

# Drawing Down the Fire of the Gods - Reflections on the Leo/Aquarius Axis

by Ray Grasse

A picture is worth a thousand words, they say. So when I was asked to distill some of my ideas for a magazine issue devoted to the Leo/Aquarius axis, I immediately thought back to one image in particular that, to my mind, best captured the essence of this zodiacal dynamic:

*Two or three children on a playground, laughing and singing in blissful abandon, while circled around them are a dozen scientists in white lab coats, carefully observing and recording every move for a research study on the nature of play.*

As with all symbolic images, this one offers several different meanings, and for that reason provides a useful point of departure for exploring a few of the many themes associated with the Leo/Aquarius polarity. As I hope to make clear, understanding this zodiacal polarity is not only important for understanding our personal horoscopes but for unlocking the significance of the pivotal historical period we find ourselves about to enter—the much-heralded Age of Aquarius.



**Aquarius and Leo**

Sources: Aquarius: [Dorothe](#), [Pixabay](#)  
Leo: [Supreme Motivation](#), [Pixabay](#)

## The Dance of Fire and Air

So where does one begin in trying to understand this dynamic? One way is by considering the elemental symbolism associated with these signs: *Leo represents the principle of fire, while Aquarius represents the principle of air.*

First, let's look at fire. Of all the elements, this is the one most associated with life's vitality itself. Like our children romping on the playground, Leonine fire is the principle of pure experientiality, of *being-in-the-moment*. At its most spiritual, Leo therefore exemplifies the ideals of courage, enthusiasm, and even spontaneous, enlightened awareness. The Buddhists have a saying:

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*Spontaneity is the mark of the Buddha.*

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Leo embodies this spontaneous, playful awareness at its most dynamic, with this sign's fixity compressing this essence and burnishing it to a diamond-like brilliance. At its worst, this same principle can express itself as self-centeredness, or an inability to stand outside one's own perspective to see things—or oneself—objectively.

On the other end of things, Aquarius expresses the principle of air, the element most associated with the principle of rationality, and mind. Like those scientists on the fringes of our theoretical playground, air stands outside the field of activity to best observe and conceptualize it and systematically relate it to other ideas and systems. In contrast with the fiery principle of pure being, Aquarian air represents the principle of understanding.

At its highest, Aquarian air therefore confers the objectivity and discernment necessary for clear thinking and effective decision-making and planning. Your ability to read these words right now are made possible through the mediating element of air. But at its worst, Aquarian air can be detached to the point of coldness, standing so far outside of direct experience that it loses touch with the emotional realities of oneself and others. The famed detachment of Aquarian president Ronald Reagan offers just one example of this.

But how exactly do these two different archetypes interact with one another? Traditional astrology informs us that fire and air are complementary and feed one another in symbiotic ways. But, as we shall soon see, the truth of the matter can be far more complex.

## The Individual/Group Dynamic

As individuals, how do we reconcile our own needs or behaviors with those of the group? And in turn, how does the group impact on our personal lives?

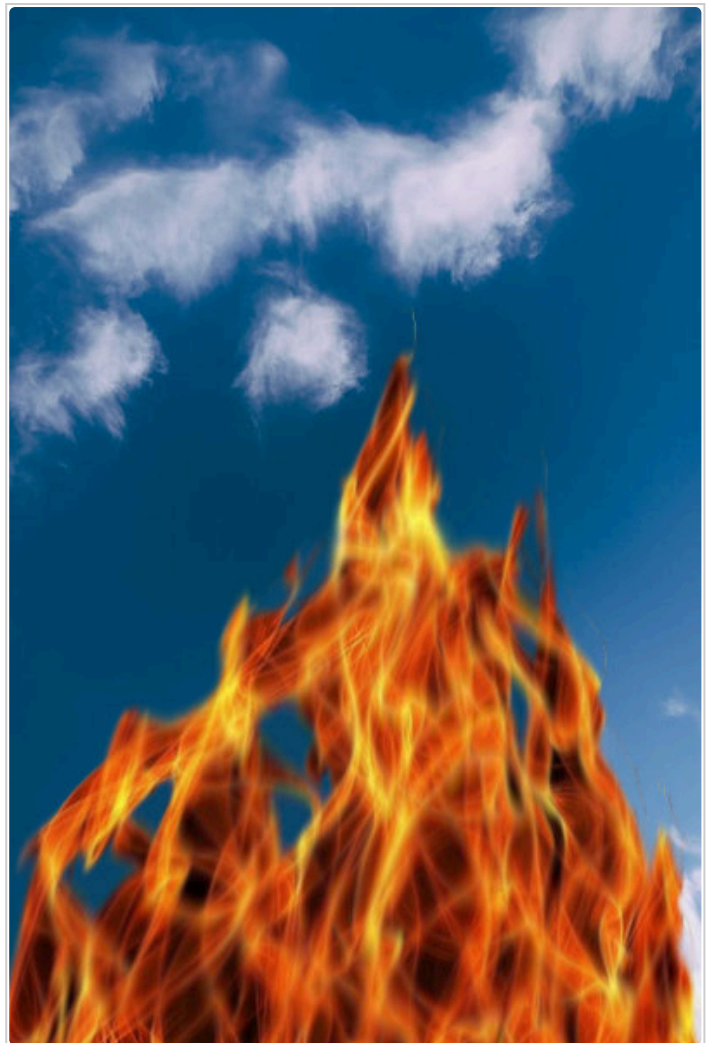
These are just a few of the concerns driving this zodiacal polarity. On the one hand, Leo stands for the principle of the reigning individual, shining before all in his or her uniqueness. At the other end, Aquarius represents community, the masses. In political astrology, Leo is therefore associated with government by monarchy or theocracy, where power is focused into a single royal or religious figure, whereas Aquarius relates to democracy and government by the common man/woman. In short, *Leo rules from the top down, whereas Aquarius rules from the bottom up.*

Whenever this zodiacal polarity is prominently displayed in someone's horoscope, we often find a concern with integrating one's personal values or habits with those of the collective. When Leo is more dominant (say, by planetary emphasis), individuals might gravitate toward positions of eminence, such as being the ringleader in social undertakings; but with Aquarius more emphasized, the individual may feel a greater attunement with the group, the masses.

Sometimes, the house placements involved hold the decisive clues as to which direction this will take. For instance, one client of mine had multiple planets in Leo positioned in the 1st house, opposing Aquarius planets in the 7th. Throughout her life she found fulfillment as a charismatic motivational speaker standing before hundreds, sometimes even thousands of people. With Leo so prominently placed in the 1st house, she enjoyed the role of a "star" to the hilt. Yet another client of mine had virtually the same planets in the same signs, except positioned in precisely opposite houses (Leo on the 7th, Aquarius on the 1st). For her, this polarity manifested as the compulsion to *attend* workshops led by charismatic figures and to identify with the masses rather than take on the starring role herself!

On the global scale, planetary configurations involving these two signs often bring about historical events which dramatize that group/individual dynamic *en masse*. When Leo is dominant over Aquarius, for example, there can be events which highlight the ability of lone rulers or nations to affect larger collectives, constructively or destructively.

As one example, the much-discussed solar eclipse of August of 1999 featured a powerful Sun-Moon conjunction in Leo, opposing planets in Aquarius—Leo dominant over Aquarius, in other words. On the exact day of the Full Moon after that eclipse (traditionally, one of several potential trigger mechanisms for eclipses), Chicago's O'Hare airport, one of the world's busiest, was shut down for hours because of a lone individual bolting the wrong way through a security checkpoint. As one TV commentator remarked later that evening,



**Fire and Air**

Sources: Fire: [Prawny](#), [Pixabay](#)  
Air: [Francesco Ungaro](#), [Pexels](#)

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*This incident illustrates how a single individual can disrupt the entire system.*

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On the other hand, a striking example of how the collective can powerfully impact the life of an individual was the Gulf War of 1991. The most significant outer-planet aspect unfolding during that conflict was Saturn in Aquarius opposing Jupiter in Leo. (The war itself lasted from mid-January to early April; the Jupiter-Saturn opposition was exact on March 15, 1991.) Regardless of one's political opinions about the situation or its causes, that planetary dynamic found explicit expression in the way U.S. president George W. Bush led a "disciplinary" coalition of nations (Saturn in Aquarius) to set limits on the expansionist ambitions of a would-be king, Saddam Hussein (Jupiter in Leo).

In a stunning historical synchronicity, this event was paralleled by another development that erupted into public attention during that same period: the so-called "Rodney King incident" in Los Angeles, which came to light in early March. In a manner virtually identical to the United Nations' actions toward Hussein, this urban incident likewise involved a band of "disciplinary" figures (L.A. policemen) coming down hard on a lone "expansionist" figure—a speeding motorist by the last name of "King," no less!

With the slow emergence of the Aquarian Age, we're already seeing the erosion of longstanding monarchies and their replacement by democratic forms of government. And as with our previous two examples, we often find powerful configurations behind such developments taking place in the signs Leo and Aquarius. To cite a classic case, all of the major events of the French Revolution occurred in tandem with powerful astrological aspects between Leo and Aquarius, chiefly centering around a Uranus-Pluto opposition in effect during that period.

## Creativity

Another key concern of the Leo/Aquarius axis centers around the expression of creativity in our lives. At the one end, Leo expresses the idea of personalized creativity—the lone artist painting in his loft, for instance, or the musician composing at her piano. On the other hand, Aquarius governs all forms of group creativity, where individuals band together to merge their creative energies toward a single project. A modern example of this would be an average film or TV production, where one can find literally hundreds or sometimes even thousands of individuals pooling their energies toward creating a single movie or TV series.

In actual practice, the notion of "group creativity" is a decidedly double-edged sword. At its best, it can lead to ensemble work of the most brilliant type, as with films like *The Godfather*, *Citizen Kane*, or *2001: A Space Odyssey*; or through popular musical ensembles like the Beatles. To my mind, the modern symbol that best captures the essence of Aquarian group creativity is that uniquely American art form, jazz. In contrast to Piscean-Age art forms like the Gregorian choir where individual creativity is surrendered to a higher ideal, the jazz band *encourages* personal creativity within the context of community. Yes, a general structure is followed, but it's loose enough to allow for personal freedom of expression. On a technological level, Aquarian Thomas Edison pioneered a jazz-type approach to innovation with the unique workshop environment he developed, in which an entire team of thinkers pooled their efforts towards conceiving new inventions.



**On stage and in the crowd**  
Source: Ray Grasse, own work



**The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1964**  
Source: Library of Congress, Public domain, via  
Wikimedia Commons

But at its worst, the notion of group creativity calls up images of faceless bureaucracies, or “beehive” societies, where individual creativity is essentially squashed by more collective imperatives. One doesn’t have to look far to find examples from our own time of how creativity can be constrained by corporations and the “vested interests of the stockholders.” Nowadays, independent artists find themselves faced with the Faustian bargain of compromising their visions by having to contend with virtual armies of marketing consultants, corporate bureaucrats, and test audiences to get their work out into the marketplace.

But as bleak a scenario as that may seem, I feel there’s much reason for hope. While there’s no denying our world has become more corporatized, we still manage to find impressive books, films, and musical compositions emerging out of the system with some regularity. Also, the Internet has introduced a new wrinkle by allowing independent artists to use modern telecommunications for distributing their works before a worldwide audience, thus bypassing the corporate process almost entirely. Likewise, computer technology has allowed individuals to explore their own creativity in a variety of new ways—musically, photographically, artistically. So while there’s definitely much room for improvement, reports of modern creativity’s death are (to paraphrase Mark Twain) greatly exaggerated!

## Personal Pleasure/Group Pleasure

A close cousin to creativity on our chain of correspondences is the notion of *pleasure*, with each end of the Leo/Aquarius polarity approaching this in its own way. For instance, Leo governs pleasures of a more personal sort, as in the case of adults having a romantic affair, or our children romping around on that proverbial playground.

By contrast, Aquarius governs *group* pleasures involving many individuals at once, such as we find in theme parks like Disneyland or Disney World. In environments like these, groups of individuals can come together and take a virtual ride into outer space, venture down simulated jungle rapids, or thrill at the sight of electronic dinosaurs clawing at them. But by far the most pervasive form of Aquarian pleasure in our time is that of mass entertainment, expressed through media like films, TV shows, or online performances. With either of these last two, for instance, it’s possible for millions or even billions of people around the world to enjoy the exact same show at the exact same time.

Examples like this point up several other key aspects of Aquarian pleasure, such as its heavily *technological* nature. Here I include video games, virtual reality devices, and even Internet chat rooms, which can be engaged in by entire communities. Note, too, the comparatively cerebral or “heady” nature of Aquarian pleasures. To use an extreme example, imagine an Internet party of scientists swapping jokes about the Grand Unified Theory!

In contrast with the immediacy of Leonine play, Aquarian pleasure generally involves an element of detachment where the participant is somehow removed from the heart of the experience. Not unlike our original scientists standing outside of the playground looking in, an average TV viewer experiences the action vicariously and indirectly, like a spectator rather than a player.

Note the impersonality implied there as well. With an ordinary television show, you can have literally millions of viewers tuned in at the same moment, watching the same event—but with all of them being physically separate from one another! So the Aquarian Age may well usher in a time when we all “come together as one,” although this could take a more technological and detached turn than some are expecting.

## Chance

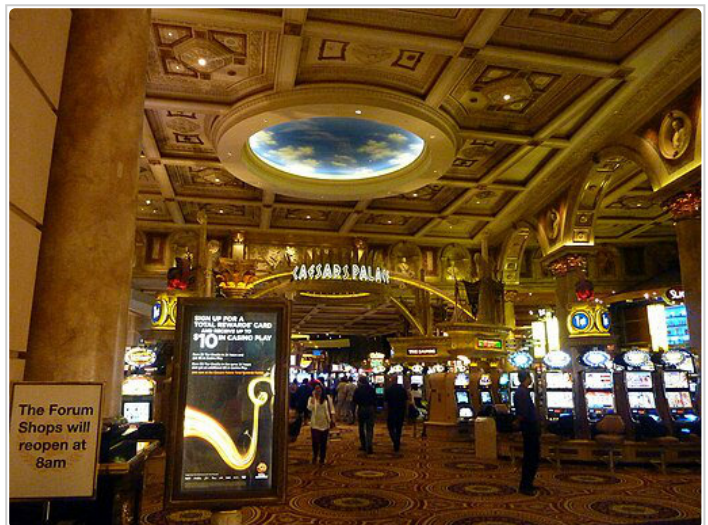
For most astrologers, gambling is said to fall under the rulership of the 5th house in the horoscope—the house naturally associated with Leo. To my mind, this has always concealed a deep esoteric truth. Why? Because in addition to being a form of play, gambling—like most of the other areas we’ve been exploring thus far—involves a certain element of chance, of randomness. For whether we talk about romance, creativity, conception, or childbirth, we are, in every case, looking at something that’s essentially spontaneous and unpredictable. Conceiving a child is one of life’s greatest crapshoots, for instance, not only in terms of whether pregnancy will occur but in terms of the kind of child one might bring into the world.

Correspondences like that open a window onto a deeper truth of both Leo and the 5th house—namely, that the spontaneity expressed in these areas reflects the free-flowing qualities of Spirit itself, that innermost fount of consciousness where energy unfolds openly and intuitively, unfettered by logic or calculation. In moments of play or creativity, we tap into this divine, creative source of being, something even reflected in our use of the term “recreation”—or *re-creation*—when describing ordinary pastimes. Gambling likewise stems from this same divine impulse, though for more distorted and self-aggrandizing reasons.

So how does this principle of spontaneity or chance manifest when filtered through the opposite sign of Aquarius? For one, it gives rise to *mass* games of chance, not to mention more technological and corporatized forms of chance. In stark contrast with the more traditional setting of a few individuals standing around throwing dice in the dirt, the emerging Great Age has already introduced bustling amphitheaters that accommodate thousands of individuals playing electronic slot machines side-by-side. The house of worship for many these days are modern-day shrines to chance like Las Vegas casinos, where a very different “faith in the unseen” is invoked than what we find in traditional churches or synagogues.

In a more positive and creative way, our earlier example of the jazz band actually reflects a distinctly Aquarian approach to chance, since it's based on the concept of *group improvisation*, a creative art form similar to gambling, actually, and based on one's response to the unpredictabilities of the moment. It's entirely different from a conventional orchestra where virtually no room is allowed for improvisation outside the notes inscribed on the composer's score.

In a distinctly different way, environments like Disneyland and Las Vegas express a more Aquarian approach to chance in their shared concern with *controlling the unpredictable*. Let me explain. At an amusement park like Disneyland, for example, engineers take activities that traditionally involved huge elements of risk and bring them under tight supervision, in order to best provide customers with all the thrills and vicarious enjoyments of chance-laden experiences but without all that messy randomness and dangerous unpredictability. Rather than risk one's life going out on a big-game safari, one can experience a simulated version of the same thing, all from the safety of your electronically guided car or virtual headset.



**Casino**

Source: Sean MacEntee from Monaghan, Ireland, CC BY 2.0 , via Wikimedia Commons

And while childbirth has always been one of life's most unpredictable activities, scientists are learning how to reduce the element of chance there as well, with new advances in fertilization and genetic engineering. The striking film *Gattaca* features a scene that beautifully illustrates this dilemma: Set at an unspecified time in our future, a couple comes into a fertility clinic to consult with a corporate counselor on planning out the features of their next child. The counselor tries to convince them to go all the way and pick out every characteristic of their future child; but they are resistant, wondering if it wouldn't be nice to leave just a *little* bit to chance and randomness. The counselor seems perplexed why anyone would even *want* to leave any part of the conception process to complete chance. In much the same way, the Aquarian society of the future may be one where, for better or worse, we attempt to control as many elements of randomness and unpredictability in our world as possible—in short, to *harness chance*.

This same archetypal polarity also helps explain efforts by modern academicians to unlock the "laws of chance" in purely scientific ways. Entire disciplines have sprung up over the last century which attempt to uncover the hidden order beneath life's apparent randomness. These include statistical theory, Quantum Physics with its notions of "probability theory," the revolutionary new science of Chaos (or complexity), and even the emerging field of synchronicity studies. Consider Chaos theory, for example. Researchers contend that by carefully observing the complex behaviors of phenomena previously

thought to be random (say, the behavior of motorists on a freeway, or gas molecules moving about a room), it's possible to discern the hidden laws governing these patterns. This is a uniquely Aquarian approach to the phenomenon of chance.

In our personal horoscopes, significant aspects between the signs Leo and Aquarius sometimes indicate an effort to balance personal spontaneity with the restrictions of social convention. At their most constructive, our collective behavioral codes serve to channel or restrain the wilder expressions of our fiery personal impulses—the result being a little something we call *civilization*.

## The One and the Many

Another metaphor I've found useful in explaining the distinction between Leo and Aquarius draws from the field of medical astrology. Traditionally, Leo is associated with the heart while Aquarius is often associated with the distribution of the blood via the arteries. Viewed symbolically, that tells us an important insight into the archetypal processes underlying these two signs. Simply put, Leo is the principle of *centralization*, while Aquarius is the principle of *decentralization*.

This dynamic helps explain several of the areas we have been looking at thus far. For instance, when we say that Leo rules government by monarchy, that's because monarchy centralizes the power of the nation into a single king or queen, who acts as the "heart" of a country. By contrast, democracy decentralizes power to the outermost "branches" of society—that is, ordinary citizens. Whereas Leo is the principle of the One, Aquarius is therefore the principle of the Many. Or think of this visual analogy: Leo can be compared with pure white light, while Aquarius could be compared to the prismatic breaking up of light into multiple colors, into a spectrum. Hence, whereas Leo is more monolithic in focus, Aquarius has a more kaleidoscopic agenda, with its greater emphasis on diversity and complexity.

In light of such correspondences, it's easy to understand why Aquarius is symbolically linked to systems, networks, and associations of various kinds. (1) On the global scale, that may suggest that the next Great Age will be an era of complex alliances and networks of many types—political, social, or technological. *Systems within systems within systems*. We even see the multi-perspective qualities of Aquarius in such modern developments as postmodernism, with its splintering of traditional Truth into multiple truths and worldviews.

## Leo and Aquarius in the Chakra System

I'd suggest it's possible to uncover a still deeper level of meaning to this zodiacal polarity by considering where it falls in the context of the yogic system of the *chakras*, or subtle energy centers within the body. As I've discussed in previous essays and books, there is a growing number of esotericists, both East and West, who propose a close relationship between astrological symbols and the psycho-spiritual system of the chakras. (2) According to this set of correspondences, Leo is associated with the "third eye" or Ajna chakra, while Aquarius (along with Capricorn) relates to the lowest "root" chakra, called Muladhara.

Correspondences like these reveal new insights into the host of associations we've been examining thus far. With Leo, for instance, traditional associations like creativity, pleasure, spontaneity, and "centralization" all take on added significance in connection with the spiritual center in the forehead, commonly described as the seat of creative, visionary consciousness. On the other hand, the scientific detachment of Aquarius assumes new meaning when seen in relation to the root (Saturn) chakra—the point on the chakric ladder furthest away from the third eye. Like our scientists on the outside of the playground looking in, consciousness at this lower level is likewise "outside looking in," so to speak, relative to that "playground" of pure being concentrated in the Ajna chakra, or Third Eye. (Remember, "upper" or "lower" in the chakric hierarchy does not mean "better" or "worse" in any absolute sense, since each chakric level has its own "spiritual" or "unspiritual" modes of expression.)

## Power, Will, and the Promethean Axis

Also consider the proximity of this zodiacal axis to not just the Third Eye but the central spinal column referred to by yogis as *sushumna*, the pathway of kundalini energy. While it would be wrong to suggest the Leo/Aquarius axis is identical to the kundalini channel, it comes closer than any other polarity in the



zodiac. As a result, this polarity (and its corollary planetary aspect, Sun conjunct Uranus) taps into something quite profound in our nature, an energy closely related to consciousness at its most dynamic and luminous.

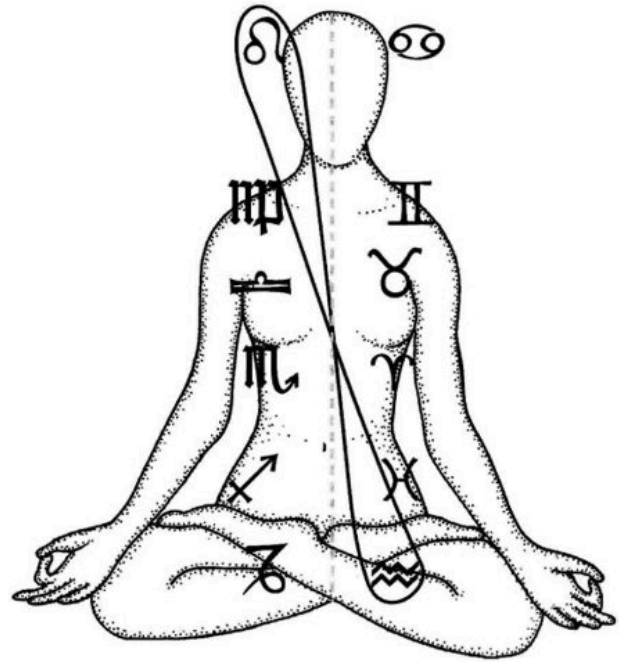
As this polarity expresses itself through the Aquarian end of things, it can manifest as an urge to take “higher” energies and bring them down to everyday situations, as we see with many inventors. In fact, a modern technology that serves as a perfect symbol for the Leo/Aquarius polarity and its archetypal dynamics is that of solar power. In the same way that solar power technology “draws down” energy from the Sun for use in everyday life, so Aquarius may be said to “draw down” energy from the Ajna chakra into the realm of material plane concerns. For this reason, we might call the Leo/Aquarius polarity the “Promethean axis” — Prometheus being the mythological figure who carried fire down from Mt. Olympus to humanity.

As we shift into the Aquarian Age, we’re already seeing numerous ways in which “fire” is being drawn down from the proverbial mountain top into daily affairs: politically, through democracy; economically, through capitalism which (ideally) shifts wealth from “above” into the hands of ordinary entrepreneurs; technologically, through electricity which makes the once-awesome power of lightning available through small holes in the walls of our homes; through atomic power, which literally harnesses the powers of the Sun for human use; and intellectually, through the democratization of knowledge made possible by books, magazines, and the Internet. In recent centuries, we’ve even seen renewed interest in the Prometheus myth itself, as with the writings of Percy Shelley (*Prometheus Unbound*), or his wife’s famed novel *Frankenstein* (originally subtitled *The Modern Prometheus*).

Yet, as Mary Shelley’s story of Dr. Frankenstein also shows, with great power also comes great responsibilities, not to mention great dangers. For that reason, the Leo/Aquarius axis may well be thought of as the “third rail” of the zodiac, since tapping into it can be an electrifying or even lethal experience. Classical mythology offers numerous warnings about the problems of unwisely acquired powers, of course, but during the last century we’ve witnessed countless real-life examples of what happens when great power is wielded without the counterbalancing forces of compassion or reflectivity. The ability of a commoner like Hitler to rise from the lowest ranks of society into a position of global power is just one testament to the perils of “playing with fire,” politically or psychologically. Hiroshima and Chernobyl offer equally dramatic examples of this danger on more technological and scientific levels.

## The Mystery of the Sphinx

The metaphor of solar power provides us with one last insight into the Leo/Aquarius experience: that involving its unique relationship to mysticism. Just as solar power draws down the fires of the Sun into everyday use, the Leo/Aquarius polarity concerns the drawing down of “spiritual fire” from higher states into more personalized contexts, such as through a more individualized approach to spirituality. In pre-scientific cultures, for instance, “divinity” was viewed in largely Leonine terms as residing in certain



**Chakras**

Source: Ray Grasse, own work



**Solar panels**

Source: Ray Grasse, own work

individuals like the King, Pope, Pharaoh, or a remote God. But with the emerging Aquarian mythos, we're increasingly seeing the *democratizing of divinity*, where Spirit is recognized to reside within each man or woman. Rather than simply being "children of God," a new paradigm is emerging in which we regard ourselves more as *co-creators* with Divinity.

In personal horoscopes, an emphasis on the Leo/Aquarius polarity can likewise signal an interest in "personal empowerment," whether in spiritual, physical, or psychological ways. The chart of TV talk show host Oprah Winfrey (January 29, 1954) features a distinctive configuration between Aquarius and Leo, as does the horoscope of motivational speaker Tony Robbins (Feb. 26, 1960), and both have been strongly associated with matters of personal empowerment.

At its most sublime, the harmonizing of Leo and Aquarius expresses a truth with special relevance for men and women of our time: *the reconciliation of the divine and the human*. At the outset of this article, I proposed one image to convey certain qualities of this zodiacal dynamic—that of the scientists observing the children. In closing, I'd suggest very different symbol for illustrating the integration of these polar opposites: *the Egyptian Sphinx*.



**Sphinx**

Source: Ray Grasse, own work

In this timeless image we see the merging of the lion and the human bodies in one, the combining of Leo and Aquarius. However the Egyptians themselves may have intended this symbol—and there isn't agreement even amongst Egyptologists on that point—it's possible that the growing interest in this archeological wonder during recent decades stems directly from its archetypal numinosity as an emblem for our emerging spiritual potentials. The growing importance of this symbol was something Irish poet William Butler Yeats anticipated over a century ago, when he penned those lines anticipating—or was it bemoaning?—the coming Aquarian Age, in his poem "The Second Coming":

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*Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man... (3)*

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