

# OLGA TOKARCZUK THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER USES ASTROLOGY IN HER LITERATURE

by Constanza Johnson

In 2019, the Polish writer became the twelfth woman in history to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. The jury recognized in her *"a narrative imagination embedded in encyclopedic passion, representing the crossing of borders as a way of life."* In her novels, significant values stand out, such as women's rights, the commitment to environmental protection, the integrity of local cultures, and above all, a radical view on the relationship between human beings and animals using myths, legends, symbols, and archetypes. It is worth noting that Olga Tokarczuk studied psychology in Warsaw and began working as a psychotherapist within her country, especially in Walbrzych where she still resides.

## Natal Birth Chart and Publications

Olga Tokarczuk was born on January 29, 1962, in Sulechów (Poland) at 7:30 p.m. We see a stellium of planets in the sign of Aquarius, which would indicate her interest not only in writing and literature but also in humanity-wide consciousness and an original and somewhat eccentric literary mind. However, her Moon at 18° Scorpio in conjunction with Neptune at 13°, makes her an unconventional exponent due to her interest in occult, mythical, spiritual, and astrological topics. Her rising Sun is Virgo at 10° and the ruling planet Mercury is at 22° Aquarius. Also, with Pluto at 9°, conjunct to the ascendant, she has the power to choose the world she wants to build. Birth and re-birth could be a theme in her life. Many changes in her personal life and work as a writer may occur. It is no coincidence that she uses astrology, myths, and paranormal themes in her novels.

Her natal chart has a Seesaw pattern with a T-square towards her Moon and Neptune in her 3rd house. The author maintains her balance through writing and her literary imagination (Moon in 3rd house where it is in Joy).

## Innovative Methods and Ideas in her Writing

In her novel, *E.E.* (1995) its protagonist, the adolescent Erna Eltzner, has developed psychic abilities. *Anna in the Tombs of the World* (2006), was written within the framework of the international series "Myths." In this novel, Olga Tokarczuk tells the myth of Inanna, the Sumerian goddess of harvest and war, who visits her sister, the goddess of the underworld and death, and unexpectedly returns to the world of the living. The plot is closely related to the descent of the planet Venus as the morning star to the underworld, during which we do not see the planet of love in the sky for weeks or months. Venus then returns as the evening star, symbolizing its return to the world of the living. The writer aims to go beyond conventional reality in her novels to unravel the mysteries of life. In one of her best-known novels, *Primeval and Other Times* (1996), the story is set in a mythical town where strange situations occur. Many characters appear during both World Wars, which take place in this "Primeval place at the Center of the Universe."

All her novels are marked by the influence of her Moon in Scorpio, conjunct Neptune, and Mercury in Aquarius. This combination brings an overflowing imagination and a focus on unraveling the mysteries of life, evident throughout her narration. In her natal chart, the Sun at 9° in conjunction with Saturn at 3° and Venus at 9° in the sign of Aquarius (in the 5th House) gives her great creativity and imagination. Venus at 9° in her Joy and Cazimi by the Sun (also in the 5th House) in conjunction with Jupiter at 17° inspires her great artistic capabilities together with Mars (exalted) in Capricorn, endowing her with the strength and courage necessary to pursue goals. Moreover, in its traditional domicile, Saturn gives her the structure and discipline to express herself through her unusual world. Her North Node in Leo at 18° (12th house) is square to her natal Moon in Scorpio (3rd House) which is not easy on emotions and yet she achieved the greatest literary award and wide international recognition. She stands out and shines from her unconscious world.

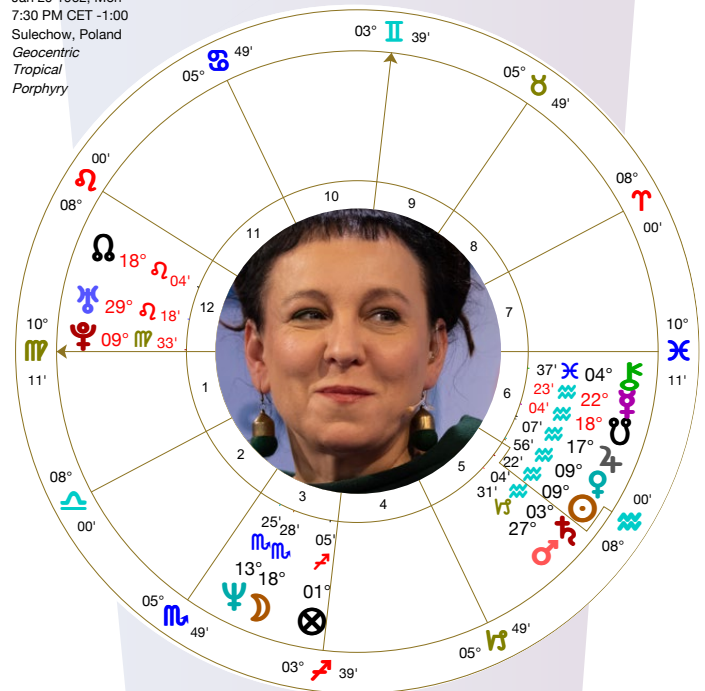
## A novel where astrology is in the background

The novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, a thriller, appeared in 2009. The author employs suspense as her protagonist constantly advocates for the humane treatment of animals. In her campaign against hunters, butchers, and those who mistreat her pets, the protagonist displays borderline paranoia. Authorities mistreat her, considering her crazy.

German critic Anne-Dore Krohn has noted that *"it is a deeply pessimistic and melancholic story about environmental protection, set in the landscape of the Silesian mountains, intertwined with a suspense motif."* The book was made into a film by Agnieszka Holland in 2017. Entitled *Pokot* "Spoor," it premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and won the prestigious Silver Bear in 2017.

## Olga Tokarczuk

Natal  
Jan 29 1962, Mon  
7:30 PM CET -1:00  
Sulechow, Poland  
Geocentric  
Tropical  
Porphyry



Harald Krichel, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

The narrator's propensity to highlight the correspondences between events on Earth and planetary movements makes her an unreliable witness. Despite not being taken seriously, she persists. Why is that?

I want to add a few words about the movie adaptation of this book. From the beginning, the film surprises us with its images of landscapes that envelop us in the environment described by the writer. Also, the plot advances in the same narrative form as the book, which is different from so many movies that usually betray the author's ideas. "Spoor" develops freely without competing with what is written surely because the author herself collaborated with the script. Despite some simplification, it is a movie worth seeing and does not disappoint the reader's expectations

In one of her statements, the protagonist (Janina) says that if she had to go to a desert island, she would take a book with all the Ephemerides. *"Though if I ever had to calculate a Horoscope in the desert, with no computer, no electricity or tools of any kind, I could do it. All I would need are my Ephemerides, and therefore if anyone were suddenly to ask me (although sadly no one would ever will) which book I would take to a desert island, my answer would be: The Complete Ephemerides, 1920–2020."*<sup>1</sup> Every astrologer would do the same.

### Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead

Curiously, this book came into my hands when an acquaintance told me that she had not understood many parts of the plot, because of its astrological observations, which for the average reader would indeed be difficult to tackle. However, some well-known crime literature fans have pointed out to me that for the first time, they found a detective artist who seriously used astrology as an instrument in a criminal investigation.

The novel contains many techniques specific to ancient branches of astrology. In the chapter 999 Deaths, they refer to the calculation of the "Hyleg, or the Giver of Life" which means the native's potential for health and longevity. Widely used in Hellenistic, Arabic, and Medieval astrology, ancient authors devoted large sections of their writings to this subject. In Janina's words "To determine natural death we examine the positions of the hyleg, in other words, the heavenly body that sucks vital energy from the Cosmos for us. For daytime births, it is the Sun, for nocturnal ones it is the Moon, and in some cases, the ruler of the Ascendant is the hyleg. Death usually ensues when the hyleg reaches some radically inharmonious aspect when the ruler is on the eighth house or with the planet positioned within it. In considering the risk of violent death, I had to take note of the hyleg, its house, and the planets situated within this house. In so doing I paid attention to which of the harmful planets—Mars, Saturn, or Uranus—was stronger than the hyleg, and was pointing to a negative aspect with it."<sup>2</sup>

This technique is not used in modern astrology—though it may appear in medical astrology—since no astrologer would give a death date to a client. The art of reading the planets has evolved over the years, and it is not in the interest of either the astrologer or the client to know their death date. Today, astrology focuses more on understanding the purpose of life, the evolution of the soul, and self-awareness. However, in ancient times, this practice

was likely relevant due to shorter lifespans and the lack of medical advancements that we have today.

### Why does the author use astrology?

Perhaps it is due to her devotion to the symbology and archetypes introduced by Carl Jung, whose revolutionary ideas addressed psychic issues, particularly the "collective unconscious," and linked them to social and collective issues. In her natal chart, Mercury at 22°, an indicator of communication and intellect, is in Aquarius, conjunct with her South Node at 18° and Jupiter at 17° (both in the 6th House). This conjunction gives her a breadth of thought and knowledge from the past about her life and works. Additionally, Uranus in Leo at 29° is opposite this conjunction, marking her writing with originality.

The book contains many intertwined readings, characters full of symbols, and associations with the past and future, eliciting profound fascination in readers. The verses of William Blake, which give the book its title, also provide a counterpoint that reinterprets the mysterious lyrics of this great English poet. As we progress through the book, we find ourselves inside a fictionalized astrology lesson in the form of a thriller, where the protagonist Janina reflects relentlessly from an astrologer's point of view. She observes, "I succeeded in observing similar conformities with regard to the Alien films, set on a spaceship. Here, subtle dependencies between Pluto, Neptune, and Mars come into play. As soon as Mars was in aspect with these two slow planets, TV simultaneously showed one of the Alien films. Isn't that fascinating?"<sup>3</sup>

I could continue quoting astrological interpretations. The narrator's propensity to highlight the correspondences between events on Earth and planetary movements makes her an unreliable witness. Despite not being taken seriously, she persists. Why is that? She believes that the planets have arranged the scenarios to enact righteous revenge on behalf of the animals for the wrongs done to them. However, she also believes in free will. Thus, she keeps a secret throughout the investigation, which cannot be revealed in a review as it constitutes the key to the book. The narrator uses astrology to divert attention from the facts, culminating in a conclusion that leaves the reader immersed in cosmological mysteries.

Writing *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* must have been risky for the author, given that many astrological terms, aspects, and analyses are unfamiliar to readers not trained in astrology. However, the Nobel Prize winner commits fully and seriously to her writing and astrological knowledge. Isn't it time to reposition astrology as a significantly more serious tool that helps individuals become more aware in life?

### REFERENCES

1. *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* (p. 55). Penguin Publishing Group
2. *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* (p. 58).
3. *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* (p. 96).

Natal Chart: Porphyry System

### CONTRIBUTOR



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