

CULTURE AND COSMOS

A Journal of the History of Astrology and Cultural Astronomy

Vol. 2 no 2 Autumn/Winter 1998

Published by Culture and Cosmos
and the Sophia Centre Press,
in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David,
in association with the Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology
in Culture,
University of Wales Trinity Saint David,
Faculty of Humanities and the Performing Arts
Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales, SA48 7ED, UK.

www.cultureandcosmos.org

Cite this paper as: Zoller, Robert, 'Marc Edmund Jones and New Age Astrology in America', *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 2 no 2, Autumn/Winter 1998, pp. 39-57.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue card for this book is available from the British Library

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publishers.

ISSN 1368-6534

Printed in Great Britain by Lightning Source

Copyright © 2018 Culture and Cosmos
All rights reserved

Marc Edmund Jones and New Age Astrology in America

Robert Zoller

Abstract. Although astrologers and astrological concepts were instrumental in formulating the core assumptions of the modern New Age movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the increasing number of scholarly studies of the New Age movement pay almost no attention to astrology.¹ The only two English language histories of modern astrology set out the role of the English astrologer Alan Leo (1860-1917) in creating an astrology designed to facilitate spiritual evolution and the coming of the New Age.² This paper examines the foundation of an astrology of spiritual development and psychological growth in the USA and examines the key role played by Marc Edmund Jones (1888-1980). Jones used arguments based on the history of astrology, strongly influenced by theosophical theories of history, to justify his reform of astrology.

Introduction

The American Theosophist, Presbyterian minister, writer, occult philosopher, and astrologer Marc Edmund Jones (1888-1980) laboured in the astrological field for over sixty years endeavoring to promote his vision of a rational, reformulated, philosophically consistent and metaphysically sound astrology. Though his solution to what he saw as problems besetting the astrology of his day was not psychological, his reliance upon philosophical and doctrinal guidelines derived from Idealist philosophy and the theosophy of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky ensured that his efforts would establish a foundation on which a psychological astrology could be based. This, in fact, occurred during Jones' lifetime and is seen in the astrological teachings of Dane Rudhyar (1895-1985) and other contemporary astrologers, whose debt to Marc Edmund Jones is extensive whether or not it be consciously recognized.

Jones' revisioning of astrology was radical; so much so, in fact, that it can be legitimately said that he created a new astrology erected upon new philosophical bases. For Jones, astrology was not an end in itself but rather a prophetic tool or 'scientific' ancillary subordinated to the grander and spiritually far more important work of spiritual development, itself understood as the fullest realization of the potential latent in the innermost being of the individual society, and even in the totality of 'Universal

Robert Zoller 'Marc Edmund Jones and New Age Astrology in America', *Culture and Cosmos*, Col. 2 no 2, Autumn/Winter 1998, pp. 39-57.

Mind'. Seen in this light, in Jones' opinion, astrology is not about prediction but rather about the process of temporal manifestation of the potentials latent in Mind (Universal or particular) in any given time and place. Notwithstanding Jones' professed opposition to prediction, he was a practising horary astrologer, casting horoscopes to answer precise questions, and made predictions from the natal horoscope rather more frequently than his written works would seem to imply according to those who knew him personally.³ Jones' vision of astrology and his biases against prediction became pervasive in the American popular astrology of the 1960's onwards and thoroughly penetrated the literature and doctrines of contemporary American astrology.

American Astrology Prior to Jones

The astrology practised in the US immediately prior to Jones' day was in very large measure, if not totally, derivative of that taught by Luke D. Broughton (1828-1899) from roughly the time of the Civil War until his death. Broughton's astrology was geocentric, tropical, 'rational' (as opposed to 'intuitive'), mathematical, predictive and relied as much as possible on astronomical verity. In other words, he eschewed abstract astrological points such as the Arabic Parts (except Fortuna), did not mix cartomancy, numerology or spiritualism with astrology and did not engage in astrological magical practices. His astrology sought to predict the concrete events of life rather than dwell on their subjective meaning. In short, his work may be traced back through what I would term the English 'scientific school'.⁴ This drew heavily on the seventeenth century English astrological practice at the core of which we find William Lilly's natal astrology as presented in *Christian Astrology* (1647)⁵ although Lilly himself had not been connected to any of the earlier attempts to create a 'scientific' or reformed astrology.⁶ It is perhaps of great note that when American astrologers of the late 19th and early 20th century look back at their astrological antecedents citing the texts deemed fundamental to traditional astrological practice, William Lilly's name is very often cited.⁷

Broughton's influence was extended via students such as William H. Chaney (1821-1903), Catherine Thompson (1858-1934) and John Hazelrigg (1860-1941), founder of the American Society of Astrologians, and students of theirs, including Evangeline Adams (1868-1932), who may have studied with Thompson, Llewellyn George (1876-1951), George Winslow Plummer. Many of the founders of the American Federation of Astrologers, such as Elizabeth Aldrich and Robert DeLuce followed the

parameters laid down by Broughton, in most cases with little, if any, modification.⁸ Indeed, this approach to astrology, bereft of its more complicated mathematical techniques (such as primary directions), and having taken on an intuitive⁹ approach to delineation, continues as the basic astrological approach to this day among a great number of American practitioners. Jones regarded this kind of astrology as degenerate fortune telling and set out to reform it.

By the beginning of the 20th century American astrology was beginning to diversify. The advent of new techniques, such as horoscopes cast heliocentrically, and ideologies, such as spiritualism,¹⁰ theosophy, neo-Rosicrucianism, New Thought, Christian Science, Mental Science, progressive political philosophies such as socialism and populism, and new developments in sciences, including psychology, evolution and relativity, began to be applied to or merged with astrological theory and practice. The result was the development of an astrology which I shall call neotraditional.¹¹ This astrology served more as a vehicle for the dissemination of social, philosophical or alternative religious ideas than for the accurate forecasting of life's events which astrologers such as Broughton had thought of as its main function. It was touted by its proponents as heralding the advent of a New Age of progress, social consciousness and spiritual and material good. For Thomas Burgoyne, the author of *The Light of Egypt* (1889), his magical/spiritualistic astrology promised that the years 1881 to 2188 would bring forth 'the age of reason dreamed of by Bruno and Thomas Paine'.¹² With renewed interest in astrology came a fresh debate over the cogency of astral influence. Some astrologers asserted the fatal rule of the stars; others free will. For The Order of the Magi's Olney Richmond (1844-1920), Willis Whitehead, and their followers, such as Milton Pottenger, heliocentric astrology, uniting astral fatalism with the evolutionary science, made the rise of a socialist state in the US inevitable.¹³ Others claimed that, in order to be able to read a horoscope accurately one needed superior spiritual perception.¹⁴ It followed that according to this belief the true astrologer had abilities beyond those of ordinary people and hence that his or her judgments might be seen as beyond question. It goes without saying that this attitude is entirely alien to the doctrines of traditional astrology, as represented by Broughton, which assumed that astrology is entirely rational and can be learned by anyone.

Jones' Critique of Contemporary Astrology

In 1903, at the age of sixteen, Jones had made a Christian commitment, although his study of esoteric matters was to commence with his study of theosophy in Chicago from 1907 to 1914, apparently with his aunt.¹⁵ He continued to study Blavatsky throughout his life. He is said to have been introduced to conventional occultism via Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Apocalypse Unsealed* by Pryse, which was, though, published in New York in 1910, after Jones' studies had started. According to Canarius, 'The beginnings of Marc Edmund Jones' class work in spiritual and occult subjects dates from 1907, the year in which he began seven years [1907-1914] of intensive study of oriental symbolism, the New Testament in the original Greek, the Hebrew scriptures and the Cabala'.¹⁶ These studies were part of a seven year program that culminated in astrology.

Jones' first effort to learn astrology was his letter to the *Chicago Evening Post* on 6 February 1912 requesting information on the subject. He was told he was superstitious, but he had taken his first step in his investigation of the occult. His first real contact with a competent astrologer was made in November 1913 in Los Angeles in the person of a certain Ella Woods. Her interpretation of his chart led to his own astrological researches, and his investigation of horary astrology in the winter of 1913-1914. In the following year he joined George Winslow Plummer's clandestine Neo-Rosicrucian occult order, the *Societas Rosicruciana in America* (SRIA), in NYC. He was also to frequent, without ever actually joining, Max Heindel's Rosicrucian Organisation at Oceanside, California. Heindel's teachings on astrology and Rosicrucianism were to influence him significantly as is apparent from the number of times he is cited in *Occult Philosophy*. His first book, *Evolutional Astrology* by 'Figulus', was published by the SRIA in 1913 only three years after commencing his studies, and was illustrated by George Winslow Plummer.¹⁷ Jones chose the name Figulus because he believed that the astrologer Nigidius Figulus had fought the fortune telling astrologers in 1st century Rome.

From the very start of his astrological career in 1916, when he published his first booklet on the subject,¹⁸ Jones found much to criticize in contemporary astrology. His criticism of Elizabeth Aldrich (1875-1948) was typical. Aldrich was an actress by profession and was active in the women's suffrage movement of the 1918-1920 period.¹⁹ After she retired from the acting profession in the early 1930s, she turned to astrology, which had been a long-standing interest. She published her own magazine

The New York Astrologer for several years, wrote books²⁰ and gave classes, and was a charter member of the AFA and President of the Astrologer's Guild of America. Jones knew her by way of literary collaboration before she became interested in astrology. He regarded her astrology as typical of what he dismissed as 'omen astrology'²¹ and described her method as

looking up every indication that could possibly be of pertinence in a given situation, and put it in the back of her mind for germination. In due time her insights would emerge and these would be the basis of her forecasts. This meant the consideration in common of the most divergent factors such as signs, houses, planets, aspects, parts, nodes, progressions of the different order, transits in connection with the horoscopes of particular prominent people, or anything at all that might be suggestive of coming eventuations.²²

In Jones' opinion, no better description of omen astrology could be found. Astrological judgment was not logical, but intuitive. 'This happily is almost completely outmoded,' he says. 'Intuitive astrology', he continues, 'can be very admirable as long as it is recognized for what it is, or a fascinating interpretive art. It is...a proper use of the mind's power of synthesis by a careful selection of significant pertinencies in the horoscope and recognizing possible correspondences to them in human affairs'. However, he concludes, 'This is an upside down way of mastering astrology. To learn the nature of all likely experience for all different kinds of people is beyond accomplishment'.²³ In 1945 he placed his criticisms in a historical context, attacking what he saw as his contemporaries reliance on authority. He complained that

In the same way that isolated ethnic groups have tended to preserve archaic languages and customs all over the globe, the highly insulated astrologers clung curiously but characteristically to an earlier and outmoded scientific view. This was an intellectual framework which developed in the eleventh to fifteenth centuries primarily and which, none too happily on the whole, lost all respectability with the seventeenth century's materialistic synthesis. The marks of this astrological crystallization are to be noted in (1) an unreasoning veneration for old books, (2) a deference to the fathers of the art as beyond all error, and (3) the idea that the real nature and powers of the horoscope were determined for once and all in a dim antiquity, if indeed

these did not come directly from the gods, so that (4) interpretive skill would depend on spiritual merit or divine favor...²⁴

His last remark, that omen astrologers claim divine favor to be able to read a chart is, possibly, hyperbole. However, as mentioned above, in his day such pretensions were common (note 14), and Jones himself was not immune from them. In his *Key Truths of Occult Philosophy* (1925) he implies that he has knowledge of the true Plato and other philosophers through direct contact with them. In transcripts of his classwork, we read his wife's comments that occasionally, 'something else comes through.' The implication being that Jones had inspiration from teachers on the 'other side,' in other words that he was capable of what the 19th century Spiritualists termed, 'Inspirational Speaking.' He explains how his practice, though, is superior to that of the astrologers he criticises, claiming that 'The occultist understands that knowledge primarily results from the coordination of relationships. This fundamentally is the science of astrology which in the present era is perverted to a delineation of horoscopes and a prediction of events.'²⁵ In his footnote he explains that 'Perversion is not an unmerited designation in view of the general incompetence of delineations. E.g. in 1915 the president of the largest society of astrologers in America had three times mistakenly predicted his own death and upon the first occasion had given away many of his effects in preparation for the event.'

Blavatskyan Theosophy and Astrology

Given that Jones was hostile to predictive astrology from at least 1915-16, only two to three years after beginning its study, it is possible that his attitude was shaped by his earlier contact with theosophy. In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky both articulated the view that superior spiritual perception is necessary for effective astrology, and set her discussion in the context of the rival cosmologies of Plato and Aristotle, asserting that,

Astrology is a science as infallible as astronomy itself, with the condition, that its interpreters must be equally infallible; and that it is this condition, *sine qua non*, so very difficult of realization, that has always proved a stumbling block to both. Astrology is to exact astronomy what psychology is to exact physiology. In astrology and psychology one has to step beyond the visible world of matter and enter into the domain of transcendent spirit. It is the age old struggle between

the Platonic and Aristotelian Schools, and it is not in our century of Sadducean skepticism that the former will prevail over the latter.²⁶

A few pages later Blavatsky identified the religious origins of astrology when she claimed that ‘the radical element of the oldest religions was essentially sabaistic’,²⁷ a claim substantiated throughout both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* by numerous references to ‘Astrotheology’. Jones was to use the word ‘Sabean’ to describe his occult philosophy and his astrology. His most famous application of the word was to his Sabian symbols, the images he attached to each degree of the zodiac.²⁸ In the *Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky expounded on the relevance of her astral theology to astrology.

Connected as the Lipika (Assessors of the Soul of the Deceased) are with the destiny of every man and the birth of every child, whose life is already traced on the Astral Light--not fatalistically, but only because the future, like the past, is ever alive in the present--they may also be said to exercise an influence on the study of Horoscopy. We must admit the truth of the latter whether we will or not.²⁹

The theosophical approach to astrology was expanded by Jones’ contemporary G. de Purucker, the International President of the Theosophical Society from 1929-1942.

The astrology of the ancients was a grand and noble science....Modern astrology is but the tattered and rejected outer coating of real, ancient astrology; for that truly sublime science was the doctrine of the origin, of the nature, of the being, and of the destiny of the solar bodies, of the planetary bodies and of the beings who dwell on them. It also taught the science of the relations of the parts of cosmic Nature among themselves, and more particularly as applied to man and his destiny as forecast by the celestial orbs. From that great and noble science sprang up the exoteric pseudo-science, derived from Mediterranean and Asian practice, eventuating in the modern scheme called ‘astrology’ - a tattered remnant of Ancient Wisdom.

In actual fact, genuine archaic astrology was one of the branches of the ancient Mysteries, and was studied to perfection in the Ancient Mystery-Schools. It had throughout all ancient time the unqualified approval and devotion of the noblest men and of the greatest sages.

Instead of limiting itself as modern so-called astrology does to a system based practically entirely upon certain branches of mathematics, in archaic days the main body of doctrine which astrology then contained was transcendental metaphysics, dealing with the greatest and most abstruse problems concerning the universe and man. The celestial bodies of the physical universe were considered in the archaic astrology to be not merely time-markers, or to have vague relations of a psychomagnetic quality among themselves--although indeed this indeed is true--but to be the vehicles of starry spirits, bright and living gods, whose very existence and characteristics, individually as well as collectively, made them the governors and expositors of destiny.³⁰

De Purucker also dealt with astrology in his *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, published in 1932. Elaborating on what he has said about Giordano Bruno's theory of infinite worlds, de Purucker tells us that the ancient astrologer initiates viewed the world as a living animal, comprising numberless cell-universes, all mutually affecting each other. This intercommunication was twofold: intelligence was communicated as were etheric and physical influences. This was the fundamental thought of ancient astrology. But ancient astrology, unlike its modern reflection, also incorporated the best ideas of religion and philosophy.

Archaic Astrology was one of the main departments and exalted and inspiring subjects of the Ancient Wisdom, the Esoteric Philosophy [note equation]; whereas Modern Astrology, albeit cultivated by no small number of intelligent men and women, is more or less condemned today as a pseudo-science...Modern Astrology is itself largely to blame for this state of affairs; and equally so was the astrology so widely studied and publicly practised in the degenerate days of the Roman Empire. The reason was, or better is, that both now and under the Roman Imperium, whether of the Republic or of the Empire, all thought of the loftiest, the sublimest and best of true astrology has been utterly forgotten, except perhaps as lingering intuitions in the minds of a few; and both in Rome itself and in our time, it degenerated into a mere system of divination--of 'reading the future'--often to the peril and danger of those who consulted its practitioners. The laws that Rome passed at different times against the work of astrology and the calling and operations of the Chaldaeans as they were then called, show clearly enough to the modern student how true Astrology had fallen, and that

the fault was its own. Yet this is not saying that in the Roman Empire there were no sincere, truthful, and even clever and successful practitioners of the art of astrological divination, for we know there were, and relatively speaking many of them, even as there are today.³¹

Later he tells us that ‘Archaic Astrology taught not only what is now called astronomy, but included likewise all that modern Theosophy teaches in those branches of its doctrine dealing with the inner and outer nature of the cosmos as an Organic Entity...’³² De Purucker’s views were typical of the theosophical milieu in which Jones moved. Jones himself was profoundly influenced by the notion that contemporary astrology was a degenerate descendant of the truths taught by the ancient mystery religions. In 1947 he actually referred to it dismissively as a pseudo-science,³³ the description of astrology more usually associated with scientific sceptics. He saw the degeneration beginning in Rome, where it became a means merely of ‘reading the future’.

Jones' History of Astrology

When Jones began his reformulation of astrology, no comprehensive nor even reliable history of astrology existed. This forced him to make several attempts at writing short historical surveys of astrology in order to justify his polemic. He gives his last and most comprehensive treatment of the history of astrology in his 1978 *Fundamentals of Number Significance* in which he complains that until recently it had not been possible to write such a history due to paucity of reference materials. He had been forced to make stabs at the subject in 1945 in *Astrology, How and Why It Works*, with additional remarks in 1947 in *Occult Philosophy*. His 1945 account is very patchy. He gives an account of the Greek astrologers, notably Ptolemy, makes brief note of the Roman astrologers lauding Nigidius Figulus whom he says opposed the fatalistic attitudes prevalent among his contemporary astrological colleagues. He deals with the Middle Ages without mentioning a single author by name, reducing the entire period to ‘the Moslem tide.’ He mentions the Renaissance astrologers Regiomontanus and Luca Gaurico, regards Kepler with favour and regards William Lilly’s *Christian Astrology* as the most important influence on modern astrology. Modern astrology, he asserts, begins with Wilson’s 1819 *Dictionary of Astrology* and he concludes that the complete story of astrology is still to be written.

The fact that Jones was aware of the 9th to 13th century Sabaeans (Sabians) and his frequent citation of the *Fons vitae* of Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol shows that he is not totally ignorant of Medieval astrology, only biased against what he feels are inferior practices and those responsible for them. He considered that ‘The very dubious heritage of horoscopic astrology, as it was brought back into the western world whether by the Moors in Spain in the 13th century AD or perhaps more directly but under unknown circumstances from the Near East, is remarkable for its unswerving fidelity to the assumptions and methods of the horoscope delineation first coming to actual record in its virtual completeness during the 3rd century BC. This was what the author faced at the time of his initial contact in 1913’.³⁴

In fairness to Jones, it must be said that in the first quarter of the 20th century there were no good, comprehensive histories of astrology, either produced by academics or by astrologers themselves. When Jones’ studies began the history of science was only then beginning to coalesce into an academic discipline. Thorndike’s *History of Magic and Experimental Science* had seen only the publication of volumes 1 and 2 dealing broadly with the first thirteen centuries AD (1923) followed by volumes 3 and 4 (1934), 5 and 6 (1941) and 7 and 8 (1958); the work of such scholars as Richard Lemay, Otto Neugebauer, E.S. Kennedy, David Pingree and others had not yet come to be. Frederick H. Cramer’s *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics* was not published until 1954. So, in mitigation it might be argued that Jones was forced by a lack of accessible secondary sources to rely on the ‘esoteric history’ of the Theosophists, his own intuition and the scanty historical fare available to him in English. But neither is there any evidence that he attempted to read these authors when they became available. Jones clearly was ignorant (at least in 1927) of the turn of the century work of Kugler, Strassmaier and Epping on Babylonian astrology. He didn’t read German in 1927, so couldn’t have read their work, but neither is he familiar with Sayce and Thompson’s English language accounts of Babylonian astrology. In fact he appears to have read no scholarly studies of astrology, ancient or medieval. He shows no familiarity with Thorndyke’s work even though he was based at Columbia University in New York City, where Jones spent a significant amount of time. It was not until 1935 that Jones studied French and German as a prerequisite for admission to Columbia University’s Ph.D. programme. In creating his Sabian Astrology, Jones thought he was reformulating contemporary astrology according to the pristine form which he had rediscovered, an

astrology which had been preserved by an occult tradition which he believed originated in ancient Egypt but which, in the form it was practised by his contemporaries, had become an impediment to astrology's further evolution. However, his work was founded not, as he claimed, on the rediscovery of historical truths, but upon preconceptions derived from Blavatsky and his own experiments with clairvoyance.

Jones' New Astrology

Jones' aspirations are revealed clearly in the correspondence he carried on with G.W. Plummer, which was preserved in Plummer's SRIA archives. In his 'Fortnightly Field Notes' (a newsletter Jones created to keep the interest of his students), Issue 31, May 27, 1926, Jones writes:

The Hermetic dominance, the ascendancy of the Theban school in occult sciences, has served its constructive purpose in keeping alive the gaunt frame of astrological and alchemical principles through those long dark centuries of bigotry immediately preceding the birth of modern science. Now the time has come to subject all superstitions to modern standards. The doctrine of planetary influence must give way to the older Sabian astrology. The planets should be taught as active symbols or indicators that are convenient and useful but by no means necessary to astrology.

In response to Plummer's letter of Aug 19, 1927 asking: 'What in thunder is this 'Sabian System' of astrology you are speaking about?' Jones writes, on Aug 25, 1927:

The Sabian system is my own name for the reconstruction of the Chaldean or Babylonian science as far as I have been able to dig it out through sources here and there. That is, it is a recovery on my part and not an invention. So far I have not been able to get much of anything in writing concerning it, and have nothing that I can send you although a little later on I will have a full correspondence course.

Notwithstanding the fact that Jones thought he was restoring astrology to its pristine Sabian state, he was, of course, engaged in the act of invention. The ancient world knew of no such astrology as Jones formulated and he was actually responsible for laying the foundation for psychological astrology, and for creating non-predictive/non-fatalistic astrology, an astrology which no longer recognises the medieval distinctions between

benefic and malefic indications, and in which astrology the ‘possibilities’ or ‘potentialities’ an individual may develop or confront in his or her ‘evolution’.

In *Occult Philosophy* and elsewhere, Jones makes it clear that Idealistic philosophy provides the basis for his own occult philosophy which he dubs ‘The Philosophy of Concepts’. His Ph.D. thesis, submitted in 1948, provided him with an opportunity to learn the principles and applications of this philosophical system in an academic environment. Philosophically, the appellation ‘Idealism’ identifies any system in which the object of external perception is held to consist, either in itself, or as perceived, of ideas, or concepts. For many in the 19th and early 20th centuries Idealism was the perfect alternative to Materialism, offering a reliable metaphysical argument in favor of the spiritual as against the naturalistic or materialistic interpretation of existence.³⁵

Idealism was the philosophical fount which gave rise to the Metaphysical Movement in the United States, notably Christian Science, New Thought and Rosicrucianism. It also became the 19th century’s rationale for Hermeticism and seems to have influenced the interpretation of ‘Inner’ or ‘Higher’ Alchemy, especially after M. A. Atwood’s *Suggestive Enquiry* (1850) and E. A. Hitchcock’s *Remarks Upon Alchemy and the Alchemists* (1857). Indeed, Idealism dominated all occult thought in the 19th century and continues to do so in the 20th century.

Jones identifies his Idealism as a *theistic* idealism and as a *dynamic*, and modeled it to a significant degree upon the theories of George Sylvester Morris’s (1861-1889) and John Dewey (1859-1952). Jones’ astrology is an extension and practical application of his occult philosophy of concepts. Beginning from an Idealism which sees creation as a process of patterning consciousness, Jones exploits geometrical concepts as the alleged means by which the Undifferentiated One becomes defined as something finite. We see dichotomies, trichotomies, patterns, relationships, relativity of good and evil to which are added psychology and the concept of evolution, all of which contribute to the articulation of a new astrological system which deals more with the subjective experience of life than with the objective prediction of events. Thus his primary definition of astrology in *Astrology: How and Why It Works*, is as ‘a psychological method for charting or measuring experience’.³⁶ Accordingly, Jones’ astrology gives an entirely new interpretation to the concept of astrological configurations which were no longer, as they had been in the traditional astrology of Broughton, a means of making precise forecasts or arranging circumstances to guarantee

the required consequence. Neither did he accept the dominant role of the planets, their celestial positions and hence their relative strengths in determining the outcome as defined in the classical and medieval texts. In Jones' reformulated Sabian Astrology, the patterns produced by any of the planets, irrespective of their natures or rulerships, become significant. Such patterns are 'configurations' of a sort unknown to traditional astrology. In so far as such patterns form the key to horoscopic delineation for Jones, he has created a new astrology.

Thus, in his *The Guide to Horoscope Interpretation* (1941) he introduced the seven planetary pattern types: the Splash, Bundle, Locomotive, Bowl, Bucket, Seesaw, and Splay patterns. Also in this book he sets forth his method of planetary pairs, an approach consistent with his pre-occupation with 'dichotomy' (polarity). In his *Essentials of Astrological Analysis* (1961) he looks for what he calls 'focal determinators,' i.e. 'T'-squares, grand trines, grand sextiles, grand squares, hemisphere emphasis, preponderance (such as several planets in fire signs), negative preponderance (such as an absence of planets in fire signs, or of a particular aspect), planets in special dignity (such as rising, elevated, final dispositor, cazimi), or planets in special aspects (such as the quintile or septile).

The planets themselves were seen no longer as 'naïve eventualities,' as Jones calls them, but potentialities, tendencies, opportunities and probabilities. He tells us

a potentiality is the possible duration of a definable action, or body of acts, reactions and attitudes. Seen circumstantially, any one potential in question is a momentum serving as an integrating factor in experience, and so providing the basis for any estimation of outcome. Examined functionally, the same potential is a capacity, and analysis moves on from predictive measurement of the situation -- that is, a judgment of its integration--to the shaping of events which are controlled rather than suffered. The possibility of this control, as against naïve eventuality, is shown by the identical heavenly body, of course, in the same astrological chart. The planets in the horoscope are used to determine the twofold potentiality of things (1) as encountered and (2) in the light of what may be desired. They show what tendencies in a particular life are of value, and so are either to be left undisturbed, or helped and strengthened, and what ones, contrariwise, are fruitless and hence require redirection. The planetary relations of an astrological wheel thus

reveal themselves as patterns of expediency, entirely as the native's momentums give a varying value to his capacities.³⁷

In 1947 Jones placed astrology in the realm of prophecy, writing that astrological divination plays a legitimate role in the 'Quest for Self-Orientation'.³⁸ He then defines divination as

the individual's endeavor to equip himself with knowledge in advance of fact. Superficially this is an effort to cushion the shock of events--the phenomenon exhibited by the fatalistically minded defeatists of every age, particularly evident in their resort to fortune telling--but more properly it is a determination to approach any given problem after an intelligent estimation of its potentialities. Astrology has arisen in this connection providing man with what quite probably was his first organized science. It originally comprised his attempts to perfect a time measure, systematize navigation, forecast the weather and improve his crops and flocks as well as find the heavens an augury of his fortunes. Judicial astrology, or the analysis of individual potentials on what has been a predominantly and unfortunately a pattern of irrevocable destiny, gave the world its largest body of specialized literature in medieval times.³⁹

Jones' revision of astrology opened the door to the 'humanistic' psychological astrology of Dane Rudhyar, first set out in 1936 in his *The Astrology of Personality*, and may be viewed as the foundation stone of New Age astrology. Without the Idealist foundation to astrology provided by Jones, it is unlikely that Rudhyar would ever have succeeded in grafting psychology and his own version of metaphysics on to existing astrology. Such success as Jones had was due, in my opinion, to his personal charisma, his contagious dedication to a optimistic spirituality and his reportedly humanitarian behavior. In short, Jones' personal charm, dedication, eloquence and intellectual acumen seduced the astrological community for over 60 years. Such success as he had in converting astrologers to his views was, in my opinion, a demonstration of the rhetorical power of his personal prestige rather than to the cogency of his arguments.

Acknowledgment

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Astrological Lodge history of astrology seminar in 1998.

References

1. See for example York, Michael, *The Emerging Network*, Rowman and Littlefield, London 1995; Heelas, Paul, *The New Age Movement*, Blackwell, Oxford 1996; Hanegraaf, Wouter, *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, Brill, Leiden, London, New York 1996.
2. Howe, Ellic, *Urania's Children: The Strange World of the Astrologers*, William Kimber, London 1967; Curry, Patrick, *A Confusion of Prophets: Victorian and Edwardian Astrology*, Collins and Brown, London 1992.
3. Personal communication from Delle Fowler Frech, the Esoteric Secretary of the Sabian Assembly, an organisation founded to perpetuate Jones' sabian philosophy.
4. Ellic Howe contrasts the rise of a scientific, mathematical astrology in England in the 1780s, as opposed to a romantic, esoteric, Hermetic astrology. See *Urania's Children*, p 23.
5. William Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, London 1647, 2nd edition 1652, facsimile Regulus Press, London, 1985.
6. See Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989.
7. Roback's *Mysteries of Magic* (1854) mentions Lilly several times. Broughton (p. vii *Elements of Astrology*, (NY 1898) mentions Lilly as a very learned astrologer who advanced the Art, laid the foundations for modern astrology and whose *Christian Astrology* every student of the Art ought to get if possible. *Christian Astrology* is listed in F. Leigh Gardner's *Bibliotheca Astrologica* (1911), originally published and circulated privately by the author as *A Catalogue Raisonné of Works on the Occult Sciences*, vol. II, Astrological Books, which sported an introduction by Dr. William Wynne Wescott. It was known in the US shortly after it appeared in England. There was a copy in George Winslow Plummer's library. John Hazelrigg is proud to report in the biographical introduction to his *Astrosophic Tractates* (1936) that one of his forebears is mentioned in Lilly's Autobiography. Frederic van Norstrand cites Lilly in connection with Coley's edition of Bonatti's 146 Considerations in Devore's *Encyclopedia of Astrology* (1947). He knows the Redway edition of 1886. He also cites Lilly in connection with Zadkiel's revision of *Christian Astrology* (1647), entitled *Introduction to Astrology* (London 1835).

54 Marc Edmund Jones and New Age Astrology in America

Astrologers generally relied on Zadkiel's version until Olivia Barclay's 1982 photocopied edition of the 1652 edition and Regulus Press' 1985 facsimile.

8. The main source of information, however brief, for American astrologers is James H. Holden and Robert A. Hughes, *Astrological Pioneers of America*, American Federation of Astrologers, Tempe AZ., 1988. See also J. Gordon Melton, *A New Age Almanak*, Visible Ink Press, Detroit, Michigan, 1991. Broughton's impact is evident in the writing of one of his most prominent students, W.H. Chaney. Chaney's *Primer of Astrology and American Urania* was originally published *seriatim*. His students and friends collected the installments, which were never completed due to Cheney's age and illness, and compiled them as a book in 1890, published by Magic Circle Publishing Co., St. Louis, Mo. The dedication calls it the first of its kind ever published in America. On p. 6 Cheney refers to Broughton as his teacher. He used minor aspects and all the planets (save Pluto which was unknown), placed a great reliance on transits for forecasting (pp. 13 & seq.), calls into question the validity of houses (p. 16), discusses primary directions (p. 27), gives the rules for the calculation of the poles of the houses (& longitudes of their cusps) by oblique ascension (p. 54), and of sunrise and sunset (p 59-60).
9. Jones characterised Aldrich's astrology as 'intuitive astrology' in the *Fundamentals of Number Significance* (Sabian Publishing Society, Stanwood, Washington, 1978, p. 92). He made the case that such astrology was the common practice in his day and set out to reform it.
10. Spiritualism had been in vogue in the US during most of the 19th century. While the beginning of Emma Hardinge Britten's 'Modern American Spiritualism' may begin in 1848, spiritualism was integral to Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1903), to Swedenborgianism, which spread to the US in the 1790s and to the Shaker movement, which came to New York from England in 1774. Some spiritualists became interested in magic and divination. This interest contributed to the 'Intuition Approach' to horoscope delineation later, after the renewal of interest in astrology as some practitioners of spiritualism carried over attitudes of alleged superior or 'advanced' spiritual 'gifts' into the reading of horoscopes. For example, Paul Christian's *History and Practice of Magic* (trans. Kirkup and Shaw, Citadel Press, NY, 1969) originally published in 1870 in Paris as *Histoire de la Magie, du Monde Supernatural et del Fatalité à travers les Tempes et les Peuples*, a book popular among spiritualists interested in magic, has extensive sections devoted to astrology some of which advocate the mixing of tarot with astrology.
11. There is no single definition of the term 'traditional astrology'. Since 1985 it has come to mean medieval astrology as found in Lilly's *Christian Astrology*. Before then it was often applied to the astrology of Alan Leo and Sepharial and their followers, which is more properly termed theosophical astrology. I would

define Broughton's astrology as traditional and thus the later adaptations, incorporating new techniques and ideologies, as neo-traditional.

12. Thomas Burgoyne, *The Light of Egypt*, 1st edn. 1889, Astrophilosophical Publishing Company, Denver 1965, Vol. 1, p 115.

13. Olney H. Richmond, *The Religion of the Stars: or the Temple Lectures*, orig. 1891, reprinted by Astro-Cards Enterprises, Chicago, 1991; Milton Pottenger, *Symbolism*, Sacramento, CA, 1905; in *Astrology or the Socialism: or the New Era*, Brooklyn, 1902, Frank T. Allen predicted Socialism in the US by 1942 on the basis of Uranus' transit through Gemini.

14. This is a point of view current amongst theosophists, drawing on Blavatsky's opinions; see *Isis Unveiled*, vol. I, p 259 (Theosophical University Press, 1976

15. Inside back dust cover of *The Sabian Manual*.

16. Biography of *Marc Edmund Jones*, by anonymous (Stan Canarius), October 1984, no place or date of publication, p 8; also see chronology on p 95-126.

17. Jones used his *nomen mysticum* of the Order, 'Figulus,' as a *nom de plume* for the book. All that remains of this book at the SRIA library is a pamphlet of Part One, 'The Houses.' I also see in the SRIA library, a 12-page pamphlet by 'Figulus, FRC 0°=0°' on *Dimensional Evolution*, 'given freely' to the Fratres.

18. *Evolutional Astrology*, written under the pseudonym 'Figulus', and published by the SRIA.

19. Holden and Hughes, *American Pioneers*, p 3.

20. *The Planet Neptune* (1928), *The Daily Use of the Ephemeris* (1942), *The Mechanics of Progression* (1945?).

21. Jones, *Fundamentals*, p. 92.

22. ibid.

23. Marc Edmund Jones, *Astrology, What it is and How it Works*, 1945, Aurora Press, Santa Fe, 1995, p. 410.

24. *ibid.*

25. Marc Edmund Jones, *Key Truths of Occult Philosophy*, self-published in 1925, currently available from the Sabian Publishing Society, PO Box 7, Stanwood, WA 98292. It was published as *Occult Philosoph* in 1948. In the foreword to the 1925 edition Jones tells us that the initial response was discouraging, but 10,000 copies had been sold by 1944. The author was told that Jones' theory of occult understanding might also be expressed as 'knowledge arises to fill a need'.

26. See note14.

27. By 'sabaistic' Blavatsky meant 'pertaining to stellar religion'. In Blavatsky's theory of the evolution of religion through distinct stages from fetishism to sabaism through 'real' religions such as Christianity and ultimately to 'natural' religion, the word is derived from sabaism, the worship of the host of heaven from the Hebrew Saba, host, as in Sabaoth, Lord of Hosts.

28. Marc Edmund Jones, *The Sabian Symbols in Astrology*, 1st edition 1953, Aurora Press, Santa Fe 1993.

29. *Secret Doctrine*, vol. I 105, 1888 edition.

30. G. de Purucker, *Occult Glossary*, 1st edition 1933, Theosophic University Press, Pasadena, 1972, p 10.

31. G. de Purucker *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, Theosophic University Press, Pasadena, 1979, vol. II. 839 et seq.

32. de Purucker, *Fundamentals*, p 842.

33. Jones, *Occult Philosophy* 1949, p 10.

34. Marc Edmund Jones, *Fundamentals of Number Significance*, Sabian Publishing Society, Stanwood, Washington, 1978, p 84. Also see Eliphas Levi's *Transcendental Magic* (1855-6), chapter 17 for similar attitudes toward astrology.

35. Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, New York, Philosophical Library 1949.

36. *Astrology, How and Why it Works*, p 37.

37. *Astrology: How and Why It Works*, p 248-249.

38. *Occult Philosophy*, p 27.

39. *Occult Philosophy*, p 29.51