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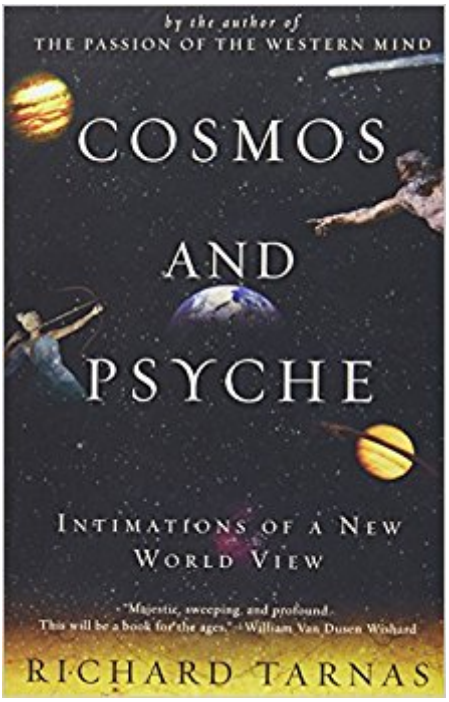
Cosmos And Psyche: Intimations Of A New World View



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Synopsis

From a philosopher whose magisterial history of Western thought was praised by Joseph Campbell and Huston Smith comes a brilliant new book that traces the connection between cosmic cycles and archetypal patterns of human experience. Drawing on years of research and on thinkers from Plato to Jung, Richard Tarnas explores the planetary correlations of epochal events like the French Revolution, the two world wars, and September 11. Whether read as astrology updated for the quantum age or as a contemporary classic of spirituality, Cosmos and Psyche is a work of immense sophistication, deep learning, and lasting importance.

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Customer Reviews

According to Tarnas, acclaimed author of The Passion of the Western Mind, history is on the verge of a major shift, comparable to the one wrought by Copernicus and Galileo, but a seemingly antiscientific one: an astrological turn that can only be understood thorough chronicling planetary alignments as they correlate to the rise of the modern mind over the last 500 years. Understanding planetary alignments, for Tarnas, is crucial to the world’s future and requires "a genuine dialogue" with the cosmos, by "opening ourselves more fully" to "the other," to ancient and indigenous epistemologies, even "to other forms of life, other modes of the universe’s self-disclosure." Filled with philosophical, religious, literary and scientific thinking ranging from Luther and Kepler through Hemingway and even Hitchcock and Dylan, Tarnas’s book is not only sweeping in subject but dense and sometimes painfully slow going. It requires at once a strong background in the history of

modern thought, an advanced knowledge of astrology, a willingness to withhold skepticism about the role of planetary alignments of the past in understanding life today and the avoidance of imminent world catastrophe. Tarnas's call to redefine what we consider as "legitimate knowledge" will resonate in some sectors, but it will be a tough sell with the more scientifically hardheaded. (Jan. 23) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

World history is vast and confusing. How to find coherence? Tarnas thinks the answer lies in astrology. Possessing a tremendous amount of historical knowledge, the author correlates human history's big events and personalities with the orbits of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Why only Pluto, but not Pluto-size objects (or, for that matter, extrasolar planets) recently discovered, should reign over us goes unexamined, but be that as it may, Tarnas discusses charts, planetary alignments, and archetypal personality traits embodied by the planets so aligned. Reaching into mythology and Jungian psychology, Tarnas associates history makers with, for example, a Neptune-Pluto conjunction. Averring an empirical basis to his research, Tarnas proves a determined writer whose fortress of connected dates, historical trends, and philosophical thought defies would-be challengers to his cosmic viewpoint. Casual astrology buffs and readers of the daily horoscope may find this volume heavy going. This is a book for those who are as intrigued by and as convinced of astrology's validity as Tarnas. Gilbert TaylorCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I have studied astrology for 43 years. This book is the clearest, most comprehensive and most persuasive exposition of the essentials and the truth of astrology of any book I have ever read. Richard Tarnas is a genius. The unbelievable amount of work and analysis that went into this book is hard to even comprehend. It is a masterpiece on every level. One comes away with a clear understanding of the themes that are activated when the planets (archetypes) interact with each other, learning through vivid, precise, plentiful and compelling historical examples and crystal-clear prose. The depth and breadth of his cultural knowledge allow him to correlate astrology to real life historical and cultural events and periods in ways I have never seen done before. As a litigator for 35 years, it is my opinion that this book alone marshals and clearly explains more than enough factual evidence to prove to anyone with a rational mind that astrology works, a staggering achievement. There is more valuable and awe-inspiring astrological knowledge not found anyplace else in this book than any book I've ever read. Any student of astrology, however new or advanced,

will treasure this book. It will outlive us all.

Fascinating book. I'm reading it now for the second time, and - after becoming more knowledgable about astrology in the intervening years - I'm getting even more out of it. I had used The Passion of the Western Mind extensively in my Master's work, and was happy to see a new book from Tarnas. When I discovered it dealt with astrology - which I myself had begun studying - I was thrilled. A sharp, lucid mind taking on a taboo subject, and taking it in fascinating directions.A note about one of the editorial comments above: "Why only Pluto, but not Pluto-size objects (or, for that matter, extrasolar planets) recently discovered, should reign over us goes unexamined..."Actually Tarnas explicitly examines the idea that 'heavenly bodies' might have sway over us, and dismisses the notion in favor of 'synchronistic' or 'correlative' experience - much like a clock tells time, the movement of planets appear to correlate with archetypal experience. So it's not that planets 'reign over' us, but more, that somehow there's a organization and synchronistic order to the universe.

This is a fascinating book. To begin, it is extremely well written and for the most part a joy to read. (The second half of the book in which he presents his survey of historical trends and astrological factors, however, does get a bit verbose, tedious, and boring.) Tarnas exposes the limitations of the mechanistic world view that has dominated modern science until recent times with the advent of quantum physics and relativity. His understanding of Western intellectual history is profound. For astrologers there is little new in this book but for non-astrologers his research is eye-opening. I found the beginning chapters to be the most interesting with their discussion of the modern idea of self. Having studied astrology for over 40 years and having been trained in psychiatry and Freudian psychoanalysis, I finally feel understood by a reputable member of academia. For example I have lectured about the conjunction of Schopenhauer's natal sun with Saturn, only to received befudlled looks from my audience. I was delighted that Tarnas uses this same example to illustrate a point in his text. My only reservation is that the author presents his material as if he has personally newly discovered correlations between celestial phenomena and mundane events, which astrologers had already written about for centuries. He does not credit his astrological sources in a way that one would expect of a research scholar. One gets the impression that he has not studied the rich intellectual traditions of astrology in the same meticulous way that he has pursued Western philosphy, religion, and science. I also found myself agreeing with the review of Anton G. Hardy on this site, especially his comments about "Kant's Copernican revolution, certainly an event of import in the history of thought," having "received such scant discussion. The reason apparently is that

1781 falls outside the expected Uranus-Pluto period of influence." Hardy argues that interpretive systems (like astrology and psychoanalysis) utilize "bailout" propositons to explain phenomena that don’t fit their system. Tarnas would have been more convincing had he addressed such events headon. Tarnas correlates many but not all major events in Western intellectual history of astrological cycles. But correlation is not proof; it’s merely a suggestion that something deeper may be going on. I’m afraid this book will be lauded by astrologers and dismissed by serious scholars of history as not convincing.Nonetheless, I highly recommend this book because it places astrology deservedly at the center of the Western intellectual tradition.

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