

Glossary of Terms for Archetypal Astrology and Transpersonal Psychology

Applying Transit When a transiting planet has not yet reached the point of exact transit to a natal planet and is moving toward it.

Archetype Patterns of experience and meaning. C. G. Jung coined this term to describe primordial patterns of experience and symbolism that occur in the spiritual mythology and fairy tales of all cultures, as well as being spontaneously produced in people's dreams, fantasies, and inner lives. Some of the archetypes or eternal forms that Jung observed were the Anima and Animus, Shadow, Descent into the Underworld followed by Rebirth, Eternal Child, and the Self.

Richard Tarnas writes that the fundamental insight of astrology is that there exists a one-to-one correlation between the archetypal principles and the planets and luminaries (Sun and Moon) of the solar system. Each planet corresponds to a major archetype or group of archetypes: Uranus to Rebirth and the Eternal Child, Pluto to the Descent into the Underworld and Evolution, Venus to Love and Beauty, and so forth. The interaction of planets in the birth chart creates a blend of archetypal meanings, like a series of personal myths. Astrology can illuminate the dominant archetypal patterns in an individual's life, and specifically *when* a given archetypal principle is likely to be activated.

Aspects Significant angular relationships between two or more planets that cause the archetypal qualities associated with those planets to interact and express their natures together.

Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPMs) Clusters of experience that occur when people explore the perinatal layer of their psyche. By extrapolating from a large amount of clinical data, Stanislav Grof observed that perinatal experiences—sequences of psychological death and rebirth—tend to occur in four distinct clusters or complexes. He termed these the *Basic Perinatal Matrices* or *BPMs* I-V. They are: I) *The Amniotic Universe*, II) *Cosmic Engulfment* or *Hell*, III) *The Death-Rebirth Struggle* or *Purgatory*, and IV) *Separation from the Mother* or *Rebirth*. Each perinatal matrix is based around a specific stage of labor, while at the same time having archetypal experiential components that far surpass the biological aspects of birth.

Tarnas discovered there was an exact thematic correlation between the experiences of individuals influenced by these matrices and the archetypal meanings associated with the planets Neptune, Saturn, Pluto, and Uranus.

Caesarean Birth The pattern in an *emergency* caesarean birth is essentially the same as with a vaginal delivery. The infant passes from the (often) blissful situation in the womb, to the extreme suffering of BPM II, then possibly to the agonizing struggle in the birth canal of BPM III, and then experiences rescue from the

outside as they are surgically removed from the mother's body. The sequence passes from womb, to life-threatening birth canal, to breakthrough out into the world, in an ecstatic release of pressure. The moment of birth and situation in the delivery room are experienced as a dramatic liberation and improvement by the fetus, incomparably better than the life-threatening pressures in the birth canal.

Both a vaginal delivery and an emergency caesarean birth impart a deep sense that we can endure difficult situations and survive. We gain a natural template in our psyches for experiences of extreme pressure or suffering, which are then followed by release and breakthrough. Grof believe this is nature's way of creating optimism and tenacity in human beings, a deeply ingrained feeling that we can survive challenging situations and come out the other side. This endurance was absolutely necessary for our Stone Age ancestors to persevere in the often-difficult conditions of their lives.

Elective caesarean births, on the other hand, present a different sequence, with some advantages and disadvantages. The infant moves from the ecstatic situation of the womb directly into the delivery room, with its experiential polarities of hunger and thirst, dry and wet, heat and cold, and bright light. The world is experienced as significantly worse than the blissful womb. Sometimes elective caesarean-born people feel that they missed some fundamental pattern that is natural and necessary for human development. However, these feelings of omission can be worked through in sessions.

On the positive side, an elective caesarean baby will have less birth trauma, pain which can block access to the blissful memory of the womb and spiritual unity with the divine. They may have easier access to mystical and imaginative states, and even approach the world as if it were a great friendly womb. However, if people and events do not corroborate this expectation of safety and friendliness, they may become deeply hurt and withdraw back into themselves—lacking an innate sense of endurance and capacity to withstand adversity. See *A Different Doorway: Adventures of a Caesarean Born* by Jane English.

www.cheart.com/cesareanvoices/DD-revised.pdf

COEX Systems (Systems of Condensed Experience) Grof discovered that when powerful uncovering techniques were used, such as Grof® Breathwork or Holotropic Breathwork®, his clients relived sequences of experience connected by a common emotional theme or sensation. For example, a person involved in deep self-exploration might have a sequence of experiences related to shame, from the most recent back to deeper events, and finally to a core experience, which was often a facet of the birth process or an even deeper transpersonal root.

Other frequent examples of COEX themes include threads of memories involving failure, grief, or personal breakthrough, or experiences connected by a similar physical sensation such as choking or pressure in a certain part of the body.

Commission Problems of *commission* occur when a traumatic, especially a life-threatening, event has not been fully digested, and leaves a trace or residue in a person's psyche. A foreign, disorganizing experience has intruded into the person's

psyche and being. These types of problems can be released by fully experiencing the original event and allowing its energies and emotions to be discharged and consume themselves.

Grof® Breathwork is the form of holotropic breathwork that Stan Grof wishes to be taught and practiced by the Grof® Legacy Training, founded by Stan and Brigitte Grof in 2020. The technique of holotropic breathwork was created by Stan and his late wife Christina in 1974 at the Esalen Institute in California, as a non-drug substitute for his clinical research in psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. A powerful avenue for healing and self-exploration, the process uses deep and rapid breathing, evocative music, focused bodywork, and mandala drawing to access holotropic states of consciousness in a supportive group context.

In this approach, the psyche is recognized as containing a wide spectrum of material, including memories from infancy to the present, sequences of death and rebirth, transpersonal phenomena, and profound spiritual experiences. Facilitators are aware of and comfortable with the full range of possible experiences, and there is no priority placed on one experience over another. The participant controls the intensity of the session through their own breathing and can stop the process at any time. Facilitators are not viewed as technicians manipulating the psyche toward a certain predefined goal but as trained co-explorers, who provide a safe and encouraging context for each person to find their own answers at their own pace. The psyche's intrinsic healing mechanisms and inner healer are deeply supported and respected.

When occurring in a day-long format, participants usually meet the night before on Zoom or sometime previously to discuss the protocols and format of the session. The next day they gather in the morning and introduce themselves, then each person chooses a partner. One person “breathes” before lunch while the other acts as a sitter. Sitting involves keeping the participant safe while they surrender to their emerging inner material, reminding them to breathe deeply, and offering support if requested. A verbal contract is made before the session in which the breather makes explicit what kinds of intervention they want—and this is always honored.

The facilitators, who are ideally a male-female dyad, choose the music, check on people during the experience, make interventions when appropriate and asked for, and in the final stages offer focused bodywork to any unresolved participants. Afterward, each participant draws a mandala. After lunch the process is repeated. When everyone is back in normal consciousness there is an optional group sharing. The facilitators ensure that each person is in a relaxed and stable state of mind before leaving. Each session is complete in itself but is also part of an open-ended spiritual quest that can be pursued whenever a person feels the need to do some deep processing work.

Grof® Breathwork is compatible with other therapeutic techniques that involve deep self-exploration. It can be used as an adjunct to therapy, an activating technique for clients who are “stuck,” or a backup modality for highly emotive clients or those experiencing spiritual emergency. It is also very beneficial

for healthy and well-adjusted individuals who are looking for deeper answers and meaning in their lives. Finally, it is one of the most useful and comprehensive practices available for people who are training to become therapists and sitters in the field of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. www.grof-legacy-training.com

Holotropic A term coined by Grof, from *trepein* = “moving toward” and *holos* = “wholeness.” The holotropic impulse is the impulse in our psyche—directed by our own “inner healer”—to shed our limited perceptions and experience our identity as being bigger than the boundaries of the ego, ultimately as being commensurate with the field of Universal Consciousness itself.

Holotropic states of consciousness offer a temporary opening to a range of experiences normally inaccessible to us in the everyday or *hylotropic* mode of consciousness. These include memories from childhood, sequences of dying or being (re)born, fetal experiences, ancestral memories, past lives, identification with other people or groups of people, the consciousness of animals or plants, experience of other dimensions, mythological terrains and sequences, archetypes, or identification with the Universal Mind, Absolute Consciousness, or the Macrocosmic Void.

Holotropic states, when entered into with proper supervision, have dramatic healing potential. They have been pursued in a systematic way by all or most non-Western and pre-industrial societies, often as a central part of the society’s spiritual life. The variety of methods used to enter holotropic states include rites of passage, aboriginal healing rituals, fasting, meditation, trance dancing, breathing maneuvers, sensory deprivation or overload, and use of psychedelic substances.

Hylotropic From *trepein* = “moving toward” and *hylos* = “matter.” Grof’s term to describe the impulse in consciousness which keeps our attention focused on the everyday, here-and-now layer of reality. To be a realistic, functioning person we need to be able to operate in the hylotropic mode of consciousness. However, when this everyday, hylotropic mode of perception dominates our consciousness, it tends to result in a dry, barren, and meaningless way of experiencing the world—what Grof calls a “rush-hour, hamburger stand” mode of reality.

To find healing and deeper meaning in life we need to periodically enter into another type of consciousness—called *holotropic*—and integrate these experiences back into our everyday life. Grof gives the example that when we are landing a jet at O’Hara Airport, we want to be in the hylotropic mode of consciousness. To find perspective on our true authentic identity and role in the universe, we need to periodically enter the holotropic mode of consciousness.

An Integral or Spectrum Approach to Psychology Ken Wilber addresses the problem of why there are so many different psychological schools and paths of personal growth. He says that each school of psychology focuses on a different layer of the psyche, to the exclusion of the other layers—as they take the insights from one layer and attempt to extrapolate them to every other layer. The various competing theories are not so much right or wrong as they are accurate for the layers of the psyche they address, and not accurate for other layers.

Thus, Freud had essentially correct principles for the biographical layer of the psyche, but his theories are totally inadequate when addressing the spiritual dimensions of the unconscious. C. G. Jung focused on aspects of the transpersonal layer but did not integrate the powerfully energetic and cathartic experiences of the perinatal layer. A person's problems can only be resolved by addressing the specific layer of the psyche where they originate. For example, a person cannot resolve a memory of near-death through choking in the birth canal by talking about sibling rivalry or their oppressive father.

In his great article, "Holotropic Practice and the Promise of Full-Spectrum Transformation" (2014), Martin Boroson writes that: "Each form of therapy or spiritual practice has its own list of proscribed behaviors and recommended techniques. For example, in Zen meditation, the instruction might be to sit absolutely still, in order to avoid distraction, but in tantra, the instruction might be to follow every desire until one experiences ecstasy. In bioenergetic therapy, one might be encouraged to punch a cushion to give full expression to one's anger, but in kundalini yoga, the instruction might be to keep anger internal and channel this energy toward enlightenment."

Boroson notes that Grofian approaches to breathwork function by activating an intrinsic inner radar that zeroes in on the most relevant material for that individual, at that moment in time. It offers a technique for full experience of whatever *the psyche itself* selects as important, including various experiences along the full spectrum of the human psyche. Some sessions would have the character of a bioenergetics session, others like a Jungian exploration of archetypes, and still others like a shamanic rite of passage. He considers Grof's approach to breathwork a prime example of an integral path.

Intrinsic Human Values Grof consistently observed these positive human characteristics that arise automatically when a person has worked through the traumatic leftover material from their psyches, especially the life-threatening passage through the birth canal. These include a high value placed on warm relationships, appreciation of nature, urge to do meaningful work, and cooperation to find solutions to shared social and ecological problems. Individuals in touch with these default layers of human nature and the universe see the exaggerated striving for power, money, or prestige as an immature compensation against the unconscious fear of dying and memory of birth. They also feel critical attitudes toward the abuse of power.

Kundalini An electrifying energy that arises in people's consciousness who are pursuing concentrated spiritual practices, and sometimes spontaneously. Kundalini awakening is like a supercharged evolutionary force cleaning out the blocks and unconscious areas in a person's body and psyche. It is important to have access to deep processing in supervised holotropic or psychedelic states, in order to keep up with and integrate the emerging material.

Midpoints The strongest type of midpoint is when a planet sits midway between two other planets. This combines the archetypal energies of the three planets, similar to a weak conjunction.

Natal “Birth.” Natal planets are the positions that the planets were in at the moment of our first independent breath.

Omission Problems in the psyche caused by unfulfilled valid needs for touch, cuddling, and rocking in early infancy. Omission problems leave a kind of vacuum in the psyche, which creates a feeling of emotional starvation in adult life—a person may spend their entire life looking for the love they missed as an infant or child. Grof observed that these vacuums can only be filled by regressing to the original state of emotional vulnerability and then receiving the appropriate nurture from a therapist, guide, or sitter. This process is similar to the psychological techniques known as “reparenting” and “corrective emotional experiences.” This kind of physical contact should be available but only offered when requested by the journeyer themselves, and conducted with peer supervision.

Orbs The allowable number of degrees from exact, in which we consider two planets to be interacting, by aspect or transit. See the graphic on p. 15 of the Study Guide.

Perinatal *Peri* = surrounding and *natal* = birth. Grof applied this term to describe the layer of the unconscious psyche which contains experiences of birth and death, with the two always intermixed so that dying to the old becomes birth into the new. Perinatal experiences appear with verifiable details from actual childbirth alternating with sociological, archetypal, and karmic elements which have the same experiential flavor. These experiences tend to occur in four distinct clusters or complexes, which Grof refers to as the Basic Perinatal Matrices or BPMs.

The perinatal layer of the psyche is in between and forms a bridge between the biographical layer of the psyche (events from the lifetime) and the transpersonal layers (experiences that transcend individual consciousness). The perinatal layer—birth and death—represents the boundaries of individual human existence. From a higher perspective, perinatal experiences can be seen as a kind of transformer station where collective energies, archetypes, and karma enter an individual human incarnation.

Separating Transit When a transiting planet has passed the point of exact transit to a natal planet and is moving away from it.

Spiritual Emergency A term coined by Stan and Christina Grof to describe periods of dramatic psychospiritual opening. These states can occur as a result of concentrated spiritual practice, or sometimes spontaneously. Spiritual emergency or emergence states require commitment from the experiencer and knowledgeable support from others to resolve. If supported and allowed to complete themselves,

these states can result in major inner healing and transformation. See their books *The Stormy Search for the Self* and *Spiritual Emergency* (as coeditors).

Synchronicity An “acausal connecting principle” which was studied and documented by Swiss psychiatrist C. G. Jung. Synchronicity occurs when two events are meaningfully connected without one causing the other, for example thinking about someone just before they call. Because planetary alignments do not “cause” human experiences, the entire field of astrology is based on synchronicities. The integration of Jung’s work, through figures such as Dane Rudhyar, Liz Greene, and Robert Hand, effected a dramatic quantum leap in the evolution of astrology. I believe an equally important development is now occurring with the integration of Grof’s expanded cartography of the human psyche.

Transcendence Experiences of our true identity as being bigger and more inclusive than the limited ego-body identification—going beyond what Alan Watts called “the skin-encapsulated ego.” Transcendent experiences represent partial or total access to realms beyond the limits of human birth and death. They are one of the prime goals of spirituality and recognized as having a “meta-healing” value in transpersonal forms of psychotherapy. Transcendent experiences bring an ecstatic freeing of consciousness from the fear of biological death and dying, renewed zest for life, meaningful connection with other people, nature, and cosmos, and an opening of creative channels.

Transits The interaction between a planet in the sky now with a planet’s position at birth.

Transpersonal A term coined by Stanislav Grof in 1968 to describe states of consciousness that transcend the boundaries usually considered absolute in everyday reality. Transpersonal experiences occur in several broad forms: transcendence of space (such as identification with other people or groups of people), contraction of space (such as tissue, organ, cellular, DNA, molecular, or atomic consciousness), transcendence of time (ancestral, racial, or collective memories, phylogenetic memories, and past life experiences), or experiences beyond the time-space continuum as we know it altogether (archetypal personages and principles, mythological terrains and sequences, the Universal Mind, Absolute Consciousness, or the Supracosmic Void).

Transpersonal Psychology The branch of psychology and psychotherapy that seeks to integrate the spiritual dimensions of human nature into therapeutic practice. Transpersonal psychology acknowledges the complete spectrum of the human psyche, from the wounds and traumas of birth and early life, to spiritual realms of being which have a meta-healing value. A metaphor Grof uses is that verbal approaches to psychotherapy, with their biographical focus, can be compared with trying to ladle water out of a swamp, one spoonful at a time. Opening to the intrinsic spiritual dimensions of the psyche in experiential sessions, on the other

hand, is like digging a trench from the swamp to the ocean, and allowing the cleansing ocean to flow in.

Transpersonal psychology was initiated in 1968 by Abraham Maslow, Stanislav Grof, Anthony Sutich, and others and is considered the “fourth wave” in psychology, after psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and humanism. Although predating the term, Carl Gustav Jung is considered the first transpersonally oriented psychiatrist of the modern era, for his articulation of the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

From Renn Butler’s *Study Guide of the Archetypes* (\$7.35 on Amazon):
www.amazon.com/Study-Guide-Archetypes-Archetypal-Holotropic/dp/B0BF1W7J9N
www.rennbutler.com