

# THE EMPOWERING OF DESIRE

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Psyche and Cosmos

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## SUMMARY

Desires hold power and offer deep insights into the current state of our psyche. The desire one experiences on an individual level reflects complexity and the interwoven wants of many factors of influence. Examining one's desires opens up an exploration of the psyche and offers access into areas perceived to be missing wholeness or needing fulfillment. I suggest using desire as a doorway into better understanding of the cosmic archetypes at play in a natal chart and the collective unconscious. An investigation of cravings associated with certain planetary archetypes most prevalent in one's birth chart offers access to the parts of oneself wanting attention and most likely integration. By focusing on desires the process enhances the already mutually beneficial relationship between psychology and astrology by placing importance upon the archetypes exposing themselves through psychoanalysis and the birth chart and transits.

While Venus is associated with the principle of desire,<sup>1</sup> all the archetypes present their own unique flavor of yearning. Natal charts reveal a unique set of potential for each individual's set of desires while archetypal astrology offers a way of empowering desire so that it dissipates by virtue of contemplation. The origination of longing brings consciousness to cravings seemingly undistinguishable or confusing before. It isn't enough just to notice we have desire and follow it. Real power comes from delving into our passions to unpeel layer by layer what resides behind each one -- being conscious of the archetypal nature of our longings release us from their grip. By maintaining the mystery of life and offering freedom of expression, archetypal astrology shines light on the unconscious motivations often running the show.

## DESIRE

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<sup>1</sup>Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 90.

The word desire itself implies that desire comes from somewhere heavenly and divine. According to the Etymology Dictionary, the word “desire” comes from the Latin *desiderare* meaning to “long for, wish for; demand, or expect.” Stemming from the phrase *de sidere* meaning “from the stars,” and *sidus* as a “heavenly body, star, constellation.” A literal translation could perhaps be “await what the stars will bring.” In the Homeric tradition the planets and archetypes were deities, and not just representations of patterns, that bestowed upon us their desires, which we mistake for our own.

It wasn't until mid-14<sup>th</sup> century France the word was first recorded as being more associated with eroticism with the word *desir*, from *desirer*; sense of "lust."<sup>2</sup> Our modern mindset has associated the word “desire” almost exclusively with libido, as almost an unconscious Freudian slip of what we have repressed and therefore hear each time the word is uttered. All desires, not just the ones more associated with Pluto and sex, move us towards fulfillment and life force. Desire is a tool, a compass, pointing us towards a path and not necessarily a destination.<sup>3</sup> Each craving shows us a bit more of where we want to go and how to get there.

By reflecting upon our desires before acting we create a gap between impulses and action, giving us the ability to differentiate between surface desires and deeper longings of the soul. Behind each want is a deeper layer of desire, a deeper level of craving beyond the simple want itself. When watching a desire we notice how we judge it, and how we judge others' wants based upon our own projections for something perceived to be outside of ourselves. Our desires hold

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<sup>2</sup> Etymology Dictionary

<sup>3</sup> Swimme, *Universe is a Green Dragon*, 27.

pure potential for bringing unconscious patterns and habits into our full view and also hold an element of shadow when ignored or avoided.

## SHADOW OF DESIRE

Like all the archetypes, even Venus as desire herself has a darkness. Venus' shadow has us act on all of our urges without reflection believing they will bring us pleasure. The beautiful thing about desire is that we can look at it and choose whether or not to engage. In the moment of contemplation between impulse and action lays the opportunity to know ourselves deeply. The danger rests in not acknowledging cravings at all and having them become repressed and nonintegrated parts of us. In many of us cases there are parts and wants we have that go unacknowledged, Carl Jung called this the "shadow" and believed everyone has one. Our shadow encompasses all the disowned parts of ourselves and through the process of uncovering the repressed part of ourselves we discover missing pieces of our psyche.

In society today this pattern of sexual desire and repression fall into this category of ignored pieces of us. Pluto is associated with the form of desire having to do with sex, taboo, and also the shadow.<sup>4</sup> Our culture has demeaned the importance of identifying with ourselves as sexual beings, and the price we have paid is an adolescent and distant relationship to sexuality. This distance makes us uncomfortable with forms of taboo eroticism and also accounts for the high percentage of people who seem uncomfortable with varying forms of other people's sexual expression. In the case of eroticism, it seems useful to look at projection as a means of examining disowned desire within ourselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 99.

Watching and orienting ourselves towards desire affords us the opportunity to diminish the suffering of unrequited desires. By plunging into our deepest, darkest desires, without the goal of getting rid of them as some philosophies suggest, only then can we experience the freedom associated with archetypes moving through us, instead of controlling our every move. We become then the dancer instead of the puppet.<sup>5</sup> With desire we have the option of expressing it or repressing it, a path leading to an exploration of the psyche or a continued shadow. The yearning for more leads us more deeply into ourselves. While Pluto's desires relate to libido and sex, it also represents the vitality of life pulling us forward through our yearnings and into a deeper understanding with Venus to the path of fulfillment and love.

That leads to the question of what is a final desire or is it possible to ever truly be devoid of desire? Some might say what we all truly want is a connection with the whole. Others might say love, and some freedom. This answer would inevitably vary by individual and the archetypes dictating ones birth chart or transits. The answer in the end doesn't matter, more so the permission to honor our Earthly desires where ever they lead us.

## NATAL CHART ANALYSIS

Bit by bit my path of deepest inquiry and desire guide me through the archetypes and major aspects of my own birth chart, including this entire paper topic. The midheaven represents a career path or a life's work and in my case my midheaven is straddled by my Moon and Venus conjunction.<sup>6</sup> I relate very much to this very public part of myself. Venus cultivates my craving for closeness, pleasure, and a deep appreciation for the aesthetic. The Moon, representing my

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<sup>5</sup> Tarnas, class lecture

<sup>6</sup> Please see Figure I on last page for all references to my natal chart

body and emotional, and also environment and home, part of myself wants touch and combined with Venus I notice needing very nurturing, healing touch often. Together these two planets express themselves, and their own desires, through me with taking pride in my relationships, lover of deep emotional connections, and places great importance on aesthetic.

Alternatively the shadow part of my desires, as repression, comes up and I find myself overindulging in just about anything that brings me pleasure such as sugar or money, being overly sensitive, and obsessing about the Feng Shui of my apartment. On the flip side of the coin, or chart in this case, is an underlying darkness and intensity wishing for a place at the table. In my case the disowned is Pluto, in a tight opposition with my Moon and conjunction with Saturn, the oppressor.

While the Moon and Venus are on both sides of my midheaven, Saturn and Pluto straddle my nadir on the opposite side of the midheaven point. While the midheaven feels public, the nadir oftentimes represents the hidden or private part of us.<sup>7</sup> My shadow side and nadir both have a home with Pluto, and relate to the tightest aspect in my birth chart, my Moon/Pluto opposition. It feels fitting to me that the closest planet/heavenly body of our solar system, the moon and also the part I want most to identify with is next to Venus, the archetype of closeness and intimacy. The two planets are opposite in my chart from the farthest planet from Earth, Pluto, representing my shadow and parts I wish I could disengage from. Many times I feel this dichotomy in my desires, and yet, I realize the two directions aren't as different as initially suspected. Desire seems where the two meet and suggest the most promise for integration and the eventual loving and adoration of all the complex parts of myself. In looking at the things I

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<sup>7</sup> Stelzner. Class lecture.

desire I notice Pluto and Venus aren't as distant as I previously believed and that oppressor known as Saturn has deep lessons to teach me about what I truly want.

## SATURN RETURN

Saturn embodies maturity, the past, and fate.<sup>8</sup> It pushes us to become who we were meant to be. During the Saturn Return cycle we complete cycles from our childhood that mark the end of an era so that we can move more fully into the person we are to become.<sup>9</sup> As my Saturn Return cycle hits its halfway point it has become more and more potent in its lessons and urgency for integration and acknowledgement. I've especially felt this pull since turning 29 to grow into more of who I know I am. It's as if future version of myself wants me to catch up with her.

During this juicy time of my Saturn Return I'm called to explore more in depth the planets in aspect with my Saturn, including Pluto. Pluto has screamed for integration with such force I find myself craving things with more intensity than ever before, as if my desires and power refuse to be tamed. It has also brought with it a large number of transformations, also very characteristic of Pluto. Jupiter, in the stellium with Pluto and Saturn, shows up sometimes for me as a desire to poke fun at or bring humor to the expansion of the intensity and transformation. I feel my life's work relating to the integration of all the planets within my moon relationship. A work that sheds light on the shadow and pays attention to our sensual selves and in particular with the empowerment of desire. I feel an urgency to empower desire as a way of coming to

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<sup>8</sup> Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 91.

<sup>9</sup> Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 119.

terms with parts of myself that need integrating and also as a practice of lending a listening ear to what I truly want for my life.

## INTEGRATION

I experience a version of my non-integrated Pluto as the denial of things I truly want and the inability to give them power. Desire itself inherently feeds on this incompleteness and lack of wholeness. An eye for archetypal desires divulges to us what needs integration. The bridge between my opposition with Venus and all the other archetypes seems to begin with desire. I have found a spiritual practice in examining archetypes and the desires that unfold within their transits. With this in mind I courageously step into the remainder of my Saturn Return ready to complement Saturn with the power and intensity of Pluto. I'm called towards the empowerment and transformation in the way we relate to desires. To give Venus the right to what she wants with a stellium on the other side of the line, adding a hint of Jupiter for lightheartedness, and a healthy dose of disciplined Saturn for support.



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