaint according to personal preference, but nothing to lose sleep over. In astrology, however, the antipathy is still very keenly felt.

It may be because of the long-assumed overlap between the heavens and Heaven itself, implying that somehow knowledge of the universe brought with it knowledge of worlds beyond that of our physical existence, that the hostilities have been so protracted. There is a theological or a religious ingredient in the mix, which makes this a battle for hearts and souls as well as minds. It may be that in the battle for the high ground in any argument, there is no higher ground than the heavens, and so he who controls the heavens holds sway over all. When Science re-defined and explained the heavens, religion quietly abandoned them, and made the quest for redemption an internal rather than an upward journey; astrology, however, had to hang on and defend its territory, since without the heavens it could not exist.

In the second category, those scientists who have attempted to prove astrology in a scientific manner, the best-known name is that of Gauquelin. Before going any further, it is worth noting that researchers hoping or claiming to 'prove' astrology are actually hoping to prove in one way or another that the planets have a measurable effect on mankind; in other words, they are attempting to prove the Fallacy of Celestial Influence, which as we have just seen, is condemned as folly by both Dawkins and Plotinus, along with every occultist and celestial philosopher between them. While seeking to extend the objective universe and its physics to include and explain astrological effects, these researchers are still failing to see that astrology deals not just with invisible effects but with intangible and non-material realms as well. A successful 'proof' of astrology will in fact answer Dawkins' prayers (so to speak; he is an atheist) in that the physical effects of astrology, if any, will be absorbed

into the scientific mainstream, while the philosophical and spiritual content will be stripped away from it and discarded, thus severing the 'as above, so below' maxim which lies at the heart of it all; far from giving astrology new vitality and validity, the proof will kill it for ever. Or perhaps, since this is a very similar process to what happened in the seventeenth century, the non-physical parts of astrology will simply go underground for a while, hidden in folklore or occult traditions as they did in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, until a later era chooses to resurrect them.

Gauquelin's work is too well-known to need detailed exposition here.¹⁸ In making a statistical study of thousands of champion athletes he noted that Mars, the planet traditionally symbolising strength and vigour, was placed in particular sectors of the sky at birth to an extent which far outweighed random chance. The same effect was also noted with different planets and different occupations. Repeated trials seemed to indicate that the effect was reproducible using other collections of data, suggesting that the phenomenon was genuine and capable of scientific exploration. Amateur astrologers were delighted by this apparent vindication of their belief, though those who knew the traditions of the art were disconcerted by the fact that the placing of Gauquelin's significant sky sectors ran contrary to astrological tradition, and so this interesting body of work has tended to occupy a position in no-man's land, distrusted by scientists and traditional astrologers alike. Much work has been done on examining the accuracy of the birth times used, and even on estimating the truthfulness of the birth times reported by rural doctors, some in an attempt to undermine Gauquelin's conclusions, and some to support them. The debate is unlikely to go away for some time yet, though is it equally unlikely that at the end the establishment of either side will open its arms to embrace this rather awkward body of work.

In the early 1990s British scientist Percy Seymour suggested that supposed astrological influences could be explained by changes in the magnetic fields of the planets of the solar system.¹⁹ This interesting idea, a modern variant of the Fallacy of Celestial Influence, has so far failed to gain widespread acceptance either among scientists or astrologers, despite managing to offer a scientific rationale without crushing or rejecting the softer and more

subjective personality-centred facets of astrology at the same time. Perhaps the idea lies outside the present preoccupations of either side, and its moment will come at some future date.

Though the work of these scientists investigating astrology may make some initial impact when published, in the long run their 'proofs' of astrology are unlikely to change the established scientific standpoint. As we have seen earlier, a 'proof' is more likely to change astrology than to change science, and in any case it will always attempt to objectivise a subjective practice, which does more harm than good. Proving astrology in this way may be impossible, but even if it is not, it is probably inadvisable.

The task of dissuading well-meaning scientists from attempting to 'prove' astrology, and its inverse, dissuading astrologers who are sure that their art can be shown to have a scientific basis, seems to be something of a personal crusade for Geoffrey Dean, who stands on both sides of the debate at once, yet favours neither. Dean is a special case, in that he is a scientist and an apparently vigorous opponent of astrology, but also has a long-standing familiarity with astrological language, techniques and practice, which in theory should make him a more able and perceptive critic of astrology. His criticisms and dismissals of astrology, which are usually published in academic journals, create outrage within the astrological community, as they are intended to, but their impact in the scientific world is probably much less. This is because most of the scientific world, Dawkins and his supporters apart, has little interest in further disproving astrology, since in the scientific view it was satisfactorily dismissed four centuries ago; some sectors of the astrological community, on the other hand, have an almost pathological need to prove astrology and to have it accepted as scientific fact, and so Dean's work is seen as a particularly hurtful betrayal of the cause by one who knows its inner workings.

Dean's magnum opus, *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology* (1977), remains a much misunderstood work. It was an overview of almost all the developments in the techniques of astrology developed between 1900 and 1976, collected with admirable accuracy and conciseness, and with full references to all publications quoted. As a source-book for the

practising astrologer it could hardly be bettered. The problem for astrologers was that the data Dean presented showed clearly that almost no astrological techniques were in any way reliable or predictable in their results, and so it became clear that the title of the book was heavily ironic. There had been no advances in natal astrology.

Whenever new research is published which seems to offer proof of some astrological effect, Dean can usually be relied upon to refute it, prove the contrary, or point out the errors in the research, provoking in turn blustering defences of astrology by prominent astrologers. The most recent of these exchanges was in 2003, when Dean published research with Ivan Kelly which suggested that astrological twins (unrelated pairs of people born at the same time on the same day) were in no way similar, and which prompted a defence by popular astrologer Jonathan Cainer in the pages of the *Daily Mirror* as well as the more usual articles in the specialist astrological journals.²⁰

It is outside the purpose of this dissertation to analyse, support or reject Dean's work in detail, but it is worth asking the question as to why he seems determined to oppose all attempts to prove that astrology works. Perhaps some clue can be obtained from the ideas advanced in his less well-known works and in his lectures: in a memorable lecture given to the Astrological Lodge of London in 1989, later to appear in the Lodge journal, *Astrology*, he separated the scientific and poetic sides of astrology, urging more care on the part of astrologers when handling the first (though not by any means denying that it was possible) and celebrating the second.²¹ Dean's lectures are often enriched with highly poetic images, and he delights in the trick frequently found in alchemical texts where the meaning is hidden in plain sight, seeming to say one thing while intending its exact opposite to be taken by those who care to look a little deeper. It is not necessarily correct, therefore, to cast him in the role of the champion of rational science, cruelly crushing astrology's nonsensical superstition; he may at the same time also be the guardian of a more personal and poetic astrology, firmly dissuading those who seek to legitimise their astrology by attempting to make it seem scientific. Not only are they, for the most part, hopelessly lacking the necessary mathematical, statistical or logical skills, Dean seems to say, but they are

misguided as well, because the astrology they love and leap to defend is not, and can never be, a science in the way that such things are now defined and practised. Astrology may be philosophical, religious, poetic, meaningful in every way, and no doubt useful to both its practitioners and their clients, but it is not a science, and it would be wrong to try to make it one.

Dean is therefore not, perhaps, the ogre he has been made out to be; but his clear belief that astrology is not an empirically provable science, and his determination to disprove all who would make it one, show that rational science cannot provide a suitable shelter for astrology, nor nourishment for its future. Dean's opinion is to be taken even more seriously than that of Dawkins, because as an astrologer himself Dean does know what he is talking about. He knows what sort of a thing astrology is, knows how complex and fragile it is, and despite his demonic reputation within the astrological community would not like to see it die.

If, as has been argued, astrology is not just a collection of early and outmoded scientific knowledge, but a much greater collection of things, of which the larger part is non-scientific and cultural, then modern science can only hope to see and understand a fraction of it - and an unrepresentative fraction at that. Even if some sort of new and friendlier rapport could be established between scientists and astrologers, there could still be no home for astrology in its fullest sense within modern science, because that would entail astrology losing or abandoning its cultural associations and becoming simply a chapter in the history of early science, a sort of preserved relic. Whether this relic would still constitute astrology is a debatable point: are bones without flesh a true image of the person? It does seem certain, however, that astrology in this form, that is as the accepted early history of mathematical astronomy and nothing more, is not what most of its present-day supporters and enthusiasts want it to be, and it is not what has enabled it to survive in the centuries since the work of Galileo and Copernicus. If, therefore, it is the non-scientific parts of astrology which have been the key to its survival, then any attempt to place it within a rational scientific framework is not only unworkable but undesirable, and far from preserving or

supporting astrology's cultural and philosophical attributions, will almost certainly destroy them. Astrology's best hopes for support and sustenance in the twenty-first century must therefore lie elsewhere.

6. Astrology and religion: no room at the inn

The relationship of astrology to religion is almost the exact inverse of its relationship with science. Religion has always concerned itself with non-material or transcendent worlds, and has always employed a rich vocabulary of symbols, and so the form and style of religion would appear to be ideally suited to astrology in the very areas where science, as we have seen, is unable to accommodate it. There have also been several eras in the past in which astrology was well tolerated by religion, and some in which astrology was almost an integral part of religion, and it is tempting to suppose that what worked before could work again. There are, however, certain doctrinal difficulties to be overcome first, and although doctrines in both disciplines do change their stance over time, at the moment they are some distance apart. But the greatest obstacle in the way of a possible reunion is that neither party wants it to happen. There are plenty of astrologers who seek a union between astrology and science, but almost none who would like to see astrology joined to religion; and of those few who do, the majority envisage that religion in a new form, far removed from the traditional practices of the established Christian churches. This perceived incompatibility between church and astrology among astrologers of today is probably due more to the rejection of the church as an embodiment of established and repressive authority during the social revolutions of the 1960s than to any actual theological difference, but the antipathy is still there nonetheless. Only a very, very tiny minority - probably no more than half a dozen individuals, representing an extreme stance within astrology's traditional revival - would welcome an astrology explicitly aligned to Christian doctrine, and it is worth noting that for this particular tiny cult the preferred doctrine would be that of the seventeenth century or earlier; in other words, before the development of modern science.

The doctrinal objections to astrology put forward by the churches over the centuries have tended to fall into three broad groups. The earliest, typified by St Augustine's dismissal of astrologers in Book V of *City of God*, concerns itself with the error of astrology, the worship of planets and celestial objects as gods in themselves, which is entirely understandable in an era when Christian authors were aiming to superimpose a new faith

on a pagan world. To believe that the planets are the actual causes of events on earth is wrong, Augustine says, though to see both planets and events as linked to a higher reality is not:

‘...it may be said that the stars give notice of events and do not bring those events about, so that the position of the stars becomes a kind of statement, predicting, not producing, future happenings; and this has been an opinion held by men of respectable intelligence.’²²

Realising, perhaps, that by this statement his argument has allowed the respectably intelligent astrologer to escape his theological trap, he straight away continues:

‘Now this is not the way the astrologers normally talk. They would not say, for example ‘This position of Mars signifies murder’; they would say, ‘it causes murder.’²³

Aware that he is on increasingly infirm ground, Augustine concedes that astrologers should take more care in their phrasing, and goes on to show how astrology cannot work by citing numerous examples of twins, who despite having similar horoscopes turn out to lead different lives. This well-worn ‘proof’ of astrology’s preposterousness has been used to taunt astrologers ever since, though in fact it is nothing of the kind: Augustine’s assertions are nowadays rendered null not by advances in philosophical argument but by improved knowledge in obstetrics and gynaecology, and the argument about one fate and one fate only being possible for each person is something no astrologer would ever agree to, since it denies the astrologer the ability to make his judgement.

The accusation that astrology is fatalistic in nature points to the heart of the problem that Christianity has always had with astrology. If the future of an individual is fated, then there is no opportunity for him to change his fate by changing his behaviour, or more importantly by the salvation afforded by recognising Christ as his saviour; furthermore, if that fate is determined by the influences of planets, which are in turn created and ordered by God, then

our various fates, good or bad, must have been preordained as part of God's will, and therefore it makes no difference whatsoever whether or not we keep the Commandments. In addition, if the actions of men are directed by the planets, then God is placed at an even further remove, beyond the planets and beyond the reach of men. Such a Neoplatonic arrangement - mankind, planets, God - is clearly unsatisfactory from a Christian viewpoint.

The break with Neoplatonism came with Aquinas, who suggested that although the lower nature of man was subject to natural laws and impulses, the higher nature and the soul were, as Thorndike puts it, free, and as intellectual substances unable to be coerced by any corporeal substances, however superior.²⁴ It was therefore possible for the soul to turn towards God as a free choice, even in defiance of the impulses of nature. This marvellous theological compromise pleased everybody. It made the idea of celestial influence acceptable, and with it a certain fatalism, but at the same time it gave the higher nature of man the hope of salvation. In separating the physical world and its planetary regents from the metaphysical world of the spirit it also prepared the ground for the later separation of science and religion, but at the time it served rather to combine than to separate, facilitating the uptake of new ideas. In the Renaissance astrological thought was a part both of science and theology, and flourished as it had not done for a thousand years.

The Renaissance also saw the flourishing of the second doctrinal objection, which turns on whether the planets are signs or causes. It is merely a refinement of the objections raised by writers like Augustine, though by this time there were very few who were likely to suggest that the planets were themselves gods. Again, if the planets were seen as mere indicators, there was no theological problem. Arguments typical of the era can be found in the works of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola.²⁵ In an age when all things hermetic were enthusiastically studied, and when the election of suitable moments for all purposes was a popular pursuit, as was the making of talismans, there was a suspicion that those who strayed too far from the line of acceptability were drifting towards magic, which was seen as infernal rather than celestial. Most astrologers of the era were at pains to show that they were aware of the theological implications, and on the right side of the line.

Given the extraordinary complexity and subtlety of Ficino's arguments it seems a pity that the doctrinal objection to astrology most employed in the modern era is also the most unthinking, which is that astrology is against the teachings of the Church because the Bible says it is. This fundamentalist argument is favoured by the evangelist churches, which tend to come from the Protestant tradition, and mostly from the U.S.A. Though small in their numbers in England due to the overwhelming presence of the Anglican denomination, evangelical churches are the fastest-growing part of the Christian faith worldwide, and their influence, not just in religion but in politics as well, is rapidly increasing. The majority of these churches are fundamentalist, if not literalist, in doctrine, taking the text of the Bible (usually the Authorised Version, or 'King James' Bible) as it stands as being divine truth, and paying no attention to any symbolic or figurative meanings, or allowing consideration of any historical context. Therefore, when a text is found in Ezekiel 13 which condemns those who practise divination, this is seen as a warning against all astrologers and fortune tellers which is to stand for all time; the context, which is that Ezekiel is speaking about the practices of the Babylonian religion of his own time, is not considered.²⁶

The theological argument usually advanced alongside these extracts from the Bible is that astrologers are attempting to tell the future and in so doing are pre-guessing God's purpose, which God alone can decide. This is a neat though probably inadvertent inversion of the usual position: astrologers are usually condemned as fatalistic, but for these evangelical churches it is God's purpose that is fixed and immutable, and astrologers who are wrong to suggest otherwise. One contemporary preacher suggests that practitioners of divination are hoping for autonomy and independence from God, and in so doing are accepting a satanic doctrine.

The widespread and increasing acceptance of the fundamentalist viewpoint makes it unlikely that twenty-first century Christianity will welcome, or even tolerate, astrology in the way that it did five hundred years ago. The theological arguments which fascinated the Renaissance are irrelevant now; Christianity is moving towards a more emotive, less intellectual stance, and evangelism deals in a simplified theology where symbols and high philosophy have no place.

Contemporary evangelical Christianity does not meet any of our suggested criteria for the continuance of astrology, and in its fundamentalist form finds astrology not only wrong but dangerous, as does the scientific community, though for different reasons. Astrology's home in the twenty-first century, if there is one, lies elsewhere.

7. Astrology in academia

As the previous sections of this paper have shown, none of astrology's previous host cultures are willing or capable of continuing in that role in the future. Astrology needs to find a new way forward, and an unexpected new pathway which has very recently opened is the re-installation of astrology as a subject for study in universities. At first sight, this looks like a very promising avenue to explore: after all, as its proponents would gladly attest, astrology has a long and intricate history, its own literature and vocabulary, links with early science, architecture and philosophy, and - the easiest of syllogisms to make, but regrettably one of the most erroneous - astrology is a 'higher' knowledge, and so ideally suited to places of higher education. Unfortunately, the reality of the situation is less straightforward than that, and the path beset with many obstacles and pitfalls.

Firstly, we must consider what astrology might gain from being added to the curriculum of a university. It would ensure the survival of the subject in the most basic sense, since there would be sufficient books, literature and academic work on the subject stored in the university's libraries to enable someone a hundred years from now to reconstruct the basic procedures of astrology, even if all forms of it had vanished from public sight in the interim and there was nobody still living who could read a horoscope. In providing an archive or a memorial to knowledge once but no longer in use, academia would be doing astrology a great service.

A memorial archive, however, is quite literally the last hope. It would be far better if astrology could take its place in academia among the other disciplines as both vivid and valid: that is, alive, in use, and able to make a contribution to the growth of knowledge and its understanding. Yet even if it were to do so, the question remains as to what sort of life astrology could lead in a university. It is quite possible that it might turn out to be like an animal in a zoo: outwardly content, able to thrive, and giving every sign of outward health, yet out of its true habitat, cut off from its original and wider environment, and - most importantly - no longer wild. Something is lost from such creatures, and it may not be

possible for them to breed successfully in captivity. In the same way, astrology may be studied with interest and enthusiasm at university, yet it may not successfully share its viewpoint with other disciplines, and productive exchanges of ideas may not be forthcoming. Whilst to have a live animal in a zoo is in every way better than to have a glass case containing the stuffed or pickled remains of the last known example, it is to be hoped that the placement of astrology in academia could result in something better than either.

The problem, as before, is one of worldview, and to their credit is more keenly recognised by the academics than by the astrologers. Since their earliest days, universities have seen themselves as repositories of knowledge and truth. In the late medieval period and Renaissance it was possible to study astrology at a university because the astronomical component of astrological knowledge, that is the mathematics of the visible cycles of the planets, represented the most advanced knowledge of the era, while its philosophical component was for the most part compatible with the teachings of the Church, the ultimate authority on matters metaphysical or transcendent. Since then the definition of knowledge itself has changed, and everything now taught or studied is seen in terms of the universe as described by material science. Notwithstanding their conservative image, universities have to present knowledge as it is currently accepted: even in the study of history, scholars constantly re-interpret and re-select the facts of the past to offer a new light on the present day. Astrology's geocentric worldview is seen as either outdated or just plain wrong, and neither can have any place in the study of the solar system as it is presently understood, so therefore a large part of what astrology originally contributed to the academic community is excluded. Its philosophical content also finds itself excluded, because astrological philosophy is in essence theistic, with its ultimate aim being divine knowledge, while philosophy in the last three centuries has taken a different route, away from the theological and towards investigating knowledge itself, through reason. The only ways in which academia can approach astrology, therefore, is either by studying its history, noting its development and cultural role in various eras of the past, or by a phenomenological approach, looking at the whole practice exactly as it is, archaisms and illogicalities included.

The phenomenological approach seems like a promising way forward, but again there are problems. The phenomenological approach invites observation rather than participation, and it is all too easy then to study astrology as if it were a museum exhibit or, as we have said, an animal in a zoo. It may be possible to identify it and describe it, but there is a strong participatory, if not initiatory, element in it, and therefore to understand it fully the observer must step inside it and do it for himself.

To step inside the practice risks the observer losing his impartiality, but at the same time it offers him deeper insight. Is this not a reasonable exchange? Hundreds of researchers, in every discipline, have taken risks in the pursuit of knowledge, so what makes this one so difficult? The danger lies in practising astrology within the academic environment, which although not physically dangerous, creates intellectual conflicts and threatens the credibility of the academic institution. The processes of astrology create certain conclusions, called 'judgements' in the jargon, which although apparently insightful to the practitioner, are in no way true, verifiable and repeatable in a modern scientific sense, and therefore cannot be admitted to what is presently accepted as 'true knowledge'. A university cannot allow itself to create, disseminate, or otherwise approve and recognise 'untrue knowledge'. Which is not to say that it cannot be done, but such a thing would more properly belong to a sect, a cult, or an underground movement rather than to a university.

The university, therefore, must distance itself from or forbid the actual practice of astrology. The easiest option for the university would be simply not to allow its study; if it does allow a study, then it must either be historical or phenomenological. Both of these, as we have seen, will tend to make a zoo animal out of astrology. The line between unacceptable intellectual conflict and unacceptable restriction on astrology is extremely narrow, and must be walked with great care.

Astrologers, by and large, are unaware of this. The vast majority of astrological enthusiasts simply want to take their hobby to University, to have a chance to study it to their heart's content in an academic environment. There is also the cachet of being able to say that they have done just that, studied astrology at a University, as though that legitimised in some way what had previously been seen as a waste of time or false

knowledge. That legitimisation, as we have just seen, is a much more difficult issue than most amateur astrologers realise.

Recent initiatives have established a handful of small centres for the study of astrology within selected universities in England and the U.S.²⁷ These are very carefully controlled and well aware of the problem of what is 'true knowledge'. It is hoped that useful cross-fertilisation between these centres and other fields of study can take place, but it is probably too early to say whether these plans can be fully realised. There are other factors to be taken into account besides those internal to the subject itself: politics and finances, to name but two. At the moment (2003) a good proportion of those involved in astrological studies at universities are themselves experienced practitioners of astrology who have agreed to leave the practice of astrology to one side, concentrating on phenomenological or historical approaches and avoiding the 'true knowledge' question entirely. Although this solves the problem in the short term, the picture may be somewhat different if the practice of astrology continues to decline and those who study astrology at universities have no previous knowledge of astrology at all, and no experience of its practice. Once that point is reached, astrology will become similar to those ancient languages whose original sound has been lost.

Overall, the re-installation of astrology in universities seems to be a useful backstop, a last defence in case no other home can be found, and perhaps a safe repository from which if all else failed, astrology might yet be restored at some future date. Unless the prevailing scientific paradigm for what is and is not true changes, there will always be difficulties with the verification of astrology's intensely subjective experience, and this will tend to keep it as an isolated study, discouraged from integration with other disciplines. There is no doubt, however, that the preservation of the subject, even in such a limited form, is far better than its extinction, and if nothing else than as a form of insurance it is worth persevering with the re-installation process. But it would be better by far if another host could be found, one which was more willing to encourage and support astrology's participatory nature, and one for which subjective truth was seen as more of an asset than a problem.

8. Ecology and paganism

Astrology cannot stay where it is, or it will wither and die; but most of the directions it could choose to go in lead to dead ends. It cannot move forward to a more modernist stance, because that would inevitably require it to abandon its geocentric viewpoint and to adopt a framework closer to the assumptions of modern science. The model most usually quoted by astrologers for this is contained in David Bohm's *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, in which the author suggests that the universe is interconnected at every level, so that a molecule moving at one end of the galaxy will have an effect at the other, but few astrologers (if any) have a deep enough knowledge of particle physics to create a genuinely scientific astrology along these lines. In any case, the continuing enmity between science and astrology would prohibit its wide-scale acceptance. Astrology cannot, therefore, go forward in the usual sense, implying progress and modernity, because science and technology stand in its way, and regard the future as their own.

Moving backwards is something that astrology has already done, in the form of the traditional revival. This has been a very useful exercise for astrology, and although its effects have been minimal at the popular level, 'middle' astrology has become stronger and more fully understood by its practitioners; the rediscovery of astrology's roots and history has given an inner strength and pride to those who study and maintain the tradition. The last twenty years have seen a great many groups - political, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic - re-discovering their roots and regaining a sense of identity thereby, and it has been as true for the astrological community as for any other. But, beneficial as these retrospective efforts might be, a community cannot exist solely on its past. It must have a future as well.

Moving to the left or right of the political spectrum is, as we have already seen, pointless for astrology. It is in many ways outside politics, and since its natural inclinations are traditionalist, deist and conservative, it sits uneasily with the predominantly left-wing or centre-left attitudes of the majority of the populace today.

It cannot move upwards either. High astrology has been virtually extinct for three

centuries, and until the present secular emphasis in society changes, it is unlikely to return. Even if it were to do so, it would find itself in conflict with the churches and organised religion, though it could no doubt reach some kind of agreement with one denomination or another, as happened in previous centuries. The dispute, however, would be about moral teachings and divination, not about knowledge of the heavenly spheres and realms above: the physical heavens, so vital for astrology, no longer belong to the churches.

By a process of elimination, there is only one direction left for astrology: downwards, into the earth. This seems an unpromising direction for a philosophy which has always looked up to the skies, but on closer examination it will be seen that the new earth philosophies which have sprung up in the wake of earth sciences like ecology are very fertile soil indeed in which to re-plant astrology for the new millennium.

The re-emergence of interest in all things magical and tribal has been one of the most easily identifiable developments in popular culture during the 1990s. It has shown itself at every level and in every way, from the huge popularity of children's books featuring wizards and magic to the tattoos in Maori or Celtic styles which adorn people from both sexes and every social stratum. The precise reasons for this extraordinary shift in popular consciousness would make a dissertation in themselves, but the underlying theme seems to be a search for something which has been lost, something believed to have been good and of worth, which if recovered could restore wholeness to the present day.

This is, of course, the 'Wounded Land' scenario familiar from Arthurian legend, but as well as offering interesting material for those seeking to prove the existence of cultural archetypes, it may also express something more mundane: a simple but heartfelt dissatisfaction with an increasingly material, technological and impersonal society, particularly among those who were unable to keep up with or participate in the high-tech urban lifestyle of the late 1980s and later.

There appear to be two strands of thought of which one or both can be found in every manifestation of this new mood. They are:

1. A need for spirituality, or a spiritual dimension to everyday life. The most often heard cry is that 'there must be more to life than this,' expressing a sense of being disappointed at

the lack of depth in popular media-driven culture. Everything is ephemeral, with a new ideas barely unpacked before being superseded by next year's model or a totally different technology which renders all that went before it obsolete. This need for spirituality does not necessarily mean a need for religion, since along with the need for spirituality goes a need for freedom from hierarchy and control; this seems to show that one of the main features of the larger dissatisfaction is a feeling of being oppressed and over-regulated. In response to this the evangelical branches of Christianity, which tend to be less hierarchical than the older forms, are now prospering, as noted earlier. Above all, this need for spirituality seeks something inexplicable or magical - and wants it to remain so. It is not in any way a search for meaning or explanation, but a need for some areas of life to be mysterious, potent and operating in a way which is quite separate from the usual cause and effect of technology. The appeal of the night sky lies not in the understanding of astrophysics, but in its enfolding darkness, and mystery, as recent research has shown.²⁸ This need for the inexplicable is very similar to what Weber and his followers have called the need for re-enchantment. There is a perceived need for an intimate and interactive relationship between the user and his work or environment which can be seen to change and enrich both at a level which transcends the mere facts of ownership. Consciously recognised or not, this is a rejection of the present-day ethic of consumerism, where the idea is to acquire, consume and discard as much as possible, the satisfaction lying mainly in the momentary thrill of acquisition.

2. A need for locality. In an increasingly global culture it is very easy to become lost, and to lose the sense of community and of territory which previously acted to reassure and support the individual. One response to this has been a resurgence in national identity, most easily seen at sporting fixtures: not even the most ardent fan twenty years ago would have thought of flying the flag of St George for England, nor even imagined that he would paint the design on his face, yet these are commonplace now. Along with this new sense of nationalism has come a sense of tribal identity, with any possible link to a Celtic, Viking or any other pre-literate warrior culture eagerly sought and expressed through music, body

adornment, jewellery, and tattoos. Again, this is a rejection and a protest against the perceived governing establishment: it is lower classes against upper, urban against rural, and high-tech against hand-made, all rolled into one. But most of all, taking on these tribal 'identities' gives the participants a feeling of belonging which was missing before. They know where they are and where their people are, or at least feel that they do. They no longer feel lost.

Ecology, as it is popularly understood, that is the idea that the earth's resources are finite and must be used in a responsible and sustainable way, aligns with these two strands very well, mixing the idea of the interactive relationship with the locality of the earth itself. All that is missing is the spiritual element, which is added by writers such as David Abram in *The Spell of The Sensuous*, and others who contribute to the various groups known by titles such as *Green Spirit*.

Abrams is in no doubt that man and nature are and should be both interconnected and interactive:

'Conventional scientific discourse privileges the sensible field in abstraction from sensory experience, and commonly maintains that subjective experience is 'caused' by an objectifiable set of processes in the mechanically determined field of the sensible. Meanwhile, New Age spiritualism regularly privileges pure sentience, or subjectivity, in abstraction from sensible matter, and often maintains that material reality is itself an illusory effect caused by an immaterial mind or spirit. Although commonly seen as opposed world-views, both of these positions assume a qualitative difference between the sentient and the sensed; by prioritising one or the other, both of these views perpetuate the distinction between human 'subjects' and natural 'objects'...by bouncing from scientific determinism to spiritual idealism and back again, contemporary discourse avoids the possibility that both the perceiving being and the perceived being are of the same stuff, [and] interdependent.'²⁹

Abram's ecological spirituality betrays its essentially mid-twentieth century liberal American roots in that although he reveres the spirit of the natural world, he stops short of

naming it and making it into a god. In England, however, the tribal associations that come with the rediscovered sense of relationship with the land have resulted in a resurgence of interest in Celtic and Nordic mythology, and with them a re-formed paganism, complete with ancient gods and, more importantly, goddesses (these being brought back to life from a blending of politics, eco-spirituality and feminism). So successful has this been, especially in the form which calls itself Wicca, that it has been claimed that Wicca should now be seen as a genuine new religion, the first for many centuries.³⁰

These revived forms of paganism come in many different varieties and have no central authority, often being formed on an ad hoc basis by interested individuals at a given location, but that is entirely in keeping with the nature of the beliefs, and is a valid response to, and expression of, the need for locality. Paganism in its modern forms effortlessly entwines the two strands of spirituality and locality to produce the simple but fundamental concept of 'sacred space' or 'sacred land'; in its insistence that the land must be cared for, and that we are its stewards rather than its owners, it is a perfect match for the expressed needs of the moment, and so seems likely to thrive in the immediate future. As long as technology continues in its present path, and there is no reason to suggest that it will not, then paganism or something like it will continue to present itself either as an alternative or as a protest, in an attempt to redress the balance. (The idea that this may be a spontaneously occurring balancing mechanism which arises at necessary moments in history would probably delight the supporters both of Abram and of Bohm, but further exploration regrettably lies outside the scope of this paper.)

A blend of ecology and neo-paganism seems set to become, if is not already, the most significant factor in shaping popular belief in the decades ahead. Ecological awareness is a given, a universal belief, among the present generation of people in their early twenties, as personal freedom and choice in sexuality was for their parents' generation. Eco-paganism, if it can be called that, appeals to that influential older generation as well as to the younger group, giving it the potential to be a powerful shaping force in the society of the twenty-first century. The question which now arises is whether it could be a suitable host for astrology, whether astrology has anything to offer in return, and whether astrology can

meet the needs of spirituality and locality.

Astrology provides very good responses to the questions of spirituality and locality. The presence of spirituality and/or enchantment is so obvious throughout that it requires no further comment, but astrology also provides a strong sense of locality in that it is primarily to do with the appearance of the sky at a particular time and place. Although universal, in that it can be made to apply to any time and place, it is also local, especially in its older forms where rising and setting of specific celestial bodies at the observer's location is given greater significance.

The enriching and interactive relationship between the practitioner and his environment is also present in astrology. The prime maxim of the practice is 'as above, so below', affirming that the sky and the earth are indeed of the same stuff, as Abram puts it, and that what happens in one happens in the other. Horary astrology, the most noticeable product of the traditional revival, is particularly closely aligned to the idea of interactive involvement, because the astrologer is a part of the world he interrogates, and cannot stand outside it. To a certain extent, he creates it: asking the question, which initiates the process, is arguably a magical act, and the astrologer's role becomes much closer to that of the sorcerer or shaman than would be the case in, for example, astrological character analysis. Horary astrology's mechanism defies even pseudoscientific attempts to explain it, sidestepping the imagined influences of the Fallacy of Celestial Influence entirely. It appears to be a form of magic, and one which brings practical results, a perfect answer to the needs of an age which is accustomed to the precision of technology yet still wants to believe in the mysterious.

Astrology seems therefore to blend very well with the strands of thought which make up eco-paganism. Does eco-paganism in return fulfil the criteria for astrology's continuance? With certain reservations, the answer appears to be yes. Certainly there is no problem with the acceptance of its apparent and subjective truths, the interconnected 'as above-so below' philosophy.

The question of its higher philosophy depends on whether astrology can abandon its long

association with monotheistic religions, specifically Christianity, and revert to its earlier form. Robert Hand, in his essay *Astrology as a Revolutionary Science*³¹, divides religions into what he terms Type I and Type II. In Type I religions, there is no single moment of Creation and the cosmos, like Time within it, is both eternal and cyclical. There is no boundary between subject and object, and consciousness and spirit are suffused throughout all creation. In Type II religions, Creation is a unique act which occurs once and once only, and Time is linear. Man and nature are divided as subject and object, and divided, too, from God, which makes the mystical experience of the divine and of nature very difficult. There is no diffusion of spirit and consciousness. Christianity is a Type II religion, says Hand, as are Islam and Judaism, and it may be argued that the modern scientific viewpoint is Type II with the deity removed. Astrology is not a religion at all, but it has more in common with Type I than Type II, particularly in its fundamental belief in cyclical time, although in the medieval and Renaissance eras it presented itself as Type II to suit the needs of the time. Paganism is in every way Type I, and if astrology could go back to its original nature it could be accommodated within paganism without conflict.

The acceptance by paganism of the forms of astrology, its planetary cycles and geometry, seems unproblematic at first sight, but in fact there would have to be some adjustments. The pagan calendar of lunations and the eight-fold division of the solar year are but one part of the planetary lore astrology uses; paganism has no objection to this lore, but at the same time it has no knowledge of it nor any immediate need of it. It has been noticed by commentators like Letcher that modern pagans display a surprising lack of astrological or astronomical knowledge, perhaps because they are not actually using a lunar calendar for their crops but simply mimicking it in ritual. (It must be pointed out, however, that not all pagan groups in Britain today are entirely ignorant of astronomy, and some mix precise astronomy with astrology in pagan invocation and worship.) If astrology re-asserted some of its older techniques, involving the reading of omens from the actual sky rather than from published tables, and giving prominence to visible conjunctions and other phenomena, it could bring itself closer to present pagan practice, and if paganism then took on some of the lore concerning the movements of the visible planets in addition to its present solunar

emphasis, there could be a useful transfusion of knowledge which would reinvigorate both parties. The geometry, however, is more difficult. Paganism is very much an outdoor practice, and geometry is a precise, pen-and-paper, indoor abstraction of mathematical truths; yet geometry and angular measurement is an essential part of the form of astrology, and cannot be sacrificed. Perhaps a way forward here would be in the mathematics of stone circles and alignments, allowing paganism to take number into the landscape and give it an outdoor expression.

With slight adjustments, then, eco-paganism could act as a host for astrology. The next question is whether pagans are interested in astrology, and vice versa. At the moment most of the initiative seems to be coming from the pagan side, which is encouraging. Recent enquiries within the astrological and pagan communities elicited some interesting replies; what follows is a snapshot of the situation in late 2003. Firstly, an astrologer of many years' experience as both teacher and consultant, who is now a very active pagan involved in ritual work:

'I am strongly linked to three groups and know of others...I do not teach astrology directly in my gatherings, but I always mention moon phases, planetary observations of interest...astro talk does arise and I always answer as fully as possible. The group are lightly interested in astrology at about the sunsign level... I have taken groups to good viewing locations to watch eclipses, moon rises, dawn stone alignments and other things.

My astrology mates seem to be not at all pagan minded. Not potential outside-practicing pagans....

They [pagan group members] ask for what they need, and I supply it. The main interest is for cosmic info - alignments, solar timing, moon phases and the myths relevant to pagan teaching. Pagans I know seem to be a practical bunch, less interested in self importance than astrologers, and keen to contact old ways of knowing things...

I work with awareness of the [planetary] transits at all times, and with the chart of the moment in mind. I find it helps with the outcome. I do not think the other two groups have

the skills to do this. I think I am the only qualified astrologer within all three groups...

In writing this it has shown me that they do not have a real need for it. The History of the Study does interest them, and the practical application, and that only needs a person with knowledge to consult as required. A sort of tribal astrologer. Hmm, that is a thought.'

Secondly, a pagan of long standing, also with some astrological knowledge but not as much as the previous correspondent. This account shows paganism reaching for astrology rather than the other way round, and may be the first documented evidence of the worship of a planet other than the sun or moon since classical times:

'About 15 people by invitation only celebrated the Mars perigee in August with a chaotic Mars rite, made up on the spur of the moment, the first time we have 'worked' with a planetary presence. Last Saturday for the samhain rite I talked to the grove about the harmonic concordance³² and the two upcoming eclipses. I told them that New Age people in the States were seeing it as an ascension gateway, a time to realise our essential divinity and make a quantum leap into love. Those are all quotes. A few years ago, the pagans hated and New Age ideas. They saw themselves as rough and tough, living on the edge committed to inspiration, wild sex, bondage, ecstasy, the wyrd and cyclical dark moon chaos and dissolution. On Saturday when I talked about New Age ideas there was no dissent or carping. They simply wanted to know when would be the best time to make love to repair or restore fragile relationships, which is a huge change.'

It can be seen from these accounts that a relationship between neo-paganism and astrology is already forming, and there is everything to gain, certainly from the point of view of astrology, from encouraging it further. It is true that the necessary adjustments might mean that some techniques of present-day astrology would disappear, but that has always been the case: so-called 'esoteric' astrology, which was popular in the first half of the twentieth century, is little practised now. On the plus side, revisiting a few Babylonian techniques and taking new interest in primary rather than secondary motion will do astrology no harm

at all; its back catalogue is enormous, and could do with airing. Certainly, a revived early and observational astrology will be truer to its roots and core values than any attempted compromise with science or psychology, and in a world which is increasingly shallow, authenticity is always respected. An authentic astrology will find adherents; astrology which is a compromise or a pastiche will not.

Paganism, as we have seen, is willing to accept astrology, but is astrology itself willing to take that road? It is not unreasonable to ask whether any hint of astrology's direction in the twenty-first century could be offered by astrology itself. It is, after all, a predictive art, or is claimed to be, and if the procedures and practices of astrology do suggest an aim or direction then that aim is bound to have an influence on the way astrologers envision their own future and that of their practice. To a certain extent it then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, in that if enough people believe it they will work to make it so, but that does not necessarily detract from the value of the information. We are not testing prophecy here, simply asking whether astrology itself could provide a lead.

It is not entirely fanciful to use astrology to define its own history. In a previous paper³³ I have shown how using the cycles of the planets to mark historical epochs is as valid a process as any other, and since it uses no measure besides the planets themselves, is arguably more impartial than some other methods.

In this instance the key indicator is a clustering of the seven traditional planets (Sun, Moon, and Mercury to Saturn inclusive) occurring within the bounds of a single zodiac sign. Although close clusters of this kind occur about once every forty years or so, the additional stipulation that all seven planets must be within one sign simultaneously reduces the occurrence to once in several centuries, and at highly irregular intervals. The most recent occurrence was on May 3rd, 2000, in Taurus. The inference of that, in astrological terms, is that from now until the next such occurrence the dominant theme and tone of history will be Taurean; anything which might be considered Taurean in character will therefore be in alignment with the flavour of the age, and can be expected to grow and flourish, while anything which is to the contrary can be expected to fail, die out, or at the very least be

regarded as outdated and of no interest. Taurus is what is called a fixed sign, one of the four pillars or foundations of the four-element cosmos, and assigned to the element of earth. Everything that is of the earth, from landscape geography through natural flora and fauna to every form of farming, is Taurean in the astrologer's vocabulary.

This alignment in Taurus represents a complete change of direction from the path taken over the preceding fifteen centuries. There was a seven-planet cluster in Gemini in 531, just four years before the Emperor Justinian closed the Academy at Athens, and St Benedict established the monastic order that bears his name; these two events are often taken as a convenient point at which to draw a line between the classical world and the medieval.

Astrology had flourished in the classical world at both a philosophical and a popular level; in the medieval world it was to exhibit a much lower profile. The next seven-planet cluster was in Libra, in September 1186: historically, this is a few years before the Third Crusade and the defeat of Richard I at the battle of Hattin, and may be said to represent the high-water mark in the attempts of the various kings of Western Christendom to dominate the Muslim caliphates of the Middle East. In the history of astrology, this period marked the rediscovery of classical astrological sources, ironically often preserved in Arabic versions, and reaching Western Europe through contact with the Muslim world. There was also a seven-planet cluster in Aquarius in February 1962, commemorated by the 'Age of

Aquarius' song in the musical *Hair*.³⁴ The social and cultural changes which took place in the years following this alignment are too well-known to need further elaboration, but it is worth noting that in the history of astrology this period again corresponds to a resurgence of interest in the subject, and also that most of the attempts to prove astrology scientifically or statistically, such as those of Gauquelin, take place during this period, which is in keeping with the generally held astrological view that Aquarius is the most 'modern' or 'scientific' sign.

All three alignments - 531, 1186, and 1962 - took place in signs given to the element of air, and in astrological terminology this would indicate an emphasis on intellectual activities. Astrology during this time can be seen as a purely book-driven activity, a philosophical or literary pursuit far removed from its origins in the interactive sky-god ritual exchanges of

the Babylonians of the third millennium BCE. With the change of element shown by the alignment of 2000, it would appear that an astrology whose core activity is *reading* - whether books, tables, charts or personalities - has gone as far as it can go, and must find a more physical, more practical, and indeed an earthier expression from now on.

Paganism, being a religion based on the natural environment and its cycles, can be considered Taurean, and so can the science of ecology. There is a general compatibility between the values traditionally assigned to Taurus and the ideals of both neo-paganism and ecology, and so by the internal indications of astrology's own practice, noting the recent seven-planet alignment in Taurus, paganism and ecology would seem the most suitable hosts for astrological thought in the near future: science and psychology are both in astrological terms too airy, and by the timekeeping of seven-planet conjunctions any possible alliances between them and astrology must now lie in the past.

Any assessment of astrology's future must, as we have said, consider external factors and the wider social context as well as astrology's own internal indications, but it is nonetheless interesting that the internal indications and the conclusions of our investigation appear to be in agreement. While astrology is not guaranteed to follow its own indications, and any astrological interpretation is open to discussion and dispute, it is usually the case that astrology's history is indeed influenced by its internal indications, and it is thus all the more likely to take the path suggested when internal and external influences both point the same way.

9. Conclusions

Too much has happened in the centuries since high astrology, theology and science went their separate ways for any union to be envisaged. Astrologers should abandon their quest for a rapprochement with modern science: in most cases, all that is being sought is a legitimisation of astrology in its present forms, and no real thought has been given to the task of reconciling a subjective knowledge to an objective one, or the idea of linear progress to that of a cyclical cosmos.

Astrology's association with psychology has been fruitful, but is now in decline. This is no reason for it to be rejected, but astrologers should be aware of its fading energies and look to the future. What astrology has gained from psychology both in practice and in vocabulary will be assimilated into astrology's rich and varied traditions, and put to use at some future date, so the experience will not be lost.

Eco- or neo-paganism is by far the best option for astrology in the immediate future. As well as offering the boost of being currently fashionable and making good use of astrology's old associations with magic and wizardry, it provides environments for growth at the top and bottom of the cultural spectrum which the alternatives do not. At the bottom, neo-paganism revitalises the compost of low magic and folklore which is so nourishing for astrology; and at the top, if neo-paganism should develop into a genuine religion (which, *pace* Hutton, it has not done yet) or at least a moral philosophy with a way of life to express it, then astrology is ideally placed to provide that top level of symbolism and teaching which neo-paganism presently lacks, and thus for high astrology to be re-born, albeit in a somewhat different form from that in which it last appeared.

There are already signs that new shoots are starting to show through the compost. The 'New Age' shop mentioned in the Introduction to this paper has begun to sell greetings cards depicting neo-pagan wizard figures and Celtic knot work, one for each sign of the zodiac.

Notes and References

1. *Astrology*, Vol. 60, No 1, pp. 4-10. The editorial endnote by Geoffrey Cornelius refers the reader to previous papers by Curry on the same subject and notes Curry's apparent declining confidence in 'scientific' astrology, which proved to be justified.
2. The Astrological Lodge of London currently has 166 members: in the late 1980s the number was nearly 300. The Astrological Association is about three times as large, but has seen similar losses over the same period.
3. This episode is fully recounted in Curry's *A Confusion of Prophets*, especially pp. 149-50.
4. See my paper *Attitudes to the Night Sky: A Research Questionnaire*, BSUC 2003.
5. Howe, *Urania's Children*, pp. 68-71.
6. This idea is more fully explored in my essay *The Radical Nature of Sun Sign Astrology*, in *AA Journal* 38, Sept-Oct 1996.
7. See Kollerstrom, *The Star Temples of Harran*, in Kitson (ed.), *History and Astrology*.
8. *The Times*, 14 May 2003.
9. Ibid.
10. *Astronomy Now*, November 1996.
11. Augustine, *City of God*, V, 6.
12. Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, p.143.
13. Dawkins, *The Real Romance In The Stars*, published in *The Independent*, 31 December 1995, now available on the AA website at www.astrologicalassociation.com.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Plotinus, *Enneads*, II, 3.
17. *The Rite of the Planets*, Astrological Lodge of London, privately published, 1927.
18. English summaries of his findings can be found in his books *Astrology and Science* and *Cosmic Influences on Human Behaviour*.
19. Seymour, *The Scientific Basis of Astrology*.

20. Dean and Kelly, *Is Astrology Relevant to Consciousness and Psi?* in *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 10, No. 6-7, 2003, pp.175-98. Cainer's response appeared in the *Daily Mirror*, 15th August 2003. Both articles, and an academic critique of Dean and Kelly by Frank McGillion, can be found on the AA website (see note 13 above) at the time of writing.

21. Dean, *Neps and Slubs: Approaching Astrology via God and Poetry*, in *Astrology*, Vol. 62, Nos. 1 & 2.

22. Augustine, *City of God*, V, 1.

23. Ibid.

24. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Vol. II, Chap. LX, p.609.

25. See Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance*, chaps. 3 & 4 for a useful summary of the arguments; see also the many papers on Ficino by Angela Voss, including *The Astrology of Marsilio Ficino: Divination or Science?* in *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Autumn /Winter 2000.

26. Dozens of these evangelical attacks on astrology can be found on the internet. *Fortune Telling and Astrology* by Brian M. Schwertley of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southfield, Michigan, is typical and can be found at www.reformed.com/pub/fortune.

27. A list can be found on the Sophia Project website at www.sophia-project.org.uk.

28. See note 4, above.

29. Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, p.66.

30. See Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: a History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, on the emergence of Wicca.

31. Hand, *Astrology as a Revolutionary Science*, in Mann (ed.), *The Future of Astrology*.

32. The harmonic convergence was a hexagonal arrangement of planets, geocentrically viewed, which came into alignment at the lunar eclipse of 9th November, 2003. Largely ignored by traditional astrologers because one of the six was Chiron, a planetoid discovered in 1977 and not yet a part of astrological orthodoxy, discussion of the significance of this alignment was enthusiastically circulated on the internet. New Age enthusiasts saw it as a possible dimensional doorway, offering access to higher worlds.

33. See my paper *Planetary Cycles as Historical Indicators: An Introduction*, BSUC 2002.
34. This is not the first use of the phrase, but it is the one which has stuck. See Champion, *The Start of the Age of Aquarius*, in *Correlation*, Vol. 19(1), Summer 2000.

Bibliography

1. Books

- Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York, Vintage, 1996
- Augustine. *City of God*, tr. Bettenson. London, Penguin, 1972
- Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. London, RKP, 1980.
- Cornelius, Geoffrey. *The Moment of Astrology: Origins in Divination*. London, Penguin Arkana, 1994
- Curry, Patrick. *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England*. Oxford, Polity Press, 1989
- Curry, Patrick. *A Confusion of Prophets: Victorian and Edwardian Astrology*. London, Collins & Brown, 1992
- Dawkins, Richard. *The Blind Watchmaker*. London, Longman, 1986
- Dean, Geoffrey. *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology*. Australia, Analogic, 1977
- Ficino, Marsilio. *Three Books on Life*, tr. Kaske and Clark. New York, The Renaissance Society of America, 1989
- Elwell, Dennis. *Cosmic Loom*. London, Unwin Hyman, 1987.
- Garin, Eugenio. *Astrology in the Renaissance*. London, RKP, 1983
- Gauquelin, Michel. *Astrology and Science*. London, Mayflower, 1970
- Gauquelin, Michel. *Cosmic Influences on Human Behaviour*. London, Garnstone, 1974
- Gauquelin, Michel. *The Truth about Astrology*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1983
- Howe, Ellic. *Urania's Children*. London, William Kimber, 1967
- Hutton, Ronald. *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain*. Oxford, OUP, 1996
- Hutton, Ronald. *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. Oxford, OUP, 1999
- Kitson, Annabella (ed.). *History and Astrology: Clio and Urania confer*. London, Unwin Hyman, 1989
- Lilly, William. *Christian Astrology*. London, 1647, repub. London, Regulus, 1985.
- Mann, A.T. (ed.). *The Future of Astrology*. London, Unwin Hyman, 1987

Plotinus, *Enneads*, tr. McKenna. London, Penguin, 1991

Seymour, Percy. *The Scientific Basis of Astrology*. London, St Martins Press, 1992

Spencer, Neil. *True as the Stars Above*. London, Gollancz, 2000

Thorndike, Lynn. *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*. New York, Macmillan, 1923

Watson, Peter. *A Terrible Beauty: A History of the People and Ideas that Shaped the Modern Mind*. London, Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, 2001

Weber, Max. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Gerth and Wright. London, RKP 1991

York, Michael. *The Emerging Network: A Sociology of the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements*. London, Rowman & Littlefield, 1995.

Zeldin, Theodore. *How Even Astrologers Resist Their Destiny*, in *An Intimate History of Humanity*. London, Random House Vintage, 1998

2. Journals

Astrology, now known as *Astrology Quarterly*, pub. Astrological Lodge of London, 50 Gloucester Place London W1H 4EA

Culture and Cosmos, Correlation, and *AA Journal* via the Astrological Association of Great Britain, Unit 168, Lee Valley Technopark, Tottenham Hale, London N17 9LN