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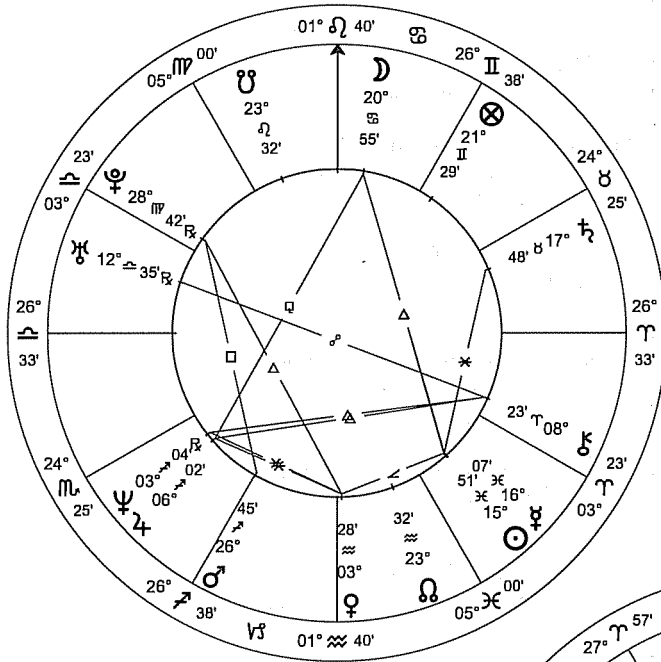
Cover: The Orion Nebula is one of the most dramatic and photogenic celestial objects, and this image, one of the most detailed ever produced by NASA's Hubble Telescope. Though known by the Mayans as Xibalba (according to E.C. Krupp), the discovery of the nebula is credited to Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1610), yet was co-named Messier 42 after Charles Messier who listed it in his star catalog (1771-4) as item 42. Referenced in older texts as *Ensis*, it is currently considered a stellar nursery where new stars are being born. A close look will find the stars of the familiar, fall and winter, northern hemispheric constellation, Orion.

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NCGR Birth Charts

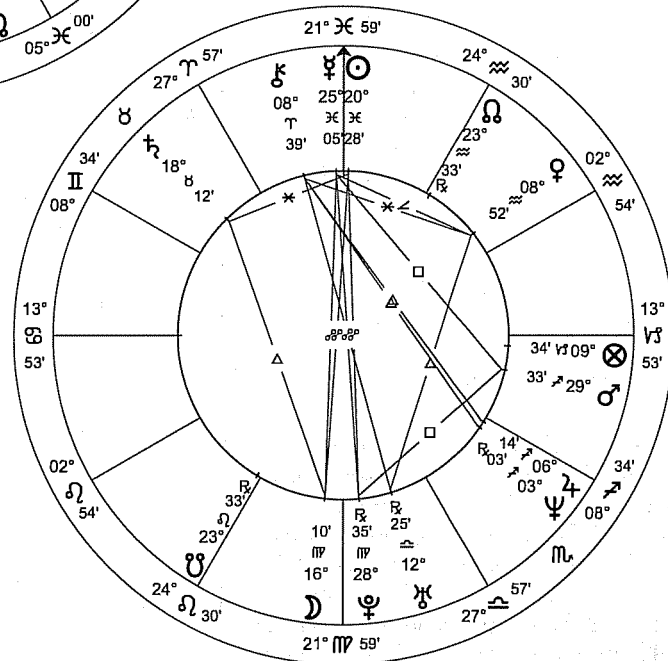


Signing of Articles of Incorporation

March 6, 1971,
9:02 pm EST
Wareham, MA
Tropical
True Node
Placidus

Incorporation Date

March 11, 1971
12:00 pm EST
Boston, MA
Tropical
True Node
Placidus



To briefly summarize the history of NCGR, seven men and women met in Wareham, MA, on March 6, 1971, at the home of Harry F. Darling, MD, who became the first Chairman. The official signing of the Articles of Incorporation took place at 9:02 pm. The founders included astrologers, medical professionals, scientists and scholars, all interested in exploring astrology as it related to other disciplines. The name they chose, Geocosmic, sought to avoid the popular misunderstanding of astrology and set the tone for their purpose with a serious and scholarly approach to the study of correspondences between life on earth (geo) and the cycles of the cosmos, in particular, that of our solar system.

Editorial Commentary

When I was asked to be guest editor of a forthcoming NCGR Journal on psychological astrology, I was excited. With the current revivalist trend toward traditional astrology, there seemed to be a reaction against the humanistic, psychologically oriented astrology that was dominant throughout the latter half of the 20th century. As a psychological astrologer, this was troubling, and I wanted to address it in some way. Was there something that psychological astrologers needed to learn? Should we change our ways and go back to more traditional approaches? In reviewing the articles for this Journal, the answer I arrived at was *yes* and *no*.

To appreciate my ambivalence, one needs to understand how astrology is subject to evolutionary processes just like any other field. Evolution often advances by going *backwards*, i.e., by regressing to an earlier stage in an organism's development, and then leapfrogging over its current stage to form an entirely new species. In biology, this is called *paedomorphosis*, a term derived from the Greek, *paedo*, meaning *child*, and *morphe*, meaning *form*. In combination, it means *formed of a child*. Paedomorphosis is the process whereby nature fashions new forms out of earlier structures. This could be exactly what is happening in astrology. We are going backwards—yes, but the current regressive trend may actually be in the service of an evolutionary process that is leading toward an entirely new species—one that transcends contemporary astrology, not by remaining fixated on its past, but by recapturing something of essence that enables us to make the evolutionary leap to a new order.

But what is this *essence* that needs to be restored? What will the new order be? A system does not evolve by completing jettisoning its current form, but by eliminating its weaknesses, preserving its strengths, and adding something new. Accordingly, we need to explore both the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary astrology while assessing what could be of value that was lost. In so doing we might anticipate where the old girl is headed.

Hints of a new order will hopefully be gleaned in the following pages by ten different authors, all of whom were asked: *What differentiates psychological*

astrology from other approaches? What are its strengths and weaknesses? In what direction would you like to see contemporary astrology evolve?

In formulating these questions, I was seeking to get to the heart of the matter. Exactly what *is* psychological astrology, and how and when did it deviate from its predecessors? The usual answer is to go back to an alleged founder, like Alan Leo, or Carl Jung, or Dane Rudhyar. However, we need to appreciate that the evolution of astrology is part of a larger evolution—that of human consciousness itself. Astrology's various forms, mutations, and developments are reflective of stages in the unfoldment of the collective psyche.

Contemporary psychological astrology, for example, is a product of the emergence of psychology as an academic discipline in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The birth of psychology, in turn, was symptomatic of a ripening of human consciousness, a readiness to look within, explore our inner realms, know our primary motivations, discern the meaning of dreams, actualize our potential for growth and development, and appreciate our linking to a wider and deeper consciousness. These ideas were not entirely unknown to our ancestors, but prior to the 19th century had not reached that critical mass of collective awareness necessary to catalyze a decisive shift to a higher level of consciousness *en masse*. Once that tipping point occurred, psychology was born, and in its wake arose an entirely new form of astrology.

Michael Lutin points out that we are living in a psychological age in which awareness of ourselves and of our potentialities is at an all-time high. We cannot interpret horoscopes in any relevant way for 21st century clients by drudging up meanings that come from previous centuries. Such interpretations invite the client to regress rather than evolve. This is not to imply that work in traditional astrology has no value. Just as modern physicists need to be aware of Isaac Newton's early work, so recovery of our past is important from a historical perspective. Yet, we need to remain mindful that ancient techniques are inextricably encrusted with the fatalism and short-sightedness of prior epochs.

Psychological astrology, of course, is a work in progress and not without its own flaws and limitations. Like any other academic discipline, it is subject to revision and further elaboration. For a sampling of current thinking in the field, the following articles provide a nice overview, elucidating both its foundational principles and core themes. These can be defined as:

1. Focus on growth

The core defining feature of psychological astrology is its application to the growth, development, and actualization of human potential. This of necessity entails awareness that charts not only symbolize temperament and outer events (fate), but also the intrapsychic realm, which exists at a deeper level than temperament and may, to varying degrees, operate outside of awareness. It is precisely astrology's potential for deepening awareness and clarifying the contours of the inner world that enables it to be utilized in the service of psychological development. By deepening awareness, growth is facilitated. In this regard it could be argued that all astrology is to some extent psychological. As Brian Clark asserts, the very term, *psychological astrology*, is redundant since to do astrology necessarily involves working with a client's psyche.

2. Intrapsychic Sensitivity

Heightened awareness of the client's intrapsychic world sensitizes the astrologer to the emotional impact that his or her interpretations can have, which is a further defining feature of psychological astrology. Scottish astrologer, Anne Whitaker, once quipped, "*Some people think that if you don't call yourself a psychological astrologer it releases you from any responsibility for the counseling you do, since you are free to deny that you are doing it!*" Whitaker's remark suggests that astrologers fall roughly into two camps: (1) those that do astrology with awareness of the potential psychological impact their interpretations can have on clients; and (2) those without this awareness.

3. Synchronicity

Astrology can err in two directions, either the Scylla of focusing too much on outer events, or the Charybdis of becoming mired in personality descriptions. Either focus is one-dimensional and reduces astrology

to the level of pop culture—entertaining fluff that, if it is to be believed at all, does not go very deep. It is only by revealing the subtle interweaving of inner and outer realities that clients are empowered to take responsibility for the fabric of their lives.

Psychological astrology is often defined as the study of correlations between celestial events and human *behavior*, as if its chief preoccupation were a listing of personality traits that correlate to various planetary configurations. This, however, is a misleading half-truth. The more important thing is that it reveals the meaningful coincidences between subjective and objective reality. This is what Jung meant by his term, *synchronicity*, the confluence of inner and outer events. Jung formulated this concept in the 1930s and it has since become an essential component of psychological astrology. Emphasis is on the *relationship* of inner and outer, subjective and objective, and the purposive, circular process of feedback that activates higher levels of personality integration over time. Whereas traditional astrology is based on the aphorism of *as above, so below*, psychological astrology expands this understanding to *as within, so without*.

4. Multidimensionality and Indeterminism

One of the hallmarks of psychological astrology is the recognition that chart symbols offer more than just one-dimensional meanings; rather, they are multidimensional and multivalent. Not only can a single configuration manifest in multiple ways within the same person (multidimensionality), but each part of the chart is changed by its relationship with every other part (multivalence). In addition, people express their charts differently over time contingent with their growth, development, and maturation. It follows that astrological outcomes are inherently indeterminate, i.e., incapable of being foreknown with any degree of certainty.

5. Value Neutral, Wholistic and Positive

A salient theme of the articles posted in this Journal is that dualistic good-bad approaches to the meanings of chart symbols are hopelessly out of place in our modern, psychological age. The archaic practice of interpreting charts in terms of exalted and detrimental

An essential work of therapy is to become conscious of the fictions in which the patient is cast and to rewrite or ghostwrite, collaboratively, the story by retelling it in a more profound and authentic style.

~ James Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*

sign placements, malefic and benefic planets, strong and weak houses, and fortunate and unfortunate aspects, derives from a mindset that was preoccupied with egoic concerns for power, status, and ease. Conversely, a psychological perspective is trans-egoic in that it regards every astrological symbol—sign, planet, house, and aspect—as an integral part of the whole (soul), and thus equally positive *and* capable of development toward higher levels of functionality.

6. Intersubjectivity and the Discovery of Meaning

An idea repeatedly stressed by various authors is that a consultation is not simply an objective interpretation of the horoscope, but a complex, mutually subjective interaction that needs to be approached with maximum sensitivity and awareness. The term, *reading*, is an anachronism. Psychological astrologers do not merely *read* horoscopes, they dialogue with people. Consultations involve an interview with the client and a co-creative approach to the interpretation of chart symbols. Astrologers cannot know everything about a person merely from the chart. Meanings emerge from the creation of an intersubjective field involving the horoscope, the astrologer and the client. This implies openness to the *discovery* of meanings that are not explicit or foreordained in the horoscope.

7. Reverence for the Divine Intent

Rather than utilizing astrological knowledge for the sake of increasing preferred outcomes, i.e., maximizing pleasure and avoiding pain, psychological astrologers strive to discern the intent of the cosmos for the individual. The operative question is: *What does the Universe require from this person? How specifically are they being asked to evolve?* Such a perspective recognizes the purposiveness of fate. If individuals are required to learn certain lessons that are implicit in their charts, then fate is the vehicle for an evolutionary process—as Jung put it, *a path of individuation*.

8. A Participatory Relationship to the Cosmos

From the foregoing it follows that the relationship between psyche and cosmos is circular, not linear. Psyche is not merely the effect of a pre-determining cosmic cause; rather, it actively participates with the cosmos in determining outcomes that provide the catalyst to yet higher levels of self-actualization. While certain life lessons are pre-figured in the chart (fate), how well people learn is a matter of choice (freedom). Every choice, in turn, has consequences, which are administered by a divine intelligence. Freedom and fate, psyche and cosmos, are partners in a circular, reciprocal dance.

9. Freedom and Responsibility

A psychological approach to consultations strives to empower clients by emphasizing their freedom to choose and by encouraging them to take responsibility for the consequences of those choices. Accordingly, it does not advise clients what to do—i.e., who they should marry, where they should live, or what profession they should have—this can be disempowering to clients, undermining their autonomy, and encouraging an unhealthy dependency.

10. Predictions and Conscious Evolution

From a psychological perspective, simple event-oriented predictions are woefully inadequate. A more useful approach is to focus on the developmental process carried by the event, i.e., its meaning in an evolutionary context. Focus thus shifts from accuracy of prediction to adequacy of support in helping clients prepare for and respond to the windows of opportunity that each and every transit or progression entails. In so doing, astrology encourages *conscious evolution*—awareness of the divine intent and a willingness to cooperate with it.

As the foregoing hopefully makes clear, psychological astrology, as defined by the authors of this Journal, does not consist merely in the incorporation of psychological constructs and ideas. Rather, it alters and deepens our understanding of psychology in a manner that changes both disciplines, thus transforming the two into a new, higher synthesis—a true astro-psychology. Again, psychological astrology is a work in progress with its own problems and shortcomings. It will, and should, continue evolving in the direction of greater precision, structure, usefulness, clarity, and depth.

If astrology is poorly utilized amongst licensed therapists and counselors, perhaps it's because its development as a theory is still at an early stage (an overarching personality theory of astrology has yet to be written). Accordingly, astrology remains linked in the public mind with fatalism and fortune telling—the two F's of backward thinking. If this is to change, we need to move toward a more ethical, enlightened application that is contemporaneous with developments in related fields and thus utilized by a wider array of professionals dedicated to the public good. I believe the articles contained in this Journal will contribute to that end.*

—Glenn Perry



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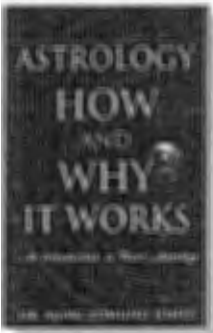
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—Henry Miller, author



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*"Emotionally, I would prefer that Gauquelin's results
don't hold, rationally I must accept they do."*

—Hans Eysenck, London University of Psychiatry

Soul Helix

by Hadley Fitzgerald

By redefining the ways in which our society looks at what ails people on every level, the euphemism, managed-care, has appropriated our reverence for the vast and mysterious ways the soul of each human being goes about its business. Hadley Fitzgerald, astrologer and psychotherapist, suggests that people are in need of something far more dimensional than the flip side of mental illness. A wise, careful, compassionate weaving of astrology and psychology can provide practitioner and client with a unique, evocative way of addressing and restoring the balance between earthly development and the concerns of the soul.

Astrology came into me—not just into my life—one night while I was standing in the kitchen of a stranger. She uttered one declarative sentence, and the cosmos downloaded my life purpose on the spot. The original career plans and rigorous educational preparation into which I'd just poured heart, soul, and years vanished in a trice.

Psychology's arrival was more oblique. Somewhere in the early days of my astrological work, I saw something in a client's chart and asked a question that caused us to give one another a *where-did-that-come-from* look. She burst into tears and I froze, wondering what to do next. I'd stepped into a world beyond the world of our consultation and knew I was not qualified to move around in it, ethically or otherwise. As

this began to happen more and more frequently, I would refer out to therapists I'd heard about, hoping the client got appropriate attention for whatever we had discovered. Then one day, alone in my office, I suddenly *knew* astrology would become an integral part of the psychology of the future—like the entwining strands of a double helix for the soul—so I decided to return to graduate school to figure out how to weave the two together.

However, as Joseph Campbell points out in his schematic for the Hero's Journey, whenever we answer the call that draws us into a new dimension of our lives, we encounter a shadow presence guarding the passageway. We are tested—initiated—in some way.

In the earliest weeks of my astrological studies a teacher peered over my shoulder, literally clutched her chest and gasped as she asked about the quite rudimentary chart wheel I'd just drawn in my notebook. "*Is that your chart?*" "Yes," I said, easily imagining I'd miscalculated something. She proceeded to point out all the troubles to which I was obviously heir in this life, and had I a slightly lower quotient of ego strength, I might have been reduced to psychic pulp on the spot. Instead, a voice in my head said: "*Do not ever do this to anyone.*" I smiled at the woman and quipped that, even though my life had not exactly been a cakewalk thus far, I *was* still ambulatory. I heard a disappointed "*tsk-tsk*" as she ambled away. She had seen something, but it wasn't *me*.

The stuff of life comes out of stars, every single atom, every single carbon atom, oxygen atom, and hydrogen atom. Your body elements were in a star probably more than four-and-a-half thousand million years ago. They were actually synthesized from hydrogen and helium in a star that length of time ago. If anybody tells you anything different, they're mad.¹

~ Sir Harry Kroto, Professor of Chemistry, Florida State University

Midway through my first year in graduate school some eight years later, as part of the mandatory course in psychological testing, we took each of the tests we were studying. During that time I was also earning a large chunk of my tuition by working as executive assistant to Dr. Clinton Phillips, the founder and director of the school. He knew I was an astrologer, but we never discussed what that meant to either of us. He liked me, I felt fortunate to work for him, and quite soon after he hired me, I realized I had also found my mentor in the psychological field.

One morning immediately upon my arrival at work he summoned me to his office. He looked like he had been visited by a spectre as he handed me a large manila envelope already open. Above his address in bold red ink were the underlined words, *Refer for psychiatric treatment!* I wondered what we had on our hands. "Help me understand," he said. Inside was a profile generated from one of the more well-known personality tests that everyone had taken during the course. I scanned the graph, the numbers, the pale-lettered summary and category breakdowns searching for a clue to Dr. Phillips' distress; then I saw my name at the top of the first page. What I'd seen was *not* favorable, and he started asking some concerned questions about me and my life. I replied frankly to his queries, and as the minutes ticked away our mutual bafflement increased.

Then, as I looked down again at the first page of the report, I suddenly saw: Age 33, Male. "Great," I said, "on top of everything else they've made me a guy." Dr. Phillips leaned over to see for himself, and his expression noticeably relaxed—as if the mystery had been all but solved. "Ah," he said, "We'll need to run this through again with you as female." When I asked what possible difference that could make, he urged me to fret no more and get on with the day's work. When the results came back the second time, there were no red alerts, and my profile was within acceptable parameters.

Though I had this experience 30 years ago, I still consider it a *God shot*—i.e., a grace intended to alert me to something else altogether. That still commonly used test which I took in the late 1970s had, at that time, last been standardized on a population in the 1950s. So, my honest answers to the multitude of questions made me an acceptable, stable human if I

were a 1950s female; but had I been male I would've needed psychiatric intervention. The test measured something, but it wasn't *me*.

What DNA is to the physical body, the archetypal world is to the psychic body. It simply shapes configurations in the psyche that we're born with.²

~Marion Woodman,
The Crown of Age

These two seemingly minor episodes nearly a decade apart initiated me as an astrologer, and ultimately as a psychotherapist, into a different perspective from thence forward. As an astrologer, I've seen again and again how the patterns of meaning offered up in astrological symbolism are infinitely richer than many of astrology's proponents—let alone

opponents—still seem willing to allow. Astrology becomes narrowed when the chart is used to render a static description of personality—however accurate—rather than to provide the thread that anchors passage into the psyche's labyrinth. As I've garnered experience in the psychological field, I've seen some of the best minds and most caring hearts put forth insightful interpretations of the human condition, yet, at the same time, circumscribe it.

In *Anatomy of the Psyche*, Edward Edinger noted:

The process of psychotherapy, when it goes at all deep, sets into motion profound and mysterious happenings. It is very easy for both patient and therapist to lose their way. This is why narrow and inadequate theories of the psyche are clung to so desperately—at least they provide some sense of orientation.⁴

In both fields—and particularly for those of us wearing both hats—we are ultimately vulnerable to speaking from a perch, as it were—i.e., to providing, as Hans Strupp wryly put it, "a supply of interpretations [that] far exceeds the demand."⁵

Awareness of the power to label people and potentially proscribe their lives with such interpretations, let alone do so erroneously, is sobering. My experience of both astrology's and psychology's capacity for such proscription—and such error—whether at the hands of a practitioner or an established system, comes as no news to any of us practicing in either field. But in this time of managed-care driven, cut-and-paste therapy and myriad astrological models that still lend themselves to the language of causality—both of which are operating in a manic zeitgeist scornful of soulfulness and depth—I hope we can continue to clarify and refine what we mean when we reference *psychological astrology* lest it become just another division of either field and thereby dilute its own deepest alchemical potential. In other words, when we say we practice

psychological astrology, are we: referring to—and treating in terms of—a cosmic version of the DSM-IV? Seeking to restore something to the field of psychology itself? Or ultimately crafting a practice that transcends both?

Most of us are familiar with the Greek roots of the words, *psychology* and *astrology*: ψυχη [psyche], αστρον [astron], and λογος [logos], but these, too, get shorthanded, so I'll revisit them here. *Liddell & Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*⁶ tells us that ψυχη can be defined as "soul, heart, spirit; breath as a sign of life; things dear to life; the mind, as in understanding." For αστρον we find "star; colloquially, the stars" (which can include the planets); "the heavens"—and in still more ancient Greek "a flame, light, fire." That same dictionary gives nearly half a page to definitions of λογος, among them: "the word, or that by which the inward thought is expressed; that which is said or spoken; language; talk, speech, discourse, report; thought, reason; tale, account, narrative." Factor in the designation *psychotherapy*—too often used interchangeably with *psychology*—and there's a noteworthy nuance. The Greek noun θεραπεια [therapeia] and verb

θεραπεω [therapevo] can be defined as "waiting on, tending to, fostering, nurture, care; to do service to the gods, to attend to, to heal, to cure." *Psychotherapy*: attending to, nurturing the soul—and therefore listening, deeply, to what it has to say.

So, then, at the heart—the root—of psychology we're dealing in soul-language or soul-talk, the soul's account of itself. But just as science has been divorced from the spirit of a more profound knowing, it's not a big stretch to say that psychology has become divorced from soul, becoming in its modern form largely ego-centered in both its language and its goals. There's nothing inherently wrong with that since we know a healthy ego navigates the world more effectively than one full of fear and self-loathing. Still, as writer Michael Ventura observes, in the long run "the soul doesn't give a damn what the ego wants"⁷—a deeper river runs through us.

In ancient Greek we find ψυχη was the word for butterfly as well as for soul.⁸ The journey "from caterpillariness to butterflyness,"⁹ as Ram Dass called the soul's journey through a lifetime, is also an exquisite metaphor for the process clinicians seek to refine in the alembic of the therapeutic relationship. Integrated skillfully into that process, astrology—the narrative of

the heavens—can provide the light, the necessary fire, to alchemize deeper levels of understanding as to the nature and purpose of the transformative journey. The resultant soul helix enables us to consider DNA from another angle—as our Divine Natal Agenda.

I often cite the Greek writer and spiritual seeker Nikos Kazantzakis for his wise and challenging perspective on our human existence. I don't know that he had any knowledge of astrology, but his concept of the purpose of a lifetime could easily contribute to an astrological manifesto. He imagined every human soul as a one-of-a-kind, unrepeatable piece of the whole spirit of God. He wanted each of us to think of ourselves as solely responsible for the salvation of the world, in the sense that, when one of us dies, what our unique being *could* do for humanity, is lost to the world forever. He urged us to take on the sacred task of plunging far enough into our own souls to find and free what he called "the endangered spirit of God"¹⁰ inside ourselves—i.e., to contemplate and become ever more conscious of our purpose, our life path, in the world—lest whatever contributions we came here to make remain undeveloped, and the world be the poorer for that.

*All things are full of signs, and it is a wise man who can learn about one thing from another.*⁵

~Plotinus

In its best and most artful form, the practice of psychology and of psychotherapy would contradict little, if anything, in Kazantzakis's postulate. When entwined with astrology in its best and ever-evolving form, the consequent double helix pro-

vides the profound and necessary cross-links to help us address the predicament James Hillman describes in *The Soul's Code*:

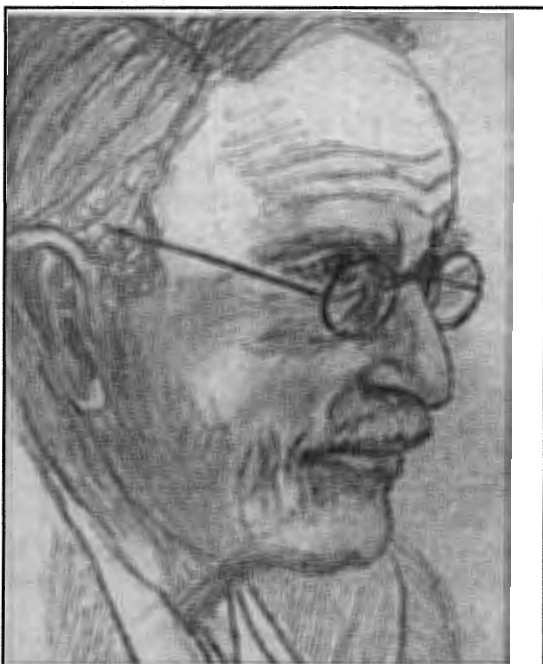
*The soul of each of us is given a unique daimon before we are born, and it has selected an image or pattern that we live on earth. This soul-companion, the daimon, guides us here: in the process of arrival, however, we forget all that took place and believe we come empty into this world. The daimon remembers what is in your image and belongs to your pattern, and therefore your daimon is the carrier of your destiny...That innate image can't be found, however, until we have a psychological theory that grants primary psychological reality to the call of fate.*¹¹

The psychologist has a model—or an amalgam of models—she or he uses: to explore the client's current family history and presenting problems; to assess the degree of dissonance between the conscious and unconscious minds, the outer and inner selves; to determine emotional and behavioral manifestations of that

dissonance; and to help establish goals for change that will facilitate the client leading whatever she or he comes to believe would be a more congruent life.

The astrologer has a schematic of the Cosmic Name, the thumbprint, the daimon, the mysterious place, the true voice in us that aches to answer if only someone would genuinely ask: Who are you? What are you here to do? What complexities have you brought with you? How can I help you? and then listen down through the layers rather than laying a template over them—if only someone would, as Neruda said, “*sit on the rim of the well of darkness and fish for fallen light with patience.*”¹²

When we consider [root: “*with the stars*”] the potential for a new, evocative, and intricate communion between the two disciplines and stay ever mindful of their shadow dimensions—what Richard Idemon termed “*the subtle seduction of the power trip*”¹³—we have an entirely different vantage point from which to support the client’s soulful differentiation from consensus reality. Right there in the chart wheel, the cosmic contract, is an evolutionary trajectory, an evolving and unrepeatable intention; everything in that wheel is sitting across from us incarnated in human form.



—Carl Gustav Jung
(from *PsychArt*, a public domain library of famous psychologists at Sonoma University, Rohnert Park, CA).

Our sacred task, replete with humility lessons, involves: helping the client forge a collaborative relationship between the visible and the invisible; bringing elements of grace and meaning to the puzzle and perturbations of this human’s destiny; compassionately confronting the psychological blocks that stand in the way of both earthly progress and spiritual evolution; and as one pilgrim to another, extending a hand across Time with reverence for the miracle of it all.✽

Endnotes

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Imagination and Language: Confessions of a Psychological Astrologer

by Brad Kochunas

Much of psychological astrology is concerned with strivings for personal growth, self-improvement, actualization of potential and/or making our lives better. The focus has been upon what is it that we want out of life, whereas very little is devoted to what life wants of us. Astrologer and prison counselor, Brad Kochunas, asks, how do we honor the claims the gods have upon us? Though there may be no clear answer, Kochunas advocates that we at least address this question in our approach to astrology.

By disposition and practice, I am a minimalist. I use ten planets, twelve signs, twelve houses, six aspects, current transits, secondary progressions, and an occasional Sabian symbol. I practice psychological astrology using a dialoging process. I don't do readings telling clients about themselves in a one-way performance. I don't do readings in the sense of giving advice. I don't help clients regain balance in their lives (to which I will return later), and I don't make predictions. I suspect many psychological astrologers eschew the predictive aspect of astrology by recognizing that it moves the client away from their life in the moment, which is after all, where each of us really live with its attendant anxieties, worries, and joys.

I don't believe the stars and planets have any literal influence in our lives, I don't believe in karma, past lives, or future lives. I don't believe astrology is hard science nor is it simply empirical.

I don't use nodes, Chiron, midpoints, harmonics, eclipses, parts, asteroids, decanates, fixed stars, or other such categories. Is there anything wrong with these? Of course not, but for me they simply tend to clutter up the scene like having too many actors on the theater stage. There is such an abundance of astrological methods, numerous techniques, and objects for

consideration for use in the chart that it leads me to believe that most of what has been written in astrology over the last two decades has given greater breadth to astrology with precious little having been published that deepens this grand wisdom tradition. I find it sufficient to keep a narrowed approach.

I truly believe that a psychological astrology is foremost about imagination and language, providing a framework for imagining a profound intimacy between ourselves and our world. The chart reflects how we imagine ourselves being in the world, mirroring various beliefs and attitudes that we hold about life that guide us through changing circumstance. By shifting the way in which we imagine ourselves, we can alter how we move through life. For instance, I can imagine myself as hopelessly stuck or free to respond to life in a more satisfying fashion. I can imagine myself as disabled or as differently abled, as a victim of forces beyond my control or as an agent of change. What are the limits of my ability to modify my root beliefs and everyday assumptions about life? Can I recognize that it is not whether the glass is half full or half empty, but that both perspectives are equally and simultaneously valid?

As for language, it allows us to differentiate and deepen our experience of the world. It is a powerful factor in the way we experience ourselves. When transiting Saturn is on my natal Moon, perhaps it reflects a period in which I am experiencing a depressed mood. I can simply say, I'm depressed or I can fine tune my experience and say that I'm feeling melancholy or malaise, downcast, blue, overwhelmed, trampled, dejected, worthless, put down, empty, barren, dry, dense, weighted, heavy, leaden, stuck, heavy hearted, despondent, sorrowful, captive, gloomy, woeful, glum, dismal, disconsolate, unhappy, or mournful. Each of these words carries

subtle nuances that deepen and enrich my experience of Saturn as depression, allowing me to invite Saturn into my life, befriending him, and possibly learning something of value from him.

Additionally with language, when astrologers use words and phrases that exhibit ideas like cause, force, fate, or that planets are doing something to us, or that there are bad signs, bad planets, or bad configurations, we victimize our clients and ourselves. When I hear myself say that I am experiencing some personal difficulty and follow that up with the statement that such or such a planet is transiting such or such a house or squaring or opposing this or that planet, I cringe inside. My language is not simply correlation; it betrays both a cause and explanation for my distress that can be disempowering. Admittedly, it is at times comforting to not have to take responsibility for every darn thing that happens to me, but beneath that, I believe there is little difference between my responsibility for what I do and what happens to me. These are like two sides of the same coin, separable only in the abstract, not in reality. As the chart so visually suggests, I am a particular and specific expression of the whole universe, so what I am doing is at the same time what is being done to me. These ideas reflect two distinct conditions, that in reality, are not separable from one another.

From my perspective, my chart is not something different from who I am, it is a reflection of who I am and the movements in the sky mirror, reflect, echo, parallel, image, and symbolize that which is manifesting as me. I believe that the chart is an image of psyche, the archaic Greek word for soul, and as such I take the early Greek philosopher Heraclitus as my guide in saying that, "*You could not discover the limits of soul, even if you traveled every road to do so; such is the depth of its meaning.*"¹ Consequently, I don't believe the chart is something to be mastered, overcome, or transcended as if it were something different from my true nature, nor do I believe it can be actualized, fulfilled, or realized as if it were in my command to do so. The chart as a fixed moment in time is, like my life, a small whirlpooling in the river of life, swirling into being for a brief moment then dissolving form without trace into this great flow. My sense is that the chart is to be imagined, plumbed, fathomed, and sounded into its depths, of which as Heraclitus noted, there is no end. This process leads me ever deeper into meditations, contemplations, reveries, conundrums, struggles, mysteries, and further queries into my life.

Astrology regarded as a discipline of the imaginal is aesthetic, poetic, mythic, and psychological. This stance shapes how I approach the chart. I don't

believe that it is best used for alleviating uncertainties by providing answers to the problems of life but rather, for generating more questions, thus sinking the client firmly into life.

My focus then is somewhat different from the humanistic approach that emphasizes personal growth, self improvement, individual effort, overcoming problems, and actualizing potential. That style is a little too crafty for me, too heroic, and too methodical. I prefer a softer, transpersonal approach, more contemplative, more Piscean, a perspective holding great faith in the organic process of change and unfolding according to our own inner rhythms. The beginning question is not what do I want, but rather what does my life want of me? How do I honor the imaginal figures that clamor for my attention and yearn for expression and acknowledgement?

I like to think that I have a homeopathic approach rather than the typical allopathic approach that we find in medicine. An allopathic approach is exemplified by the antidote perspective. In medicine, this means that infection calls for antibiotic; inflammation, an anti-inflammatory; excessive stomach acid, take an antacid; muscle spasms require an antispasmodic; depression, an antidepressant; too much histamine, as in an allergic reaction, try an antihistamine; too much fire, as in fever, how about an antipyretic? This entire approach circles around the notion of compensation and going against the flow. The focus is upon a return to equilibrium or center, to homeostasis, where the person feels balanced and better. This allopathic approach is played out in astrology in a variety of ways. If the client is heavy in one element, the astrologer may prescribe working on developing the one that is weak or lacking. If there is too much Venus expressed in the life, the astrologer could encourage a martial assertiveness program. If the client has problematic squares, ask them to practice using their trines, developing their talents. These prescriptions may or may not be helpful for the client, but there is another way.

Astrology for my purposes is a fiction, something to be taken seriously, but not literally. I am not concerned with questions of astrology's truth or falsity; the client and I bracket disbelief and proceed *as if* it were true. Together we will imagine a lot about his or her life and explore various fantasies contained therein. What are the stories the client is living out? Who is the author of his narrative, which god is speaking? In line with Hillman,² I use the word *god*, not in a theological sense, but in a psychological one. In other words, these gods are not to be believed in, but rather to be imagined, configured, and elaborated. We will explore the chart and the life together, recognizing that emotional difficulties and problematic

circumstances, as Glenn Perry³ has noted, are inherent in beliefs, i.e., the stories we tell ourselves, not horoscopes.

Generally speaking, my overall purpose in working with clients is the cultivation of imagination. Cultivating imagination means exploring the imaginative possibilities within our natures. It is the differentiating of a middle ground or psychic space within us, thus turning and deepening an event into an experience, as Hillman⁴ has noted. It is the creation of psychological space for reflection, a reshaping of our inner landscape. Sometimes a walk by the river is simply an event; at other times with an engaged imagination, it becomes an experience of the numinous as in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey."⁵

A homeopathic approach recognizes that like cures like, that the very god that visited the calamity upon us is the self-same divinity who can alleviate it. In some ways, I might prescribe the symptom, asking the client to do more of the same, to follow the god into their temple, as will be seen in the depression example below.

I characterize my work in terms of *cultivation* and *constellation*. Cultivation in terms of the chart has to do with working with the planetary function that is either excessively or poorly expressed or acknowledged in the client's life. In either case, the god needs attention either through myth, poetry, art, praxis, or psychology. I will work with the client, helping them cultivate the experience of the troubling divinity.

Constellation is the recognition that all the planetary gods have a rightful claim upon us and we may sanctify ourselves by attending to those claims. For those readers familiar with the Greek story of Paris and the apple of discord, when we are asked to choose amongst the gods, it is best, if possible, to choose them all. Astrology and psychology especially require a polycentric perspective, an ending to the one central self notion (an echo of a monotonous, monocentric, monotheistic world view), and an affirmation of our many selves.

To serve the diversity of powers and principles within and without, we need to be flexible, adaptable, comfortable with uncertainty, and able to shift allegiances in line with the context in which we are embedded. We need to allow ourselves to be off-center, unbalanced, eccentric if we are to discover our true natures. Embracing all of our inner figures leads us to novel and unusual psychic spaces. Author C. S. Lewis, a close friend of Tolkien, is said to have remarked that you can't enter a strange land and come back unchanged. Indeed, exploring our own depths in an imaginative manner with the help of the chart may lead us into dark labyrinths where familiar markers

fail and we feel cast adrift; but this may be precisely what we need in order to arrive at a new shore of being.

These are the places and situations that push us, drive us, and force us deeper into our lives, to the abode of the gods. If we are to discover who we are, then we would benefit from acknowledging and affirming our shortcomings, flaws, quirks, failures, disappointments, and sufferings, following them into their own textured richness. Clients wishing to rid themselves of problems and annoyances in quick order, seeing no value in their presence, suffer from a simple failure of imagination. They do not recognize the sacred work going on within.

Let me use depression as an example. As an astrological counselor, I don't want, like some thief in the night, to rob my client of the experience of Saturn. The client's depression may have great undiscovered value for them. Metaphorically speaking, what is it that Saturn wants that he has visited this depression upon the client? Has the client been living too much in the fast lane or on the surface of things? Have they been living in the future, distracting themselves from matters requiring attention in the present? Can the client appreciate slowing down, adding substance to their life, experiencing the gravity of their situation rather than avoiding or escaping from it? Either directly or indirectly I will ask the client to engage the slow dance of Saturn. Perhaps they can read some of Saturn's mythology, or depending on what would be contextually relevant, read about time or architecture, maybe see a movie about aging, or volunteer with the elderly, study the bones of the body, or immerse themselves in loneliness. Additionally, I will want them to explore the various nuanced shades of their feeling life.

Our focus would be upon acknowledging and honoring Saturn, giving him his due. I don't want the client settling upon an answer such as Saturn transiting their Moon, or blaming their childhood, or assigning depressed mood to a chemical imbalance. When we fixate on answers, imagination curdles, and we can remain stuck. This reasoning cuts off the flow of fantasy and short circuits imaginative process. Emerson believed that the nature of imagination is to flow and not to freeze.⁶ I would want to alternately heat matters up and cool them down. Soul making, as an alchemical process characterized by simmering, mulling, fermenting, and cooling brings a ripening and depth to life. The client's original problems may remain unsolved or only slightly changed, yet they report a difference that matters in their life. Jung once wrote, "*The serious problems in life are never fully solved. If ever they appear to be so, it is a sure sign that something has been lost. The meaning and*

purpose of a problem seem to lie not in its solution but in our working at it incessantly.”⁷

In the end, psychological astrology for me has little to do with strengthening the ego, seeking happiness, or satisfying desires for personal growth. Psychological astrology in its transpersonal aspect is beyond the person and I argue that its proper field of application is to psyche or soul and how we can learn to cultivate and discover what soul wants. It’s not always a long, healthy life filled with happiness, or a lasting marriage, or a successful career. Sometimes it is a life interrupted by trauma, disaster, failure, or illness. Read the late Christopher Reeve’s book on his life after being thrown from the horse⁸ or Michael J. Fox’s, *Lucky Man*⁹ in which these men express a life worth living after it has gone terribly awry. They speak of a life fertile with creative challenge, meaning, and worth, yet few of us would choose that life. To call their situations mishaps is to view it only from the perspective of what the ego wants. These two men arrived at an understanding that in an odd way brought great blessing to their lives despite what the public deemed tragic situations.

Psychological astrology, dedicated to exploring and discovering what psyche or soul desires, rather than ego, brings us to a different understanding of what it means to be human. Astrology has been literalized to so many fields of human interest as to be almost limitless in its applications. For psychological astrology, however, I believe that it is its metaphorical power, its capacity to cultivate imagination, to link us to the cosmos, to move us deeply into our own suffering, into reverie and fantasy, that can be of greatest usefulness

in how we go about our daily business and in how we imagine our particular weave in this vast cosmic tapestry.*

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Psychological Astrology: *La Cosa Nostra* (That Thing We Do)

by Michael Lutin

At one time as an astrologer, all you had to do was read the radix. It was all written there, the past, present and future of the poor blighted native. Michael Lutin, astrologer and professional counselor, argues that it's not so simple any more. We cannot forget that we live in post-Freudian, psychological age in which the evolving consciousnesses of human beings affect the planets as much as the planets affect human beings. Ours is an age of astro-psychology and renewed metaphysical investigation, and whether or not it is part of the post-industrial hubris, we cannot read horoscopes without that in mind.

Whatever name you choose to give that elusive thing we are all pursuing—bliss, enlightenment, happiness or fulfillment—everybody deserves to get a piece of it. Those of us who have been granted the privilege of pursuing the study of astrology know only too well the joys it can bring. We feel a sense of elation and almost imperious command of ourselves by having our perceptions confirmed by the horoscope, and by being reminded how deeply we are a part of the Great Turning Wheel of this world, Solar System, Galaxy and Universe itself.

What Differentiates Psychological Astrology from Other Approaches?

Even within this discipline of astrology, there are different paths to wisdom. Astrologers approach their studies differently and from different angles and points of view. No matter how much we would like to believe that we analyze an astrological chart objectively, the fact is we do not. We all come from disparate backgrounds, childhoods, socio-economic levels, cultures and religions, so no way can we kid ourselves that our choice of approach is anything but subjective.

Those of us interested in psychology have chosen to integrate the art of astrology with other healing and therapeutic modes. We cannot pretend that Freud, Jung and the other great minds of past centuries did not exist or have a huge impact on modern thinking.

Many fine astrologers insist that we are not therapists and that we are not doing therapy. Since we are not doing therapy, we should refrain from confusing the art of astrology with psychology or traditional therapy. Such astrologers have a different vision of astrology and their work is certainly valid, as long as they hold to their own ethical standards.

It is not my way, though. When a client of mine committed suicide back in 1975 I became aware of the difference between what I thought was *pure* astrology and the psychologically healing or damaging aspect to what I was actually doing when I was reading horoscopes for individuals.

When you are looking deeply into somebody's head and seeking to guide them, help them, or change their perspective or patterns of behavior, you are very much involved in a therapeutic approach, whether it is comfortable to admit it or not. Period. Psychologically oriented astrology is a form of art that is distinct and apart from horary, mundane, financial or any other branch of astrological study. You are inside a person's head. Because you are doing a form of brain surgery, it is best not to pretend you are doing anything else. You are not simply reading off a piece of paper full of arcane symbols placed by a clever manipulation of logarithms. And you're not an empty vessel through which the Holy Ghost of Astrology is flowing. You are in a dynamic relationship with another human being and potentially invading that human being's mind. You are a stranger in a strange land, caught up in a process that is not merely a cold translation of lines and circles, but an actual dance, a

mystical rite of transformation. It does happen. When you see that invisible light bulb pop up and go on right over someone's head (it doesn't happen all that often), and you see their whole countenance change before your eyes, you know you have done your job and you have done it well. Only when we come to understand the interaction of astrologer and client, and embrace the opportunity to participate in that sort of transformation, do we value psychological astrology for the unique gift that it is.

Primary Goals and Values of a Psychological Astrologer

In a very real way, my primary goal is to free a client from the need for any astrological counseling at all. I do not want or expect clients to be coming be for their *updates* for the next three hundred years. Of course, I accept clients on any basis they are comfortable with. If they prefer to see me once a year, every two years or six months, it is clear to me that they are not interested at that time in pursuing a deeper exploration of their issues with me. Long ago I came to understand that if a client returns at any time for a second or third session, what they are intending to do is to continue a conversation that was begun in a previous session, even if they call it their annual update. Those who wish to work on a closer basis, more often, are welcome. That way we get down to what is really going on in the unconscious and the sessions are more profound and authentic, dealing often with the relationship the clients have with me, based, of course on the unconscious communications I translate from the current transits and early progressions. It's a complicated process and beyond the scope of this material, but my work is designed to liberate the client from enslavement to previous transits and progressions, and thus from a past they have tried to bury.

That is the unmentioned and often unconscious force driving them to choose to return. It has been my firm belief that deep down the client is totally strong, clear and healthy. Life, with all its distractions, society with all its mad fads, church, school, parents—everything conspires to cloud our minds with notions of right and wrong, who we are supposed to be, and where we are supposed to be going. We are taught to forget and block out childhood, pretend what happened did not happen (that was a long time ago, don't bring it up now, it's too upsetting). We are conditioned to feel what we do not feel, believe what we don't believe, and act in direct contradiction to what we need in order to feel healthy and prosperous. People who have neither the insight nor experience, and yet have the authority to convince us of their positions, tell us what is smart, practical and wise, often against our own better judgment.

Deep down, however, beneath that crust of falsehood and defense, there blazes in every single person a blinding light of wisdom that fuels our mental, spiritual and emotional health. My primary goal is to help clients break through that crust of falsehood and defense in order to find renewed faith in their own instincts and to restore their courage and confidence so that they can guide themselves through any crisis on their own and onward toward prosperity. If that can happen in one session, great. More often than not, though, it takes years of working together, as closely as the client can tolerate.

Fate, Freewill and Personal Responsibility

People ask me all the time if I live my life by astrology, and I always say the same thing: "*Of course I live my life by astrology, until there is something I want to do.*" No professional astrologer should ever have the hubris to make a blanket statement about whether fate is actually stronger than freewill. The ancient and medieval views of destiny and fate notwithstanding, in the 21st century we are still debating the issue. Did the Big Bang just *have* to happen? Was *Something* behind it, coaching into existence?

Ever since the so-called Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, man has been determined to overcome and undermine the power of nature. The environment and everything connected with it have become a challenge. The goal is to defeat nature, elevate the power of reason, and prove that Man is supreme over all forces in the Universe. Ancient people had much greater respect for the natural world and saw magic and mystery in everything around them. As the 21st century begins, maybe now we are reaching a greater understanding of the intimate, dynamic interaction between human beings and the natural world. Maybe we are coming to see that we are really and truly at one with the Universe. If and when we do, then the issues of fate and freewill can perhaps be put to rest.

Obviously we come into this world with a destiny to fulfill, struggles to overcome and powers to develop. The life we come into is a window of opportunity to raise our consciousness, enjoy life in the body, and taste love. There are, however, parameters and limitations that we can never overcome. The family you get, the skin color, religion, nation into which you were born, time period in history—all are tremendous factors that determine to a great measure your fate in this incarnation. To believe, however, that it is all completely written and that your choices have all been scribbled down somewhere in a cave over in India is infantile thinking. We have not even begun to know the depth or extent of how many levels and dimensions exist in time, how many concurrent and

simultaneous realities may be coexisting or any of the other mind-boggling possibilities that lie beyond human consciousness. We can sit around drinking herbal tea and smoking fabulous pot and figuring it all out until we have to get up and go to work the next morning.

While there is a breath left in a human being, he or she has to accept certain factors from which there is no escape. Maybe those factors of birth and early life came from a choice in a previous incarnation. That is another philosophical discussion that will always be open to debate. In any case, parts of our lives are written and immutable. There are, however, the elements of intelligence, experience, wisdom and awareness, which, though often painful and hard to deal with, allow us the latitude to turn to the right or left, up or down, and make those tiny, infinitesimal decisions that alter our course, change our path and lead us to a higher destiny. That is freewill.

Psychodynamic Theory

Since I stumbled upon the communicative approach to psychoanalytic psychotherapy developed by Robert Langs,¹ I have made use of a dynamic approach to horoscope interpretation that allows the client to direct the entire course of the session. That is not to say that I am always listening for the psychodynamic component in every story a client narrates. A more useful tool has come into valuable use when I am playing more off the client's unconscious messages and narratives, based more on their unconscious reactions to my astrological interventions, than to the conscious stories they think they are telling. Many people have been conditioned by family, church, and school never to reveal what they are actually thinking and feeling toward other human beings. Their narratives and stories are often a replay of childhood dynamics as a clever way of appeasing the listener, in this case the astrologer, concealing feelings and emotions and responses that would be much more healing and cleansing if they could only be expressed directly.

It is to this end that I use the astrological stethoscope to hear the true beating of a client's heart, rather than rely solely on conscious interaction, which, already mentioned, is often two-dimensional and indicative of a client's old pattern of defensive behavior.

How the Chart Symbolizes Unconscious Factors

No matter how desperately we may try to think astrology is pure science, the deeper we go into it, the more we realize that a metaphysical approach is one we must all eventually employ in effective chart interpretation, at least to some extent. Even if we perceive a

client's view of reality more clinically, the horoscope represents the transits experienced by an individual at the moment of birth. It represents an instantaneous imprint of how an individual perceives reality, more specifically, the reality of his or her life. All the situations, circumstances and events of that moment make a gigantic imprint on that infant who comes here without the benefit of language or the ability to make critical observations.

Such an approach is inadequate when we contemplate the vastness of the capabilities of the human unconscious, and we must humbly attempt to accept and understand that there are forces operating deep below and far above normal human awareness that bring that individual to life on Earth in the first place. The horoscope mysteriously outlines the blueprint of that unconscious, and we are left to analyze, interpret and speculate, albeit feebly, as to the meaning of all the symbols that we place upon the astrological chart. They describe in astrological language what only the owner of that horoscope knows way down in the basement of his or her mind: the real purpose of that particular incarnation.

Synchronicity and Astrology

In personal consultations, every moment is fluid and rich with meaning. Every gesture, every interruption to the session, everything that takes place is a profound echo of the horoscope I am analyzing. To be alive and awake to synchronicity affects my interpretation profoundly. For example, I never allow anyone else in the office while I am in session. Rarely, a delivery will occur unannounced or an assistant will be briefly present. I use that to see if within the horoscope itself, there is an interruption to intimacy or a third party interfering with a relationship. Rather than look upon these symbols as omens, I use them as a meaningful directive in understanding what influences may reside more deeply in a client's unconscious, largely measured by his or her response to whatever events appear during the consultation. It is amazing how rich the sessions can become by simply watching and listening to synchronous events.

A Psychological Approach to Transits and Progressions

Although transits and progressions are used mostly in prognosticative techniques, in my work they are an integral part of horoscope analysis. I look always at the first five or ten years of transits and progressions. Not only will they impact the unconscious of a client and thus direct much of his or her behavior, but they imprint events, feelings and responses that are replayed throughout life. Many of the events, situations and circumstances that we encounter, as we all know, are

merely replaying of old movies we have already lived. They are sequels, tawdry remakes of experiences we had as children, often cleverly disguised as unique. Job problems, issues in relationships with men or women, crises of one sort or other, even the strengths and confidence building experiences that occur during our lifetime are all for the most part, just plain old re-issue.

My most valuable tool is the tool of recurrence. If a client has Saturn go retrograde at three years old, then every year for the rest of his or her life, when Saturn goes retrograde, there will be an unconscious recurrence of whatever took place at three years old. If Pluto changed sign at two, or the Sun squares Neptune at five, every time a transit repeats a certain configuration, the client's memory will be jogged. Very often this will not occur on a conscious level, but it is useful for the astrologer to be ever watchful and vigilant, mainly because it is in the moments of recurrence when the past can be forcibly and permanently separated from the present. It is when a client learns to separate what is happening now from what happened back then, that a true and permanent healing occurs.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Psychological Astrology

The weaknesses are the same weaknesses that lie in any field of endeavor that seeks to understand human behavior. When we start thinking that the chart has all the answers and that the horoscope (and the astrologer) knows better than a client what is best for him or her, then we are in trouble. Just as traditional psychotherapy runs the risk of intellectualizing every aspect of human interaction by seeking all the answers in childhood, so does psychological astrology risk getting uppity—mainly because not only do we have a brilliantly powerful diagnostic key, but we can easily begin to believe that we are privy to a spiritual dimension from which traditional therapists are excluded. Unquestionably, we have been given a gift that can really be considered divine—the ability to peer behind the curtain and enter the intricate web of human personality to the impossibly accurate degree that we can. It is too easy to think we have figured it all out, but we have not.

The strengths are magnificent to behold. As mentioned before, there are moments, rare to be sure, when in the middle of a session, you see that thing happen. That thing we do. If there is such a thing as magic, it will be right in front of you. You see what transformation can be and you are the catalyst for it. This is not about your powers to dazzle a client with your insight and blow them away with your knowledge of them. The strength of psychological astrology is its ability to diagnose, observe, guide and eventually free a client from the bonds of the past, liberate him or her from

false thinking, help individuals rediscover their faith in themselves, and realize and manifest fully whatever wish they have to fulfill. Also, sadly, psychological astrology can identify those maladies that are too complex to solve in one lifetime, and it provides us with the perspective to understand the nature of the issue and help them with compassion to understand it. It's the reason we do what we do.

The Future of Psychological Astrology

I hope that astrologers who intend to practice astrology on a professional basis will come to see the importance of uniting their astrological skill with the benefits derived from understanding the techniques and dynamics of counseling. Again, though, we need to keep in mind that there are many methods and modes of counseling. Which one is the right one? Who has the secret key to the proper and appropriate model of psychological astrology? I do what I do; I teach what I teach to those who are interested and care to adopt some form of my approach, but I offer no certification for that approach. I believe there should be strict rules of conduct between astrologer and client, and definite forms and ground rules for the astrological session. There are certain techniques I use, and others that I have discarded. I can only speak for myself. It is my belief that every sincere astrologer will rise to the occasion, hone his or her skill, add dimensions to his or her abilities, and make the best contribution to the human community as possible.*

Endnote

1. The particular school of Robert Langs, MD, is called the communicative approach to psychoanalytic psychotherapy. His books include:
Langs, R., *The Listening Process*. NY: J. Aronson, 1978.
——— *Workbooks for Psychotherapists*. NJ: New Concept Press, 1985.
——— *Decoding your Dreams*. NY: Ballantine Books, 1989.
——— *Death Anxiety in Clinical Practice*. London: Karnac Books, 1997.

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From Ancient to Postmodern Astrology Toward a New Synthesis

by Glenn Perry

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in traditional astrology. What is the difference between traditional and modern approaches? Noted psychologist and astrologer, Glenn Perry, addresses the evolution of astrology from ancient times to the present. Rather than exploring specific astrological techniques in depth, he covers the territory in broad strokes with an emphasis on clarifying general principles. After analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches, Perry proposes a postmodern synthesis that integrates traditional ideals of system and precision with modern sensibilities of indeterminism and personal growth.

The history and evolution of astrology is part of the larger story of the history and evolution of human consciousness. Even a brief review of astrology's past reveals that its various forms are culturally determined.¹ Culture can be defined as the totality of socially transmitted beliefs, products, and institutions. More importantly, culture is a reflection of the level of consciousness that prevails at a particular time and place. As Ken Wilber's work makes clear, different levels of consciousness give rise to different truths at various stages of history.² It follows that we cannot understand a given *type* of astrology without also understanding the predominant worldview in which it was situated. In speaking of worldview, I am not referring merely to the philosophical or scientific paradigm of a period, but also to the predominant mode of thinking, feeling, and behaving of that epoch.

Consciousness is our capacity for all forms of experience and awareness. As the essence of psyche, it is made up of multiple parts and functions (drives, archetypes), some of which operate outside of awareness, but all of which are distinct ways of experiencing the world. Most importantly, consciousness

evidences purpose, intelligence, and intent to learn, all of which combine to produce an evolutionary thrust toward higher and more integrated states of awareness over time.

Progress in our understanding of life, as reflected in various philosophical traditions, is concurrent with progressive changes in human consciousness. Although there have always been variations within any historical period, and brilliant people in every epoch, it can be argued that collective human consciousness has continuously evolved throughout the course of history. Thinkers as diverse as Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard de Chardin, Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Abraham Maslow, Julian Jaynes, Richard Tarnas, and scores of others have trumpeted this singular, all-important conviction. The point here is that consciousness is not static; it *evolves*, producing artifacts, doctrines and metaphysical systems that reflect its current state.

It follows, then, that astrology can be viewed as an artifact of human consciousness. Like any other subject, our understanding of it evolves, often in fits and starts, and sometimes by regressing to long forgotten truths. To understand the trajectory of its development, we need to situate that development in an evolutionary context—i.e., in relation to how consciousness has developed, changed, and matured over time. Not only will this help to clarify the differences between ancient and modern astrology, it will also elucidate the various purposes that astrology has been made to serve.

Evolution of Consciousness— The General Trend

As Arieti's classic study pointed out, ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny: the development of an embryo

from conception to maturity recapitulates the evolution of the entire species.³ While this is apparent at a biological level, it may also be true psychologically. Infants, for example, share certain general characteristics with the earliest *Homo sapiens* (Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon). Anthropology and developmental psychology concur that consciousness evolves along a continuum from states of relative unawareness, time-space constriction (me here, now), and fusion with the environment, to increasingly higher levels of awareness, time-space extension, and articulated differentiation from the environment.

Earlier states, whether of young children or pre-modern peoples, are characterized by more instinctive, less reflective and less controlled modes of behavior.⁴ Perspective is egocentric, which is the tendency to perceive, understand, and interpret the world in terms of the self. Baser instincts for survival, security, and ego gratification are the primary determinants of behavior. Because the ability to think ahead is restricted, actions are focused on short-term interests. Self-awareness is comparatively shallow with a limited capacity to reflect on impulses, feelings, and assumptions. All of this implies that the organization of the self is less differentiated and less ordered. Rather than managing and coordinating contradictory impulses, the self is fragmented and polarized. Internal tensions tend to be acted out and converted into conflicts vis-à-vis the environment.

Coincident with a lack of inner awareness is an external locus of control, i.e., a tendency for behavior to be determined predominantly by outer circumstances. Greater weight is placed on the power of outside forces to influence, control, or annihilate the self. The result is relative rigidity and resistance to change, as well as stronger attachment to states, practices, and persons that augment one's sense of control. As will be shown, it is precisely this emphasis on control (via predictive techniques) that most characterizes traditional astrology.

At the other end of the consciousness spectrum, more evolved states are characterized by higher levels of self-awareness as reflected in a greater capacity for containing and controlling the divergent impulses of the psyche. Parts of the self are more differentiated, conscious, and coordinated with one another; thus, the emergent self has greater overall complexity, depth, and unity. Less driven by blind instinct, and less apt to act out destructively, the self is more confident and spontaneous. Greater self-acceptance is mirrored by a stronger sense of connectedness and empathy with others. The fearful egocentricity that characterized lower levels of consciousness is gradually replaced by a growing capacity for empathy, compassion and altruism.

As the self grows down and carves out a deeper interiority, there is a shift toward an internal locus of control. Rather than feeling controlled or threatened by outer circumstances, the self is empowered by the conviction that freewill largely creates the conditions of one's life. Intentions thus become more rational, objective and deliberate. A greater sense of freedom, choice and personal agency is accompanied by less attachment to the way things are; thus, the evolving self is more resilient, open to experience and capable of change.

An extended time perspective gradually supplants the need for immediate gratification. The self can plan ahead, delay gratification, and structure time with a view toward attainment of long-term goals. An intrinsic need for growth and development is supplemented by a deeper capacity for trust in a higher power—not a controlling, dictatorial power to which one must submit, but a numinous presence that facilitates one's return to source.

Trust in a transcendent power enables the self to accelerate the pace of its own development—conscious evolution—as reflected in the self-help and human potential movements of the 20th century. Included among these is modern humanistic astrology, which by definition is more psychologically and spiritually oriented than its predecessors.

I am not suggesting here that there are merely two types of consciousness—primitive and modern; rather, that there is a continuum of consciousness along which we evolve. It is tempting to suppose that marked variations in levels of consciousness only apply to primitive versus contemporary human beings. Yet, substantial variations can actually be observed in much shorter time spans, even from one generation to the next. We only have to look back at films from the 30s and 40s to appreciate how much our consciousness has changed.

In developmental psychology, it is a general principle that implicit, conscious elements of one stage become the explicit, objectified elements of succeeding stages.⁵ Likewise in culture, each generation transcends its predecessors by including prior perspectives as components of a more comprehensive worldview. While there are occasional regressive periods, e.g., during war or social breakdown, the general trend is clearly in the direction of more evolved and complex states.

If one accepts that astrology is an artifact of human consciousness, then every form of astrology bears testimony to the consciousness that spawned it. In the remainder of this article, we will explore how human characteristics of earlier periods were precisely reflected in the nature of the astrology practiced.

Specifically, I will show that traditional astrology (500 BCE–1600 CE) was oriented toward the ego, concerned with survival and security, unaware of psychic depth and complexity, fear-based and utilized primarily for augmenting control over life, nature and death. Conversely, during the modern era, there has been gradual shift toward a more psychologically based astrology with a focus on character delineation, intrapsychic processes, personal development, healing, self-transformation, and ego-transcendence.

Astrology's Origins

Astrology's origins lie in the urge to understand the natural rhythms of earth and sky. This urge was evident even in the world of Ice Age hunter-gatherers. Anthropologists have established that during the last Ice Age, about 35,000 to 9,000 BCE, primitive humans were compiling a rudimentary calendar by observing and noting the phases of the Moon.⁶ Distinctive markings of carved notches on the surface of bones appear to fall into a rhythm, reflecting changes in the Moon's appearance. These carved bone and stone artifacts are found throughout Europe and the Americas. Various sequences of notations, often accompanied by symbols that seem to represent animal heads or plants, represented the matching of a lunar count against seasonal changes in the hunter-gatherer's surroundings, such as the arrival of migrating salmon or the first appearance of spring buds.

Months were named after seasonal events—the ripening of berries or the movement of caribou; laying geese; ripening strawberries; raccoons, stirring from winter hibernation; the arrival of eagles; and the gathering of wild rice. These were timed in synchrony with the pattern of the constellations, which would shift in tune with the seasons. The first annual appearance of a star in the dawn or evening sky was a sign that a particular month was starting, which may have been marked by an important ceremony.

Megalithic star watchers (4000–1500 BCE) planted wooden stakes to mark solar and lunar positions on successive days or nights. The stakes would provide an accurate measure of changes in the risings and settings of the Sun and Moon. Eventually, megaliths were erected—huge standing stones and stone circles—of which Stonehenge is the most famous. Because it was vital to initiate tribal activities of hunting, fishing, planting and gathering in synchrony with the proper time, early peoples were keenly interested in predicting equinox and solstice dates. Corresponding rituals and festivals signaled the arrival of times for particular activities.

The apparent power of stars and planets to determine events on earth suggested the existence of

superhuman sky beings—gods—who had dominion over the terrestrial realm. These powerful, supernatural entities were external, above, and utterly dominant. While the gods might be propitiated, they could not be denied; hence, submission to heavenly dictates was absolutely necessary for the tribe's survival. Knowledge of the sky provided a sense of control and predictability over the physical and supernatural realms, and the perceived order of the heavens provided a model that gave form and meaning to the actions of people on earth. Tribal mythologies and religious rituals were thus inextricably linked to observations of the stars.

It must be emphasized that human awareness at this stage (4000–1500 BCE) was still quite dim, more like a toddler's consciousness than a modern adult human. Julian Jaynes asserts that prior to the second millennium BCE mankind "*did not have any ego whatsoever.*"⁷ Although there was a proto-subjectivity, the self-sense was still relatively diffuse, centered on the body, and weakly differentiated from the environment (*participation mystique*). Moreover, there was nothing like the kind of astrology practiced today. While observations of solar, lunar, and planetary cycles evidently began as early as 12,000 years ago, the human relationship to such movements was imitative and magical. Imitation through ritual, combined with blood sacrifice, was practiced to pacify the gods and secure the future against death and calamity. Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, has shown that human sacrifice in correlation with planetary movements continued in Sumeria (modern Iraq) right up until 2350 BCE.

By the end of this period (1500 BCE), a momentous event occurred that shook the world. According to Ken Wilber, "*Sometime during the second and first millennia B.C., the exclusively egoic structure of consciousness began to emerge from the ground unconscious and crystallize out in awareness.*"⁸ Joseph Campbell called it "*an evolutionary psychological mutation.*"⁹ In short, the ego was born. As an evolutionary phenomenon, the ego has its own history. Wilber divides what he terms the "*mental-egoic*" stage of consciousness into three major periods:

Low:	2500 BCE–500 BCE
Middle:	500 BCE–1600 CE
High:	1600 CE–present

Emergence of the ego opened up the possibility of truly rational thought, introspection, philosophy, and penetrating science—at least in rudimentary form. Differentiation of the personal self as a freely willing, self-thinking, autonomous entity was symbolized in the Hero Myths that began to emerge during this period. These had a corollary in worship of the Sun

(*Sol Invictus*, the Unconquered Sun), which replaced lunar religions of the Great Mother Goddess that prevailed during the previous epoch. “*In general mythological terms,*” says Wilber, “*the self had to break free of the Great and Chthonic Mother, and establish itself as an independent, willful, and rational center of consciousness.*”¹⁰

This first sub-period of ego emergence (2500 BCE–500 BCE) correlates to the development of Babylonian omen astrology in what is now modern Iraq and Iran. By the second millennium BCE, the study of celestial omens was firmly established. Initially, an omen was a prophetic sign in the heavens that foretold when the seasons would change, edible planets would make their appearance, animals would migrate and so on. Omen astrology eventually evolved into predicting times of war and peace, abundance and famine, health and disease, natural disasters, and other important mundane events. Demetra George points out that this type of astrology consisted exclusively of simple if-then statements that were limited to the rising and setting of planets or the movement of a planet into a new constellation, e.g., “*If Mars approaches the Scorpion, there will be a breach in the palace of the prince.*”¹¹

Given that knowledge of the heavens was intimately connected to human survival, we should not be surprised that early astrology was weighted heavily in the direction of prediction and control. Astrology was first and foremost a system of divination. Its focus was centered about the king—a kind of proto-individual who embodied what was emerging in the community as a whole: *ego*, or the separate self-sense. As the king was the intermediary between the forces of nature and the lives of his people, early astrologers served him alone. Their main task was to detect disturbances in the king-cosmos relationship by watching for portents, such as eclipses, meteors, comets, lightning, and other unusual natural phenomena. As all astrology in this early period was mundane, it was exclusively concerned with the outcome of various activities relevant to the community.

At the inception of Wilber's middle egoic period (500 BCE), another momentous event occurred: the birth of horoscopic astrology. It is no small coincidence that the first *individual* horoscopes were drawn during this time. As Wilber put it, “*From the 6th century B.C., the world was never the same—this middle egoic period lasted until around 1500 A.D., with the Renaissance, and shortly after.*”¹² Whereas self-consciousness was rudimentary prior to 500 CE, there was a decisive emergence after this period, as if the ego finally wrenched itself free from its prior embedment in nature. This is the true birth of the separate self with its pride, creativity, and intentionality. It was

also the beginning of unprecedented self-inflation, blind arrogance and preoccupation with personal glory. Having separated itself out from nature—the Great Mother—it reacted against all it had previously been: a body-self guided by spontaneous instincts, feelings, and intuitions. As Wilber put it:

*The ego structure, in order to rise arrogantly above creation, had to suppress and repress the Great Mother, mythologically, psychologically, and sociologically. And it repressed the Great Mother in all her forms. It is one thing to gain a freedom from the fluctuations of nature, emotions, instincts, and environment—it is quite another to alienate them. In short, the Western ego did not just gain its freedom from the Great Mother; it severed its deep interconnectedness with her.*¹³

When Wilber is speaking of the Great Mother, he is referring to Nature as a whole, including the cosmos. Whereas early humans were completely subservient to planetary dictates and “*the fluctuations of nature,*” the newly emancipated ego made *itself* the center of the Universe. The goal now was to exploit astrological foreknowledge to personal advantage.

Coincident with greater differentiation of self was the greater differentiation and complexity of astrology. The constellations, which had been of unequal length, were redefined as zodiacal signs of exactly 30 degrees each.¹⁴ The increased technical precision that resulted from this innovation made it possible to accurately calculate solar, lunar, and planetary positions at the moment of an individual's birth. During the ensuing centuries, Babylonian natal astrology passed to the Egyptians and Greeks. It underwent significant new developments from the 3rd through the 2nd centuries BCE, eventually coming fairly close to the astrology practiced today.

While the history of astrology is one of continuous development and can be divided into various periods, we can think of it as having three major divisions: ancient, traditional, and modern. Ancient astrology is synonymous with omen astrology and correlates to Wilber's low egoic period, 2500 BCE–500 BCE. Traditional astrology includes any astrology from 500 BCE all the way to 1700 CE, and includes Hellenistic, Persian-Arabic, Hindu-Vedic and Medieval varieties. Note that the duration of traditional astrology corresponds to Wilber's middle egoic period. Modern astrology can be said to begin after 1900, with the intervening period of 1700-1900, a kind of no-man's land during which astrology drifted into a deep hibernation—or incubation, if you will. Modern astrology corresponds to Wilber's high egoic period.

In the ensuing sections, I would like to discuss how traditional astrology has certain discernable features

that reflect modes of thinking, feeling, and perceiving characteristic of earlier stages of human consciousness. Of these I will note seven: 1) Focus on fate, 2) Ego-centered concerns, 3) Descriptions of temperament, 4) Value judgments, 5) Rigid technique, 6) Questionable validity, and 7) Emphasis on certainty.

Focus on Fate

As a divinatory system, traditional event-oriented astrology was primarily concerned with fate, and in this sense could be described as *fatalistic*. In a recent paper, Robert Hand addressed some of the nuances and subtleties of this concept,¹⁵ but for practical purposes we can define fate as *a force or power that determines an outcome in such a way that it cannot be changed*. Fate, in other words, implies a higher power that unalterably determines a particular result.

From the perspective of early stargazers, the validity of this point of view must have seemed self-evident. As the Sun, Moon, and planets moved through the constellations, there were clear, discernable changes on Earth. Seasonal phenomena were as predictable and unalterable as the heavens above. To primitive humans, it must have been apparent that one caused the other; omnipotent sky gods had domain over the earthly realm. It was only a short step to presume that they also had domain over individual human lives.

Whereas omen astrology had been utilized to discern the intentions of the gods, natal astrology was utilized to support the intentions of the individual. Accurate prediction of specific, concrete outcomes enabled one to gain some measure of control (or relief) with regards to future events. Again, prediction and control were the primary values of horoscopic astrology. Predictions could reassure the recipient that the future will unfold as wished, assist in the attainment of desired goals, and protect against the occurrence of dreaded outcomes. In short, prediction augmented control. Given the general conditions of human life in pre-modern times (disease, famine, war, treachery and suffering were ubiquitous), it should not be surprising that the need for control was paramount.

Underlying the fatalism of traditional astrology is an implicit metaphysical position that can be summarized thusly:

For unknown reasons and for no apparent purpose, the cosmos has arranged itself such that an individual's character and fate is foretold in the positions of the planets at birth. Personality and fate are largely unalterable. However, foreknowledge gained from astrology enables human beings to avoid or exploit circumstances to personal advantage.

To the extent that astrologers believed that the future is fixed and thus knowable, there was the related assumption that freewill was subordinate to the planetary gods. This may seem something of a contradiction given that horoscopic astrology arose in conjunction with the birth of the human ego-will. Accordingly, a compromise was affected: freewill could be utilized, with the help of astrology, *to avert or exploit the will of the gods*. Such a use, however, needs to be sharply differentiated from application of astrology as a means to empower humans to become co-creators in a conscious, participatory relationship with heavenly powers. That idea would not take hold for another 2000 years. Again, earlier stages of human consciousness are typified by an external locus of control. As one of my friends jokingly put it, "*The stars are making me drink, when will they make me stop?*"

Even today some astrologers (notably Vedic and modern medievalists) will argue that the inability to make precise forecasts is entirely due to deficiencies of knowledge or technique. Such a position holds that, in principle, the future is knowable right down to the last detail. Robert Hand, however, asserts that such an assertion is not credible, as astrologers have always made errors in prediction. "*There is no credible evidence that any system of astrology has ever approached anything like the complete reliability that one would expect if astrology were a manifestation of unalterable fate,*" says Hand.¹⁶ Still, the very nature of linear, cause-effect, if-then astrological statements—*If Venus is squaring Saturn, then the native will not marry*—bear witness to the fatalistic, deterministic mindset implicit in traditional astrology.

In one form or another, the argument of fate versus freewill raged across the centuries. Recall that belief in cosmic determinism—human beings ruled by the sky-gods—was implicit in the mythologies and practices of tribal peoples all the way back to the hunter-gatherers of 10,000 BCE. By the beginning of horoscopic astrology in 500 BCE, it was explicit. The second century Roman astrologer, Vettius Valens, who codified much of early Greek astrology, wrote: "*Fate has decreed for every human being the unalterable realization of his horoscope, fortifying it with many causes of good and bad things to come.*"¹⁷ Emphasis here should be placed on the word *unalterable*.

A few notable authorities that believed in astrology nevertheless opposed the doctrine of astro-fatalism. These included Plotinus (205-270), perhaps the most important Neoplatonist, and Marcilio Ficino in the 15th century, who translated Plato and Plotinus into Latin. Ficino argued that human beings partook of the absolute freedom of the divine by the very nature of their creation, and thus, by acting from the immortal part of their souls, could achieve direct union with

God. "Astrology can be justified," he wrote, "only if it provides some means or guidance for the human soul to begin to know itself as an image of God."¹⁸ Ficino's views foreshadowed the work of 20th century humanistic astrologer, Dane Rudhyar.

A turning point in the debate occurred in the 12th century when St. Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican friar of considerable renown, sought to reconcile the doctrine of astro-fatalism with the Christian doctrine of free-will. Aquinas knew that astrology worked, but he did not want to support a system of regressive thought that invited people to believe that they were helplessly subservient to planetary dictates.

Aquinas argued that celestial determinism undermined the emergence of autonomy and moral responsibility and held man back from a higher spiritual calling. If astrology worked, said Aquinas, it did so because it exerted a direct influence on men's bodies, but only an indirect influence on their souls. By communing with God, man was liberated from his lower nature and free to act in accord with a higher power. In an effort to dissuade people from allegiance to the disempowering, fatalistic doctrine of astrology, Aquinas stressed the importance of freewill and the choice between good and evil. As St. John of the Cross later put it, "I am made and unmade not by the things that happen to me, but by my reactions to them. And that is all God cares about." The father of modern science, Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1621), acknowledged that wiser astrologers always held that "there is no fatal necessity in the stars; but that they rather incline than compel."¹⁹

Some neo-traditional astrologers, like Demetra George, argue that ancient astrology was neither deterministic nor fatalistic since various apotropaic rituals, or *narburbis*, could be performed as invocations to the gods, entreating them to change their minds with respect to disasters heralded by comets, eclipses, and other natural phenomena.²⁰ Likewise, Nicholas Campion asserts that "The medieval cosmos was far from being fatalistic and deterministic...the contextual literature of both scripture and astral magic, within which astrology operated, indicates the extent to which individuals were able to engage with the cosmos."²¹

To a certain degree, I would agree with these statements. Sacrificial ritual, prayer, and astral magic make plain that traditional astrologers did not entirely see their fellow humans as helpless pawns of celestial forces; rather, man could engage those forces and exercise some degree of influence upon them. Astral magic in particular was an attempt to channel, harness and direct the power of the stars into objects (*sigils*) by creating them at auspicious times for specific

purposes. In so doing, astrologers sought to divert the power of the heavens to their own ends.

While these activities do evidence a kind of primitive exercise of freewill in relation to an all-powerful cosmos, having astrologer-priests intervene on one's behalf through blood sacrifices, invocations to the gods, or astral magic is not the same thing as engaging the gods in a co-creative, participatory relationship in which divine powers are grounded, integrated, and actualized within the psyche itself. That ancient peoples could engage the cosmos through pacification rituals, prayer or astral magic is a very weak argument against the charge of celestial determinism. For it still places power and responsibility more or less wholly *outside*. In effect, it marks the difference between a petitionary and participatory relationship to the gods. With petition, the aim is to secure favor and protection through ritual, rite, sacrifice or prayer. A participatory relationship, however, has an entirely different aim: to transcend the separate self-sense, commune with a higher power, actualize latent potentials, and realize one's essential identity with the divine. This latter view is more in accord with modern, humanistic astrology.

Not only does a fatalistic approach to astrology imply that human beings are determined by external forces, thus removing any sense of responsibility for the conditions of one's life, it also denies the human potential for growth, change and evolution. Such a doctrine is disempowering since it encourages a dependency upon astrologers and reinforces an irrational fear that some dreadful, overpowering cosmic force, for no rhyme or reason, will eventually afflict the individual with suffering. To the degree that such a Jobian view is promulgated, clients have little recourse but to depend upon astrologers for ethically questionable countermeasures involving evasive strategies, astral magic, sigils, yagias²² and the like.

Ego-Centered Concerns

If nothing else, traditional astrology was practical. It addressed real world concerns of immediate importance. *What* should the native do to succeed? *When* will the native meet his true love? Hellenistic astrologer Robert Schmidt points out that some techniques addressed the life as a whole; others dealt with specific topics such as health, wealth, marriage, or profession, while still other procedures described different life periods with a view toward assisting the person in maximizing the opportunities therein.²³

Again, the primary values of traditional astrology were prediction and control. These values are ego-centered in that they derive from the ego's need to a) maximize pleasure by assuring that preferred

outcomes are increased, and b) minimize pain by assuring that dreaded outcomes are averted. In pursuit of these needs, traditional astrology addressed two main questions: *What is going to happen?* and *When is it going to happen?* The goal was to exploit foreknowledge to personal advantage. Astrology could assist planning by choosing auspicious times for various projects. Assistance in the pursuit of wealth, health and happiness was astrology's *raison d'être*.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this. After all, questions and concerns about the future are natural. The problem is that astrology is only relatively good at answering such questions. Most modern astrologers would argue that human beings are not wholly fated by the stars; rather, they are free, evolving, indeterminate beings. Not only is there an inescapable uncertainty in the choices we make, but what is most significant about a person emerges in large part from how she or he has integrated the chart and *the level at which it is being lived*. Since this is not discernable from charts alone (charts only hint at possible outcomes), astrology cannot be counted upon to provide unequivocal information about specific, concrete details.

It is also questionable whether predictions oriented to the ego are truly helpful. Some predictions may simply reinforce neurotic fears and subvert a natural developmental process. This is especially true when traditional astrologers advise clients to take evasive action, "*Don't start a new business when transiting Neptune is conjunct your M.C.*" or "*Don't date John because his Saturn is opposing your Venus.*" The presumption underlying such advice is that adversity serves no purpose. From a strictly egoic point of view, this is no doubt true; the ego is averse to suffering. Viewed through a psychological lens, however, all experience serves a purpose, including and especially suffering. Adversity can be a spur to growth in so many ways that attempts to avoid it may actually be in the service of neurosis. As Jung put it, all neurosis is born from a failure to endure legitimate suffering. The point here is that traditional and psychological interpretations are governed by different values and often operate at cross purposes to one another.

Of course, traditional astrology *can* be helpful if the goal is merely to relieve anxiety. It can be reassuring to know that present circumstances are unfolding according to a cosmic plan. Interpretations of current transits can validate that one's actions and intentions are in synch with the heavens. It can be a relief to know that what *is* happening is somehow supposed to happen. The real question, however, is: can traditional astrology help people evolve? Are predictive, advice-giving, event-oriented interpretations helpful in the sense of facilitating growth and empowering people to

actualize latent potentials? My experience suggests the answer is *no*. Traditional astrology is analogous to predicting stock market trends; one can buy or sell in accord with the economic forecast. While such use of astrology may make one a better trader, it does not make one a better *person*.

Some modern astrologers charge that traditional astrology is limited to the trivial and banal, but this assessment is unfair, for helping people evolve was never its intent. The very concept of psychological growth and change was completely absent from the cultural lexicon prior to the 20th century. Other astrologers argue that ancient techniques can be bootstrapped for psychological ends, but given the original purpose of such techniques, they would be an ill fit indeed. We will return to this point later.

Descriptions of Temperament

To the extent that traditional astrology addressed individual temperament, it was more descriptive than explanatory. Modern medievalist astrologer, Dorian Greenbaum, points out that temperament was considered an inborn way of being—which is to say, it is not conditioned by lived experience, nor does it evolve over time.²⁴ Temperament simply *is*. There were four basic types that roughly correlated to the four elements—fire (choleric), earth (melancholic), air (sanguine), and water (phlegmatic). Ways of deducing temperament from the chart included analyzing the ascendant, Moon, and Sun sign, as well as the season of one's birth. Each zodiacal sign was a combination of hot, cold, wet, and dry, so people were alleged to be mixtures of various sorts that added up to one of the four types. From temperament one could deduce physical appearance, habits, and behavioral tendencies.

Even assuming that there is some accuracy to astrological delineations of temperament, these must be differentiated from modern, astro-psychological *explanations* of character. A description is not an explanation; rather, it focuses on fixed, unchanging surface characteristics, including good and bad traits, enduring attitudes, and so on. By contrast, an astro-psychological explanation moves from the surface to the depths, focusing on underlying drives, conflicts, complexes, unconscious beliefs, and the relative degree to which the personality as a whole is integrated, all of which constitutes the underpinnings of behavior. This should not imply that descriptions of temperament have no value, only that they are the tip of the iceberg. From a psychological perspective, temperament is but a surface layer through which deeper dimensions of the psyche are released.

Comparing traditional delineations of temperament to modern analyses of character is like comparing a snapshot to a documentary film. The former is flat, simple, and fixed in time, whereas the latter has breadth, depth, and movement through time. This highlights an important difference between temperament and character: temperament does not change, whereas character does. What I mean by character is *an innate psychic structure that continues to evolve in response to lived experience*. Character is revealed by how one reacts to events, especially those that are challenging. Since responses are, in part, determined by the meanings one attributes to experience, and since meaning attributions are a product of free choice, character is molded from within as much as it is shaped from without. In other words, character is not entirely fixed; it can be altered by freewill.

This points up another important difference between traditional and modern approaches to astrology. In the traditional view, the chart *is* the person; the governing assumption is that there is no discernable difference between what the chart indicates and who the person actually is. Given that the interior dimension of the human being is largely missing in traditional astrology, and thus the possibility for healing and transformation is unrecognized, what is left are strictly horizontal descriptions of temperament. People can be described in terms that capture their surface but not their depths. By contrast, a psychological approach addresses both the surface and the depths with the additional caveat that people are recognized as having a potential for growth.

The upshot is that psychological analyses of charts allow for both horizontal *and* vertical dimensions. The horizontal dimension reflects the surface of the psyche (temperament). The vertical dimension addresses its interior, i.e., the intrapsychic realm, while implicitly recognizing our potential for higher levels of integration and self-actualization over time. Unlike traditional astrology, there is no chart-person equivalence. Human beings have charts in the same way that students have curriculums, but they are not conflated. As people grow and change, they express their charts differently, i.e., at a *higher* level. Recognition of a vertical dimension allows for more nuanced interpretations that capture the level at which the chart is being expressed.

In effect, there are two ways of providing a behavioral profile: descriptive and psychological. A descriptive approach is descriptive because it describes the person's outer behavior (temperament) and life history. A descriptive interpretation of Sun conjunct Mars in the 10th might be: *Bill is aggressive and egocentric just like his father was*. Conversely, a psychological approach evaluates behavior in terms of inferred causes

and underlying mechanisms, e.g., *Bill is aggressive because he anticipates that authority figures will try to exploit him, just like his father did*. In other words, what is driving Bill's behavior is not simply a chart configuration, but an underlying belief symbolized by that configuration. Whereas the descriptive approach relies solely on objective criteria, the psychological approach considers descriptive phenomena as merely superficial manifestations of more profound underlying forces. In effect, a psychological approach is both descriptive *and* explanatory.

Clearly, both descriptive and psychological approaches are valuable, since each addresses a different dimension of the person. If the descriptive approach focuses on the *what* of behavior, the psychological focuses on the *why*, its primary value being a capacity for illuminating the psychodynamics that underlie temperament. In other words, a psychological approach does not replace descriptions of temperament, but rather subsumes them within a broader and more comprehensive framework.

Value Judgments

If astrologers operate from the perspective that a) fate and temperament are unalterable outcomes of the horoscope, and b) there is no particular purpose to experience, then all that is left to consider is whether the chart is good or bad for various endeavors. In other words, evaluating whether the planets are arranged for good or ill with respect to sundry enterprises is the only practical response to such a conception. This was called *judging the nativity*. Each planet was judged as to its fitness for fulfilling its responsibilities on behalf of the native.

Will I be successful in my career?

When will I be promoted?

In preparation for answering these questions, relevant planets are evaluated in terms of their capability for delivering the goods, so to speak. Everything in traditional astrology entails a judgment of one sort or another: a planet can be a benefic or malefic; a sign strong or weak; a house good or bad; planetary sign positions can be in dignity or in detriment, exalted or fallen; planets are afflicted by aspect or debilitated by sign position. After making a convoluted series of judgments of this sort, the astrologer arrives at a final judgment—to wit, the outcome is favorable or unfavorable.

This kind of rigid, black and white thinking is characteristic of toddlers and pre-modern cultures. Developmental psychologists refer to it as *splitting*, i.e., the tendency to perceive the self and the world in terms of all good or all bad. What's missing is the capacity to recognize that the same person, event or experience

can have more than one quality, or even opposite qualities simultaneously. For example, transiting Saturn square the Sun can momentarily frustrate one's intentions with assorted delays and obstacles; but out of this frustration may be born a greater capacity for organization, self-control, patience, perseverance, and other Saturnian virtues. In other words, it's bad but also good.

Of course, assessing a chart in this way presupposes that fate and character evolve in response to learning, and that learning and development *is* the purpose of experience. An inability to see how adversity results in growth reduces life to a static, flat, two-dimensional experience: things are good *or* bad, but not both. And when things were bad in traditional astrology, they were really bad. Ominous eclipses, death dealing comets, evil fixed stars, and hard aspects in general (especially with malefic Saturn) were all portents of doomsday scenarios—plagues, war, food shortages, famine, social unrest, decapitations, the fall of Kings, rebellions, subversion, the end of the world, and on and on. Such dire predictions struck horror in both the popular and educated cultures of early modern Europe. For example, a prophecy circulating during the 16th century warned that, “*After direful and bloody Comets ... there shall remain nothing for the future safe or healthy amongst Men...and nothing remain but Night, Destruction, Ruine, Damnation and Eternal Misery.*”²⁵

Negative judgments of astrological phenomena were not limited to mundane astrology. Lurking in the very language and theory of natal astrology, says Shelly Jordan, “*lays a virtual repository of fear and trepidation.*”²⁶ Books and pamphlets of prior centuries reveal an endless neurotic preoccupation with disaster, crisis loss, failure, sickness, and death. Readers were invited to anticipate all manner of potential calamities that angry planets, evil aspects, or negative progressions could serve up to the vulnerable and unprepared victim.

Needless to say, the irrational belief that the sky could hurl calamity and misfortune at a defenseless humanity was not conducive to the public's mental health. Negativism and fear-mongering amongst astrologers was so rampant in early modern Europe that astrology was finally banned in England and the United States. By the 18th century, astrologers were classed under vagrancy laws with rogues, vagabonds, fortune-tellers and *Sowers of Discord or Sedition*,²⁷ the latter charge reflecting contempt for the gloom and doom predictions that alarmed the populace and even incited some to treason.²⁸

By contrast, modern astrology has a more nuanced view when judging the chart. While it recognizes that

certain configurations are stressful and may manifest in events that are painful or frustrating, it evaluates these outcomes in terms of their *meaning for the individual*. In short, psychologically oriented astrology is based on a learning model. Instead of seeing merely the event itself, it assesses the event's purpose. What is the event leading toward? What is it requiring of the individual? How might it be a catalyst for new levels of awareness and functionality? Again, this view implicitly recognizes that individuals are capable of expressing their charts at higher and more functional levels over time.

Rigid Technique

One of the hallmarks of traditional astrology is the precision of its techniques. For the answer to any question there are logical, straightforward formulas that are explicit, fixed, and repeatable by anyone. In this regard, the rules of traditional astrology were a forerunner to the scientific method. Almost invariably the form of an interpretation had the appearance of a general law: *If Saturn squares Mars, then the father will be cruel*. The emphasis was on producing relatively clear, unequivocal judgments, especially with regard to future outcomes.

One cannot overstress the simple elegance and precision of early models, but where they provide structure, they are also rigid; where they provide precision, they are also narrow; and where they provide system, they are also restrictive. While the structure, precision, and systematic nature of early astrology represents its strength, its rigidity, narrowness, and overly restricted meanings are its weakness.

Again, traditional astrology operates on the assumption of a chart-person equivalence, or conflation. Interpretations were written in a way that implied fixed, immutable laws. A given astrological variable was presumed to operate the same way for each person that had it. For example, Firmicus Maternus, who's *Mathesis* is considered the most detailed work on astrology to survive from the classical world, writes:

*Venus in Capricorn with Saturn in opposition [in a man's horoscope] makes the natives hated by their wives ... They will be despised in sexual relations yet objects of scandal for their base desires ... The Moon, Saturn, and Venus in the 7th house makes for effeminate perverses, and for sodomites if squared by Mars.*²⁹

Note the decisive, authoritative tone of this interpretation. One gets the impression that there is no escape and no exception. Maternus asserts that even the slightest difference in a chart would cause a noticeable and predictable change in the subject's fortune. Such descriptions of irrevocable, chart-induced fates

were surprisingly specific, as if every detail of the native's life was knowable in advance to the astrologer. Meticulous calculations in accordance with time-honored rules seemed to grant astrologers a capacity for near omniscience, or so it seemed.

These simple, formulaic, one-size-fits-all interpretations were perhaps unavoidable at earlier stages of astrology. We must assume that ancient astrologers were seriously compromised by a comparative lack of reliable charts to study. Not only did it take a considerable length of time to construct a chart, but in many instances astrologers worked without reliable birth dates and times.³⁰ Calendars were often different from one country to another, the clock was not invented until the 14th century, and accurate clocks were not in use among the populace until the 18th century. Moreover, early astrologers lacked the advantage of telescopes (17th century) and computer technology (20th century) for producing accurate ephemerides. Even in the 16th century—allegedly *the golden age* of astrology—ephemerides were so inaccurate that the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in 1563 was off by a month from what the tables indicated.³¹ It goes without saying that our ancient forbearers were ignorant of epistemology and research methodologies, which did not come into use until the scientific revolution of the 17th century.

Compare this to the advantages of the modern era with its computer generated charts and ultra accurate ephemerides. Software programs like AstroDatabank contain thousands of reliable horoscopes, biographies of each chart subject, and search features that allow astrologers to compare and contrast the charts of people that have the same aspect or who share a similar fate—e.g., individuals of a particular profession or people who suffer from the same illness. It is not an exaggeration to say that the modern astrologer can study more reliable charts in a week than a 1st century astrologer could study in a lifetime.

All of this is to say that it should not be surprising that traditional astrologers operated from the assumption of a chart-person conflation. If one person expressed Venus opposed Saturn a particular way, then it was reasonable to suppose that everyone did. Lacking adequate comparison with a group of individuals with the same configuration, the astrologer might simply write his observations of a single person, generalize it for the rest of the population, and publish his findings. In psychology, this is called *over-generalizing*—a cognitive distortion that involves inferring a general meaning from limited instances of a specific type of experience. In the vernacular, it's *jumping to conclusions*.

By contrast, in modern times we are blessed with a surplus of charts that not only contain accurate birth data, but also provide opportunity to study how

different people can express and experience the same configuration *differently*. We recognize that an astrological configuration is not like a firing pin striking a bullet: one strike, one outcome. Rather, it is an alchemical reaction similar to dropping an Alka-Seltzer tablet into a glass of water. A series of bubbles emanates from the tablet and rise to the surface; the tablet slowly dissolves, particle by particle. Each particle is equally representative of the whole tablet, while also being distinct from every other particle. This is a better analogy for an astrological configuration than the simple, one-cause, one-effect formulations of traditional astrology. A configuration unfolds over time and has many possible permutations. In this regard, it is like a hologram; each part, each distinct manifestation in time, encapsulates the whole configuration. It is axiomatic in modern astrology that a single astrological configuration can express itself in innumerable ways while still remaining consistent with its essential meaning.

The further back in history we go, the more narrow the range of meanings we find vis-à-vis a configuration. Conversely, as our understanding of astrology evolves, we recognize an increasingly broader range of meanings that includes both breadth and depth. Again, modern astro-psychological configurations have horizontal and vertical dimensions. The horizontal dimension (breadth) refers to the *quantity* of possible outcomes at a single level of integration. The vertical dimension (depth) is the *quality* of outcomes that reflect greater or lesser degrees of actualization on a continuum of possibilities for that configuration (see Figure 1). Sun square Saturn might be our depressed client who hates his father and refuses to work. Yet, at a higher level of integration, it could be Oprah Winfrey, one of the most successful, powerful, and wealthy women in the world.³²

Modern astrologers also recognize that chart configurations have a *coincidence* of meaning between inner and outer manifestations (synchronicity). Traditional astrology dealt almost exclusively with external outcomes. It focused on what was going to happen to the native as a result of his chart. Recall Vettius Valens' assertion: "*Fate has decreed for every human being the unalterable realization of his horoscope.*" We now recognize that the chart symbolizes both the without and the *within* of the person. Every variable has a psychological and environmental meaning. As within, so without; intrapsychic dynamics are reflected in external circumstances via synchronicity. More importantly, as inner factors evolve (integrate, transform), they produce corresponding changes in outer conditions. This implies that the chart is not the cause of experience, but rather is a description of a circular, reciprocal process. Events constitute *feedback* that

reflects the current state of the psyche while also providing a catalyst for new learning and higher levels of integration.

Questionable Validity

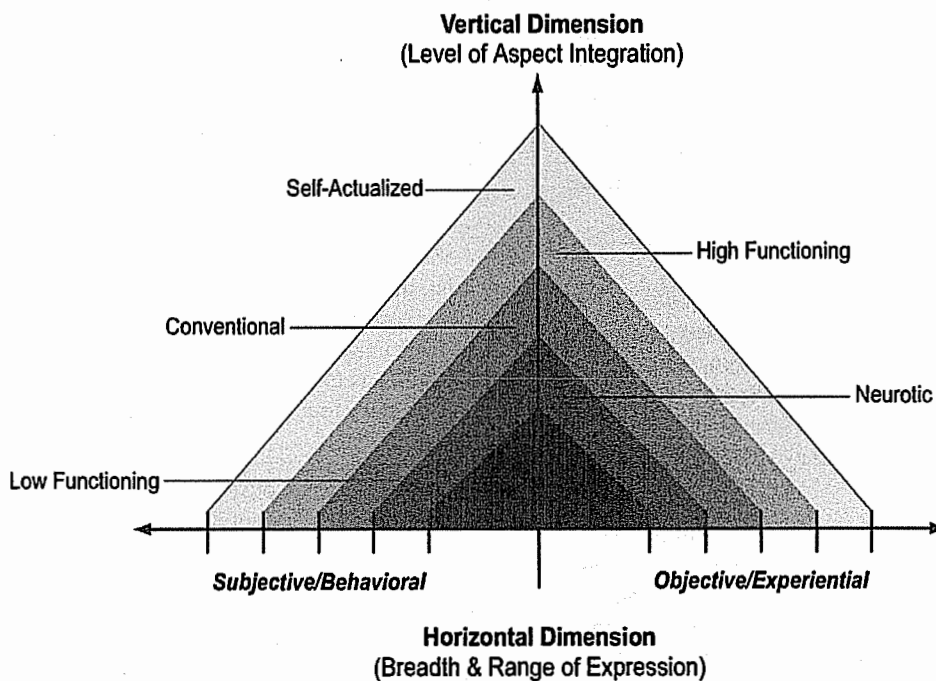
Related to the issue of rigid technique is the question of validity. Precision is not the same thing as accuracy. A medieval physician could be very precise in applying the proper leeching procedure for a patient suffering from pneumonia, but the patient was still likely to die.³³ Similarly, one can be very systematic in analyzing a chart and still produce worthless information if the technique itself is invalid. A few examples should suffice to illustrate this.

Because traditional astrology is almost wholly concerned with evaluating whether a planet will produce favorable or unfavorable outcomes, assessing a planet's *dignity* is of utmost importance. Dignity is a

measure of a planet's supposed strength or weakness. The stronger the planet is thought to be, the greater its capacity to produce favorable outcomes. A planet's dignity is measured in terms of five main categories: domicile, exaltation, sect, triplicity ruler and term. To the extent that a planet's sign and degree position is favorable within these categories, it is said to be strong. Of course, aspects and house positions have to be considered, too.

Domicile is the sign(s) the planet rules, whereas exaltation is the sign thought to elevate the planet's functionality to the highest degree, e.g., Mars rules Aries (its domicile), but is said to function best in Capricorn (its exaltation). Sect reflects whether a person is born during the day or night. Some planets allegedly are stronger during the day (Sun, Jupiter, Saturn), while others are stronger at night (Moon, Venus, Mars). For example, if a person is born during the

Figure 1
Horizontal & Vertical Dimensions of Planetary Aspects



The above graph shows two basic dimensions of astrology—horizontal and vertical. The horizontal dimension depicts the range of behavior and experience that correlates to any given configuration. Conversely, the vertical dimension depicts level of integration and overall quality of functioning. The left side signifies the subjective aspect of consciousness, which includes drives, beliefs, affects, and behavioral traits. The right side shows the objective side of life—synchronistic events, people, and experiences. There are five levels of functionality—low functioning, neurotic, conventional, high functioning, and self-actualized. Each level is inclusive of behavior and experience that accrues to lower levels while adding new possibilities of expression. As level of integration rises, there is 1) increasing degrees of freedom, 2) a broader range of potential experience, and 3) enhanced functionality.

day and Mars is above the horizon with the Sun, its functionality is allegedly weakened.

Triplicity rulers are determined by a complicated procedure that combines the dignities of domicile, exaltation, and sect. According to Ptolemy, Mars is the triplicity ruler of water signs, so if Mars is in a water sign, then its functioning is enhanced.

Terms (also called *bounds*) are arbitrary divisions of all signs into five uneven segments, with each planet (excluding Sun and Moon) ruling one segment. For example, a planet at 27 degrees of any sign would be in Saturn's bounds, which is not good.

In sum, if we were to evaluate a person born during the day with Mars at 3 degrees of Cancer above the horizon, we would note that Mars is in its fall, which is *bad*, but is the triplicity ruler of Cancer, which is *good*, but is out of sect, which is *bad*, but is in its own bounds, which is *good*. If this sounds confusing, hang on; the traditional astrologer is just getting started. We have yet to evaluate Mars' house placement, aspects, and dispositor!

Suffice to say that the whole concept of dignity, apart from domicile, is a convoluted system of arbitrary value judgments that have no basis in anything empirical. While it is relatively self-evident that certain planets and signs do have a clear affinity, which gives us our system of rulerships (domiciles), the concept of exaltations and falls is far more controversial. It appears to have derived from various competing systems that date all the way back to Babylonian astrology, and, unlike domiciles, does not follow a logical scheme for sign assignment.³⁴ Exaltations and falls constitute an arbitrary system in which planets are claimed to function best (exalted) in one sign and worst (fall) in the opposite sign. Yet, such judgments are highly questionable, e.g., Jupiter is said to be exalted in Cancer, yet this position suggests a highly subjective, provincial, and emotionally biased approach to issues of justice.

The concept of exaltations is central to traditional astrology not only because planets are judged to do better or worse in various signs, but also because traditional dispositorship is linked to planetary exaltations. In modern astrology, a dispositor is a planet that *rules* the sign that another planet is in; thus, if Venus is in Aries, then Mars disposes Venus. This means Mars receives an impetus from Venus and carries forward the agenda that Venus has initiated. However, in traditional astrology, a dispositor is a planet that is the *exaltation* ruler of a sign; thus, if Venus is in Aries, then the *Sun* would disposite Venus since the Sun is allegedly exalted in Aries. But if the very concept of exaltations is questionable, then the traditional method

of assigning and assessing dispositors is likewise thrown into doubt.

Even more dubious is the concept of planetary sect. In assessing the validity of a claim, we should always ask if the claim is testable via actual lived experience. For example, how does one isolate a planet from all other considerations—sign position, house position, aspects, and everything else of potential significance—and then judge whether that planet functions best above or below the horizon? I submit that such a test is impossible. If there is no conceivable way to test the merit of a claim, then it is vacuous.

This rule also applies to the concept of triplicities and planetary rulers. To say that Mars is the triplicity ruler of water signs, and therefore Mars in Cancer is dignified, contradicts the claim that Mars is debilitated in Cancer, which is the sign of its fall. By the same token, to say that Mars at 27 degrees of a sign is in the *bounds* of Saturn, and therefore receives a negative charge (thus weakening Mars), contradicts the claim that Mars in the sign ruled by Saturn (Capricorn) is exalted! Not only are such judgments contradictory, the entire system of triplicity rulers and bounds is arbitrary and untestable.

This leads me to an important point. In assessing the merits of traditional astrology, it is extremely important to differentiate *qualities* of astrological variables from *judgments* about them. The former is based on objective observation, whereas the latter is a product of subjective reasoning. In other words, we can know the quality of a planet, sign, house, or aspect simply by observing it, e.g., Mars is aggressive, Pisces is escapist, the 3rd house is about communications, a square is stressful, and so on. Such observations, based on empirical data, are subtly different from judgments as to whether these variables, either inherently or in various combinations, are good or bad, strong or weak.

For example, I may observe that someone with Venus in Pisces in the 8th negotiates financial transactions in a deceptive manner. Such a qualitative assessment can be relatively objective. To say, however, that Venus is exalted in Pisces and is in the house of its detriment are simply value judgments. It contains no actual information other than to say that this Venus configuration is a combination of good and bad. Qualitative statements of Venus' sign and house position can be consensually validated by observation, but evaluative statements that place a judgment on Venus' placement cannot be validated because they are merely subjective opinion. Moreover, such opinions are rigid because they presuppose that a planetary position will not evolve toward more functional expressions over time.

This same principle applies to any astrological technique that is not solidly grounded in observational statements. Again, the fact that traditional astrology is precise and systematic does not necessarily make it valid. Indeed, the technique of time lords in which different planets allegedly rule various periods appears so obviously made up and arbitrary that it is difficult to understand how any person of discernment could believe in it.³⁵ Each planet is assigned a period of time, which purportedly determines the general tone of the life for that duration, e.g., Saturn rules 11 years, the Sun rules 10 years, Mercury rules 13 years, and so on. Note that these time periods do not correspond to actual planetary motions, i.e., they are not observational statements, but random suppositions.

Countless other techniques offered in traditional astrology seem little more than inventions of the imagination. There are a tremendous number of these techniques. There is also a marked lack of agreement as to their veracity. Manilius, Dorotheus, Ptolemy, Valens, Cardano, Morin and other traditional authorities frequently differ over what is valid and what is not. Given the nature of traditional techniques, this should not be surprising. Lots, sect, dwads, faces, profec-tions, decennials, triplicity rulers, injurious degrees of signs, and innumerable other techniques comprise a muddled, idiosyncratic mess of untestable ideas that have no basis in anything observable. The result is assumption piled upon assumption until the whole system begins to resemble a house of cards.

By the 16th century Johannes Kepler thought that astrology had become such a mish-mash of half-baked doctrine that it was almost impossible to “*separate the gems from the slag*.”³⁶ Likewise, the great French astrologer, Jean-Baptiste Morin, argued that “*terms, decans, faces, parts and...other worthless items introduced by the Chaldeans, Arabs, and Egyptians...were invented and therefore unfounded in nature*.”³⁷ It is no wonder that modern astrologers threw the mess out and started over.

Emphasis on Certainty

Given the dubious nature of the techniques described above, it is ironic that the primary goal of traditional astrology was accuracy—i.e., certain knowledge of the future. One might suspect that the obsession with accuracy was compensatory to the radical uncertainty that permeated the ancient landscape. In a world where existence was harsh, brutal, and short, certainty of knowledge had a high premium.

It is often asserted that traditional astrology was quite accurate. I wonder, however, if selective thinking and confirmatory bias may be more of a factor in such claims than exponents realize. After all, how many

inaccurate predictions are ever admitted or recorded? Some stories of alleged amazing predictions that have come down over the centuries are surely exaggerated or apocryphal. Even the grand master of Hellenistic Astrology, Claudius Ptolemy, cautioned against trying to be too precise with one's predictions: “*It is not possible that particular forms of events should be declared by any person, however scientific; since the understanding conceives only a certain general idea of some sensible event, and not its particular form*.”³⁸ In other words, astrology could predict general ideas of events, but not specific, concrete outcomes.

Despite Ptolemy's admonition, however, later generations of traditional astrologers argued that greater precision was achievable if the technical aspects of the art were completely mastered.³⁹ In my opinion, the great flaw of traditional astrology is precisely this pretension of precision, i.e., the claim that with mastery of astrological technique, one is able to achieve more-or-less perfect knowledge of the future. The great European astrologer of the 13th century, Guido Bonatti, penned a typical statement in this regard:

*All things are known to the astrologer. All that has taken place in the past, all that will happen in the future—everything is revealed to him, since he knows the effects of the heavenly motions which have been, those which are, and those which will be, and since he knows at what time they will act, and what effects they ought to produce.*⁴⁰

Frankly, given the limitations under which traditional astrologers worked, this is not a credible statement. In fact, it would not be a credible statement under any conditions. Bonatti's pretensions of omniscience renders suspect his other claims as well. If he is not believable in his general attitude, why should we believe his more specific assertions?

An unavoidable consequence of the quest for certainty is *narrowness of interpretation*. As soon as a configuration is collapsed into a singular outcome that is concrete and observable (and thus accurate or inaccurate), the inherent multidimensionality of the configuration is lost. Possibility is sacrificed on the altar of certainty; yet, such certainty is illusory, for no configuration is limited to a singular outcome. Collapsing a multi-dimensional process into a concrete event, constitutes an unwarranted restriction of meaning.

A related point is that certainty is not the same thing as utility. Even if the astrologer's interpretation of a single, concrete outcome is correct, it is not likely to be particularly helpful to the client unless it increases his self-understanding. When the traditional astrologer merely describes a personality characteristic already known, or a future event not yet experienced,

what has actually been gained? With traditional, event-oriented astrology the most you can be is right. However, if the interpretation locks the individual into thinking that more enlightened expressions of the same configuration are not possible, then his sense of possibility has been truncated. This is not only unhelpful; it is actually harmful.

Whereas pre-modern astrology presents a deterministic view of the chart that yields alleged certainty, post-modern astrology holds that human beings, like all living systems, are *indeterminate*. This implies that knowledge gained from charts has an inescapable and necessary *uncertainty*. The American Heritage Dictionary offers the following definition for indeterminate:

- a. Not precisely determined, determinable, or established:
- b. Not precisely fixed, as to extent, size, nature, or number:
- c. Lacking clarity or precision, as in meaning; vague:
- d. Not fixed or known in advance: *an indeterminate future*.
- e. Not leading up to a definite result or ending: *an indeterminate campaign*.

There are two basic reasons for accepting that human beings (and thus charts) are indeterminate. The first is that science has conclusively demonstrated that *all* living systems have a certain degree of indeterminacy, i.e., freedom to choose; to react in novel, unexpected ways; and to grow toward greater complexity and awareness over time. Prior to the 20th century, the goal of certainty was the holy grail of modern science. The establishment of certain, indubitable truths (general laws) was a logical outgrowth of the deterministic philosophy of mechanistic science. Not only did astrology fail to meet this standard, but ultimately science failed as well. With the advent of quantum physics, chaos theory, and recent developments in evolutionary biology, it has become increasingly apparent that throughout the hierarchies of existence—from single cells to human beings—living systems are intrinsically dynamic. The higher up the hierarchy one moves, the freer systems become. Living systems are also characterized by *fixed rules and flexible strategies*.

I submit that this exactly applies to astrology. Every human being is intrinsically dynamic in the sense of being free to choose, to act, and to aspire to new heights of self-actualization. Human behavior is also governed by fixed rules and flexible strategies. What is fixed and determined within the horoscope are the actual positions of the planets—their sign positions, house placements, and aspects. There are fixed rules for understanding this level of the horoscope, e.g., an opposition requires the balancing of two functions that occupy antithetical sign positions. Psychologically speaking, this level of the chart constitutes psychodynamics.

What is *not* fixed (or fated) is how the individual operates within the parameters of these rules. Flexible strategies mean that one is free to evolve new and more effective ways of managing the inherent dynamics of the psyche. For example, one person may express Venus opposition Saturn by attracting a highly critical spouse who withholds love and affection. Another may marry a fellow therapist with whom she or he conducts marriage seminars. There are other possibilities and strategies as well.

The second reason astrologers should embrace the chart's inherent ambiguity and uncertainty has to do with multivalence. A *valence* is the capacity for something to unite, react, or interact with something else. *Multivalence* means capable of interacting in multiple ways and with variable outcomes. Consider that every astrological variable—sign, planet, house, and aspect—has several layers of meanings. The sign Aries, for example, can signify a basic need (survival, autonomy), a range of behavioral traits (bold, impatient, pioneering), and a variety of external manifestations—a person (adventurer, competitor), a place (stadium, battlefield), a thing (weapon, car), or a quality (fast, hot). When one considers that *every* sign, planet, house and aspect likewise has a range of meanings, and that these meanings unite, react, and interact in multiple ways (multivalence), the very idea that the chart should be predictable borders on the preposterous. At best we can describe behavioral propensities along a continuum of integration. Likewise, the future can be predicted in terms of qualities of durations of time, but with an openness to multiple and varied manifestations.

Modern Astrology

Modern, psychological astrology can be said to have begun with Alan Leo and the Theosophists at the beginning of the 20th century. Because astrology was still held in wide contempt, and astrologers were frequently prosecuted for fortune telling, Leo's lawyer advised him to de-emphasize prediction in favor of personality analysis. This was the true birth of modern astrology. Charles Carter, Marc Edmund Jones, Dane Rudhyar, and other pioneers followed up by incorporating ideas from psychology, which, as an academic discipline, was beginning at the same time.

It should be pointed out, however, that the psychological astrology of this period was extremely primitive and confused. For the most part, it was limited to broad, superficial trait descriptions that were inadequately connected to underlying personality structures. Outer behavior, in other words, was not explained at a psychodynamic level. This paucity of theoretical grounding was, in part, a consequence of astrologers not being formally educated in

psychology, but also because psychology itself was still in its infancy.

Subsequent astrologers attempted to map the inner, psychological realm of the chart with varying degrees of success. They also continued to predict event outcomes. Again, however, outer events were weakly related to psychological factors inherent in the chart, i.e., subjective and objective dimensions of the chart were articulated, but without meaningful connection. In place of real psychological explanations, some authors resorted to karmic explanations, as if the mystery of the human soul could be explained away by reference to alleged past life causes.⁴¹

By the late 80s, there was a reaction to this trend, which stimulated a revival of traditional astrology. This revival is ongoing. Psychological astrology was charged with being vague, mushy, and unsystematic. Modern astrologers were accused of playing fast and loose with chart interpretations, such that anything can be made to mean anything. Note that these criticisms stand in stark contrast to the alleged precision, system, and accuracy of traditional astrology. While I might not agree with traditional astrology's high opinion of itself, I am completely in agreement with its criticisms of modern astrology.

As soon as astrologers liberated themselves from having to make precise, exact statements about event outcomes, and turned their attention instead to the subjective realm, there was bound to be trouble. Psychology introduced an array of ideas and concepts that sent the modern astrologer spinning in a whirl of abstractions. No longer shackled to the idea that there is one expression of a chart configuration, and wanting to go beyond the superficial realm of mere temperament, practitioners sought to update astrology in a way that captured the full depth and breadth of psychic complexity.

Suffice to say it was not an easy task. How does one interpret a configuration with sufficient generality that it captures a wide spectrum of potential outcomes yet is not so abstract that it becomes vague and fuzzy? How can one correlate planets with psychological processes that are by definition indefinite and elusive?

How can astrological symbols be linked to internal drives, affects, defenses, and complexes in a way that has real explanatory power? As it turned out, predicting simple, concrete events is far less challenging than explaining how chart symbols refer to complex, intangible, intrapsychic, developmental processes.

Applying psychological concepts to horoscopes is a difficult and tricky business to be sure, and unless one is well trained in both disciplines, is likely to go badly. Dubious equivalencies have been borrowed hodgepodge from psychology, e.g., the Sun is the ego, Mars is the id, Venus is the anima, and so forth, despite the fact that astrological symbols have meanings that are significantly different and far more complex than the psychological concepts with which they have been conflated. In addition, the inclusion of new chart components, e.g., asteroids, midpoints, Chiron, and minor aspects, combined with a heavy reliance upon myth as a source of information about the meaning of chart symbols, has further contributed to the impression that modern astrology is a jumbled, puffed up, chaotic mess.

A Postmodern Synthesis

At the beginning of this article, I promised to propose a vision of a new, postmodern astrology that integrates the best of ancient and modern systems. While space prohibits a detailed discussion of how this might occur, I would like to suggest some general features. But first, what does the term *postmodern* actually mean?

A hallmark of the scientific revolution in the 17th century—the beginning of modern science—was the presupposition that application of proper method would yield knowledge that was objective and certain. Such knowledge was to lead inexorably toward 1) greater predictive power, and 2) control over nature, the latter being a product of the former. In this regard, modern science and pre-modern astrology had much in common. With the advent of 20th century science, and particularly quantum physics, the ideal of objective certainty was shattered. In postmodern science, reality is accepted as *chaotic*, meaning unpredictable, purposive, and intrinsically creative. In addition, there is a shift from the standpoint of the detached observer to

Life is about making choices and living with the consequences. If you make good choices in life, you get good consequences, and if you make bad choices, you get bad consequences. You are the author of your own life story.

~ Thomas S. Ellis III, presiding U.S. District Judge
in the case of American Taliban, John Walker Lindh.

the participant observer who affects the outcome of what he observes by his way of observing. This implies that truth is a matter of perspective and that reality contains an inescapable ambiguity and uncertainty. These, in brief, are the main components of the postmodern worldview.

What this implies for astrology is abandonment of the idea that proper methods will yield certain, objective knowledge of the future. We have seen that the primary goal of traditional astrology is elimination of uncertainty via accurate prediction, thus enhancing control. From a postmodern perspective, however, not only is such a goal unfeasible, it is *undesirable*. Uncertainty is not something to be eliminated; rather, it is to be valued, for uncertainty means that the future is open and thus subject, at least in part, to freewill. Uncertainty implies creativity and the capacity to make something of oneself. As consciousness expands, new perspectives become possible—fresh ways of seeing that allow for greater freedom of choice, enhanced functionality, and a broadening of experience. What postmodern astrology loses in terms of certainty, it gains in potentiality, for a truly postmodern astrology celebrates that human beings are not only indeterminate, they are capable of evolving toward an ideal state.

This does not negate the importance of structure, system, and precision as features of postmodern astrology. However, rather than striving for predictability of concrete outcomes, the focus shifts to explication of intrapsychic processes. In other words, what should be precisely defined in postmodern astrology are not rules for determining event outcomes, but rules for understanding their underlying psychological causes.

Postmodern astrology addresses how the chart depicts the psychic structure and process of the individual. This is what is meant by the term, *psychodynamics*. The interaction of drives, feelings, and beliefs generates observable behavior and events. Instead of focusing exclusively on outcomes, the psychological astrologer explores how outcomes derive from deeper, often unconscious realms of mind. Behavior is not explained in terms of alleged astrological causes; rather, astrological symbols are utilized to understand psychological processes that are regarded as the true cause of behavior and events.

From a postmodern perspective, the horoscope can be understood as a system of fixed rules and flexible strategies. To appreciate this, one must differentiate process from content. Process constitutes the psychodynamics of the birthchart and has to do with the core motives, functions, and conflicts that organize the flow of a person's inner life. Because process can be defined as a series of operations conducive toward a

goal, it is dynamic; it is the active movement of consciousness as it progresses from motive to action. Content, on the other hand, is the *outcome* of psychological functioning. It shows up in a person's behavior and lived experience—relations with other people, things, and events. Whereas process *is* psychological functioning, content is the consequence of psychological functioning, an epiphenomenal by-product of psychic life. This means that inherent processes of the chart are *fixed*, but how one manages these processes is *flexible*. Different strategies afford varying degrees of fulfillment.

If structure and precision are to be properties of a postmodern astrology, intrapsychic processes must be sharply delineated, both in terms of their general features, and in ways that apply to individual charts. As this has been the thrust of my own work, I am confident that it can be done.⁴² For example, signs can be precisely defined as motivational drives and associated affects; planets are psychological functions that operate as specific types of action in the service of the sign-needs they rule; houses represent environmental contexts within which these processes occur; planetary aspects constitute various types of internal dialogues, or self-talk, which can be further conceptualized as cognitive structures (flexible strategies) for meeting associated needs. Finally, planetary significators and dispositors can be understood as associative linkages that tie signs, planets, and houses together into a continuous and flowing whole, thus revealing the chart's skeletal structure (plot) and unfolding sequence.

While chart synthesis can provide precise rules for understanding process, i.e., how signs, planets, aspects, and dispositors operate at the intrapsychic level, the actual behavioral expression and environmental consequences (content) of these processes are inherently uncertain. In other words, process can be delineated, but content is indeterminate. And the reason that content is indeterminate is that *it depends upon the client's level of integration and awareness*. Of course, astrologers can make educated guesses, i.e., form hypotheses, but it is critically important to accept that there is an unavoidable ambiguity to chart outcomes at behavioral and event levels.

One way of understanding this is through the concept of inherent and consequential factors. Inherent factors are underlying psychodynamics, which, again, can be understood in terms of fixed rules. To give a very simple example, Venus square Neptune means the drive for attachment is operating at cross purposes with the impulse for transcendence. This is a given; it is inherent to the aspect. Consequential factors, however, refer to the level of awareness and integration at which this conflict is being lived out. Level of integration

determines behavioral strategy, which, in turn, leads to action and experience.

At one level, a person may seek to resolve her Venus-Neptune conflict by forming an attachment to an individual that requires her to sacrifice personal needs for comfort, security, and relatedness. Perhaps she marries an alcoholic, which necessitates that she *transcend* (sacrifice) her Venus needs due to the abject condition of her spouse. Neptunian spirituality, selflessness, and concern for suffering is expressed at the expense of Venusian intimacy, fairness, and partnership. If she is able to achieve a higher level of integration, however, a different outcome becomes possible. Venusian needs for attachment are successfully joined with Neptunian impulses for transcendence. She might, for example, marry a meditation teacher with whom she goes on spiritual retreats. This second marriage signifies a more functional compromise by successfully combining intimacy with spirituality.

A key idea here is *content mirrors process*; the nature and quality of our outer experiences reflects the intrapsychic, causal realm that generates them. Jung's theory of synchronicity is central to postmodern astrology because it provides an explanatory mechanism for how inner and outer experiences are related. Synchronicity rests on Jung's concept of the archetype, which he described as having *psychoïd* properties, i.e., an archetype can manifest simultaneously as both an intrapsychic factor and an environmental condition.

The point is that outer events reflect the current state of the psyche while also providing a catalyst for new levels of integration. Content is a vehicle for process. An event is not important in itself, but only in terms of what it *means* for the individual and how it functions as a stimulus for change at a psychological (causal) level. If suffering the heartbreak of marriage to an alcoholic increases our subject's capacity for empathy and compassion (Neptune) while also heightening awareness of her need for a stable relationship (Venus), so that she works out a more conscious strategy for simultaneously expressing these two functions—compassion *and* intimacy—then a more viable marriage can result.

Other dimensions of postmodern astrology involve developmental psychology, psychopathology, and counseling skills, but these will have to be discussed in a separate article. Suffice to say that the defining attribute of psychological astrology is its focus on integrating the birth chart and, thus, supporting the human potential for growth and change. Psychological astrology places responsibility for life experience with the individual rather than with presumed external causes originating in the planets. Its primary goal is to

empower clients to be accountable for the experiences they attract in order that they can create more fulfilling outcomes.

Summary and Conclusions

Astrology is an artifact of human consciousness that assumes forms congruent with the level of consciousness that prevails at a given time and place. Earlier forms of astrology were characterized by an emphasis on fate that obviated personal responsibility. Lacking awareness of the inner world and the human potential for change, traditional astrologers addressed ego-based concerns for security, power and control. Descriptions of character were relatively primitive and shallow. Assumption of an external locus of control derived from the belief that life on earth was more-or-less wholly the effect of planetary influences. Obsessional concern with value judgments left little room for assessments of quality, meaning or purpose; thus, evaluations of chart factors were linear, simplistic, and oriented toward exact determinations of favorable or unfavorable outcomes. Although traditional techniques are precise and systematic, their validity and utility are highly questionable.

Modern astrology and psychology evolved in tandem at the beginning of the 20th century. As cross-fertilization was inevitable, this led to a hybrid model that sought greater understanding of the psychological dimension of chart symbolism. Modern astrology was initially limited to broad, superficial descriptions of personality traits that were divorced from corollary descriptions of outer events. Gradually, however, it became clear that inner and outer conditions constitute a circular, reciprocal relationship that co-evolves through feedback processes (synchronicity). Such a model presumes an internal locus of control, personal responsibility, and creative power for improving both the self and the circumstances that reflect it. Despite these lofty convictions, however, modern astrology has been characterized by a comparative lack of structure, system, and precision.

A postmodern synthesis was proposed that incorporates traditional ideals of system and precision with modern sensibilities of indeterminism, uncertainty, and personal growth. Horoscopes can be understood in terms of fixed rules and flexible strategies. Psychodynamic processes are fixed, but emergent behavioral strategies are contingent upon the level of integration attained. Different levels of awareness produce different strategies, which, in turn, create different external conditions. This view recognizes that inherent factors of the intrapsychic world can be precisely delineated through astrology. However, their behavioral and event consequences are indeterminate, since level of integration is not inherent in the chart.

Exponents of traditional astrology frequently claim that superior, ancient techniques are now being recovered for future generations. I find this claim, like the techniques themselves, unconvincing. The history of science is one in which ideas that prove to be insufficient, untestable, or invalid are gradually eliminated, like vestigial organs that no longer serve a purpose. It would appear that this is what happened to much of traditional astrology, although it can be argued that its near demise in the 18th century was more for socio-political reasons than scientific.

Regardless of why traditional astrology fell into disrepute, a huge debt of gratitude is owed to researchers like Robert Schmidt, Robert Zoller, and Robert Hand for restoring our history. Restoration of history, however, should not be confused with re-establishment of application. The practice of actually doing traditional astrology is fraught with problems that are not easily resolved. Conversely, to the extent that astrologers recognize that we are not puppets of planetary forces, but rather can engage them in a co-creative, participatory relationship, we do astrology and our clients an indisputable service.*

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Predictive and Therapeutic Astrology: A New Synthesis

by Greg Bogart

This article examines attitudes toward astrological prediction, demonstrating the use of solar arc directions to demarcate pivotal life passages and to illuminate the deeper meaning and intention of events. It describes a therapeutic approach to astrology, using positive evolutionary language and embracing each of the tasks indicated by planetary symbolism. Greg Bogart, astrologer and professor of psychology at California Institute of Integral Studies, reflects on the Moon's aspects in the light of John Bowlby's attachment theory. Bogart offers a constructive approach to the gifts of Saturn, citing numerous case examples that illustrate how horoscope symbols can be approached, not as rigidly predetermining factors, but as archetypal patterns of transformation whose outcomes can be actively visualized.

I discovered astrology at a time of confusion in my life when I was wandering around, living in the woods. Astrology found me and helped me find myself. I learned from people that I met along the way, especially the wonderful astrologers of Eugene, Oregon, who assisted me. Then I met my teacher, Andres Takra, from Venezuela. His first lesson to me was this: *"Astrology is a sacred and solemn science. It can enlighten you, or it can make you crazy. It can paralyze your freewill, or it can make you a bold, successful, evolved human being. It is up to you."*

Everything I am going to say here is just an amplification of Takra's first lesson. Then he asked me, *"Why do you want to become an astrologer?"* I said, *"To help people."* He said, *"That's right. That's the reason to become an astrologer."* Some years later I had a student and I asked her the same question, to which she replied, *"So I can be a far-out psychic and blow people away with my awesome psychic*

predictions." I thought that was quite appalling, but it was at least a very honest response reflecting a common assumption many people have—namely that astrology is all about making predictions.

But is this what really helps people? If our goal is to be astrologers who inspire and uplift people rather than scaring them, if astrology is to be most helpful, healing and therapeutic, then we need to clarify our attitudes toward astrological prediction. We can affirm our ability to see the shape of emerging time using transits and progressions. But the real power of astrology goes beyond predicting what will happen to us. Adding consciousness to the equation changes everything. By anticipating developmental tasks and responding appropriately, we mold the future. Thus, I will explore predictive and therapeutic approaches to astrology, and look at some case examples that illustrate the union of astrology with depth psychology.

Fatalism and Humanism

First let's make a distinction between fatalism and humanism in astrology. Many people approach astrology with the attitude that everything is fated to happen, predestined by the planets. Many astrologers describe planets as either good or evil, benefic or malefic. What I hear often in our field is people saying things like, *"Saturn is approaching your ascendant, or your Moon, or square Venus. That's bad. That's difficult. It is a bad time for love, money, career, health, family, children..."* Or, *"Everything will be better when this Pluto transit is over—in two years!"* This is not an empowering approach to astrology.

But our field has come a long way from this fatalistic mentality. In the 1960s and 70s, humanistic astrology emerged, emphasizing self-awareness, self-actualization and self-determination. Humanistic astrologers try to understand the meaning of events, seeing them

as phases within life cycles. Rudhyar¹ elucidated the cyclical structure of time, using the prototype of the lunation cycle to represent the major phases of evolution. We constantly experience New Moon beginnings, waxing phases of growth of form, Full Moon illuminations, waning phases of growth in consciousness, balsamic phases of completion, dormancy and expectancy. This cyclical viewpoint takes the pressure off astrologers, because instead of trying to predict exactly what is going to occur, our task is to interpret events as meaningful phases of evolutionary cycles.²

Humanistic astrologers are not passively resigned to what is *fated* to occur. We anticipate developmental tasks, envision possibilities and make things happen. We discern what actions are required at each moment. Predictive methods enable astrologers to anticipate trends and prepare in advance to meet life's challenges. It is not just about predicting, but also acting and responding to the planets. When transiting Pluto was in my 3rd house, aspecting natal Mars, my neighbor's barking dog was keeping me up at all hours of the night and I was getting really angry. Would this just be a situation I would have to endure? Would it lead to a damaging Pluto-Mars confrontation with my neighbor? Neither was the case. One night around 1:00 AM I stopped being afraid of Mars and went over in my pajamas, asking the neighbor to please keep the dog in at night. That was the last time I had a problem with the dog. I simply had to act, not passively endure the stressful transit due to fear of conflict.

A woman named Sue with Moon-Saturn in Virgo in her 6th house became ill every time transiting Mars, Jupiter, Saturn or Uranus aspected these Virgo planets, which seemed to be signifiers of health issues or illness. We worked on helping Sue become proactive and more conscientious about diet, rest and stress reduction. She began taking herbs, doing yoga and fasting briefly twice a year. Whenever transits aspected her Moon-Saturn, she intensified her health-enhancing practices. Sue transformed her *fate* through anticipation. This is our work: to utilize astrology to better our lives through conscious participation in developmental tasks, not through passive resignation to fate.

Looking Backward, Looking Forward, Using Solar Arcs

Humanistic astrologers anticipate upcoming tasks and trends using transits and progressions. We learn to use these predictive methods with skill and precision by looking backward into the past, studying events that have already occurred and finding correlations with natal patterns, transits and progressions. In this way, one learns to assess the possible outcomes of future transits and progressions.

I'm assuming that most of my readers are fairly knowledgeable about transits, so I'm going to focus here on solar arc directions, one of the most potent predictive methods. The solar arc (SA) is the distance between the natal Sun and the current secondary progressed Sun. In this technique, we *direct* all of the planets forward by the rate of the solar arc. Unlike secondary progressions, which examine the organic movement of planets in the days immediately after birth—with each planet moving at its own speed—the solar method directs all of the planets forward by the same arc, which is approximately 1° per year (the average daily motion of the Sun).³ All planets and angles are directed forward by about a degree per year of life, timing the unfolding of our natal potentials. Solar arcs enable us to reconstruct or anticipate pivotal moments of a life at a glance, by visually projecting natal planets and angles forward to complete aspects to natal planets and angles, and approximating when these contacts would be in effect; one can also note correlations with relevant transits.

Let's consider an actual case, whom I shall call Anne. At age six years, 3 months, solar arc (SA) Saturn was conjunct her descendant: Her father, an undercover CIA agent, disappeared suddenly and left the family for the first time. It was a time of sadness, fear and social inhibitions for Anne. You couldn't have predicted her father leaving, but you could infer from Saturn's involvement that there might be issues related to the father, and possible stresses or inhibitions in connecting to others.

Anne has a natal Moon-Uranus conjunction in the 4th house. Some instability or change in the family home and environment was indicated. This came to fruition at age 8 when the SA midheaven opposed Anne's Moon. At the same time, transiting Saturn was in Capricorn, opposite natal Moon-Uranus. Her family began moving constantly, living in a series of transient homes and trailer parks, causing Anne much emotional upset.

At age 16–17, when the natal Sun progressed to conjunction with Venus, Anne fell in love for the first time. At the same age, SA Saturn was conjunct Neptune in the 7th house; it was a period of romantic illusions and disappointment, as her boyfriend was an alcoholic who lied to her. Note how the potentials of Neptune in the 7th house are brought vividly to life, including her ability to devote herself to somebody selflessly. At age 21, when SA Venus (dispositor of the 7th house) was conjunct Jupiter, she married; and she and her husband relocated across country, bought a house and had their first child. At the same time transiting Saturn in Cancer was conjunct Moon-Uranus in the 4th house. Saturn in the 4th house marked the beginning of family life.

At age 25, when the SA midheaven reached conjunction with her Aquarius Sun in the 11th house, Anne became a nationally recognized leader of an alternative, holistic health movement (11th house); she also joined a group healing arts clinic. Anne's Sun rules her child-5th house. When the SA MC was conjunct her Sun, Anne had her second child; the birth was timed exactly by transiting Saturn in Leo conjunct natal Pluto in the 5th house. However, soon thereafter, Anne's husband started having an affair (transiting Saturn aspecting natal Venus opposite Pluto: relational complications, jealousy).

At age 30, during Anne's Saturn return (in the 7th house), she had increasingly serious marital problems, yet her professional practice with her husband was thriving. At the same time (age 30), SA Jupiter reached conjunction with Anne's ascendant, and she had a book published that earned her lasting recognition in her field. More than 20 years later, that book continues to sell today.

At age 35, when Anne had solar arc Mars square natal MC and solar arc Moon conjunct natal Pluto, she had an acrimonious divorce (Mars), emotional crisis (Moon-Pluto) and upheaval regarding her children (Pluto in Leo in the 5th house). She received her doctorate at age 38, when progressed Sun was conjunct Jupiter. It is astonishing how events unfold so closely linked to planetary symbolism.

When the SA MC was conjunct natal Venus in the 11th, Anne's daughter married. Let's introduce a little derived house analysis—most often used in horary astrology, but also very helpful in natal astrology. The 11th house is the 7th from the child-5th house; therefore it governs the child's relationship or marriage. Two years later, the SA MC opposed Pluto in the 5th, her daughter divorced and became a single mother. When SA Venus reached conjunction with Anne's ascendant, her daughter remarried, much more happily. Venus' meaning refers back to its natal placement in Anne's 11th house, the house of the child's marriage.

Anne remarried in the late 1980s when transiting Saturn in Capricorn squared her natal Saturn and Neptune in the 7th house—that is, under a hard aspect of Saturn. Her second marriage is much better than her first. We shouldn't assume that Saturn is a negative or malefic planetary influence.

Anne's Mercury in Capricorn conjunct the midheaven is a potent force: she is a tremendous writer. She wrote all her major works during transits of Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus to her natal Mercury. For the past few years, her writing had been dormant. Anne was in mild despair; there seemed to be nothing else to say or write. But I noted transiting Saturn in Cancer opposite natal Mercury. Could it be that fairly soon Anne

would once again be stirred to write? When Saturn turned retrograde and formed the second opposition to Mercury, she was contacted by a literary agent in New York about a book proposal. She threw herself into the new project with focus, energy and enthusiasm.

These kinds of retrospective life studies teach us to assess planetary symbols and the developmental tasks and phases they indicate. On this basis, it is possible to predict or anticipate future tasks and trends.

The Meaning of Events

If astrology's predictive methods are to be most helpful, it is important to avoid superficiality. Humanistic astrologers are not just concerned with whether events are good or bad. Rather, the goal is to understand how every phase of life is meaningful. Rudhyar said, "*Every event is accepted as a necessary phase of the ritual process of existence.*"⁴ We need to go below the surface of events, to the deeper dimension of meaning.

When I was 12 years old, I had SA Pluto sesquiquadrate my Sun (135° aspect), and a secondary progressed Moon-Mars opposition; on the day of a transiting Moon-Pluto conjunction, I was hit by a car and broke several bones. This event awakened me to the fragility of life (Pluto: emergencies, a brush with death). It was also a classic manifestation of Mars as the planet of mishaps and injuries. But looking more closely at this event, I was able to discern a deeper meaning.

Solar arc Jupiter was conjunct my 2nd house cusp, and transiting Jupiter opposed transiting Saturn in Taurus: I won a small financial settlement (2nd house and Taurus: money) that sat in a bank account until I was 21, which aided my development by enabling me to travel around and find myself for an extended period after college. At the time of the accident, transiting Saturn was stationary direct, exactly square my Moon, and SA Saturn was exactly semi-square (45° aspect) my Moon. Several nice nurses took good care of me (Moon: women, caregivers, nurturing) until my mother (Moon) arrived at the hospital, and she was especially tender and loving toward me. I grew closer in my relationship with my mother in the days and weeks after this accident. I had a beautiful experience of the mother archetype. All my needs were taken care of. Also, the Moon-Pluto conjunction in Virgo in my 12th house was relevant.

This was my first time inside a hospital (12th house) since my birth. In my hours in the emergency room, I witnessed many gravely ill or injured individuals. I became aware of the preciousness of life. Events are not black and white and may have deeper meaning

than apparent on the surface. None of this subtlety can be captured by an approach to astrology where we simply say “*that is bad*,” or “*this is good*.” The interpretation of a chart requires attention to the nuances of events, to what Alexander Ruperti calls “*the total uniqueness of each moment*.”⁵

Therapeutic Astrology

Recently, the primary image of the astrologer has been evolving from the traditional roles of prophet, psychic and oracle, to that of psychotherapist, life coach and spiritual guide. Many of us recognize the enormous potential of astrology as a therapeutic tool, a means of emotional healing and increasing self-awareness.

What makes astrology therapeutic is the working-through of material, facilitating forward movement and tangible changes in behavior and attitudes. We don't just tell people what is going to happen. We focus on process, not prediction. We make suggestions for action, and bring inner conflicts into awareness. A 45-year-old client named Ben was a devout follower of a guru and a strong meditator, but he was very undeveloped emotionally and in the relational realm. He had progressed Moon and Venus in Scorpio conjunct his descendant, opposite natal Moon on the ascendant. He was out of touch with his feelings, especially about women, and he had a limited capacity for honest communication. There was a woman in Ben's life, Christine, a single mother with two children, who had been cooking meals for him and showing a definite interest in loving and nurturing him. Ben's instinctual response was to reject her. When I pointed out that it seemed to be an important time for a deeper emotional relationship with a woman (Moon), Ben said, “*I was thinking of breaking up with her. But you're telling me that I should express my feelings to her more*.” I said, “*That wouldn't be such a bad idea*.” Ben's natal Moon squared Pluto in Leo in the 4th house; he had a lot of unresolved issues with his mother, a strong mother complex, which caused him to avoid deep emotional entanglement. It was hard for him to tell Christine when he was angry or irritated with her or felt suffocated, and he reacted instead by withdrawing from her. We discussed the importance of telling someone how you feel. This was like a revelation to him. Emotional intelligence was clearly a major focus of Ben's current growth in consciousness.

The Moon, Object Relations and Patterns of Attachment

It is helpful to understand the Moon in connection to the developmental issues studied by psychologists. I view the Moon as the symbol of a person's earliest experiences of attachment with mother or primary

caregivers. In the language of psychoanalytic object relations theory, Moon symbolizes the quality of one's early *object relationships*—the experience of caregivers (and other people in general) as either warm, responsive, nurturing, comforting and gratifying, or as cold, unresponsive, hostile and rejecting. Moon represents the quality of the early *holding environment* one experienced, the extent to which needs were fulfilled or frustrated. This becomes a template for future interpersonal attachment and relationships.

My work is influenced by John Bowlby's Attachment Theory.⁶ I view the Moon's aspects in terms of secure or insecure attachment style in childhood and adulthood. Attachment refers to the fact that one of our earliest instinctual needs is to be securely held and comforted, and to maintain proximity to caregivers. These basic needs, when thwarted, become the source of enduring emotional distress. Briefly stated, natal aspects of the Moon to Sun, Venus and Jupiter generally show a secure attachment with a reliable mother or caregiver, which is reflected in a feeling of safety and well-being. In contrast, stressful lunar aspects to Mars can show an irritable or volatile mother-infant bond.

Moon-Pluto aspects often show the conflicted patterns of what Bowlby called insecure-ambivalent attachment with its alternating cycles of intense hostility and desperate clinging to others. This can manifest in stormy, tumultuous relationships in which one is often flooded with rage. In contrast, Moon-Uranus aspects can denote insecure or avoidant attachment with its characteristic coolness, aloofness, and unavailability. Counter-dependent behavior is used to preserve a tenuous attachment because we fear our demands or attempts to achieve greater closeness will drive the attachment figure away from us. Moon-Neptune aspects can manifest as feelings of merger or fusion with mother or caregiver, a poorly attuned caregiver who is oblivious to the child's needs; or the child may feel compelled to rescue the mother or caregiver. In adulthood these patterns of attachment are reenacted as characteristic styles of relating to others. I'm not going to present examples here, but simply ask you to test for yourself my theory about the Moon's aspects and patterns of attachment.

To go more deeply into therapeutic astrology, we need training in counseling skills, developmental theory, and diagnosis. Then we can apply astrology to the problems of couples, to help people suffering from depression and anxiety. To work with a person with prominent placement of Neptune (such as Neptune aspecting the Sun), it's helpful to know something about alcoholism or addiction, and how to recognize patterns of denial. To work with material pertaining to a client's 4th house, we need to understand family systems and dynamics. It is also important to gain skill in

the art of vocational counseling, one of the areas where astrology can be most helpful.

A woman named Tess, in her mid-thirties, had been trying for years to finish college, where she was majoring in film-making and anthropology (after changing her major four times), and struggling to support herself as a gardener. She was depressed and discouraged about the lack of career prospects in her current field of study. Her idealism was foundering on the rocks of poverty. Her chart featured a Taurus mid-heaven, Mars and Saturn in Taurus in the 9th house, and progressed Moon in Taurus approaching Mars and Saturn. I asked if she had ever considered studying more practical subjects such as accounting, economics, or even international finance and economic development (Taurus and 9th house themes). She was very excited by this idea; she went to her college advisor and mapped out a new course of study. She signed up to go to school in Mexico for a year to study Spanish, business and macroeconomics. Later she decided she wanted to do graduate work on the economic impact of globalization. Our conversation about the Taurus symbolism of her birth chart was a turning point. It is amazing how the simplest astrology can reveal the most potent insights.

Another area where astrology can be most therapeutic is in relationship counseling. Divorce and broken relationships are such a problem in our society. Astrologers are in a unique position to shed light on relationship dynamics, on personality clashes or affinities. We can see when transits (for example, Mars transits) are likely to trigger little arguments, and thus we can help keep these in perspective, rather than allowing them to fan into huge infernos of discord that tear people apart. It is important to not overreact during some brief transit that will be over quickly. Within couple dynamics, it is helpful to understand what transits each person is going through individually. I do use composite charts and synastry, but I focus more on looking at each individual chart. We can see what archetypes are being activated and what qualities one is likely to project onto a spouse or partner.

Transits through the 7th house always shed light on current dynamics in friendships, business alliances or marriage. When Neptune transits the 7th house, one may feel up in the air or undecided about a relationship; there may be patterns of denial or avoidance; a partner or spouse may be dependent, spacey or ungrounded. Transiting Saturn in the 7th house might indicate it is time to settle down with somebody, make a deeper commitment or face adversities in relationships with a mature attitude; we might once and for all, face our fears about fully accepting a life-partner. Mars transits in the 7th house correspond to times of heightened energy, sexuality or friction and

discord in relationships. When Jupiter transits the 7th house, one connects with helpful, generous, educated people; relationships and social life improve. Transiting Pluto in the 7th house, may symbolize relationships with powerful, magnetic people or relationships featuring jealousy, mistrust, vindictiveness or power struggles.

A man named Chris was happily living with a woman named Pam when transiting Pluto entered his 7th house. Then his father died, and his elderly mother needed care and attention. Chris wanted to move his Mom into the house with him and Pam. His experience was that Pam suddenly changed, becoming cold, mean, resentful and rejecting. They separated. I felt sad about that because I believe the relationship might have survived had they been able to work with the archetypal dynamics involved. Many relationships can go to a much deeper place if we're willing to tolerate, or even embrace, the negativity and shadow that comes up in all of us at times.

Developmental Tasks

Therapeutic astrologers help clients understand the planets psychologically, as symbols of inner drives, rather than as forces that strictly determine what happens to us. Instead of reinforcing a sense of powerlessness, a therapeutic astrologer delineates a person's developmental tasks—many of which are generic tasks that everyone experiences. Everyone has Venus tasks of social fulfillment and Mars tasks of expressing initiative and drives. There are tasks of planning and goal-setting at each phase of Jupiter's cycle, and the form-building and form-sustaining tasks of the Saturn cycle. We can map out for our clients the maturational tests and turning points in the life cycle—for example, the early adult transition in the early twenties during the Saturn square, when we establish our own residence and occupation; the increased commitments and responsibilities of the Saturn return; and so forth.

Therapeutic astrologers approach transits not as events but as developmental processes in which clients can participate. Years ago I spoke to Alice, a schizophrenic relative of mine who had been institutionalized off and on since her early twenties. She was starting her Saturn return. Her Saturn-Neptune conjunction symbolized problems with maturation in early adulthood. She asked what everyone else asks us: "*What is going to happen to me?*" I explained the significance of the Saturn return. I said, "*I don't know the future. But I think it's time for you to decide if you can take care of yourself and become an independent adult.*" I noted that natal Saturn and Neptune were conjunct, so her Saturn return would hopefully be a process of grounding; she needed to take her

medication to avoid becoming spacey and delusional (Neptune). Also, religion or spirituality might play some role in giving her faith and strength to resolve her illness. Saturn-Neptune were in Libra, opposite her Moon in the 7th house. Maybe there was hope for her to find more meaningful relationships, perhaps even love, in this next period of her life. Notice that I was not predicting. I was delineating themes and possibilities. Soon after this conversation, Alice was discharged from the hospital, became a born-again Christian and enrolled in law school, where she met her husband. She stayed on her medication, knowing she needed this to regulate herself. Eventually she was able to become a lawyer, fulfilling the potential of Sun-Jupiter in the 9th house. To everyone who knew Alice, these accomplishments were astonishing. Here astrology was utilized therapeutically by emphasizing her responsibility for fulfilling the grounding and self-mastering potentials of the Saturn return.

Positive Evolutionary Language

The language used in interpreting a chart is crucial. In my work, I never use the terms, *malefic* or *afflicted*, to describe planetary placements or aspects. For example, a planet in hard aspect to Saturn is usually considered afflicted. I believe this language scares and disempowers us and our clients. If I say “*Your Mars is afflicted*,” or “*You have a weak, debilitated Venus*,” I am implying the person is inexorably flawed and can do nothing to change or improve her life. If I had told Alice, “*Your Saturn is afflicted and weakened by its conjunction with Neptune*,” I would be implying that she was helpless to change her situation.

Focus on the Present

In therapeutic astrology, focusing on the present is most helpful. What is happening now? What steps does this client need to take now? How can the person move forward now? I like to keep my astrology grounded and practical. I find this more useful than talking about how our problems are caused by something that happened in a past life. And the key to giving useful, practical advice is to follow Saturn’s movement through the chart. We can endure anything, any daunting Pluto or Neptune transit, if we keep grounded at the level of Saturn.

Gifts of Saturn

Saturn teaches us to stay steady through it all. Obstacles will inevitably appear in our path, but we need to just keep doing our work and stay focused. That’s the key to positive evolution during this time when all hell is breaking loose on our planet. All of us periodically have transits of Saturn. If we are resigned and do nothing, Saturn will crunch us. Our weaknesses

will grow more apparent. But if we approach these transits as opportunities to work hard to accomplish specific goals, our effort will pay off, sooner or later.

Many astrologers still view Saturn as the *greater malefic*, the planet of sorrows, suffering, obstructions and failures. These astrologers cringe when they see an upcoming Saturn transit and may try to hide out until the *malefic* influence is over. These are people who never accomplish anything. In my opinion, it is not acceptable to just wait around until something benefic or easy occurs. Master astrologers are not afraid of Saturn; they use Saturn energy to focus and achieve their goals. Saturn symbolizes our urge to achieve stability and get organized. Saturn shows us where we need to be grounded, make choices and commitments and handle our responsibilities. We come to understand that Saturn isn’t just something that happens to us. It is something inside us. Approaching Saturn in this way, it need not operate as a malefic planet.

Each phase of Saturn’s cycle refers to the themes of its natal position. If you have Saturn in the 2nd house, Saturn’s major phases refer to stages in your quest for financial stability. If you have natal Saturn in the 6th house, the Saturn cycle describes stages of your evolution in health, employment, and acquiring skills. I have Saturn in my 3rd house of speech and communication skills. In childhood at my first Saturn square, I had a speech impediment that led to shyness and inhibition at school. By working hard, I mastered the speech problem and went on to become a public speaker. Saturn is the planet of accomplishment and mastery that is the result of sustained effort. Saturn teaches us to master the lessons of the earth plane, to be patient, persevere, fulfill responsibilities and achieve our goals.

Saturn represents a process that the alchemists described as *coagulatio*, the solidification of liquids and vapors into material form; it represents coming into form in a specific place and time, becoming fully embodied, grounded and practical through work, self-discipline and determination.

Our next example is a 27-year-old man named Ted. I had previously done consultations for Ted’s father, Neil, who had Sun-Venus in Taurus, made a fortune in tech stocks and retired at age 50. His son Ted dropped out of college at 19 and went into technology sales, expecting to become a tycoon like his father. Ted had Sun-Mercury-Mars in Capricorn, and Saturn conjunct Moon in Leo in the 2nd house; he was focused on career, money and material success. Early in Ted’s career the sky was the limit, his earnings soared in 2000 when Jupiter and Saturn in Taurus were conjunct natal Jupiter in the 11th house. The industry (11th house) he worked in was very profitable; life was

abundant and full. But by 2004, the wheel of time had turned. Ted's progressed Full Moon in Leo was exactly conjunct natal and progressed Saturn. His progressed Sun and Moon both aspected Saturn precisely. Although Ted was working long hours, his earnings that year were one-third of his former income. He was learning tough Saturnian lessons, facing limits and focusing on survival and bare essentials, rather than a life of luxury. This was the reality he had to come to grips with now. Two years earlier, when solar arc Saturn was conjunct his IC, Ted bought a house, so he was responsible for a monthly mortgage payment. He longed to travel and enjoy the good life. But he had to keep working to sustain the life he had created. Ted was experiencing the alchemical *coagulatio*, coming into form in a particular location, in the new contracted economy of Silicon Valley.

Under progressed Full Moon conjunct Saturn, Ted realized he must work to survive. His chart suggested that even if for the time being, his lifestyle was more modest, he could also strive to find fulfillment through friendships and relationships (Sun-Mercury-Mars in the 7th house). Ted wanted to get married (Sun in the 7th house) and to have children (Moon-Saturn in Leo). The progressed Full Moon conjunct Saturn awakened in him the archetype of the Father. I asked him to view his current challenges as tests forging a strong character that would enable him to endure all adversities and sustain a family. In a case such as this, astrology enables us to transform a difficult, painful situation into one that is felt to be meaningful, purposeful and even necessary.

Ted had natal Sun in Capricorn square Pluto in Libra, and while transiting Saturn in Cancer aspected the natal Sun-Pluto square, Ted experienced strong challenges to his sense of specialness or entitlement. A part of him believed that earning a lot of money would be easy. Meanwhile, some of his better-educated friends (Capricorn planets in the 7th house) were advancing professionally and earning more money. He felt sad and humbled by this. I have found that during some transits or progressions involving the symbolism of Sun-Pluto, we experience defeats of the ego, narcissistic injuries, challenges that wound our sense of specialness and greatness.⁷ Astrological understanding helped Ted meet these challenges with maturity, and unfold his potential. Soon after his progressed Full Moon, Ted became engaged; note that Saturn, the planet contacted by his progressed Full Moon, rules his Sun-Mercury-Mars in the 7th house. Astrological understanding was very helpful to Ted, because it showed him that even though he was experiencing a painful narcissistic wound, this Saturn transit to his Sun-Pluto square was a meaningful phase of transformation of the self.

Astrology and Archetypes

Now let's turn to the meeting between astrology and depth psychology. Since Jung's discovery of the archetypes of the collective unconscious, astrology has a new basis. Planetary symbolism can now be linked to timeless mythic themes, characters, and patterns of human experience. Returning to my initial theme, I think that ultimately what we can predict through astrology is the emergence of the archetypes, such as Plutonian Death-Rebirth; the enrapturing Venusian Beloved, the Anima or Animus; the Neptunian Messiah, Savior, or Victim; and the Saturnian Crone or Kronos, the Wise Old Man or Woman. Asteroid transits manifest goddesses Ceres-Demeter, Juno-Hera, Vesta-Hestia and Pallas-Athena.

Depth psychology gives astrologers a mythic language that deepens our work, while transits and progressions enable us to precisely anticipate the appearance of the archetypes identified by Jung. Each archetype is a pattern of transformation within the unconscious. Earlier we saw how contacts to the natal Moon evoke the Mother archetype. Remember Ben, the man with Moon square Pluto who wanted to dump his girlfriend, who was challenged to transform his experience of emotions and of women.

The archetypal Hero or Heroine or Warrior is often constellated during transits involving Mars. While transiting Pluto squared natal Mars in Pisces, George, a gay man in a long-term relationship, grappled with sex addiction, expressed through a series of anonymous sexual encounters at steamy bath houses (Mars in Pisces). George had a dream of wild horses breaking out of their corral, running free, with fiery steam flaring from their nostrils. He felt he needed to experience unrestrained libido, and this was symbolized within the unconscious. This is consistent with Pluto-Mars symbolism. But the process didn't end there. He felt immense remorse, and feared he had endangered himself and his partner through exposure to STDs. Was it safe to let horses run wild? While meditating on the dream, George saw one of the wild horses turn into a camel, an austere animal that can endure dry periods in the desert, representing a part of him that can renounce or delay gratification. The shift from wild horses to a camel, reflected a significant internal shift. It is fascinating to observe planetary transits translated into symbols within the unconscious—symbols that release immense energies within us.

Later George dreamed that a man was in the water wrestling with an enormous snake that was wrapped around his body. This, too, reflects Mars in Pisces: a mythic battle in water. This dream represents the heroic masculine principle grappling with the primitive instinctual psyche. In the eternal myth of the Hero,

the Hero slays the Dragon, Monster, Gorgon or Serpent deity through a primordial act of phallic self-assertion. Marduk slays the dragon, Tiamat. Zeus slays the serpent, Typhon. George was enveloped in a regressive union with the energies of the unconscious, with what Jung called the instinctual psyche. One must be able to experience instinctual life force, without being consumed or overwhelmed by it. George was involved in a Plutonian transmutation of his Mars energy. This example shows how astrology illuminates not just events, but also patterns of transformation that tend to occur within each archetype.

The transformation of the self is portrayed in the ancient symbol of the ouroboros, the serpent or dragon that eats its own tail. A related symbol is the caduceus with its two coiled snakes, symbolizing cosmic energy and its microcosmic form in the human body, the kundalini. George's dream of wrestling with the Great Serpent represents an encounter with the numinous, regenerative power of the deep unconscious and its innate instinct toward transformation.

With astrology, we hold a key to real transformations of the self. It teaches us to view transformation of personality as a lifelong process. Our transits and progressions describe a series of passages and developmental challenges and lessons that transform us. If we live through each transit and each phase of life with consciousness, at any moment there can be an explosion of light in the heart, a sudden illumination. This is what occurs through a lifelong study of astrology, and dedication to the tasks it reveals to us. For astrologers, this illumination can occur each time we open ourselves to the sacred interpretive moment in which everything we need to know is revealed to us.

Astrology and Meditation

This occurs when we combine astrology and meditation, approaching astrology with a quiet mind, a contemplative attitude. To do this, begin by opening your breath. Try this now. Come to center. Now, draw or visualize your natal chart, and your current transits and progressions. As you imagine or draw these planets, feel them. For example, feel the significance of your Sun's placement by sign and house. Feel how the Sun's aspects denote various features and faculties of the complex, multi-dimensional person that you are. What does your chart indicate about how your individuality (Sun) can most clearly express itself? What actions are called forth by the current transiting planets? Reflecting on your chart, see who you are and imagine who you could become. Visualize outcomes and possibilities. Rather than relying on what books and experts tell you, find the truth of planetary symbols in the living moment, accessing your intuition.

As you meditate on your chart, practice the technique of symbol amplification, approaching planetary symbols with openness to multiple interpretations. As you consider each chart symbol ask, *What is the purpose of this? What is the highest expression of this planet? What is the secret intention of this process?* Actively shape the meaning of what unfolds. Astrology is not a practice of resignation to fate and cosmic powers. It is a practice of setting your own intention, navigating consciously, forming a vision of how our evolution wants to unfold in this moment.⁸✧

Endnotes

1. Rudhyar, 1967.
2. Rudhyar, 1993, wrote:
[H]uman experience is essentially cyclic and it unfolds according to structural principles. However varied men's experiences may appear to be, they nevertheless fall within the limits of a series of what might be called "archetypal" meanings... [T] here are only a certain number of basic meanings to be gathered by a human being in his [or her] lifetime, and these meanings can be seen in terms of structural and cyclic sequence. [T]o experience events is one thing; to release from them vital and creative meanings is another. What counts, spiritually speaking, is the harvest of meanings a person is able to gather from these many and varied life experiences... [O]nly those experiences from which meaning has been extracted count spiritually (pp. 13–15).
3. The exact rate of the solar arc varies slightly depending on the time of the year of your birth. The Sun travels a little more slowly during summer months, and thus, over time, if your birthday is in the spring or summer your accumulated solar arc will be slightly less than a degree per year of life.
4. Rudhyar, 1973, p. 385.
5. Ruperti, 1978, p. 7.
6. Holmes, 1993.
7. Kohut & Wolf, 1978.
8. Bogart, 2002. For more on this approach, please refer to my book, *Astrology and Meditation: The Fearless Contemplation of Change*.

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A Problem-Solving Focus: Key Questions to Ask the Client

by Donna Cunningham

This article addresses the need to make chart consultations more effective by creating dialogue about the key issues and situations a client is facing. Noted astrologer and author, Donna Cunningham, poses a series of questions that can help the client clarify the difficulties he or she is facing. Such questions invite the client to consider how their actions might contribute to the problem, while also encouraging the client to weigh a variety of options. Cunningham shows us how to support clients in identifying resources that will begin to shift their problems to more positive outcomes.

While some clients come to astrologers for self-knowledge or out of curiosity, in today's economy they are becoming rare. The majority of them come to us because of some problem they are trying to resolve. They may feel overwhelmed or defeated by the major issue or issues in their lives, so they are looking outside themselves for answers. We do them no favor when we couch our answers primarily in astrological terms, e.g., "The problem is Saturn, ma'am." Bombarding clients with planetary explanations creates the impression that they can blame the planets for their difficulties. It even lets their families off the hook for a while. "It's not my husband's fault after all, it was Pluto all the time!" However, this leads to no real solutions or improvement, only to fatalism.

When clients use a chart consultation to look inwardly for the source of difficulties, it can be an important problem-solving tool. We can lead clients to explore their major issues through insights that the chart provides. In doing this, we can give them a more detached perspective and motivate them to take action to resolve the difficulties they face. In order for the session to provide a matrix for resolving issues, we need to hone our skills in identifying and working through

problems. One helpful problem-solving process consists of assisting clients examine four key questions:

- 1) What is the problem?
- 2) What is your contribution to the problem?
- 3) What are your options?
- 4) Where can you turn for help?

In this article, we will learn how to help clients sort out these considerations. First, however, there are some questions to ask yourself.

Asking, Not Telling— The Need for Dialogue

Many astrologers are more accustomed to telling than to asking—to monologue rather than dialogue. An extreme example was an astrologer who gave a demonstration at a conference I attended. As he assured us that this was the way that he handled his private sessions, he conducted a one-hour, rapid-fire tap dance around the volunteer's horoscope. Only at the end, did he indicate that he would now accept a question or two from her. This was not astrological counseling, it was a performance. In no sense could it be considered problem-solving. Few of us would exclude the client in that fashion. However, a great many consultations are closer to a monologue than to a dialogue. This style often arises out of a lack of understanding of the importance of asking the right questions and listening attentively to the answers.

One hurdle to getting the information needed for successful problem solving is the belief that we astrologers shouldn't have to ask any questions. We often buy into the public's belief that we should know everything from the chart. Yet, we have as much right to ask questions as any other professional. People wouldn't expect a doctor to know all about their illness if given only their lab results. They wouldn't

demand that a lawyer draw up a mutually agreeable divorce settlement with no more than their financial statement.

Certainly, natal aspects and transits or progressions give you a wealth of useful information about clients and the conflicts they are experiencing. However, specific details of the situation and the evolutionary level of expression of aspects are not revealed. In a counseling session—and a chart consultation certainly is a counseling session—we need details in order to be more helpful. Ask questions like these:

- 1) What, exactly, do you mean by that?
- 2) Could you give me an example?
- 3) Can you say more about that?
- 4) How often does that happen?
- 5) Is it worse sometimes than others?
- 6) What seems to make it better?

Those of you with counseling background may see this list as elementary, but it may be helpful to those who haven't had the opportunity to study counseling formally or to work with a seasoned astrologer as a mentor. To hone your interviewing skills, start by paying attention to the questions you ask clients. Note which ones are productive, and compare them to the ones that are unproductive. Ask yourself:

- 1) Are your questions open-ended, or do they only result in yes-no answers? (Open-ended questions stimulate discussion.)
- 2) Are they leading questions, subtly guiding clients to give answers you want or feel comfortable with?
- 3) Are your questions relevant to the client's issues or are you off on a tangent that is more interesting to you?
- 4) Do you believe you have the right to ask clients for details, or do you think the chart holds all answers?
- 5) Have you made the client comfortable with asking your questions about anything the chart shows?

Although I will pose dozens of questions in the following sections, they aren't meant to be used word-for-word. Rather, they are lines of questioning to pursue, with sensitivity to the personality of the individual you are addressing. Do note, also, that sometimes the most productive source of information is no question at all, but a simple observation without any attempt at interpreting what you've noticed. Let's say that you've given the client a cup of tea, and you note that her hands are shaking. You might be tempted to infer that she is anxious about the consultation and to ask her about that.

Suppose that instead you simply say, "*Your hands are shaking,*" and wait for a response. So then she tells you she has a mild neurological problem, and that the shaking is why she has so much difficulty in job

interviews and in meeting new people—two of the concerns that have brought her to the consultation. Now, that is useful information and will color what you advise her.

Key Question #1: What Is the Problem?

Establishing Communication with the Client

In order to answer this, the foundation question, we must first assess whether we are listening, rather than doing a monologue, and whether the client is really opening up. Communication is rarer than we recognize. Most social conversation serves to keep intimacy at bay, rather than to reveal what is under the surface. Even when people go for help, they generally conceal more than they reveal. In part, they do this because they want to look good and not be judged.

Another reason that people communicate little useful information is because they do not have the slightest idea how to convey what is bothering them. If they had a clear picture of the problem, they'd be halfway to solving it. Your first job is to clarify the issues. Listen to the following opening of a chart session:

Astrologer: What do you want to discuss in our time together? What's going on for you now?

Client: Well, I'm worried about my marriage.

Astrologer: What seems to be the trouble?

Client: My husband and I aren't getting along.

Astrologer: That's not surprising, given that Uranus is crossing your descendant. It will finish in about six months, so you should see some change by then.

Do you see that no meaningful information was communicated in this set of exchanges? The client's statements are vague—typically so. When she says that she and her husband aren't getting along, we don't know whether she means they are exchanging raised eyebrows and sighs, or whether he has put her in the hospital twice with broken bones. By accepting a vague statement, you lose crucial information about the seriousness of the conflict and the ways it is being expressed.

The astrologer's statement about Uranus on the descendant at the end of the exchange also provides no information to help the client—it only raises her anxiety level. The astrologer has moved too quickly into interpretation, perhaps due to anxiety about dealing with upsetting material. A more helpful track would have been to ask, "*What sort of difficulties are the two of you experiencing?*"

Granted, many clients are reticent to talk about such private concerns. There may be shame or embarrassment when the fights are serious or when their sex life or finances are involved. In ordinary conversation, we are uncomfortable about prying into other's secrets, so we allow vague allusions and euphemisms to pass unchallenged. As professionals, we must learn to put our discomfort aside and also to help clients be comfortable in opening up to us. Sometimes merely acknowledging that they may be finding it hard to discuss such personal matters helps, as does reassurance that the session is confidential.

Chief Complaint Versus Core Problem

A red herring on the trail of answering Question #1 is that clients will often give symptoms rather than the real problem. They may say they are depressed, when really the trouble is that their marriage is ending. They may express hopelessness about the future and lack of a will to live, when the true issue is unprocessed grief over the death of a loved one. They may complain of chronic fatigue, when the real problem is a life-style of relentless workaholicism that has depleted body and soul.

In medicine, the presenting symptom is called the *chief complaint*. We would never want to minimize the symptom—the workaholic above truly feels depleted, and the bereaved individual may really not want to go on living. However, if we accept such statements at face value and only address the symptom—if we never look to the core of the issue—then our recommendations and results will be superficial. That's like putting bandages on tumors.

For instance, when presented with the complaint of chronic fatigue, you might be tempted to reply, “*You're tired? Well, why not set aside a week or two to rest? You deserve it.*” All true, but anyone, including Mom, could tell the workaholic to take time off. Chronic fatigue sufferers, however, are often driven individuals who need a complete life-style overhaul in order to recover.

By analyzing the birth chart and transits, you can identify the underlying attitudes, work patterns, and long-range consequences of this life style. There is something about a chart consultation—maybe the detachment it provides, maybe the divine dimension—that often enables clients to hear consequences and take them seriously. Further, astrological analysis can provide valuable information about the source of the attitudes and behaviors creating the workaholicism. Finally, it can help in vocational planning, finding a way out of the pattern.

What Issue is the Problem Designed to Solve?

One of the teachings of *est* was, “*Your problem is just a solution to another problem.*” That is to say, often the symptom, as distressing as it might be, serves a valid purpose in the psyche. Some dysfunctional traits are actually highly functional once you untangle their true intent. They protect or excuse the sufferer from things that are even less pleasurable or more frightening.

This is one of several reasons it is important to focus on clients' expressed concerns, rather than by jumping in with all the problems you detect. You may regard a particular life-style or pattern of behavior as unhealthy. If it is not a problem to the client, it isn't your business, and your judgments will be resented. Suppose you see difficult midheaven features in a woman's chart and conclude that she has serious, unresolved issues with her father. Unless you can demonstrate that these issues relate to the concerns she is raising, leave it alone. If, however, she is asking about a pattern of conflicts with her male bosses, then those chart features are relevant and can be productively addressed.

The tendency for the symptom to be an unconscious effort to resolve another, deeper issue is particularly true of chronic physical ailments—generally seen in the 1st or 12th house, rather than the 6th. (Illnesses connected with the 6th may be related to life work crises.) I am often impressed with how well the body says *no* for us when we cannot. Friends, partners, relatives, co-workers, and society as a whole will sympathize if you're too ill to carry out a particular function, but may judge you or try to make you feel guilty if you just say no. Thus, those who are uncomfortable with setting limits may develop psychosomatic symptoms or flare-ups of physical ailments when they can't refuse an intolerable demand.

When a chronic health problem or other limiting condition is addressed, ask yourself what purpose the problem may be serving. Suppose a young mother with several small children comes to you with a complaint of severe menstrual cramps and PMS, starting after the birth of the first child. She has the Moon in Aries squared by Mars in Cancer. If ever there were a signature of PMS, that is one! However, simply giving the astrological interpretation doesn't solve anything. She could then conclude that her PMS is just something to live through until menopause—which she probably expects will be hellish, too!

What underlying issues does this square suggest that might not only clarify the pain and its purpose but also lead to some solutions? We can see conflict

between the lunar and Martian functions in three ways here: the Moon is in Mars' sign, Mars is in the Moon's sign, and the Moon and Mars are square. Obviously, we might suspect some anger about nurturing and about the feminine roles of wife and mother. In getting more details, you may find that one week per month in bed with cramps is her only time off from the demands of her family. She even gets a little nurturing during that time from her husband and female relatives. The physical suffering is a high price to pay, but it does serve a purpose. If you took the symptom away, what would replace it?

Unless another means of getting time away from the role she finds so frustrating is found, there appears to be little incentive for the body to heal itself. Discussing the symptom in terms of the underlying issues and exploring other possibilities can be the catalyst for a change in lifestyle. Perhaps this woman would be happier working and having a live-in *au pair* to handle the housework and grittier aspects of childcare. You'd want to explore the various possibilities for an arrangement that would relieve her of the lunar roles she is finding so intolerable.

Discovering the link between the painful symptom and deeper life issues is often an important revelation to the person in front of you. Usually neither the symptom nor the underlying issue is outside the person's awareness. However, the realization that the unaddressed issue is one cause of the symptom that is causing so much suffering can be a turning point. The session becomes a breakthrough moment that galvanizes the motivation to face and heal the underlying issues. You then need to refocus the problem-solving efforts to explore solutions for those issues.

Key Question # 2: What Is Your Contribution to the Problem?

Key Question #2 would almost never be spoken literally. In fact, it might be too straight shooting unless one is working with a truth-talking Sagittarius or a detached Aquarius. Few of us like to face our own contribution to our toughest problems. Thus, this second line of questioning should be pursued with compassion, so that the client doesn't feel judged or patronized.

In dealing with a difficult relationship, for example, I'd probably say something like, "*You know, we'd all like to believe that we're blameless in these conflicts. We love to think that we're just innocent saints, and the other person is the villain. But the truth is, it takes two to tango, and sometimes we do things that*

contribute to the problem without really being aware of it. I wonder if we could take a look at your part in this." Having defused the person's natural defensiveness, hopefully, a productive discussion can ensue. The two charts can then be a reference point for discovering attitudes and traits the client brings to the relationship that contribute to the conflict.

If the question of the client's contribution to the situation is handled well, it can provide a source of rich insight as well as lead to a direction for change. When done gently, the astrologer can call people on their behavior in a way that no one in the situation can. If we do it lovingly, we can tell people things their best friends wouldn't, given the detachment the horoscope provides. For instance, one aggressive New Age practitioner, an Aquarius/Aries combination with some knowledge of astrology, was able to see that her pushiness could be turning business away when I demonstrated it through the chart. Humor can also be a source of self-confrontation for the client. However, make it heart-centered humor, laughing with rather than at the person.

The Red Herring of Blame

Another red herring on the path to fuller understanding is placing the blame outside oneself. Where someone else is involved, clients often present a litany of complaints about how the other party has been abusive, exploitive, insensitive or deceptive. The grievance may have gone on for years, while the long-suffering client has bent over backward to make Mom, spouse, child, or boss happy. It is easy for helping professionals, astrologers included, to make the mistake of viewing the sainted client as the victim and the other party as the bad guy. Fortunately, as a young social worker, I was able to meet enough of the so-called villains first hand to know that clients are rarely as blameless or the abuse as unprovoked as their stories would have you believe.

We should not allow clients to remain stuck in blaming others or the planets for their problems. Blaming can be a comforting—and exceedingly human—response, but it is only a temporary relief. The trouble is that blaming is a passive response and leads to the conclusion that nothing can be done. When the fault is apparently outside yourself—it's the boss, your mate, or Neptune—then you are powerless to alter the situation. You can't be expected to do anything about it, but you also stew ineffectively.

That same anger can be channeled usefully into change. After all, Mars is the planet that represents anger, but it also represents action. Generally, anger is a useful signal that some action is required. Anger is uncomfortable, but can serve as motivation to change.

Blaming others undercuts motivation and diverts anger into the more passive response of frustration. We disempower clients when our language or implied belief in the power of the planets allows them to blame their horoscopes. While momentarily gratifying, blaming the stars or other people is no solution.

Four Ways Clients May Contribute to their Problems

Faced with the question of how they might be contributing, clients often genuinely don't have a clue. They may give such saintly sounding answers as, "Oh, I guess it's my fault for being so good to him," or, "I'm just too easy-going." Such responses are face-saving, but not productive of solutions. The chart, however, is a rich source of clues to the part that clients play in the situation. Remember that they are likely to be on their best behavior with you.

For instance, individuals with Neptune in the 7th or a Venus-Neptune aspect may be involved in rescuing or enabling others, but that doesn't make them Mother Teresa. Instead, their co-dependent patterns may have a variety of payoffs, such as bolstering their own self-esteem and simultaneously binding the other person to them. Rescuing can be an unconscious sabotage of another's growth so that the rescuer continues to feel needed.

You will be more able to tell what they are actually contributing by analyzing the houses and planets involved in the areas of life you are discussing. We are different at work from at home or with relatives than with love interests, and the chart reflects those differences. Here is where astrology has a major advantage over other counseling modalities. The traditional counselor may take months to penetrate the mask of good behavior.

As the chart can illuminate, there are four major ways people contribute to chronic conditions that limit their lives and happiness: *attitudes*, *projections*, *perpetrations*, and *choices*. Questions to help you sort out these factors are:

- 1) What *attitudes* and beliefs underlie and contribute to the dysfunction?
- 2) In what ways does the client *project* these attitudes and beliefs onto the outer world, recreating the problem pattern?
- 3) What *perpetrations* are involved—that is, how does the client's behavior evoke problematic interactions?
- 4) What *mistaken choices* is the client making that result in these unwanted consequences?

In this series, one question leads to the next in an orderly progression. For example, by discovering the

underlying attitudes, it is easier to see how outer reality is perceived according to core beliefs. Core beliefs attract experiences that recreate the beliefs. In undergoing those experiences, our actions and our choices stem from those same attitudes. Let's explore how these factors can contribute to the problem and how changing them can lead to healthier solutions. Because changing our attitudes and beliefs is the key to changing outcomes, we will explore their role in the greatest depth.

People with Pluto in the 10th, can have difficulty with bosses and even wind up being targeted in political struggles in the workplace. Yet, the pattern of being targeted did not arise in the workplace, such individuals brought it along when they were hired, contributing to the situation through beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that create conflicts with their supervisors. The person who has been to the school of hard knocks can be bitter, negative, and cynical—traits that hardly endear them to others. Many Pluto dominated individuals are intensely emotional, and they can seethe with undercurrents, easily take offense, and be secretive. These qualities can make such people unapproachable on the job, setting them apart and making it hard to discuss routine work conflicts in an easy, open manner. Unable to resolve differences normally, the boss may well wind up letting such employees go.

Attitudes

Very often, the problem is not so much in the situation as in our attitudes toward it. One older couple in a retirement community may be delighted to be among peers and appreciative of the conveniences the setting provides. Another couple in the very same development may be miserable, feeling isolated from family and society and resentful of confirmation that they are growing old. One vice-president may feel fortunate and grateful for the same job that leaves another vice-president in a business feeling dead-ended. In both cases, the situation is the same or similar, but the emotional experience is totally different.

The second couple and the second vice-president regard their situation as a problem. Their attitudes are making them miserable. Furthermore, those attitudes go on to create further misery, as people act out their frustrations or negative beliefs on others in their living or work situations. An attitude adjustment can sometimes be all that is needed to make a major difference in the comfort level for all concerned.

As an outsider with some perceived authority, you can be a cosmic chiropractor, providing the needed attitude adjustment. One method is the technique called reframing in NeuroLinguistic Programming

(familarly called NLP). In reframing, you shake up the client's perceptions of reality by giving an entirely different view of the same situation. If done effectively, it produces a deep change in the client's perceptions, behavior, and comfort level. A short course or several workshops in NLP can enhance your counseling skills greatly.¹

Actions

Attitudes create actions, because our belief systems guide our behavior. If we believe that people won't accept us, we act in ways that create a lack of acceptance. If we believe we will fail at a job interview, that lack of confidence makes us come across as less desirable candidates than others who believe they will succeed. If we are suspicious and mistrustful of others, those constant suspicions can ultimately make others so resentful that they *do* betray us. If we believe that we will inevitably have to shoulder most of the responsibility for the family or the workload on the job, sure enough, we wind up having to do just that. These are metaphysical principles, but there is nothing intangible about the ways we make things work out just the way we believe they will. There are specific, concrete behaviors that make our beliefs a reality, and you can help clients examine what they are.

Perpetrations

The more destructive actions that arise out of attitudes and beliefs are called perpetrations. Often they are cases of doing unto others before they do unto you. Those who have studied Chiron often say that where Chiron is in the chart, we have suffered a wounding. Unfortunately, in the areas where we are wounded, we may unconsciously wound others, through the shadow side of our Chiron sign. People with Chiron in water signs often find that the wounding is in boundaries, especially the emotional ones. These people, in turn, may cause harm by not respecting other's boundaries.

Choices

A final way people contribute to their own problems is in the mistaken choices they make, based on their attitudes and beliefs. The question of the level at which choices are made is a complex one, involving not just conscious choice but also choices made at the soul level. For instance, the 12th house shows many paths to spiritual growth, and illness is one of them. (Prison—also shown by the 12th—can be another.) The time a patient spends in bed is often a time of contemplating the life path and its errors. Since Blue Cross doesn't pay for ashrams, only for hospitals, many people today achieve 12th house purposes only through illness rather than through spiritual retreats. Still, respectfully taking clients through an

examination of the various ways they contribute to their own difficulties can be helpful. By examining how their own beliefs, attitudes, actions and choices contribute to their persistent difficulties, they stop feeling so powerless and instead feel empowered to change. When done in a non-judgmental way, this process can be a great service.

Key Question #3: What Are Your Options?

Many clients who are enmeshed in difficult situations don't even know they *have* options. They see the situation as set in stone and haven't even considered other ways of handling it. Their thinking has rigidified, being a conglomerate of values and operating principles that they learned from their parents and other influential elders—from the church, or from the way things were done 20 to 40 years ago. (You see this rigidity especially in the fixed signs or earth signs.) When those who are in painful and overwhelming circumstances believe there are no options; their frustration and depression make life seem very bleak. With no sense of having a choice, resentment and bitterness can poison their attitudes toward those involved, toward life, and toward God.

Exploring the question, "*What are your options?*" is more than an intellectual exercise. It can literally be life-saving, if the problem is chronic enough or grueling enough. When you show clients a way out of despair, you make an important contribution to their lives. Given a chronic pattern, you would also want to find out the history of past efforts to solve the problem. You'd want to ask what they have already tried and how it worked out for them.

Having uncovered a variety of options, it is not up to us to recommend one course of action over another. We cannot know the totality of the picture and what is best for everyone involved. Neither are we there to approve or disapprove of clients' choices. That would be to impose our own values, which are no more than a set of personal prejudices, preferences, attitudes, and beliefs.

Considering the Consequences of Various Options

The process of considering options includes thinking through possible consequences. Ask questions like these:

- 1) Which of these options do you favor?
- 2) What would be involved in implementing that option?

- 3) Do you have the skills/resources you need to do that?
- 4) How would that choice affect others close to you?
- 5) What would be the best possible outcome of that choice?
- 6) What could go wrong? How could you prevent it?
- 7) What would be the long-term result of that choice?
- 8) What impact would it have on your other priorities?
- 9) Do any other options have results that are more favorable?

Allow clients to do their own thinking, but mention any major effects they miss. Sometimes it is obvious that the option that the client is favoring is unwise. The fire signs are especially prone to impulsive decisions, without thought for repercussions. It then becomes part of our job to point out the aftermath of an unwise choice.

Key Question #4: Where Can You Turn for Help?

When it appears that the client cannot resolve the issue without help, the next line of inquiry would be supports in the client's immediate environment—partner, family, friends or perhaps church. The chart will, of course, give some clues to relationships in those areas. You would look at what might be called the support houses—the 3rd house for siblings, other relatives, or good neighbors, the 11th for friends, and the 7th for partnership. You would also look for Jupiter's position in the natal chart and by transit, as well as transiting and natal trines and sextiles. The chart can give you hints about these areas, but as to the ability or willingness of actual people involved to be helpful, you would have to ask the client.

Much of the time, clients have no idea where to turn for help—they turned, after all, to you for that. Thus, part of being a good astrological counselor is becoming familiar with community resources. None of us can meet all the needs clients bring us, even when we have training in therapy. When we have no idea what kinds of help there are, both we and our clients can go away from the session feeling overwhelmed. When we know and can suggest effective sources of healing, we are more convinced the client can get out of the problem, and we convey that confidence to the client in an empowering way.

Knowing resources that can support your clients in working through the wealth of new insights gained from looking at the chart can be considered a

professional responsibility—even an important step in setting up an astrological practice. If you can suggest resources that help clients grow, you are doing a finer form of service. Clients who are helped in this way are far more likely to come back and to refer others than are clients who leave the session without a clue as to where to turn. Therefore, knowing local resources is not just good practice, it is good business!

Conclusion

Asking questions like those posed in this article will bring your client work to a whole new level—making your session far more informative and useful to the client in arriving at solutions to their problems. Each aspect in the chart plays itself out in multiple ways. In the preparation, you can speculate on possible causes and effects of a problem, but you cannot know for sure without feedback from the client. You need context and history in order to find the individualized meaning of the aspect. If you see a 100 people with a Venus-Saturn square, they will have 100 different yet related Venus-Saturn stories. You aren't going to be able to pinpoint clients' particular experiences from chart analysis, only from asking them directly. You can give the overview, but only they can supply the content. Furthermore, asking for details can speed up your own professional development, because as you see the specific ways people express their chart features, you learn more about astrology in action and about human behavior.*

Endnote

1. For a list of certified NLP practitioners and seminars, see: <http://nlp-practitioners.com/training/>.

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Donna Cunningham, MSW (Columbia University), is an internationally respected astrologer with over 35 years' experience and the author of 17 metaphysical books, including six e-books. This article is excerpted from *Counseling Principles for Astrologers: Becoming an Effective Change Agent*. An earlier version appeared in *Communicating the Horoscope*, edited by Noel Tyl, (Llewellyn Publications) and is reprinted here with permission. Her trilogy, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life*, is now complete; Vol. 1 explores the outer planets as career indicators; Vol. 2, outer planet aspects to Venus and Mars; and Vol. 3, aspects between the outer planets. For more details visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

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Astrological Supervision

by Brian Clark

Engaging the symbols of the horoscope creates a psychological situation. Even the most pragmatic astrologer will find that the complexity of astrological symbols defy linear constructs. Brian Clark, co-founder (with wife, Glennys Lawton) of the Chiron Centre in Melbourne Australia, advocates for the importance of astrological supervision. Psychological awareness in the astrological consulting room, says Clark, is not simply a matter of being psychologically fluent, but of reflecting on the in-depth encounter that occurs between astrologer and client.

For me, the term *psychological astrology* is redundant, as astrology is inherently a matter of psyche. According to C. G. Jung, astrology was a projected psychology that used the sphere of the heavens as a screen where subjective images could be objectified.¹ The ancient Greek way of thinking about psyche was that it was soul, the breath of life. Over time, the understanding of this transformed as more rational ways of thinking developed. Astrological imagery can also be used in a rational and literal manner; however, to me what is implied in the term, *psychological astrology*, is the metaphoric usage of astrological imagery to articulate complex life patterns. It is not an adaptation of psychological theory onto astrology, but the vigilant awareness that astrological images are microcosmic, and in the proper setting reveal potent patterning in individuals' lives.

What is generally meant by the phrase, *psychological astrology*, is the application of psychological theory to help amplify and articulate the complexity of astrological imagery. In this sense, the amalgam of the ancient art of astrology and the modern specialty of psychology make powerhouse allies. A more psychologically sophisticated astrology was seeded by the work of Jung. In the midst of the last century, the

maturation of this approach took shape under the guidance of Dane Rudhyar. Over the past two decades, the work of Liz Greene and many others have helped to structure this new astrological style.

To me, the best usage of psychological astrology is in redefining the magical revelations of traditional approaches in a contemporary setting, free of psychological jargon. Unfortunately, the usages of psychological terms such as ego, id, shadow, anima, persona, etc. have become concretized, stripped of their metaphors and seen as literal features of the psyche, reducing psychological astrology to just another interpretive method, rather than the fluid interactive revelatory process it can be. Whether the practitioner uses horary, financial, or traditional approaches in their consulting work, knowledge of psyche is most important. As soon as one engages with another in a discussion of the horoscope, a psychological situation is created with all the complexities and demands of a counseling situation. Hence, I am an advocate for supervision in the practice of astrology, for no matter what approach you take to explain the horoscope, psyche is served.

Astrological supervision is nothing new. We've all done it—at astrological conferences, with peers, and in the classroom. We all listen and learn to be more competent at the art of astrology. Discussing our own charts and sharing our personal experiences help us to become more proficient at astrological analysis. However, in a professional capacity, something else emerges. A dynamic mixture of ethics and responsibility, professional boundaries and presentation, as well as the psychological impact of projection and transference all converge to influence our capacity to function effectively enough to articulate the diversity of astrological images. It is no longer just our ability to read the chart which makes a consultation effective, but the capacity to listen and maintain authority

whilst at the same time allowing the client to remain in charge, be empathic and understand the client's motives. As we become active as astrological consultants, supervision can improve our performance as it supports and encourages us while confronting our blind spots, exposing our biases, and offering new alternatives.

The purpose of astrological supervision is to improve our counseling expertise so we may do the very best we possibly can for our clients. It is essentially a 6th house requirement, part of the apprenticeship of becoming a counseling astrologer. The 6th house represents the psychic sphere where we are able to gain access to *coherence*, an essential component of well-being. The 6th house assures coherence if we enter into the discipleship demanded of us there. We could view supervision in this way, as a discipline, which shapes our skills at imparting and sharing astrological insights. Without the *super-vision*, the third entity created between astrological counselor and supervisor, we are at risk of being drawn back into the chaos of the 12th house where we are faced with our own unconscious familial stories, fantasies and complexes. It is these stories, fantasies and complexes that will become silent intruders to the consultation process if we remain ignorant of the dynamic taking place in the consultation.

In the 1980s, as my astrological practice became busy, I sought supervision since I felt I needed support for what was taking place in the consulting room. As an astrological counselor, I had become witness, not just to the human being, but the human psyche as well. Each client's story seemed profound and I needed to talk about those issues that left me feeling uncomfortable: domestic violence, sexual abuse, loss, death, rape, betrayal, terminal illness, deformity, retrenchment and financial hardship, to cite a few. Even though I felt objective in myself, I was unclear about how to respond to issues surrounding adoption, terminations and affairs. How did I leave myself open to the hostile client, or at risk with the borderline? The person I found for supervision was a psychologist, not an astrologer, but who was very respectful of the astrological model. The astrological images were hooks for the complexes, rather than the complexes themselves; therefore, the sessions moved quickly beyond the astrological into the heart of the issue and the character of the situation. Identifying my own issues in the consultation process improved my ability to be able to use astrology more effectively.

Identification, transference, parataxic distortions and parallel processes, arising out of the unconscious, are probable when we are working with a person in consultation, or indeed in the classroom. You will recognize one possible scenario. We draw up the chart for a

client and we register—hmm, this person has a Saturn-Mars theme—same as ours, perhaps Moon in Cancer square Neptune in Libra, same as ours. About this time, there should be a giant, red flag waving in front of our eyes! The possibility of identification with our client has been magnified and we are at risk of losing perspective, authority and boundary. What do we do when a client undergoing a major Pluto transit stirs unresolved grief in us? How do we differentiate between our feelings and the client's projection?

Similarly in the classroom, as those of you who teach astrology will have already experienced, projection, projective identification, and the like occurs. To teach in an ongoing classroom environment, it is helpful to understand group dynamics. With 15 students or more, there is a strong possibility for the group to express itself through one of the students in the group, assigning the role of scapegoat onto that individual. Projections onto the educator will also occur. The idealized ones feel best but they turn quickly, while the negative ones are often hard to shake. Understanding the nature of these projections will allow effective and gentle management, which ensures the smooth running of the class and an optimum learning environment.

In our Astro*Synthesis Diploma program, supervision is part of the core program. Students are required to participate in at least nine supervision sessions in a small group environment. Each week a student brings a case to discuss. They will have transcribed part of the consultation, received the client's permission to present it, highlighted their concerns, and articulated what they feel they need to examine about the case. The focus of these discussions remains with the astrological practitioner and the issues that arise for them in the consultation process. These issues will range from confidentiality to boundaries with personal biases and beliefs, difficult clients and situations, loss and suffering, triumphs and disasters all brought out into the open. As each case is discussed the student is more able to recognize their part in the process and become more conscious of not only where their own blind spots affect the process, but also improve skills at listening, linking and feedback. With supervision, psyche is honored by the student becoming subtly aware of its powerful patterning and synchronicity.

As facilitator of the group, my mandate is to empower the student to become more at ease with the process. In the student's chart, we can often see where the transference has taken place, but generally the astrology is not the issue. The issue is to recognize our own responses and the scope of our expertise at dealing with these issues.

On reflection, supervision helped me to become more confident and focused. Ironically, it made me less attached to the astrological information and more alert to

what was being revealed through interaction with the client. It helped free my astrological analysis to listen to what the astrological image was revealing, so the client could lead and I could follow offering the astrology pertinent to their need. So much of my astrological learning and theory had to be deconstructed in the presence of the client. Through this progression, I recreated my own style. With great reverence to both psyche and horoscope, I act as a go-between, a process that feels more akin to the revelatory nature of astrology.

Clients turn to astrologers because their worldview embraces astrology and they are seeking its wisdom and revelation. Supervision helped me recognize that effective work is done in creating rapport with the client's predicament, not necessarily offering a checklist of their chart's ingredients. It also helped me gain confidence that the chart would reveal itself even in the most difficult circumstances. In listening while consciously holding the image of the horoscope, I felt something more was created other than my own astrological analysis.

Astrological supervision in a formal setting is relatively new in the astrological field. Today, however, unlike many years ago when I sought supervision, there are many experienced astrologers with counseling and psychotherapeutic training who are able to support the novice practitioner in recognizing the unconscious elements that exist underneath the consultation. Some astrologers have felt uncomfortable with this approach, preferring terms like coaching or mentoring. In psyche's sense, supervision is not inspecting or evaluating another's methods, but is designed to bring about awareness to the delicate practice of chart consultation, animating the images of the horoscope for the client's comprehension.*

Endnote

1. Throughout his work Jung often refers to astrology as a psychology projected onto the heavens. The first time he may have expressed this was in his letter to Sigmund Freud on 12 June 1911: "I dare say that we shall one day discover in astrology a good deal of knowledge that has been intuitively projected into the heavens." (See McGuire, William (ed.), *The Freud Jung Letters: The Correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung*, trans. Ralph Manheim and P.F.C. Hull, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974, 427.) On 6 September, 1947, in a letter to Prof. B.V. Raman, Jung is more confident when he expresses: "I formed the opinion that astrology is of particular interest to the psychologist, since it contains a sort of psychological experience which we call 'projected' - this means that we find the psychological facts as it were in the constellations." (See C.G. Jung Letters, Volumes 1 & 2. Selected and edited by Gerhard Adler, in collaboration with Aniela Jaffe, translated by RFC Hull, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974.) One succinct sentence from Volume 8 of *The Collected Works*, NJ: Princeton University

Press, 1979, Paragraph 392, captures his image: "The starry vault of heaven is in truth the open book of cosmic projection."

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The Matrix of Identity

by Glennys Lawton

Glennys Lawton, Australian astrologer and family therapist, examines planetary aspects to the Moon in the context of attachment styles and one's capacity for separation. Lawton explains how aspects to the Moon shape one's attachment style while also affecting the development of autonomy and separateness. She primarily focuses on superior planets' aspects to the Moon—Mars to Pluto—to illustrate various attachment styles and why, if not psychologically integrated, these can lead to adult separation and relationship issues.

The phrase *matrix of identity* refers to Salvador Minuchin's concept that the family is like a womb where the sense of self gestates. The ideal family is a sanctuary where the emergent and fragile identity is kept safe. It is where we learn to feel protected enough to explore our boundaries and eventually secure enough to leave. In astrological imagery, this touchstone is the IC, the gateway to the 4th house, which symbolizes the environmental atmosphere of the familial home and the imprints the family of origin impress upon our inner security.

Attachment and Separation

Childhood patterns, roles and our sense of safekeeping are interred in this astrological landscape. As the root system of the family, 4th house imagery (the sign on

the cusp, the ruler of the IC, planets in the 4th and the Moon) are the emotional foundation stones which suggest the extent to which a secure base can be formed. In turn, this influences the degree to which feelings of safety are internalized, informing the developing ego with strength that allows for security in separateness. In an archaic context, the IC is where we begin. As Winnicott said, "*Home is where we start from.*"²

Home, or the 4th house, is also where we belong, and its astrological extensions reveal the level to which a secure base provides the tools to forge a sense of belonging and a sense of being separate.

A Secure Base was the title of one of John Bowlby's more popular books.³ In it, Bowlby outlines his attachment theory that basically asserts that secure bonding develops the capacity to explore beyond the perimeter of the family. Attachment theory rests on the premise that if the individual experiences a strong place of safety, then mastery over the environment follows. Attachment behaviors are developed by day-to-day care giving, through the continuity of familial rituals and patterns, and in the fortification of the family circle. In the shelter of a safe nest, the fledgling learns to be able to tell the difference between protection and intrusion. With adequate protection, the child develops strength for exploration, knowing that the shelter of the guardian is within reach. A supportive survival instinct is fashioned from the container of the family, where the child learns to distinguish between

The family imprints its members with selfhood. Human experience of identity has two elements: a sense of belonging and a sense of being separate. The laboratory in which these ingredients are mixed and dispensed is the family, the matrix of identity.¹

~Salvador Minuchin, *Families and Family Therapy*

the sounds of safety and the sounds of danger. Hazard signals are developed that alert a physiological response to flight, away from danger and back once again to the safe haven of familial protection.

Theoretically, as this secure sense is internalized, the child distinguishes protector from predator and begins to gain a sense of self, distinct from the family, represented by the 4th house. In astrological terminology, the child crosses the cusp into the 5th where the sense of self is first consciously experienced and shaped. The 5th house cusp is the threshold where identity is encountered and can be forged through the transitional movement back and forth between security and separateness. It is the border zone where leaving home is mastered and the experiment of the transferring of loyalty and attachment to other loved ones begins.⁴

Attachment behavior endures throughout the life cycle. Internalizing the capacity to differentiate the sounds of safety and sounds of danger, develop the faculty to recognize when it is safe to leave, knowing we can always return to a secure base. But in order to develop this base, we also need the approval to leave.

The watchful eye of the parent must also be an encouraging glance. Under the shelter of parental protection, the caretaker facilitates an amalgam of the encouragement to explore and the safety of homecoming. When feeling safe enough to investigate and leave, the child's return is hopefully greeted with praise and applause. Psychologically, this capacity to explore outside the matrix of the family can only come from feeling secure within its precinct. Astrologically, this suggests that the capability to leave home successfully into the exploration of our creative potentialities, the 5th house, is drawn from the resources embedded in the 4th house. Astrological wisdom suggests that in order to gain a sense of self, as distinct from the familial terrain, we first need to integrate the 4th house legacy.

Attachment Styles

John Bowlby's model of attachment theory asserts that the ability to be separate is based on the premise of how the mix of attachment was experienced in the early years of family life. His research led him to formulate three attachment styles.

1. Secure Attachment

Care comes when child calls.

A secure base develops when an atmosphere of safety in early childhood promotes exploration past the boundaries of familiarity. Encouragement to explore further, together with welcoming applause on our return, supports our ability to meet the challenges of the unknown. In part, it is the memory of parental applause that brings us home safely in adolescence.

Surety of where one belongs facilitates the ability to leave. The sense of home is internalized and not projected out onto a place, an individual, a community, or a lifestyle.

2. Anxious Resistant or Anxious Ambivalent Attachment

Protection is sometimes available, sometimes not.

With this attachment style, bonding has been compromised by feelings of ambivalence, anxiety and disassociation. Bonding rituals have been unsafe, irregular or neglectful. The ability to separate or leave is compromised by uncertainty, feeling that if separation occurs, return to safety may not be possible. Not enough surety of belonging has been internalized to know that separation will be successful and satisfying.

3. Anxious Avoidant Attachment

Care giving is not present.

Attachment and bonding is avoided as a means to protect against feeling ignored or rejected. The child becomes self-contained and develops a sense of guarded self-reliance. Attachment is dangerous as it renders us vulnerable to disapproval and hurt. However, if we can't connect, we can't separate. We can't leave what we haven't experienced; in turn, this influences our ability to engage in life outside the familial boundaries.

Bonding

Separation is intimately linked to how we learn to bond, feel safe and trust in the early years of childhood. The ability to separate without destructive emotional undertones is a product of secure attachment. Following on from the trinity of attachment styles, three groups of separation are categorized.

1. Bond—Separate

Secure attachment facilitates a sense of belonging and feelings of nourishment, which assist healthy separation. The ability to separate functionally can only occur if we have been encouraged to explore beyond what is familiar and to have been acknowledged and highly praised for our adventures. A secure base supports the exploration beyond what is familiar, helping create mastery over the environment, an essential component of secure development.

2. Bond—Can't Separate

This attachment style promotes dependency and symbiosis; the inability to separate has been complicated by rigidity and the pressure to conform. A chaotic atmosphere engenders fear and anxiety at any juncture of separation as no safety net or secure base has been developed. When astrological archetypes prone to

enmeshment, chaos or rigidity (Neptune, Pluto, and Saturn) are in difficult aspects to the Moon, the tendency towards this style of attachment is heightened. The Neptunian attachment style may constellate fears of being unable to survive outside the family circle or the fear that those we leave will be weakened by our departure. Pluto signals the dread of betraying those we leave or being betrayed by those we trust outside the familial environs. Plutonic attachment may also indicate the hold of a familiar secret that keeps its members from leaving. Saturn in difficult aspect to the Moon, may evoke guilt when we feel we are not acting in a responsible manner toward those we leave, self-criticism about being able to go it alone, or even fear at how we may manage.

3. Won't Bond—Can't Separate

An inability to bond promotes disconnection. When attachment has not been successful, then the individual instinctually feels separate, removed and unconnected; separation has been compromised by the inability to attach. The urge for space and distance is heightened in defense of the lack of attachment. Astrologically, the archetype of Uranus in difficult aspect to the Moon may reveal this attachment style. Even the simplistic astrological statement of the Moon in Air could identify this dynamic.⁵

By now it should be apparent that the matrix of identity is broadly shaped by the astrological archetypes of the Moon (the sense of belonging) and the Sun (the sense of being separate) as well as their derivatives. The Moon and its natural habitat of the 4th house are the harbor where the identity feels safe, connected and in the right place. The Sun and its playground of the 5th house are the stage where the experience of being separate promotes creative self-exploration.

As both an astrologer and family therapist, I have often remarked on the similarity between astrologers and family therapists. Like family therapists, astrologers are used to working with family systems; not only do we honor the individuality of each planet, but speculate on how they operate together in the system of the horoscope.

The horoscope itself is systemic in that the planets reveal systems. For instance, Venus might symbolise a sister, an aunt, the feminine dowry in the family, while Mars could be a brother, father's anger or the masculine spirit of the family. Embedded in the 12th are stories of ancestry, while hidden in the depths of the 8th are the plumb lines of familial inheritance. Family therapy both challenges and compliments traditional astrological theory by encouraging us to expand our astrological parameters and ways of thinking. I have found that attachment theory has greatly

added to my ways of thinking about the Moon and the 4th house. One of these ways is to consider attachment styles in an astrological context, suggested by aspects to the Moon, planets in the 4th or planets ruling this house.

I would suggest that aspects to the Moon reveal the psychodynamic structure of attachment. Any planet aspecting the Moon needs to be honored and acknowledged in each individual's style of attachment. The more forceful aspects like the conjunction, square, quincunx and opposition may suggest an attachment difficulty, first experienced in bonding rituals with the primary caretaker, then re-experienced in adult difficulties with intimacy.

Planets in the 4th house will describe the climate of the family home and the attitudes and influences of the family of origin that shape the individual's sense of inner security. These archetypes influence the construction of a secure foundation stone for life. Planets in the 4th suggest emotional imprints and patterns impressed upon the psyche through participation in the family atmosphere. These planets suggest influences and attitudes in the early ambience of the family that shaped the degree to which an individual feels safe in the world. The planetary ruler of the 4th house shows what additional resources may be available to help build a secure base and an ongoing sense of safety.

Aspects to the Moon: Attachment Behavior

Following is a planetary guide to aspects to the Moon from the viewpoint of attachment theory. I am only looking at aspects to the Moon from Mars out, as this is the first planet outside the Earth's orbit, symbolically lying outside the matrix of the family. Superior planets exert an enormous impact on attachment and separation, as by nature, they exist outside the familial container.

When in aspect to the Moon, the familial approach to the particular archetype will shape the attachment style and affect the development of autonomy and separateness. Aspects between the Moon and the Sun, Mercury and Venus are, of course, also vital to acknowledge. They certainly reveal heritage and vital signs in the family of origin. However, unlike the other planets, these are bound within the orbit of the Earth and not separate from this familial matrix, as the other planets are. Therefore I have concentrated on the superior planet's aspects to the Moon to illustrate astrological attachment styles and the way that these may lead to adult separation and relationship issues.

Mars

Attachment Behavior: *reactionary, vigilant*
Relational and Intimacy Issues: *mastery vs. frustration, love and anger, fight or flight*

When Mars aspects the Moon, the interchange between individuality and belonging is highlighted in the family. The lunar connection to the militant archetype underscores the dilemma between violation and protection, creating a need for vigilance. In the family, a strong focus on independence may override the development of security. Concentration on self-sufficiency, standing up for one's self, being tough and striving forward, may be triggered as a reactive defense to attachment.

With this aspect, the child is sensitive to the antagonistic feelings and seething resentment that permeate the familial atmosphere. Unexpressed anger, rivalry and ill feelings may compromise safety; therefore, a passive-aggressive pattern of behavior may solidify to protect vulnerability. With the more demanding aspects between these two planets, I am alerted to the possibility that an aggressive and provocative personality masks insecurity and defends intimacy. I would also be watchful for a pattern of sexually acting out when vulnerability or dependency is stimulated.

When the attachment is secure, the parents have encouraged the expression of appropriate desires, self-assertion and using the will to achieve positive outcomes. The child feels able to express their individuality and their anger and still feel they are loved and part of the system. Their capacity to explore outside the system has not been compromised by unresolved feelings of anger or rivalry in the family. The child is better equipped to differentiate between their own desires and the needs of others, not feeling that they must act in the way others demand to feel safe and acceptable.

However when attachment has been compromised, an atmosphere of passive-aggressiveness exists which clouds the ability to express anger in a healthy manner and leaves the child going after what they want in a covert way. Caught in the fight-or-flight syndrome, the child indiscriminately reacts, especially when an inauthentic demonstration of closeness masks aggression and hostility. Love and anger may feel split and the child may have internalized a family blueprint that anger is exclusive of love, learning that rivalry or anger at loved ones is inappropriate. This dynamic renders the adult adrift in the unresolved familial complex of resentment, feeling bound to a system where they cannot be themselves. An inability to sustain an enduring bond is rooted in the complex of not managing to be independent in an intimate association.

Jupiter

Attachment Behavior: *liberal and extensive*
Relational and Intimacy Issues: *entitlement, false hope, cultural mismatches*

One of the tasks of this astrological combination is to extend the sense of safety and belonging, not only beyond the family circle, but outside the culture as well, to feel safe on foreign soil. The archetype of Jupiter is the antitheses of the Moon in many ways, bringing the poles of familiarity versus foreignness, home versus the world, feeling versus conceptuality, instinct versus culture into focus. The functionality of the innate urge to explore and question is shaped in the family environment and through its attitudes and beliefs. While it is common for this aspect to literally correlate with a parent who was born overseas, a multi-cultural, religious or bilingual family, or having lived or been schooled abroad, psychologically its essence stresses cross-cultural needs. Religious and cultural beliefs, academic and innovative education, human values, and hope and optimism in the future, play a large role in the child's security and attachment. How this was accomplished in the family of origin influences the degree of safety the child feels in the world. In an adult context, this suggests that the mystery of intimacy is discovered in foreign territory.

When the attachment has been secured in a familial atmosphere that prizes tolerance, open-mindedness, education and cross-cultural experiences, the child internalizes his or her sense of belonging independent of familial or cultural beliefs. Encouraged to think beyond the square and accept all cultures and religions, the child develops the natural capacity to explore appropriate ways to extend their experience beyond the family circle. The child matures confident in their beliefs and the future.

However, when the familial atmosphere is polluted by prejudice, dogma, inflexible beliefs and rigid cultural attitudes, the consent to form personal opinions and beliefs are withheld, compromising the sense of well-being. The ability to adventure outside the safety zone of the family is impaired, often defended by a sense of entitlement. Confined by inflexible attitudes the child is unsupported in a vision of him or herself, and is encouraged to fear what is foreign, the outside world and the future. When the family encourages the child to hang onto its limited religious and cultural way of thinking, hope for the future is compromised. Natural visions of faraway places, the excitement of foreign landscapes or dreams of frontier studies are contaminated with fear. With this combination, it is imperative that belonging or intimacy is forged in a wide-open space that encourages tolerance, exploration and differences.

Saturn

Attachment Behavior: *conditional or rigid*
Relational and Intimacy Issues: *earning love, the need to be taken seriously, fear of rejection, self-reliance, lack of optimism*

Rules and regulations are an important feature of family life. With this aspect, the potentiality that laws impede the natural course of attachment is heightened, leading to a rigid or conditional attachment style. When parental values and rules are at the expense of the young, then the individual may be prone to serving a system not of their choice, but controlled by external authority. The ability to perform, set goals and be self-sufficient is an integral part of the family atmosphere. The family ethos encourages the child to be a contributing member of society, follow tradition and respect authority.

Often the weight of this aspect feels burdensome as the inner pressure to perform is fuelled by the need to be loved. Acceptance may be gauged by performance. Therefore with this aspect the child may withdraw, rather than reach out. Rather than feeling contained within the safety of the familial environs, boundaries isolate the child, severing him or her from feeling close and included. Being self-sufficient masks feelings of rejection and exclusion. Often with this aspect, the child feels that love is measured or controlled, meted out with good behavior and top marks. Performance and acceptance become entangled in feeling safe. Hence the ability to leave is compromised if the person feels responsible in any way for those left behind.

When attachment is secure, regulations and the consequences when rules are broken help the child set appropriate limits and goals. Boundaries ensure the child feels safe; therefore a child may be empowered through appropriate controls and regulations. Predictability in family life encourages the child to feel in control and helps them manage the gaps of aloneness. Regularity is a vital ally to secure development; however, if this engenders fear and anxiety, then the rigidity of the family system suffocates individuality. Hierarchy is essential in early childhood, but its grip must loosen if we are to develop a healthy sense of personal autonomy.

Therefore the functional expression of the Saturn-Moon aspect helps differentiate appropriate usage of boundaries, not experiencing rules and limits as a withdrawal of love. However when the family atmosphere is cold and distant, the child's fear of rejection and anxiety at doing the wrong thing increases. The child feels controlled and imprisoned through the enforcement of strict rules. If lacking appropriate

boundaries, the child is unable to be in control, feeling limited and stuck. A lack of adequate fostering or authoritative guidance adds to the child's isolation in the family. Insularity and isolation are confused with containment. In an adult context, intimacy is impaired through fear of rejection and an exaggerated sense of responsibility for other's feelings.

Chiron

Attachment Behavior: *marginal, peripheral and non-personal*
Relational and Intimacy Issues: *abandonment, disenfranchisement*

Chiron is not a planet in the astronomical sense, but as a celestial wanderer, it fits the ancient tradition of a planet. Like most other counseling astrologers, I have found its influence to be essential in revealing dimensions of character not necessarily embraced by the other planets. In many ways, Chiron is marginal to the herd of planets and metaphorically parallels the feelings of being an outsider. In aspect to the Moon, it highlights the sense of feeling displaced. Often this feeling is literalized through the experience of dislocation, abandonment or relinquishment. For many clients, I have seen this actualize as their mother's post-natal depression, familial separation, adoption or emigration—that uncomfortable feeling of being a stranger in a strange land.

However this presents in the outer world, it suggests the process of attachment has been bruised by feelings of exclusion that infect the family atmosphere. This archetypal union is complex in that it combines feelings of marginality with the need to be accepted, often resulting in the child feeling excluded or disenfranchised. Often the task of this aspect is to find the apex of security, not at the center of the system, but on its fringe. The fate is to wander, to be displaced, before the sense of belonging can be established. If the family is the outsider in the society, then the individual is at risk of leaving as safety is sustained through identifying as the outsider. It is the family wound that may cripple the young person's ability to leave the enmeshed family unit. Often with this aspect, the familial myth suggests that the pain of living has been great, wounding the will and the spirit that promotes adventure and exploration outside the family and culture.

When the child feels secure, he or she learns to be heroic in the face of being foreign and marginal in the system. The parents encourage a healthy sense of feeling different and demonstrate freedom in not being part of a system. In this way the child develops the self-esteem to be secure in a foreign environment and develops the ability to be compassionate and caring

about others who suffer the same sense of disenfranchisement. However, when there is not enough parental support, the child feels orphaned from their family unit. The sense of attachment may have suffered due to a parental wound. A parent's spirit may have been broken and haunts the family atmosphere, leaving the child feeling helpless and unprepared to become part of a greater community.

Uranus

Attachment Behavior: *unique, erratic and disengaged*

Relational and Intimacy Issues: *freedom vs. closeness, non-committal, disconnection*

Disengagement and separation are themes that resonate when the archetypes of Uranus and the Moon combine. The possibility of a fractured or dislocated family atmosphere or the lack of an unconditional bond is suggested, whether perceived or real. Individuality and independence are important hallmarks in the family. Urges to adventure, take risks and be emotionally self-sufficient are aspects of family life that would be valued in this family matrix. Surprises and unexpected change will also be part of the familial landscape.

When attachment is secure, the child is encouraged to be a unique individual in the family system and is given enough space and freedom to pursue what is important. The child is prepared for the possibility of sudden change and develops other support systems outside the family unit, especially peer groups and others with common interests. The facility to be individualistic and risk-taking is sensibly supported and encouraged.

However, when the familial atmosphere is polluted with anxiety and tension, the child feels disconnected and separate from the family. Unprepared for sudden changes, the child becomes anxious that something unexpected will disrupt the status quo, leading to becoming hyper-vigilant to intuit what may happen in the future. The parents are seen as emotionally unavailable, unstable or absent leading to an erratic attachment style where the child feels unable to settle down and needs to keep moving to feel safe. A cold family climate or an unconscious memory of feeling abandoned or cut off from security, emphasizes the need to be disengaged, so that freedom and separateness are at the expense of closeness and togetherness. When the safe container of childhood has been punctured by a sudden or unresolved severance, then our own ability to sustain adult relationship and our adult family will be compromised. The urge to leave, restlessness, anxiety and lack of commitment permeate the ability to forge adult attachments.

Neptune

Attachment Behavior: *idealistic and universal*
Relational and Intimacy Issues: *loss of identity, lack of boundary, fantasy vs. reality*

The ideal of the family is important. Creativity, spirituality and a heightened sensitivity of others are aspects of family life. Emotional understanding, compassion for others in the family and the community at large, as well as the urge to serve others, are all part of the family ethos. Unspoken rules, ideals and expectations influence the language of the family. The need to bond, be close and merge is highlighted. Therefore themes of enmeshment, sacrifice, relinquishment and illness may dominate the familial inheritance when these two archetypes clash.

When the bond is secure, the child feels they are protected and looked after, encouraged to be creative and imaginative. The family atmosphere is fluid and the child feels secure without visible structures and limits. The family gives confidence to the child to improvise in the moment, drawing security from their own inner creative resourcefulness. Imaginative thought is encouraged and the child develops a healthy relationship with their inner world of fantasy and the outer world of reality, as they feel understood and accepted.

However, if bonding rituals are enmeshed, the child may feel looked over and invisible in the family unit, as the need to sacrifice their independence and will for the sake of the unity of the family is an unspoken rule. This may be due to an illness or tragedy in the family that demands the surrender of the child's individuality to attend to the family. A lack of boundary discourages the development of a private or inner self. A parent may be ill, weak or victimized yet uses this to wield power, confusing the child's ability to be accepted and understood in his or her own right. If the sense of self is sacrificed for the family, the child feels misunderstood and not met. Being entangled in the familial web, places the individual at risk when leaving home, feeling compelled to stay to care for others, attend to the parent's needs or remain on peacekeeping duty. The danger at becoming psychologically stranded is increased and the individual may become ill or languish in a twilight zone to avoid the process of separation.

Pluto

Attachment Behavior: *charismatic, compulsive*
Relational and Intimacy Issues: *trust, power*

The family system is confronted with powerful issues of loss and grief as well as taboos and secrets. Power and influence are issues or they have been in the familial past and these affect the integrity of the family.

The familial need for honesty, trust and cohesion are strong due to the ancestral denials and unexpressed grief that infiltrate the current family climate.

When safe, the child feels protected from harm and part of a tribe that is bound by trust. Emotional honesty in the family encourages the child to be intimate and truthful about what they feel. Negative feelings may be expressed without fear of judgment or reprisal and are not allowed to pollute the atmosphere. Grief and loss are acknowledged as part of the life cycle and the child feels better equipped to be able to let go and move forward with life.

However if the familiar atmosphere is polluted with secrets, shame or unexpressed grief, the young feel unable to be close or intimate with others for fear of exposing the secret and betraying the family. In this case, separation may be accomplished in a Persephone-like way through being snatched, abducted or seduced into another atmosphere of control and dominance. Power and control may be mobilized to suppress a secret. The child may develop in an atmosphere of secrecy and dishonesty, instilling a sense of shame into the self, unable to differentiate between what is private and what is secret.

Power may also be abusive in that it keeps the child from expressing who they are. Powerlessness induces rage and therefore, the family atmosphere may be polluted with rage and brutal feelings. The child feels unprotected and vulnerable to attack, learning to mistrust the world at large. When the family is bonded together through an inappropriate secret or shame, the risk of difficulty with separation is heightened and anyone outside the familial unit is cast in the role of enemy. Transferring loyalties to someone outside the family constitutes betrayal, leaving the individual in fear of being disinherited.

Conclusion

The lunar statement in the horoscope suggests not only how we bond most effectively, but reveals how that bond may have been met in the atmosphere of the home, directly shaping the way we are able to develop the capacity to separate and be independent of the family. While family therapy articulates the process of attachment and separation in depth, astrology aids in amplifying and placing this in context for each individual.*

Endnotes

1. Munuchin, S. *Families and Family Therapy*. London: Routledge, 1991, p. 47.
2. Winnicott, D. W. *Home is Where We Start From: Essays by a Psychoanalyst*. London: WW Norton & Co., Inc., 1986.
3. Bowlby, J. *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*. London: Routledge, 1988.


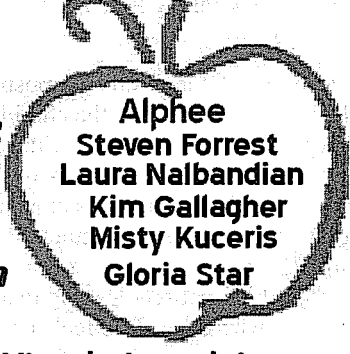
(John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth are the pioneers in delineating attachment styles.)

4. For an exploration of the process of leaving home, see Glennys Lawton, "Leaving Home", in *Apollon*, Vol. 6, January, 2001, London: CPA Press. Available: www.midheavenbooks.com. This article is also published on our website, www.AstroSynthesis.com.au.
5. See Brian Clark, *The Sibling Constellation: The Astrology of Brothers and Sisters*. London, Penguin Arkana, 1999.

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A Philosophical Perspective on Psychological Astrology

by Eileen McCabe

In defining the basic tenets of psychological astrology from a philosophical perspective, astrologer and social worker, Eileen McCabe, discusses why psychological astrology emphasizes the interaction between client and astrologer and the various psychological dynamics that exist between people during an in-depth consultation. McCabe argues that astrologers need to understand the workings of their own unconscious in order to assure that their interpretations are solely for the empowerment of the client. She also suggests that equality and mutuality between astrologer and client is reflective of a postmodern paradigm.

As an astrological practitioner and social worker with psychoanalytic training, it has been my vocation to merge both astrology and psychology into a viable and working clinical framework. When asked to write an article on psychological astrology, I thought it best to simply discuss what I feel constitutes psychological astrology from both a practical and philosophical perspective.

No matter what style of psychological astrology you practice, we would all agree that astrologers are conduits of information and knowledge and that our goal is to assist the client in his or her own personal development. My suggestion for anyone contemplating entering astrology as a profession is that they read Alice Miller's *Drama of the Gifted Child*¹ because we need to understand our own psychological need to assist other people.

Why would anyone enter into a helping profession? Could it have something to do with our own childhoods? As an astrologer with a psychological orientation, I strongly advocate that astrologers at some point enter their own therapy in order to understand themselves more deeply. When you are dealing with the

psyche of other people, it is our duty as practitioners to understand our own unconscious to the best of our ability. In that sense, psychological astrologers assume that the interaction between self and client is just as important as the information that one is imparting.

When I think of what is most rewarding about being an astrologer, the first thing that comes to my mind is the ability to mirror back to the client all the different aspects of who they are as human beings. Modern psychology in the 20th century emphasized a unitary self and purported that the ultimate goal was to become a self-contained individual. The postmodern psychological perspective, however, stresses that we are not a unitary self, but in fact, possess multiple selves and play multiple roles in our lives. We are parents, lovers, partners, students, teachers and friends. We have a private self and we have a public self. We are many various selves contained within one human entity, and the hallmark of psychological health is the ability to integrate these multiple parts into a stable and consistent sense of identity.

But astrologers have always been postmodern because we know that every planet in the horoscope symbolizes an archetypal component of the individual psyche. Like a nurturing parent, our role as astrologers is to accept the client's many different selves. Our hope is that the client will reenter the world less fragmented and with a more cohesive sense of individuality. This is especially important since we are not always allowed to reveal ourselves completely in all life situations. If an earth sign, Wall Street executive with a strong Neptune expresses that he or she also has a creative side, the astrologer is there to support and validate the many parts of who the client is as a human being. How wonderful it is for an individual to feel that one can reveal all of who one is without being judged, and at the same time, receive confirmation for the complexity of one's overall personality.

If there is one thing though that reflects psychological astrology, it is that whatever interventions or interpretations that the astrologer makes is for the purpose of giving power back to the client so that the client can make decisions about his or her own life. I always tell my clients beforehand that the session is a dialogue between us, using their horoscope as our guide. This prepares them for the fact that besides my giving certain information, they need to partake in their own astrological consultation. In fact, how people partake or not in their own reading is usually a reflection of how they function in other aspects of their lives. The session itself will usually be a reflection of where the client is psychologically at that moment in time and will reflect to the astrologer the core issues within the horoscope.

Psychological astrology is a particular orientation that approaches the natal horoscope, transits and progressions in a way that facilitates that dialectic process. It is not up to me what clients do or how they live their lives. I am not an oracle that knows what is best for them. If the planets are pre-existing archetypes that exist within all of us, then I am not really telling the client anything he or she does not already know at a conscious or unconscious level. What the astrologer can do, however, is shed light on certain issues and facilitate for the client a journey of self-discovery. A psychologically-minded astrologer understands the need to be sensitive to what the client can and cannot hear at any given moment.

There is no question that to practice psychological astrology, the clinician should be knowledgeable or trained in counseling skills with a foundation in basic psychological and developmental theory. One also should have had some years in psychotherapy personally so that the vulnerability of self-exploration has been experienced. While astrology itself is its own viable form of psychology, consciously creating a safe environment, making interventions that mirror where the client is, being conscious of how the information is given and being aware of the subtle interpersonal nuances that exist between consultant and client, does require that the astrologer be well informed in some basic therapeutic techniques.

For instance, if a client comes in with an 8th house Saturn, I know that there are deep issues about death, intimacy and sexuality, and that I need to broach this subject with extreme sensitivity. With a psychological background, I'm going to be taking into consideration childhood issues and how those issues could be impacting the client's adult life. If the astrologer is listening, the client will tell him or her about that Saturn, and the interpretation should be based on how open or not the client is to looking at those issues during the session. This is one way that we can combine astrology with psychology. It is taking into consideration the reality of

the horoscope, but also making a hypothesis that takes into consideration the many different levels of how a given placement could manifest. What is most important is how to make an astrological interpretation that best serves the interests of the client.

The psychological astrologer should also have a working knowledge of transference and countertransference. While both the astrologer and the client are creating a relational dynamic during the session, each person is still experiencing the other through their own subjective lens of perception. There are many realities present during an astrological consultation. Both parties possess their own respective horoscopes and childhood histories; and each person has had a life that is uniquely their own. While people relate to others with the totality of their entire horoscope, we usually project onto others some of the qualities and characteristics of our 7th house sign. We also seek to unconsciously reenact dynamics from the early parent/child relationship. This is going to be true for both the client and for the astrologer as well. If the astrologer took care of a sick parent, then the astrologer may have more of a need to take care of his or her clients. If the client felt unsupported by both parents, the client may either reject the support offered by the astrologer or crave constant reassurance. While both the astrologer and the client have their own relational needs, it is up to the astrologer to be conscious of projections from the client and what is being psychologically triggered within the astrologer as well.

Whether the client idealizes the astrologer or dismisses his or her interpretations, there are deep unconscious needs and desires that are stirred for the client during a reading. Therefore it is important for the astrologer not to identify with these projections, while at the same time being empathic to the client's process. Likewise, the client may trigger the astrologer's own issues, which could interfere with the astrologer's objectivity. For instance, if the astrologer is going through a divorce but the client just returned from a honeymoon, the astrologer needs to work through their own feelings to be there for the client's happiness. The astrologer's interpretations need to mirror where the client is and not simply the emotional state of the astrologer. We must be conscious of the many subtle and psychological dynamics that exist between astrologer and client for the sake of the work itself.

This brings me to the topic of predictive astrology. Forecasting, as I call it, is an inevitable component of astrological work. But it is the way that we discuss transits and progressions that determine our particular approach to astrology. My view of transits, progressions, eclipses, lunations and planetary stations is

that there is a story unfolding in the person's life, a developmental process of becoming and that there are times during this process when there will be both external events and internal reevaluations. We know that the planets are always moving somewhere, that every two and a half years Saturn will bring back balance to a particular area of life and that a Pluto transit means the end and the beginning of a new existence. Our job as astrologers is to interpret these transits and cycles in a way that gives the client a perspective and purpose as to what is occurring in their life. Rather than interpret all of this as something that will happen to them from an external source, it's really about the evolution of their own personal journey. In this way, the client can see that the changes and events in their life are a manifestation of the transitions that are occurring within their own psyche.

A psychological approach to astrology is also a model that allows for a process of mutuality between astrologer and client. The Freudian model of the 20th century was a paradigm based on the dynamics between one person who was healthy and knowledgeable and the other person who was basically neurotic and lacking any objective understanding about their own psyche. Unfortunately, this paradigm permeated much of the helping professions during the last century including the practice of astrology. Many astrologers had an attitude that they possessed a special knowledge about the client and that it was their responsibility to tell the client who they were and what they should be doing with their lives.

The postmodern paradigm of the 21st century, however, is one of greater equality and mutuality. While the astrologer has insight into planetary archetypes, the clients still contain this knowledge somewhere within themselves. The job of the astrologer then is to illuminate what is already within the conscious or unconscious mind of the client. The astrologer needs to be objective, but the astrologer also needs to reach for the subjective reality of the client at the same time. I advocate that we need to inform the client of the meaning of a Pluto transit, but we also need to ask the client whether or not they feel this interpretation makes any sense to them at this time in their lives. Let's not forget that there is really no such thing as objective knowledge. The astrologer's interpretation of a planetary picture is always based on the

astrologer's own experiences and subjective understanding of what that planetary energy represents. But that insight is only valuable if it resonates with client's experiences and their own developmental processes.

A relationship based on equality assumes that both people are mutually partaking in the interaction and that the astrologer has empathy for the struggles and complexities of the client's life. The hierarchical relationship of the old paradigm placed more emphasis on the knowledge of the physician, while the patient needed the direction of the physician in order to actualize their life. While astrology is probably the most illuminating cosmology about human nature in existence, we still need to be mindful and respectful towards how the client is working through his or her own issues. I think it was the Jungian analyst, Marion Woodman, who said that the psyche eventually gets what it needs one way or the other. While we often give advice and counsel to our clients, we also have to trust in their own mythological journey and that people are always doing the best that they can at any given moment.

We seem to be living in an overly stimulated society that does not allow for much personal introspection and integration. The sense of self is always being saturated with more and more impingements from the external world. The beauty of astrology is that it can remind both the astrologer and the client that there is a psyche, striving for completion; that there is an unconscious; and that there is a yearning within all of us for psychological and spiritual fulfillment. Psychological astrology then has an important role to play in our fast moving, postmodern world.*

Endnote

1. Miller, A. *The Drama of the Gifted child: The Search for the True Self*. NY: Basic Books, 1997.

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The serious problems in life are never fully solved. If ever they appear to be so it is a sure sign that something has been lost. The meaning and purpose of a problem seem to lie not in its solution, but in our working at it incessantly.

—Carl. G. Jung, *The Portable Jung*.

Bigger Is Better and Other Jupiterian Defenses

by Lynn Bell

Psychological astrology delves deeply into the interpretations of the planets, and looks at astrology as a dynamic reflection of inner processes that often reveal themselves in outer events. Although each symbol has a rich range of archetypal expressions that may shift and evolve over time, and even the darkest symbols have an upside, the positive factors in astrology tend to be treated almost one dimensionally. Astrologer, Lynn Bell takes another look at Jupiter, and explores the shadow side of our biggest (and best?) planet.

Try typing *bigger and better* into a Google search and you'll come across a series of sites dedicated to pictures of large breasted women and penis enhancement. In a more naïve time, *bigger and better* might have been the slogan of most communities in America. We are wiser now—or are we?

Perhaps it is the child in us that believes bigger is better, seeing our future selves as a solution to all that we cannot control. Not long ago, I watched a very tall, young man at the center of a gathering for his 24th birthday celebration. Two young boys, about five or six years old, carried his presents like pages, looking up in awe and admiration at this young giant. There is a moment in our lives when simply growing up holds the solution to so much.

The Jupiterian assurance from a bigger, stronger adult, that *"everything will be fine, don't you worry,"* is natural enough. No matter how much a parent may wrestle with anxiety about global warming or terrorist attacks (the Bomb and Communism having lost their power to invoke fear), the need to reassure the young and vulnerable is wired into us as part of our cultural survival. We may be fibbing when we say, *"Everything's gonna be alright."* But then again, we may not.

Growth is a Jupiterian function, and children are growing physically, emotionally and mentally all the time. In a sense things are always getting better, and bigger for the young.

Jupiter is thought to be exalted in Cancer, a sign connected with infancy and tenderness, and with innocence and feeling. Jupiter is at its best, protector of the vulnerable; so we wrap children in positive stories and hopeful outcomes. All of us are familiar with the cheerful, avuncular bringer of gifts, the optimistic, indulgent guide.

Jupiter is the storyteller, and stories are a form of teaching, even in the grimmest of our fairy tales, where wolves swallow grandmothers whole and lie in wait for little girls; the hunter comes along, the wolf's belly is slit open, and grandmother pops out unharmed. While grandmother's miraculous escape from the wolf's belly crosses the boundary into the unreal, the helpful hunter may very well exist. Protection is there, even in the dark and dangerous forest.

When the world we live in is particularly bleak, Neptune replaces ordinary reality with fantasy. It may even lead us into an entirely different realm where time is erased, nothing can harm us and loved ones do not die. A recent film by Mexican director, Guillermo del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*, builds a superb, tense dialogue between a repressive and fascist outer world and the magical reality of a child's imagination. A claustrophobic Plutonian world gives way to a slightly disturbing Neptunian world of fantasy. When there is no room for healthy growth, we may leave the world completely.

Jupiterian stories are different. Despite some post-modern tendencies, no one really drowns in Willie Wonka's chocolate vats. Dark elements find their way into the films and stories, but they are contained within a hopeful outcome. Children's books are still filled

with bright rainbows and smiling, helpful dolphins. Clouds have silver linings, and more often than not, monsters turn into friends.

It's fascinating to think about Jupiter's alleged fall in Capricorn. What happens to Jupiter with time and aging? Human beings continue to grow biologically until the age of 25-27, and during these years there is a natural fit between biological growth and Jupiterian attitudes. Yet we know that as the body begins its slow decline, growth can no longer be defined in the same way. A few years later, at the first Saturn return, we are asked to bite off a big piece of the real world. The classical Jupiterian positivism needs adjustment and maturation, for growth is no longer boosted by biological processes. It has shifted to other levels. Without it, the bright confidence of this planet turns into denial—for denial is one of the first defenses against painful emotions.

In psychological terms, denial often means a refusal to recognize a traumatic event, e.g., a mother who continues to speak of a dead child as if he will be going to school the next day, or a grieving spouse who acts as if nothing has changed. Denial that obliterates an event completely, has a Plutonian quality; we simply erase the trauma and re-establish reality.

Jupiterian defenses, on the other hand, belong at least in part to the real world. They build on elements of growth and stretch them to a bigger size, like a puppy's loose skin. Jupiter offers hope, Neptune escape, and Pluto removes us completely from unbearable feeling.

A healthily functioning Jupiter keeps us truly growing, ratifies positive outcomes and seizes upbeat events as proof that things will improve. Jupiter generates our belief system. We run into problems if our beliefs are too small or if the outer circumstances of our lives hold us back. Can we accept that we don't measure up? Or do we tell ourselves stories to feel better?

Under stress, the Jupiter function becomes exaggeration, a polite word for untruth, and the storyteller goes into overdrive to preserve our positive feelings about life. Stories are useful, even essential, but not all stories are true—or rather we might say, they are true in a way that is different than the usual meaning we give to the word. Jupiter is the storyteller, the mythmaker, the publicist and the guru. Under extreme circumstances, Jupiter can even be the con man. Tiny lies may help us maintain our belief systems, or preserve our sense of identity; yet, Jupiter's optimism may begin to serve only a piece of our identity, shoring it up at the expense of the whole self.

Jupiter is in detriment in the Mercury ruled signs, Gemini and Virgo, where mere words gain ascendance over beliefs. Most of us don't know when we are lying to ourselves; we slip over the boundary of truth, little by little. If we are paying attention to ethics, Jupiter keeps us connected to what most people acknowledge to be right and true. Neptunian fantasy, on the other hand, takes us further, replacing the rules of ordinary reality with magical outcomes.

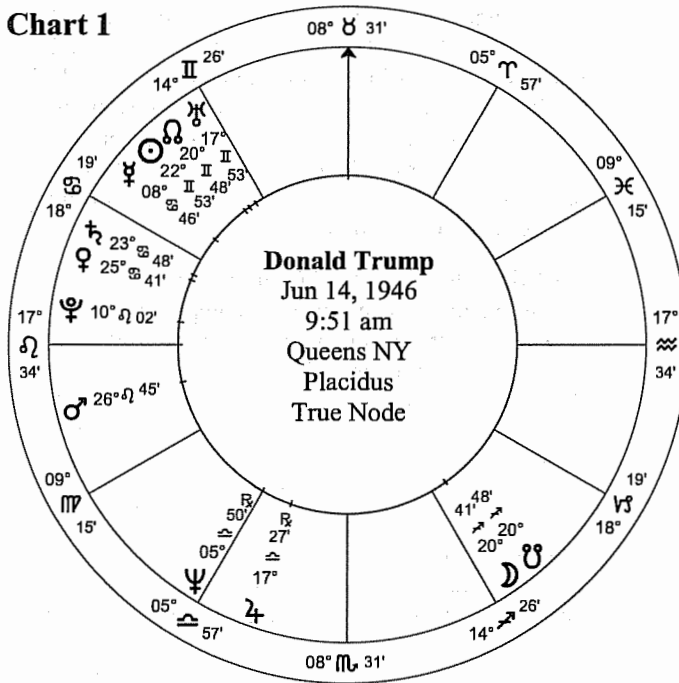
It's helpful to remember that Jupiter shares rulership of both Sagittarius and Pisces—complex double-bodied signs that bridge worlds. When astrologers gave Pisces to Neptune, they turned Jupiter into something more normative and hearty, forgetting the shape-shifting abilities of the god—his connection to the slippery symbolism of Pisces. Jupiter seeks to build wholes, to make sense out of experience. Its strong association to faith and belief, to God, reminds us that Jupiter does not rule the reality principle. It coordinates our understanding into meaningful wholes; and yet with hindsight, we see that all visions of cultural reality are partially mythological, beyond the realm of the measurable. What is important and meaningful in one society may not be so in another.

Dane Rudhyar¹ argued that Jupiter and Saturn together construct our social and cultural realities. Understood in this way, Jupiter has a great deal to do with outward success, recognition and abundance. Jupiter in the birth chart describes our ability to thrive in a given society, to successfully integrate the world. In this sense, it serves to keep the system functioning, to maintain things pretty much as they are; and in France, it is often seen as a planet of conformity. But this definition of Jupiter reduces the search for meaning to what society says is meaningful. It is the definition that is limited, rather than the planetary principle.

For those who have trouble feeling at ease in society, Jupiter can indeed function as part of the defense system by shoring up the ego with improved versions of the self. Padded resumes, inflated work experiences and tall tales of accomplishment are all means to give oneself value in the eyes of others. Like a small person wearing shoes with lifts to appear taller, Jupiter can be harnessed by the ego to help us feel smarter, richer, better and bigger than we really are.

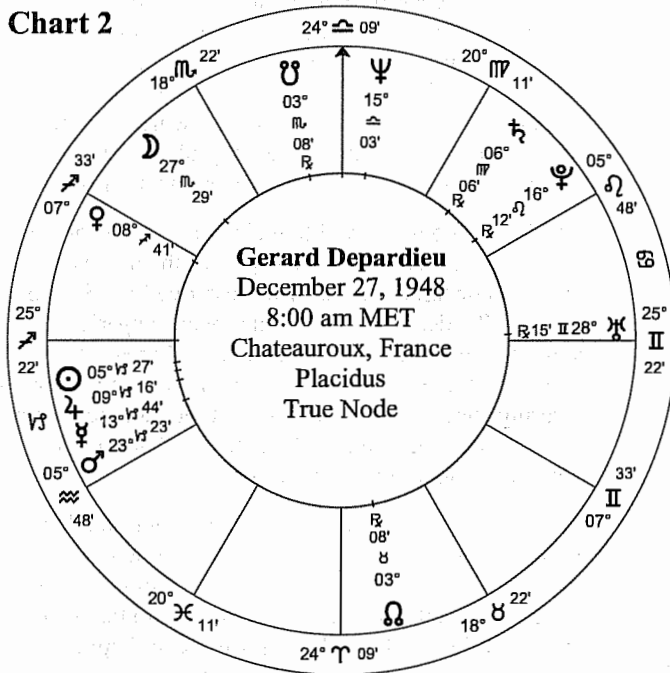
Feel-good stories are easier to see in other people than in ourselves. One Jupiterian actress I know would say, "*When we're filming in New York ...*" months before she knew whether a television pilot would be picked up as a series. In the end, the series never happened, and she let herself down rather badly. I remember another Jupiterian client, while teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, saying, "*I'm sure everything will be just fine in the end.*"

Chart 1



Data Source: See AstroDatabank
 Rodden Rating: A, from memory

Chart 2



Data Source: See AstroDatabank
 Rodden Rating: AA, birth certificate

When people use the expression, “*She’s in denial.*” they are referring to this kind of attitude. In Daniel Coleman’s book, *Vital Lies, Simple Truths, the Psychology of Self-Deception*,² he mentions RD Laing’s description of The Game of Happy Family. In this game, everyone covers up secrets in order to maintain stability. Not so long ago, the most horrid family experiences—incest, abuse, alcoholism—were routinely hidden from society at large, as well as within families. Not only would these secrets threaten the integrity of a family, they also threatened the positive image a society had of itself. Recent scandals concerning sexual abuse in the priesthood were also covered up for a very long time, perhaps because the church had such a strong investment in its Jupiterian image as a source of ethics, morality and meaning. This form of denial serves to maintain a positive identity for the church or any similar group, and the same is true for an individual. Our natural desire to see other people as good, buoyed up by Jupiter, can at times keep us from seeing a great deal.

At the same time, it has been well documented that optimists fare better than pessimists in life. They are less likely to get depressed, have feistier immune systems and tend to succeed more easily than pessimists. How do we tell the difference between Jupiter as optimist and Jupiter as denial?

The Jupiter shadow often rings hollow. It can be bigger than life; it exaggerates, inflates certain qualities and often feels *over the top*. It’s as if Jupiter is afraid of bad news, and avoids Saturn. These two planets function together in the psyche, and describe a natural movement between extraversion and introversion, between restraint and expansion. When Jupiter becomes defensive, it is important to remember that defenses are in place to protect us from overwhelming pain and suffering. We are used to thinking of Jupiter as slightly excessive. But in medieval astrology, as Darby Costello points out in an unpublished Master’s degree paper,³ the virtue associated with Jupiter is temperance. In temperance, each quality is allowed expression and movement, so that growth happens on all levels. The inherent nature of Jupiter brings growth in proportion to all aspects of the self.

Many years ago in her Sun sign book, *Astrology for Lovers*,⁴ Liz Greene wrote about the shadow side of Sagittarius, as a brand-toting, name-dropping groupie. A combination of

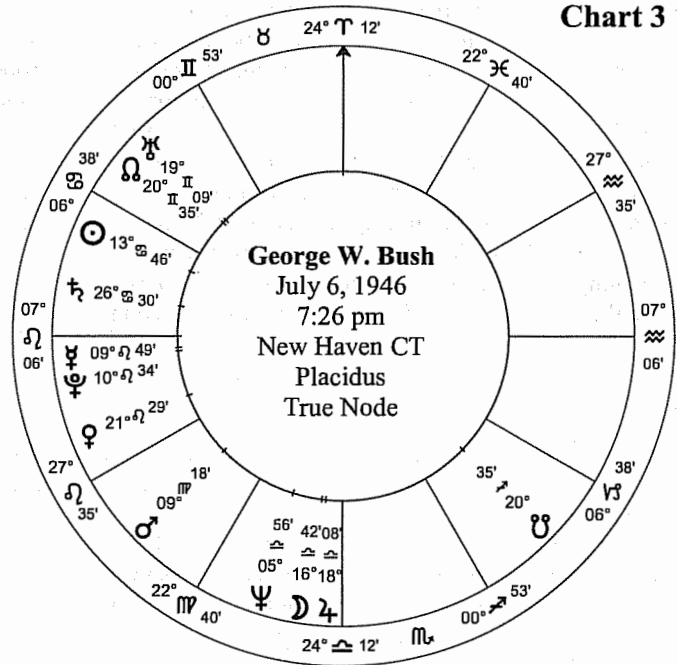
Jupiter and the Sun in the birthchart may make for a spectacular human being, or it can express itself through Gucci bags, Monolo Blahnik shoes, trophy wives and large SUVs. Donald Trump, with his Leo Ascendant and Sagittarian Moon, comes to mind (Chart 1). He was born on a Full Moon with Jupiter trine his Gemini Sun and sextile the Moon. Besides being in the Jupiterian casino business, and giving his name to nearly a dozen large building complexes in New York, he is now a well-known figure in reality television.

Trump's answer to a painful period of near bankruptcy was: take more risks along the same lines. His pharaonic tendencies are echoed in the name of his youngest child, Barron. At one time it was estimated he had \$900 million in personal debt. And although he has come back, his immense holdings have been reduced and many are on shaky ground. Although Trump really does know how to build and to build well, as things became difficult for him, he turned to bigger and better as a solution. We might ask the question, "Is growth always good?" Many astrologers have noted that Jupiter transits can be associated with cancer diagnosis—a form of uncontrolled cell growth. Perhaps our attention needs to be on a particular quality of growth.

Jupiter represents the principle of the good and of beneficence. Inordinate consumption is a product of Jupiter in service to the small self. Jupiter cannot fully function when growth is limited solely to the material. By nature it needs to be connected to something larger, to the search for meaning, to God. Even then, Jupiter can shore up the ego through being right. For those whose highest value is knowledge, and who may have a strong Mercury, or a combination of Jupiter and Saturn, rightness of argument may be used to prop up a sense of low self-esteem or confusion. The more we think we know, the more we are unassailable. The self-satisfied, bigot who claims to have all the answers (or the only answer) has often fallen victim to a Jupiterian defense. Voltaire put it another way when he stated that the constant search for something better is the enemy of the good (*le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*).

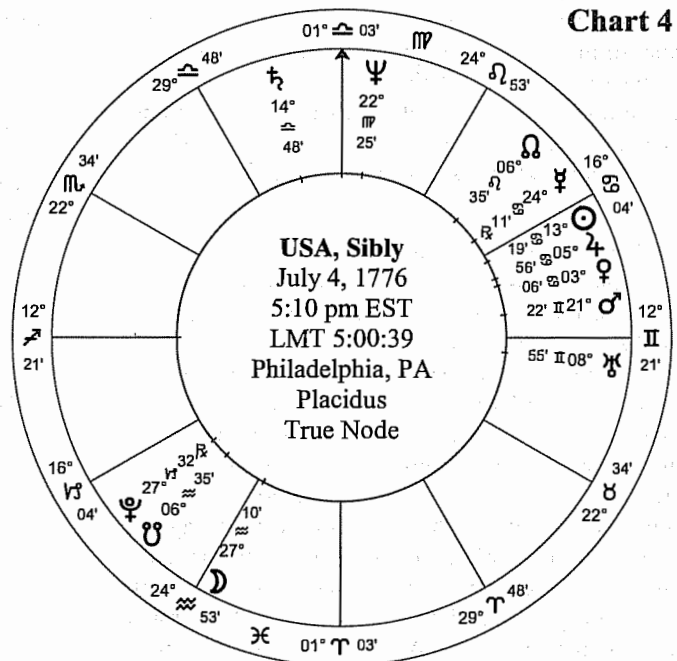
When only one part of the psyche grows it can become monstrous. In French there is an expression for very successful artists: *Les Monstres Sacrés* (sacred monsters). Usually

Chart 3



Data Source: See AstroDatabank
 Rodden Rating: AA Birth Certificate

Chart 4



Data Source: See AstroDatabank
 Rodden Rating: C, use with caution

there is an exaggerated amount of attention poured into one aspect of the persona, an aspect that often supports an extraordinary talent. Over time, the overfed persona dwarfs even a great talent, and stars became famous for being themselves, rather than for what they do. Again, the Jupiterian growth is diverted to the Sun, or chained to an earlier cycle of success. French actor, Gerard Depardieu, is an example of Jupiter-Sun conjunction in Capricorn (Chart 2). In recent years, Depardieu has bulked out and become something of a caricature of himself. It is extremely difficult, having touched the exaltation of success and creativity, to come down to earth. Jupiter becomes outsized when it's potential for growth is channeled into a container that is too small.

But the ultimate Jupiterian defense, the one most of us get caught in, has to do with all the stories we tell ourselves, the ones where we have such positive intentions, to do things for the good of others, only to be hurt by them in some way. We are almost always the good guys, in our own personal mythology. Yet we all need a little uplift now and again—what could be wrong with that?

After the shock of the events of September 11, 2001, and the accompanying devastation, loss and fear, we looked to Jupiter to make things right again. We wanted to believe the stories that would make us feel better. We were not alone. In 2004, after the disputed victory four years before, Americans voted for a president with Jupiter-Moon conjunction. George W. Bush is many things to many people. The Moon in Libra is ruler of his Cancer Sun, and the conjunction is square to the Sun (Chart 3). This aspect is often singled out as a crowd pleaser. How does it work? Under trauma, most of us regress a little. We want to hear stories with happy endings, stories that will restore our faith in the world.

Bush had early training for this role. When he was six years old, his sister died of leukemia, and George became the cheerful jokester whose job was to lift his mother out of her depression. But Bush's Jupiter is square the 12th house Sun, and thus tends to go into overdrive in order to feel that there is really someone there. In his early incarnation as a hard-drinking, rich man's son, he played another version of the Jupiter archetype. His 1985 religious conversion followed Jupiter into a relationship with God, with strong beliefs about the world as a born-again Christian. He knows what he knows, and he continues to tell us that things are going just fine, gathering believers around him and trying to cheer America with positive spin.

Natal Neptune is also involved in a square to his Sun, so Bush's natural optimism more easily slips over the line into what some journalists now call *the bubble*. It has been well-documented that Bush does not like bad

news or disagreement. The pre-selected favorable crowds for his public appearances are another indicator of Jupiter playing defense for a sense of self that needs boosting over and over again. Apart from a wide square to Jupiter and a brush with the ascendant from the 12th house, Bush's Saturn is unaspected. The reality principle has little effect on his belief system, and his belief system is a defense against an essentially shaky sense of self.

In the Sibly Chart for American Independence (Chart 4), the US has a Jupiter-Sun conjunction in Cancer, which also happens to be tightly squared to Saturn. Bush's chart has a perfect connection to this US chart. Not only does his Sun join the US Sun, but his Moon-Jupiter conjunction falls on the US Saturn. Bush has said over and over again that he believes in America's greatness. His Jupiter has been a palliative for feelings of depression and loss, for America's Saturn.

The Jupiter-Sun conjunction in the US chart can be wonderful: optimistic, inclusive and open, describing a true land of opportunity, freedom and justice. This is the reflection of ourselves we like to see in the mirror, even though the Saturn square Sun makes regular appearances in various forms of puritan dress. But our Jupiter can also go into denial on an impressive scale. Current signs of this are stratospheric national and personal debt, the rocketing imbalance between rich and poor, and statistics that show Americans weigh more on average than any other country in the world. Growth becomes mere bulk when we lose touch with our ethics and ideals, and this applies to the collective, as well as the individual.

Perhaps we need a new story. Every Jupiter return asks us to re-evaluate the narratives that make sense of our lives. Jupiter and Saturn work together. To keep Jupiter in balance, we also need a healthy relationship to Saturn. We will continue to grow spiritually, ethically and emotionally, as well as materially, when we have the courage to face our failings, when we align ourselves with our ethics and beliefs, and bring our difficult experiences into the myths that guide our lives.*

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2. Coleman, D. *Vital Lies, Simple Truths, the Psychology of Self-Deception*. NY: Touchstone, 1985.
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4. Greene, L. *Astrology For Lovers*, Maine: Weiser, 1989.


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Astrology and Alchemy

by Christina Becker and Janet Markham

Astrology and alchemy are both forms of divination. Whereas astrology reveals an individual's destiny through the movement of the stars, alchemy uses the metaphor of chemical combinations to reveal the mystery of spiritual and personal growth. Throughout history, they have been closely partnered, though in recent times, somewhat less so. Christina Becker and Janet Markham discuss how exploring alchemical symbolism in both natal charts and transits can enrich the study of astrology. Using Jung's interest in the two disciplines as an entry point, a case is made for bringing astrology and alchemy together again.

ur aim is to explore the connection between modern day astrology and the medieval discipline of alchemy. Our ability to focus this discussion has been helped by framing it within a Jungian outlook and by Jung's ideas on the *unus mundus* and synchronicity. Curiously, the seeds of what now are being supported by the theories of quantum physics are also found in alchemical writings. We were excited to find that our study of the ancient alchemical texts has led us to modern thought leaders who herald the coming of a new cosmological worldview that embraces the alchemical and the astrological. It would seem that human beings are on the verge of a significant shift in consciousness.

Several people commenting on this subject include Richard Tarnas in *Cosmos and Psyche*¹ and Rick Levine in his 2005 DVD *Quantum Astrology, Science, Spirit and Our Place in the Cycles of History*,² wherein he makes connections between astrology, quantum physics and the new direction in which astrology is poised to move. He also refers to the infrared and ultra-violet spectrum that will be discussed later in connection with Jung. Yet another, Veronica Goodchild, speaks to the reunion of psyche and matter that alchemical experiments were designed to facilitate.

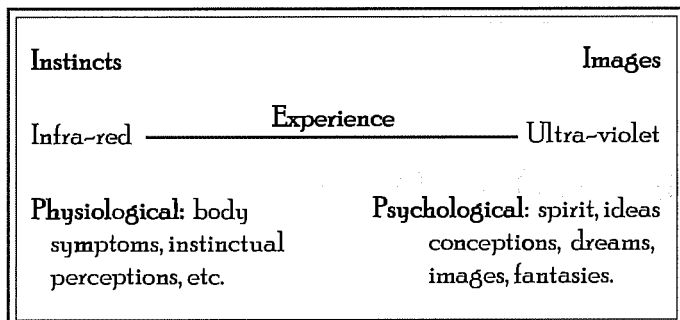
*The new coordinates of reality (in addition to our achievements in rational consciousness) include the reunion of psyche and matter as a One world, the erosion of ordinary time and space, the participation of the individual in creating reality, the movement toward the Kairos or the right or propitious moment, the notion of creation continua, continuing creation, that arises out of a reciprocal, ongoing relationship between the individual and the unus mundus.*³

(Editor's Note: Also see "Operation of the Sun: Astrology and the Alchemical Myth" by Donna Woodwell, Geocosmic Journal, Summer Solstice, 2007.)

The theories of Carl Jung were significant in this regard. His contribution was in the application of alchemical ideas to the process of psychological and spiritual development. It is in the archetypal realm where this link can be understood and that provides a theoretical framework for understanding the point where alchemy and psychological astrology meet.

In Jung's later years, his theory of archetypes took the form of a spectrum. Archetypes were described as pre-existing patterns in the human psyche, i.e., inherited, structuring patterns of the mind. His first definition of archetype focused on primordial universal imagery that arose out of the collective unconscious. In his later years, he added the psychoid dimension to archetypes. In this conception, the archetypal level of the unconscious has properties that are in common with the organic and physiological world as well as the psychological. Psychological and physiological worlds can be seen as two sides of the same coin. At one end of the spectrum is the infra-red pole where the physical instincts and the physiological world reside. At the other end of the spectrum is the spiritual imagery where the psychological lives.

The dynamism of instinct is lodged as it were, in the infra-red part of the spectrum whereas the instinctual image is lies in the ultra-violet part. Realization and instinct assimilation never take place at the red end by absorption into the instinctual sphere, but only by integration of the image which signifies and concurrently evokes the instinct, albeit in a form quite different from the one we meet on the biological level.⁴



This metaphor can help us understand the connection between alchemy and psychological astrology. At one end of the archetypal spectrum is the instinctive or physical world, which leads all the way to the imaginal world of dreams and images at the other end. It is our opinion that alchemy provides the philosophical ground for the connection between sky and the earthly plane. Looking at astrology along this spectrum means that individual expressions of planets acting in a natal chart or by transit can manifest at various points along the spectrum—instinctively in the body, an event described by horary or mundane astrology, or as a psychological experience. It is our contention that this perspective can also be tied to the full range of the astrological world, allowing horary and predictive approaches to blend with psychological ones.

What is Alchemy?

Alchemy is a combination of physics, chemistry, metallurgy, medicine, astrology and the mystic sciences. The word itself derives from an Arabic word, meaning the art of producing elixir or the philosopher's stone. It also means the substance or medium of transmutation of baser metals into gold by some magical means.

There are a number of alchemical traditions throughout history. Some are more spiritual, esoteric and mystical. Other traditions are more practical and concerned with the actual chemical reactions. These are the traditions that were the earliest attempts to understand the mystery of material phenomenon in nature.

The Golden Age of alchemy was in the Renaissance, a period of significant revolution in ideas of humanism, arts, classics and Christianity. During this time, alchemy was linked to religious and magical thought. By the 18th century, the actual connection between chemistry and alchemy dissolved, and the spiritual and mystical traditions were shouldered exclusively by healers, astrologers and poets. Alchemists in the 18th century believed that they were studying an unknown phenomenon in

matter. They observed and then interpreted. Many believed that the true purpose of alchemy was to produce medicine or heal the body.

The *opus*, or the work, of alchemy was considered a sacred task where the alchemist searched for the supreme and ultimate value that came from working with the *prima materia* towards the Philosopher's Stone. In Latin, it was known as the *philosophi lapis*, a legendary substance that supposedly could turn inexpensive metals into gold and/or create an elixir that would make humans younger, thus delaying death. It was a long-time Holy Grail of Western alchemy. In the view of spiritual alchemy, making the philosopher's stone would bring enlightenment upon the maker and conclude the Great Work.

The *opus* was considered to be a highly individual work, the alchemists were decidedly solitary individuals, and it involved a certain amount of mystery. Liz Greene writes of the purpose of alchemy this way:

The underlying theme of alchemy is not really about making gold. It concerns transforming the raw substance of human nature and releasing its potential for inner divinity, not through repression or transcendence but through inner confrontation and integration.⁵

The *opus* was divided into four stages: *nigredo*, *albedo*, *citriam* (or yellowing), and *rubedo*.

Nigredo:

Often the *nigredo* was associated with the *prima materia*, the base material, the substance to which the alchemical processes were applied. Its image is black, chaos or the *massa confusa*. Psychologically, this corresponds to depression, the dark night of the soul, or the being consumed by overwhelming emotion.

Albedo:

Once the *prima materia* has been subjected to a number of chemical operations, it moves from blackness to whiteness. This is the state of purification. The *prima materia* is no longer contaminated. From a psychological point of view, this is the state of psychological movement along the spectrum to image and insight. The individual no longer projects the planet's expression on the outside world, but begins to accept and own the planet's expression as part of oneself.

Citrian or Yellowing:

The colour yellow in the alchemical stages signifies change for the worse. This stage reflects the processes of fall, aging, old teeth and old paper. The alchemists spoke of the putrefaction and/or corruption at this point in the opus. However, the yellow is also the color of ripening grains, spring flowers, honey, sunlight, and gold and therefore, consciousness.

Rubedo:

This is the red stage and the final (4th) stage in the alchemical process. It is the place where spiritual or psychological insight is fixed and integrated into oneself. The texts refer to the need to make the outcome of the process durable so that it is always present. The alchemists referred to the state where they accepted their spiritual inheritance; it would also reflect a state of integration. Psychologically, it reflects the point where an individual has mastered the *prima materia* and the material world

History of Alchemy

Zosimus of Panopolis, a 4th century alchemical apologist, considered by many to be the father of alchemy, suggests that alchemy is at the core of an ancient pre-deluge science, one that was revealed to mankind through sexual contact with semi-divine entities.

The earliest surviving alchemical manuscript is from Isis the Prophetess to her son, Horus, found in the *Codex Marcianus*, a medieval (11th century) collection of Greek fragments. This work reflects a unique blend of Hebrew mysticism and Egyptian mythology that probably came from Alexandria in the 1st century of the Christian Era. The text describes how Isis, the Egyptian Goddess, went to the town of Hermopolis to study angelic magic and alchemy. She was met by an angel who wished to unite with her sexually. She refused to submit and asked him for the secret to prepare gold and silver. The next day a higher order angel appears. Isis agrees to exchange sex for the alchemical secret; but she must take an oath to never reveal the secret to anyone except her son, Horus. The text goes on to describe extensive lab work in melting and preparing metals such as quicksilver, copper, lead and of course, gold.

Isis was a great enchantress, the goddess of magic. Together with Thoth, she taught mankind the secrets of medicine. Her name means Queen of the Throne, or Queen of Heaven. For almost 3,500 years, she was the main Egyptian Goddess. As the wife and sister of Osiris and the mother of Horus, she was the personification of the faithful wife and devoted mother.

This text identifying the origins of alchemy is important because it is the first mention of the concept of *Kairos*. The term comes from Greek alchemy and

means the right moment for the metamorphosis of the gods. *Kairos* is much different from *chronos* or regular time; it has a qualitative nature. It reflects the point of connection between the divine realm and the human, corporal realm, that is, the point where psyche and matter meet. In the New Testament, *Kairos* means the appointed time in the purpose of God, the time when God acts (e.g., Mark 1.15, *the Kairos is fulfilled*). There is the connection to divine time or God's time. This early text also reveals that alchemical knowledge has a divine source and that it is a gift of the gods or the angels. Because of this divine source, alchemy is secret knowledge and not available to just anyone.

As Above, So Below

Our premise is that alchemy connects all life, from the movement of the stars in heaven, right down to our dream world and the unconscious. This belief in the unity of existence is captured in the alchemical phrase, *as above, so below*, found in The Emerald Tablet⁶ (see next page). Jung embraced this idea in his theories of synchronicity, and now it is prominently felt in the speculations of the new sciences.

The Emerald Tablet is said to have originated from the cosmic messenger himself, Hermes, and placed in King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid. However, the origins of the Tablet are mysterious. The Tablet is the oldest hermetic text known to exist and it has influenced and inspired 3500 years of alchemical writing. Outwardly, the lines of the text reveal the recipe for the preparation of the Philosopher's stone and the transmutation of baser metals into gold. The importance to our discussion is that the Tablet has been used to justify astrology as a vital part of alchemy.

The text supports the premise of a *unus mundus*—one world—where the alchemical opus is considered a cosmic process and that the physical, mental, and spiritual worlds exist simultaneously in a unified view of reality. That is, the empirical world of human beings and nature exist against a transcendental background. It is this background that emerges into consciousness through synchronistic happenings.

There are several levels of consciousness within this concept. At the lowest level, there is no distinction between the self and the world. Like Levy Bruhl's notion of participation mystique, there is instead a mystical connection with the world where the ego perceives and participates in an intelligent universe. Human beings and nature participated in one world.

The return of *as above, so below* in modern thought is spoken of in Richard Tarnas's *Cosmos and Psyche*⁷ and the recent film, "What the Bleep Do We Know?"⁸ These two pieces advance the hypothesis

that the same phenomenon exists between human beings and the universe. However, at a level of consciousness that goes beyond participation mystique, the ego is aware that it is participating in an intelligent universe and uses the astrological frame to observe the unfolding of its life.

Jung Says of the *Unus Mundus*

Our psyche is set up in accord with the structure of the universe, and what happens in the macrocosm likewise happens in the infinitesimal and most subjective reaches of the psyche.⁹ Liz Greene speaks of the psychoid reality this way:

*It is this perspective that we need to remember if we are to penetrate the oddities of the alchemical writings. But for that matter, we need to keep this perspective when we deal with astrology too, because what we call a planetary influence can express itself on a bodily level, as an external event, as an inner emotional or spiritual state, as an ideology, as another person with whom we engage in relationship, or an any combination of these diverse levels.*¹⁰

Astrology and Alchemy

The study of astrology and alchemy has been linked throughout *time*—the word, *time*, being a deliberately chosen word, as one of the core elements used by both astrology and alchemy is the concept of timing. Astrology and alchemy are similar in other ways, too. Both are both concerned with ingredients, correlations, operations and states. Only the language and skyscape are different. Astrology studies the planetary energy in the sky and the corresponding impact on Earth; alchemy with required steps and operations is concerned with turning of base metals into gold. Whether this is real gold as used by some alchemists from a chemical perspective, or metaphorical gold used by psychologists, depends to a large extent on the historical time and geographic location that the tradition originated. Many astrologers through the ages were also alchemists.

Dr. John Dee, astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I, is an example.

It is the traditional planets, that is, the seven known planets visible to the naked eye, that link alchemy to astrology. These planets are correlated to the metals that the alchemists used in their operations. The alchemists believe that each of these planets dominated or ruled certain metals. How interrelated these two forms of study are, can be seen in the symbols used by alchemists. *Alchemists Handbook* (Manual for Practical Laboratory Alchemy) by Frater Albertus gives seven pages of listings of symbols used by the Rosicrucian Fraters.¹¹ Amongst the many symbols of chemical substances are neatly interspersed the glyphs for elements, planets, and signs.

- The Sun rules Gold ☉
- The Moon, Silver ☾
- Mercury, Mercury ☿
- Venus, Copper ♀
- Mars, Iron ♂
- Jupiter, Tin ♃
- Saturn, Lead ♄

Text from the Emerald Tablet⁶

Truly, without Deceit, certainly and absolutely —

That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below, in the accomplishment of the miracle of One Thing. And just as all things have come from One, through the mediation of One, so all things follow from this One Thing in the same way.

Its Father is the Sun. Its Mother is the Moon. The Wind has carried it in his Belly. Its Nourishment is the Earth. It is the Father of every completed Thing in the whole World. Its Strength is intact if it is turned towards the Earth. Separate the Earth by Fire: the fine from the gross, gently, and with great skill.

It rises from Earth to Heaven, and then it descends again to the Earth, and receives power from Above and from Below. Thus you will have the Glory of the whole World. All Obscurity will be clear to you. This is the strong Power of all Power because it overcomes everything fine and penetrates everything solid.

In this way was the World created. From this there will be amazing Applications, because this is the Pattern. Therefore am I called Thrice Greatest Hermes, having the three parts of the Wisdom of the whole World.

Herein have I completely explained the Operation of the Sun.

The alchemists further refine some of these correlations by giving different symbolism for different states of the metals, e.g., refined mercury, solid mercury, and pure mercury (quicksilver).

As astrologers, our whole way of thinking is centred on the use of glyphs as a shorthand. For those willing to make the foray into alchemy, it can give us an instant resonance with the alchemical corollary, particularly when the glyphs that we are so familiar with are liberally sprinkled therein.

Is This of Any Practical Use to Astrologers Today?

Is there any benefit from recombining the two forms, so integrated in the past and yet increasingly divergent in more recent times? In essence, is there a way to recapture the synergy between the two arts-sciences and use them to create a product that is greater than the sum of the parts. We believe the answer is a resounding *yes*—if you view astrology and alchemy as divining tools with a common goal, and if you place both disciplines on Jung's archetypal spectrum discussed earlier.

One part of the alchemical process was to depict the various stages by a series of woodcuts or illustrations. Below is Emblem 42 of Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* from 1617.¹² This particular image shows the role of the alchemist, although it could just as easily apply to the astrologer. Nature and creativity are depicted in the form of a divine female force leading the way. The alchemist-astrologer follows along tracking her footsteps. He (reason and experience) is seen here wearing the spectacles of detection and carrying the lamp of illumination and a stick of divination as he sets off to walk down the path.

The key element in alchemy for the transformation of *prima materia*, i.e. the transformation of the baser parts of the personality, is to have a sealed alembic container. It is the hermetic sealing that ensures that the subject of the alchemical opus remains contained and not contaminated from outside influences. From our perspective, the alembic container in astrology is the birthchart. Inside the birthchart for an individual person or event is all the raw potential or chaos at that one particular moment in time, the *prima materia* of the alchemical world. Within this sealed container is the



—From Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens*,
Emblem 42, 1617.

composition of planetary energies in primal form. This is the starting point. Then, just as in the alchemical world, the aim is to bring these energies into order, raising the vibrations by a series of operations over future, pre-determined moments in time, until the essence becomes distilled into a purer form. This movement over time shows a close correlation to the evolving or unfolding of a birth chart by any of the generally accepted trending techniques—transits, secondary progressions, solar arcs, etc. Each has a time where it is beneficial or where it is required that we work with the different planetary energies. Thus, *Kairos* becomes a key component in the transformation within individual lives—if we accept this connection, it opens up a whole new area of exploration for the astrologer.

In transits, for example, we know that Saturn is one of our timers, making a square aspect to the natal position roughly every seven years and returning to its actual natal position for the first time around the age of 28. Saturn is concerned with issues of growing up, taking responsibility and our ability to function and take our place in the outside world. Assuming a life span of around 84 years, an individual will usually have the opportunity of three Saturn returns during the course of their life. In alchemy, Saturn also plays an important role. It rules lead, the base or starting material. The aim in alchemy is to apply a series of operations over time, by which it will be turned into gold, ruled by the Sun. Alchemical processes are repeated time upon time, with each cycle providing opportunity to perfect a little more of the base metal into gold. Saturn is the original dark. Sun is the point of illumination. We cannot have light without dark, and the interaction between the two conjures up some interesting images. One brings the dark of not knowing, the other the potential for illumination. Within that spectrum is an uneasy mix where both are engaged in a battle to reign supreme. This can be compared in astrological terms to the times of important Saturn transits, particularly those in connection to the Sun, the ever present light and warmth in the sky towards which we are always being drawn. Liz Greene describes Saturn as the glue that binds, connecting us to those people who will have an impact on us¹³ In the role of fate, Saturn brings them into our lives at predetermined times.

In addition to denoting Saturn and the Sun, alchemical texts also show representations of other planetary bodies. Of particular importance to astrologers are the Sun (Sol) and the Moon (Luna). The interplay between the Sun and the Moon in the astrological birthchart depicts our potential for integrating the inner masculine and feminine. This process can be contemplated by linking them to alchemical images symbolizing the interrelationship between Sol and

Luna. In a similar vein, other planets shown in the images also show at an archetypal level, the ways in which specific energies can interact and relate, with the potential to add a further richness to our astrological knowledge.

The comparison of the birthchart to the alembic container or flask used in alchemy is also interesting. The alembic and its contents have to be sealed. As a circle, the birthchart also has that innate quality.

In some forms of alchemy, alchemists worked in pairs. A man and a woman would work together, one acting as witness to the other. This can be compared to the role of client and astrologer or indeed any significant relationship which has the potential to act as a catalyst for development and growth in life.

Who is the Master Behind the Unfolding of the Process?

Is the alchemist-astrologer the true master in the unfolding of psychic potential? After all, practitioners possess tools and knowledge that can be used to orchestrate events of the future. Or is it the greater consciousness of the outer planets that determines the unfolding of psyche? Outer planets work in the cycles of their own cosmic time, and may connect with psyche at just the right moment by the spirit or spark of Eros, Mercury or Hermes Trismegistus. Certainly without the alchemist or astrologer, there is no witness. What is being called for is some form of divine cooperation between Earth and the heavens, a true linking of *as above, so below*. An important role for the astrologer-chemist is to act in this capacity of witness. Witnesses are an important part of any individual's quest for psychological growth, whether through the dynamics of human relationships or the more structured route of therapy. Adding the astrologer to this mix, correctly places our role. How can we, as astrologers, enter this alchemical world that opens up for us a tantalizing, but potentially huge new arena of study?

We cannot ignore the rising tide of interest about topics such as quantum physics, unified forces, interactive fields and the interconnectedness of all things. This is not surprising to any astrologer. In our minds, everything always has been connected. But what is exciting is that the world is moving in that direction, too. We may be one step ahead—as astrologers we have been putting this knowledge into practical use for thousands of years—and the subject of alchemy has accompanied us along this journey. There is a potential richness for any astrologer to be able to add to their existing knowledge through an exploration of alchemy, an art/science intertwined with ours throughout time. But the scope is huge. We have tried

to show in this article one potential point of entry through psychology, and that is through the work of Jung. We leave you with a quote from Marie-Louise von Franz, acknowledging the need for psychology and science to come together to create a joint future.

*To clarify these creative possibilities, we would have to have a group of physicists who are willing to take on a deep Jungian analysis—not because we want to rule them or influence them—simply that they learn. And then we would have to have a few Jungian analysts who would take the trouble to study physics. I think that's what first would have to be done, so that both knew really deeply the other subject.*¹⁴✦

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Earth Mounds of Ohio

by Cathy Taylor

The ancient earth mounds of Ohio are the largest in the world, with the Newark Octagon Mound itself being over 70 acres in size. The Circle Mound, less than a mile away, accompanies it. At one time, both of these sites were part of a four-mile complex totally made up of mound structures. No one knew the reason for the mounds until the lunar aspects were looked at, and it was found the lunar aspects fit the structures exactly. Cathy Taylor points out that in this current lunar standstill, it is important to note that we have earth mounds in the Americas that carefully record these points. She also notes that it is the famous Serpent Mound that is oriented to both solar and lunar standstills and demonstrates that the ancient sites of Ohio were clearly centers of learning that carefully documented the intricate cycles of the heavens.

There are huge man-made earth mound structures located all over the world. Only recently have scientists figured out that these mysterious geometrical structures are aligned to the sky. The largest earth mound structures are the immense earth mounds found in Ohio. The Serpent Mound (Figure 1) is the most famous. Less well-known are the Great Circle Mound and the Octagon Mound of Newark (Figure 2, next page). These structures seem related to the more famous earth mounds of Silbury Hill and Avebury found in England. Both include immense circles connected by grand avenues.

In the 1970s, a lot of excitement was generated when scientists figured out that Stonehenge was aligned with the Sun's apparent motion in the sky.¹ The apparent Sun makes its journey across the sky in a one-year period. We see the Sun rise from 23° north of east at Summer Solstice, to rising due east at both Equinoxes, then rising 23° south at Winter Solstice.

This cycle takes a year and is so denoted at many stone and earth mound sites.

To understand the architecture of ancient sites, there needs to be a clear understanding of horizon points. When you look at the horizon and think of it as a horizontal line, this is really a false picture. If you think about Earth in space, revolving around the Sun, you can see the side facing the Sun lit up with light, and the side away from the sun in darkness. A vertical line separates these two parts. When you wake up in the morning and face east and watch for the sunrise, think about looking out at a horizontal line that is centered

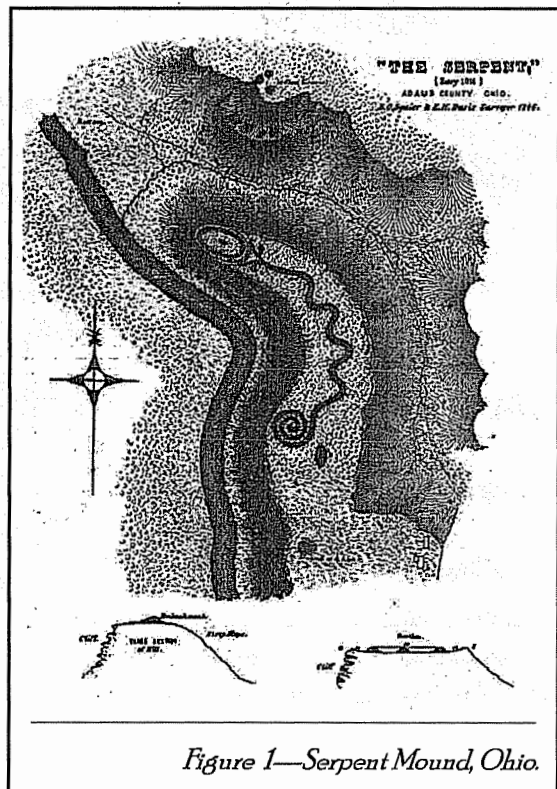


Figure 1—Serpent Mound, Ohio.

on the direction of east. The Sun at Winter Solstice comes up 23° south of east (this is the Tropic of Capricorn). At Summer Solstice, the Sun comes up at 23° north of east (this is the Tropic of Cancer). Look at a globe, and see the man-made marks of the equator and the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. The 23° tilt of the Earth appears to tilt us up and then down on our journey around the Sun, and it can be described as a cosmic belly dance of seasons (Figure 3).

In the 1970s, interested people started to wonder and calculate to see if other ancient sites were also aligned with the Sun's apparent motions. Two astronomers in Ohio were appalled at this idea and proposed that any site had enough points in it to make at least one alignment with the Sun likely. Accordingly, they went to the Octagon Mound with its many, many alignments and tried to show that randomly there would be an alignment with the Sun. However, they found none, which totally disproved that theory. Someone suggested they check out the lunar alignments, and quite astonishingly, every lunar alignment was found within the Octagon Mound.²

What are the lunar alignments? The Moon makes its journey across the sky in a month's time. When the Moon is positioned in Aries or Libra, the Moon will

rise or set due east or west. The Moon in Cancer rises and sets the farthest north, and the Moon in Capricorn rises and sets the farthest south by declination. What takes the Sun an entire year to complete is completed by the Moon in 28 days.

There is a larger cycle yet to deal with and that involves the maximum and minimum declination of the Moon. This is an approximately 9.3-year cycle of the Moon moving way out-of-bounds, as high as 28° north or south of east/west, which happens when the North Node is in Aries (or late degrees of Pisces). This is called the maximum declination of the Moon or its Major Luna Standstill. It is a time noted by extreme weather and emotions, and it was an event that people of long ago kept track of carefully. The minimum declination or Minor Lunar Standstill happens when the North Node of the Moon is in Libra. Then the Moon only reaches 18° north or south of the east-west points (Figure 4). The Moon's Nodes are the points of intersection between Earth's orbit (the ecliptic) and the Moon's orbit. As you can see, the Moon performs a larger dance on the horizon than the Sun, and also stretches and contracts its horizon points over time. The total cycle is 18.6 years. This motion is beautifully captured in the earth mounds of Ohio. All of the minimum and maximum lunar risings and settings are marked within this one earth mound site.

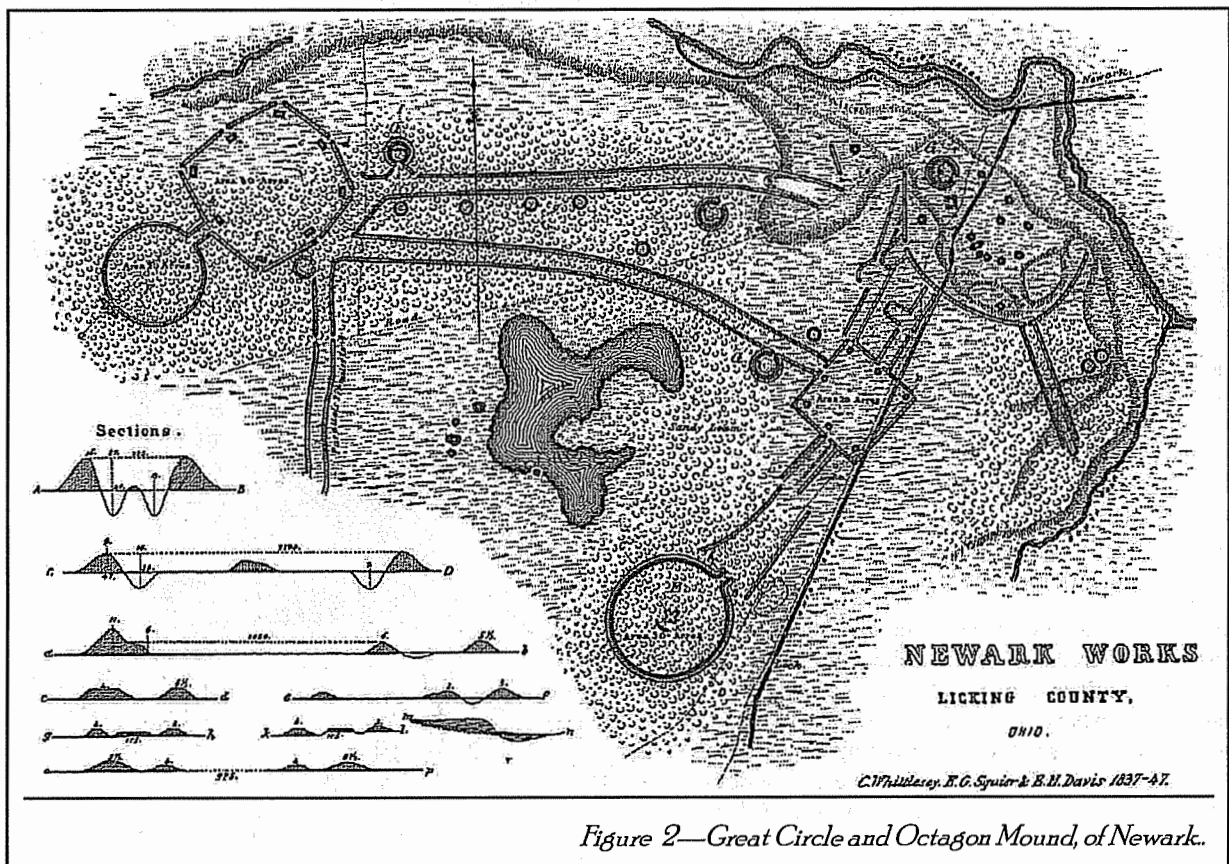


Figure 2—Great Circle and Octagon Mound, of Newark.

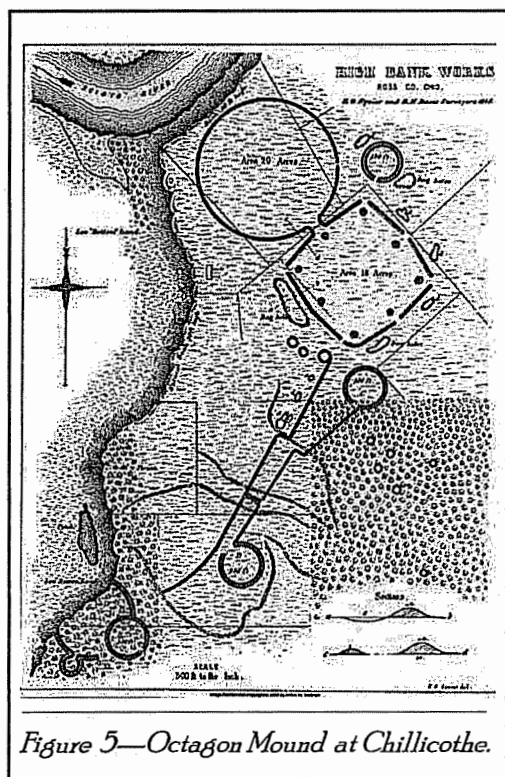
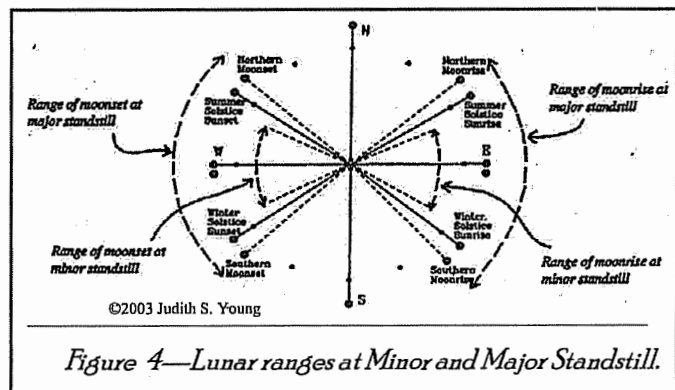
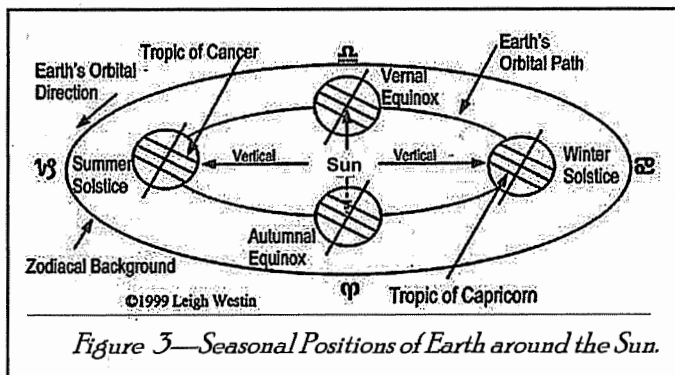
The maximum north moonrise is the most dramatic point at the Octagon Mound which is the largest earth mound structure in the world. The octagon encloses 50 acres and connects to a large circle that encloses 20 acres. The large circle is 1,054-feet in diameter; each wall of the octagon is 550 feet long and five to six feet high. The south maximum Sun would be in the opposite direction, setting right over the observatory mound. Full Moons would be most the spectacular, and watching them over the course of the year would really show the Moon's stretch. During maximum declination years, the Moon reaches its most dramatic heights generally in Cancer and Capricorn.

The Moon's risings and settings expand and contract. At the lunar maximums, the Moon rises and sets 28° north and south of east. About nine and a third years later, the Moon rises and sets at 18° north and south of the equator. The Octagon Mound marks the maximum lunar settings, while the nearby Circle Mound marks the minimum lunar settings. The minimum north moonrise is featured at the opening of the Great Circle Mound, and can be seen while one is sitting at the Eagle Mound facing out to the opening. The Great Circle Earthwork is 1,200 feet in diameter, 26 acres in size, and its walls are from five to 14 feet (Figure 2). The placement of the Moon affects the earth and weather patterns; knowing where the Moon is in its cycle is an important factor. The ancient native people of Ohio, place of many rivers, kept track of this lunar cycle carefully, ceremonially, and with great reverence.

There is a second Octagon Mound 90 kilometers away in Chillicothe (Figure 5), a most remarkable city on the Scioto River, with six other earth mound sites on the river's frequent twists

and bends. A great road 60 meters wide, once connected the two mounds.³ High Mound was an octagon-shaped mound that faced southeast. This mound was perfect for viewing the Capricorn Moons as they appeared low on the southern horizon. Envision a ceremonial procession along the great road after the two solstitial points of the year. Clearly, the people who built these mounds were aware of the great lunar cycle and honored and marked for the best viewing, the Moon's exact passages, one marking for the June-December events, and the other for the December-June time periods. At every Solstice, people would ceremoniously travel from one sight to the other.

The most recent example of this spectacular out-of-bounds lunar alignment was on July 10, 2006 with the Full Moon in Capricorn. This occurred right after Summer Solstice and showed the maximum southern lunar point very clearly. The Moon was very low in the sky, setting far south of the Winter Solstice sunrise point. In the past, this was sometimes referred to as *drawing down the Moon*. At far north latitudes, the Moon sometimes appears to *walk* across the sky. The Full Moon last July rose very orange in color and just skimmed the southern horizon. Long ago, this would have been ceremonially observed at the High Bank setting on the Scioto River in Chillicothe.



The North Node had been in Aries earlier in 2006 and an eclipse took place very close to the Spring Equinox. The closer the eclipse is to the Equinoxes, the more extreme the energy. On March 14, 2006, the lunar eclipse was almost exact to the equinox. The last time it was this close was in 1968. Other times, in recent history that the Moon reached the maximum points were 1988 and 1951.

Later in the yearly cycle, on January 3, 2007, there was a grand opportunity to observe the Full Moon at the maximum northern point. The Cancer Full Moon rose and set at the far north lunar standstill point, traveling high in the sky. The rising Full Moon could be seen from the observation point on the large circle looking through the connector to the far point of the octagon part of the structure. The Moon will not be in this extreme position again until 2025! This coming year, 2008, the Moon will still be out-of-bounds, although not quite at the very extreme points. Over the next few years, the moon will gradually move inwards to the minor lunar points.

I promised myself that my next trip to Ohio would include seeing the famous Newark sites. As I read up on these sites, I became more fascinated. With the lunar maximum happening and since ancient times had been celebrated at this site, I could not wait to go

and check it out. The size of the Newark Mounds and their similarity to those that I had seen previously in England were overwhelming. Walking the Octagon Mound in the early morning of June 5 on my 52nd birthday, will never be forgotten. I stood at the end of the circle and looked out over the connector and octagon and felt total awe. It is hard to describe with words the immense size and scope of this site.

Another incredible feature found in Ohio are the hill forts. Fort Ancient is located right on the Miami River (Figure 6) and it also is marked by celestial alignments. Walking the site helps to reveal the intricacies of the careful planning involved. There are four shallow earth-stone mounds at the start. Gaps in the mound walls mark the place to see the lunar maximums (Major Standstill), solar maximum (Summer Solstice), and lunar minimums (Minor Standstill). There is a joining connector to an area that might mark the wintertime placements of the Sun (Winter Solstice) and lunar settings. The site is situated high above the Miami River, and ceremonial celebrations still occur there today.

Another interesting, not-to-be-missed, Ohio site is the Seip Mound (Figure 7). This tall mound, 240 feet long, 130 feet wide and 30 feet high, was once in the center of a great complex of over 168 acres. The physical geography of the place is stunning. Red cliffs off to the side are weathered by erosion and fitting for a scene from the southwest US, then a wonderful park with native wildflowers and bluebirds. While I visited, a sweeping storm thundered in, violent with thrashing rain and lightening, enhancing the earthly energies.

A colleague gave me a photo of the Serpent Mound over 15 years ago, and its shape haunted my dreams and memories until I finally set off one day to visit it myself. I jumped in my car and took a solo journey to its place in Adam's County, Ohio. I hung out with the Serpent for an afternoon and two days. It was the very end of the Summer Solstice—that time when the Sun stands still at its northern most point before turning around for the journey back. It was hot—a heat spell of days over 100°; and the setting Sun over the serpent's egg lingered. I explored the limestone caves underneath and the river—and I gave thanks to the good women of Boston who in 1886 were fundraising to save this sacred piece of land.⁴

I visited the Serpent Mound once again during the Winter Solstice and was struck with the setting Sun at the Serpent's spiral (Figure 8). Winter Solstice, the time of early beginnings was coded so exquisitely here. I felt the energy at the spiral as if a portal was connecting a magnetic core with the heavens.

A few years later, I was invited to take part in a ceremonial trip to the Serpent by Terri Riviera,⁵ A group of 30 or so people took part in a ceremonial weekend and together we watched the sunset with local Ohio residents who are members of the *Save the Serpent Mound* group.⁶

The Serpent Mound (Figure 1) is a most incredible site! It sits on top of a cataclysmic meteor blast. High on a cliff, the Serpent of over 1,343 feet lies in wait to mark the passing of

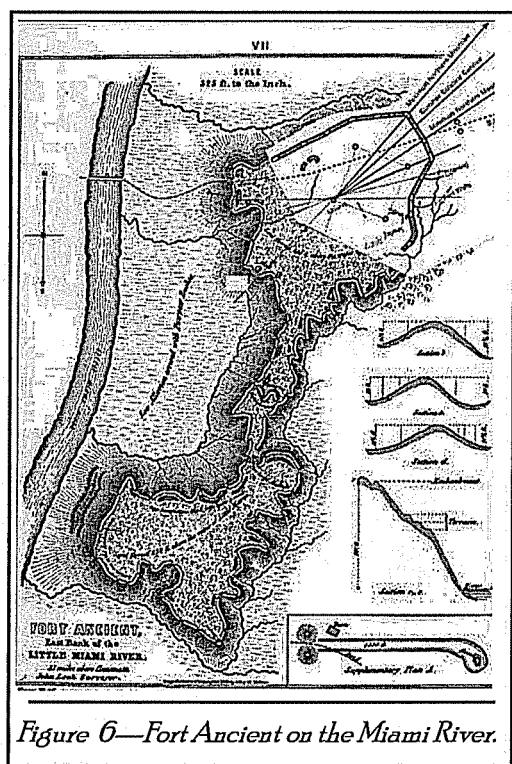


Figure 6—Fort Ancient on the Miami River.

celestial markers. Its subtle design is reminiscent of hieroglyphs, as well as large land figures in Peru. There is a viewing scaffold, but it is not high enough to obtain a good camera shot. You really need aerial shots for this.

The Serpent Mound has many astronomical and geometrical alignments. The most basic are involved with the setting and rising Sun in the rippling, undulating curves of the serpentine figure (Figure 8). To observe the Sun start its setting on the spiral of Winter Solstice, and then seeing its fruition as it sets right on the Serpent's mouth with its own egg-shaped ending at Summer Solstice, is a profound experience. Lunar points are also marked by the curves of the serpent's sides.

The Serpent is also aligned with the stars. If you take the constellation Draco and match its contours with the Serpent Mound, it is an exact fit (Figure 9), except for the star Thuban that lies behind the first curve.⁷ To understand this alignment, we need to take a look at the 23+° curve again, but this time looking at it from the view of the pole. The spinning Earth wobbles, just like a spinning top. This wobble gives us the great year of 26,000 years, the precession of the ages; and it also gives us a new north star as time progresses. Thuban was the North Star 5000 years ago.

In ancient days in the land of Ohio, many people must have come to observe and study astronomy. The large sites are set up for large gatherings. The setting Moon on the observatory mound and the rising Moon across are both spectacular ways to honor and observe the 19-year Moon dance. Less than a mile away, the Circle Mound would have been the place to observe the minor placement of the Moon's rising. In its day, the Newark complex must have been quite a spectacular place for learning. The Serpent Mound is an extraordinary way to see and experience the different energies of the Solstices and other celestial cycles, and most of all, a multi-faceted way to study how we on Earth are connected to the sky.

I have long been curious about the layering affect of the mounds both in Ohio and England. The mounds are made up of layers of organic and inorganic materials. Over 60 years ago, Wilhelm Reich studied this same layering effect and applied it to healing. His layered boxes with alternating wool and steel wool, when used for healing, proved to have a positive affect.⁸ The layering of the mounds in a similar way with organic and inorganic material may have something to do with generating a force field to stabilize energy on the river, especially around times of the maximum lunar standstill. This is when extreme weather would endanger the waterways that were the highways for transportation in their day. There is much about the mounds that we still need to explore, and the idea of using layers to generate an energy field, definitely needs to be explored further, too.

City, state and federal programs protect the present earth mounds in Ohio; however, it is both incredible and very sad

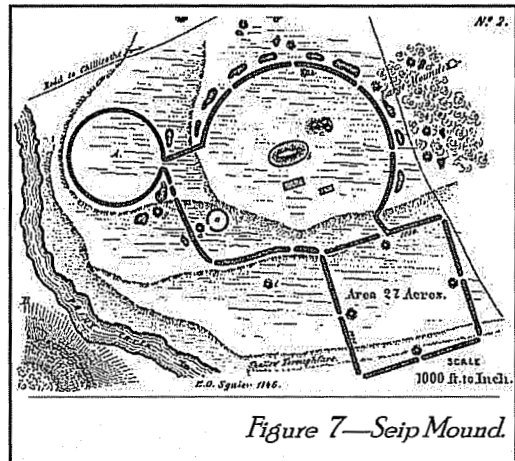


Figure 7—Serp Mound.

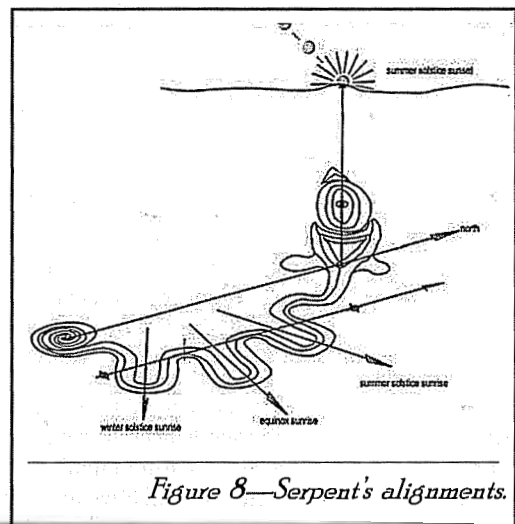


Figure 8—Serpent's alignments.

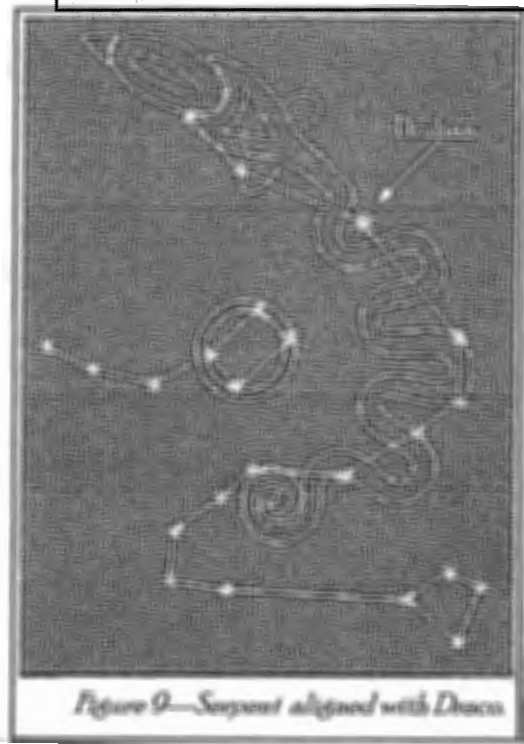


Figure 9—Serpent aligned with Draco

to see a golf course sitting inside the present Octagon Mound! The golf course leases the property, and to its credit has preserved the overall structure of the mounds. Golf cart paths at times interrupt the mounds, and there are only a handful of days in a year that are open to the public. Recently the observation time for a Moon rising was cancelled due to concern for the soaked turf. The Mound Builders Country Club presently leases the property for \$28,000 a year. The lease was recently renewed until the year 2078. Many people are outraged at the lack of public access that was supposed to be assured for this site. The 1933 deed clearly states that the city was to “to accept, hold, and preserve, as an archeological and historical site, to be open to the public at all times.”⁹ It would be wonderful if we could return the mounds to their previous state of repose and ceremony, in celebration and honor of the lunar cycle.

Although many mound sites are preserved, enough funding hasn't existed to stabilize the proper use of many of the ancient sites; for example, Chillicothe is a place of great potential for restoration. Currently, the best tourist spot is Mound City right on the bank of the Scioto River. Unfortunately in the past, many mound sites have been used as army bases and for agriculture, while High Mound is not even accessible as a site at this time.

As a people, we are closely connected to the ancient earth mounds. The earth mounds need us right now for protection, and we need the earth mounds to remind us of the greater cycles of which we are a part. Some call the ancient sites our libraries,¹⁰ and there is something to that. The great earth mounds of Ohio have been around for thousands of years, and some have been kept intact for the 500 years that we have occupied the land; but it is only within the last 30 years that we have begun to have an inkling of the information passed on through them. What else may be discovered within the great geometry of these places? It is important to preserve and honor what has been valued in the past to preserve our future.*

(Editor's Note: During the current Major Standstill, the Moon reached its highest declination in 2006. For about a year on either side, the Moon still reached only 20' less than its highest declination.)

Endnotes

1. Hawkins, 1965.
2. Lepper, 1994, p.17.
3. Lepper, 1995.
4. Putnam, 1993, p. 872.
5. See *Sings with Ravens* website.
6. See *Friends of the Serpent Mound*
7. Hamilton, 2001, p.17.
8. Reich Museum Orgone Exhibits.
9. See Indian Country website.
10. Marciniak, 1995, p.57-59.

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beautiful_lights@ohiohills.com.
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www.singswithravens.com/.
www.octagonmoonrise.org.

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Cathy Taylor is a teacher and visual artist, and researches the geometry and astronomy of ancient sites. An interest in declination led to a closer look at the important lunar standstills that we have been witnessing lately, and an eventual trip to see the Newark, Ohio Mounds up close. She has worked hard as a member of the Upton Historical Commission to preserve an ancient stone chamber in her hometown of Upton, MA, which is astronomically aligned. Cathy has been a member of the Boston NCGR group for over 20 years. She will be leading a trip to explore the ancient sites of Ohio in June of 2008. Email: phoenixrisingct@hotmail.com or 508 529-4073.

Astrology Versus Science:

Effects of Uranus-Neptune on the US

by Theresa H. McDevitt

The year 1993 marked increasing concerns about climate change and the first conjunction of Uranus and Neptune since their respective discoveries in 1781 and 1846, two seemingly unrelated events—or were they? It was just such a question that set Theresa McDevitt on the path to research the Uranus-Neptune cycle. Applying a geodetic perspective, she shares her fascinating findings of historical and weather correlations.

The entire Uranus-Neptune cycle covers approximately 172 years. There are usually three conjunctions, two consecutive times in some signs, returning again every 4,000+ years. In the past two millennia, 13 conjunctions have taken place within seven zodiacal signs. This dynamic duo can be depicted as *revolutionary changes leading to new spiritual realizations*. The issues of erratic and abrupt changes (Uranus), sacrifice and deprivation (Neptune) become paramount during this cycle.

Similar to statistical scientists, astrologers understand that although similar events attributed to planetary configurations happen continuously around the world, what makes a difference is the overwhelming poignancy of prominent issues brought about within cycles. The instability promoted by the combination of these two giant planets has had a significant influence on the United States affecting race relations, weather patterns and economic trends.

It is common knowledge that the history of the United States of America is intrinsically connected to race and ethnic relations, as well as being a leader in economic trends. Climate changes also appear synonymously with the Uranus-Neptune powerful combination: atmospheric disturbances, such as wind and rain in unusual, strange and confused ways; electric storms; loss of electric power; chemical pollution;

floods; tsunamis; hurricanes and polluted oceans. The following assessment supports these facts relating primarily to the effects on US territory.

Previous Cycles

The Scorpio cycle (1478) impacted the areas between the Bering Straits of Alaska to Washington State and California. Also occurring was the union of Spain's Aragon and Castile under the Catholic Ferdinand and Isabella, who in 1480 began the Inquisition and in 1492, reportedly financed the New World voyages of Christopher Columbus.

The Sagittarius cycle (1650) impacted the areas between Washington State to Wisconsin and from Canada to Mexico. Spanish conquerors were exploring the North West, colonizing California and Mexico and destroying what was left of the Mayan civilization in Mexico. According to scientists and historians, other causes for the demise of the Mayans have been attributed to earthquakes and climatic changes.¹ Also, according to Grun's *The Time Tables of History*, in 1650, the new American colonies began the extermination of North American Indians.

Capricorn Conjunction (1821)

This conjunction marked the beginning of the industrial revolution at the peak of the slave trade and establishment of southern plantations. In addition, the young nation was having problems with Native American tribes. William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory, led the famous battle at Tippecanoe (1811) to deal with the matter. Legend has it that the younger shaman brother of the Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh, cursed the *great white father* in Washington for broken promises, which became known as Tecumseh's Curse. In 1840,

William Henry Harrison was elected US President; but shortly after taking office, he died from pneumonia. This event was the first death associated with the infamous Tecumseh curse that has repeated every 20 years, thus also thought to be related to the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction. Since Harrison's death, every President elected in a year ending in zero has not finished his term of office, except for Ronald Reagan, who survived a gunshot due to a mutation in the cycle that year.

The current US President (2000-08) is the next one in line for the fulfillment of the alleged curse. In this particular case where the Vice-President supposedly exerts equal influential power, there is a possibility the

curse would apply to him as well. In any case, it could also be fulfilled by the fall from grace of both, President and Vice-President for misleading the nation into war, increased enemy forces, constitutional damage, environmental neglect, loss of world prestige and economic deficits with indefinite dire consequences.

Capricorn Conjunction (1993)

From the start of the applying conjunction in 1992, the US experienced the wrath of hurricane Andrew in Florida and the catastrophic floods down the Mississippi River, affecting 10 states in 1993.² At the same time, police officers were acquitted for the brutal beating of Rodney King, which led to the Los Angeles riots and the re-trial of the officers.³

By the second conjunction there was another controversial trial involving two black teenagers, who during the riots attacked Reggie Denny, a white truck driver, who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The guilty verdict was delivered by the third conjunction in October, 1993.⁴ During the separating conjunction in 1994, the O. J. Simpson trial caused additional race divisions around the country. A primarily black jury acquitted the black football hero for the double murder charge, despite insurmountable guilty evidence.⁵ During the past two cycles the flaws in the system of government (Capricorn) were highlighted.

In the geodetic map of the world, the sign Aries starts at Greenwich 0° longitude. The rest of the signs follow eastward in their natural order of 30° each. Capricorn occupies the segment from 60° to 90° West Longitude, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, encompassing the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, part of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and most of South America (see map, page 87). These areas were activated by the past two triple conjunctions (1821 and 1993). The Mississippi River runs along the line of 90° West Longitude, from north to south. (Opposite signs on the other side of Earth can be also activated to a lesser extent).

Mutual Reception

In 2004 Uranus-Neptune began a mutual reception (in each other's signs, Aquarius, Pisces, respectively), these factors emphasize the issues of the signs, as if both planets were in both signs at the same time. In addition to having a strong effect on the oceans, gases and petroleum, it puts a spotlight on the poor and destitute in the signs of self-undoing (Pisces) and humanity (Aquarius).

A few years after the conjunction, a mutual reception occurs lasting at least seven years. There have been five mutual receptions from the Scorpio conjunction

Synopsis of the Last Two Cycles (1821-1993)

Between major hard aspects are 10 to 44 years.

Conjunction 1821:

Industrial Revolution, Slave Trade,
Southern Plantations, Indian Wars,
Trail of Tears and Presidential Curse.

Waxing Square 1865:

Civil War ended, Lincoln assassinated
Slavery abolished by 13th Amendment.

Quincunx 1895:

Beginning of Spanish American War
(in 1898, the US took possession of Cuba,
Puerto Rico, Guam and Philippines).

Opposition 1905:

Great migration north of southern blacks,
Galveston hurricane killed over 6,000,
San Francisco earthquake,
Oil was discovered in Beaumont, TX.

Quincunx 1929:

Stock Market crash,
beginning of Great Depression.

Waning Square 1957:

Beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.

Conjunction 1993:

Hurricane Andrew,
Mississippi floods, Los Angeles riots,
Simpson's trial of the century.

Next Waxing Square Begins in 2035.

to the Capricorn conjunction (1993). Although the conjunction and mutual reception appear to have the strongest effect on the weather, there are ups and downs in between, related to major aspects. Disturbances have also been recorded during stations of either planet.

During the current mutual reception, all existing records on weather disturbances were broken. Hurricanes increased in size and strength significantly and in 2005, there were 27 named storms. Except for the 1832 cholera epidemic that killed over 3,000 people in New York City and 4,340 in New Orleans, there is no historical documentation related to catastrophic events during the previous mutual reception period (1835-42).⁶ However, since the mid-1990s scientists have been tracking hurricane activity through tree rings in the southeast from the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. They found that particularly during the 1820s and 1840s, there was evidence of hurricanes for which there was no historical documentation.⁷

Recent Weather Patterns

In December 2004, the Indonesian earthquake and subsequent tsunami killed 176,000 people from 11 countries. Three months later another earthquake killed 1,000. Florida was hit by four major hurricanes leaving billions in damages and thousands homeless—the first time four major hurricanes were recorded in one area in the same season.⁸

The record-breaking hurricane season of 2005 devastated the Gulf Coast States. The monster hurricanes, Katrina (Aug. 29) and Rita (Sept. 24), hit the largest refining and petrol-chemical centers in the nation located between Mississippi and Texas, including Beaumont, one of the oil centers of Texas. (Oil was discovered in Beaumont in the years following the Galveston killer hurricane in 1900).⁹ Interestingly enough, except for New Orleans, the rest of the cities affected by these powerful hurricanes (Biloxi, Beaumont, Galveston and Houston) were incorporated during the previous Uranus-Neptune mutual reception.¹⁰

The catastrophic damage to the US oil production and tourist industry, in addition to the human tragedy caused by the floods in New Orleans, will have long-lasting consequences beyond the end of the mutual reception (2011). The American Civil War started after the previous mutual reception. We cannot dismiss the possibility of similar circumstances before the next waxing square (2035).

The people mainly affected by the Katrina disaster in New Orleans were African-Americans and the very poor, who had no means for evacuating on time. The huge amount of displaced citizens and the loss of

property and jobs will affect America for many years to come. Most of all, it exposed the grim reality that the difference between life and death is still mostly dependent on poverty and race in the richest, most powerful country in the world. Domestic priorities appear to be dwarfed by the ill-advised war in Iraq.

Two months before Katrina (October, 2004), *National Geographic* published an exposé, "Gone with the Water," on the possibility of catastrophic floods in New Orleans.¹¹ Some say that most of the damage could have been avoided and lives saved had the federal government not declined to cut the funding to the US Army Corps of Engineers to fix the levees. Prior to Katrina the lack of federal funding became so dire, Louisiana's state officials were considering suing the federal government for a larger share of the \$5 billion in royalties from offshore oil and natural gas to pay for repairs to the deteriorating coast.¹²

In October 2005, the monster hurricane, Wilma, devastated the region around Cancun, Mexico and continued on a destructive path to South Florida, causing major floods and loss of electric power for weeks. In addition, unusual November tornados in the mid-west and east caused significant devastation, leaving many more homeless. Mayans in Central America suffered a severe storm with catastrophic mudslides, countless deaths and homelessness.¹³ In the same month, one of the worst earthquakes in the history of India and Pakistan killed thousands and many more were left homeless.¹⁴ California weather turned extremely violent in 2006-07, the Northeast experienced unusual warm winters and unusual tornados devastated communities in central Florida and the eastern states.

Conclusions

It is my belief that nothing happens on Earth that the planets won't show. Planetary cycles are predestined, but what people choose is not. Freewill is always available and awareness accelerates the growth process towards progress. A myriad of planetary cycles are in process at any given time, all in perfect synchronicity. The Uranus-Neptune cycle, in particular, may expose the vulnerabilities and barriers that prevent humanity from achieving its greatest potential.

It seems highly probably that the latest global warming and climate changes were triggered by the 1993 Uranus-Neptune conjunction, followed by the mutual reception in process since 2004. Scientists concur that bigger storms began to form since the 1990s, pointing specifically to 1995,¹⁵ coinciding with Uranus' ingress into Aquarius, above Greenland geodetically and activating the Atlantic Ocean. The melting of Greenland's glaciers increased when Neptune joined Uranus in Aquarius in 1998. Scientists also recorded a

temporary intensification of storms from the 1950s to 1960s,¹⁶ during the last waning square.

Scientists claim they are still trying to understand that the frequency of major hurricanes seems to occur on a cyclic time frame. Unawareness of planetary cycles will keep them speculating and struggling to understand this phenomenon. Uranus (oxygen, electric power, disruption) and Neptune (oceans, greenhouse gases, said by some to be the climate-change driver)¹⁷ can certainly be attributed to global warming. The fact that Neptune and Pisces rule petroleum contributes to the drastic exposure of these issues, such as the war in Iraq, a major center of oil in the world and the *war on terror* also referred to as the *clash of civilizations* [west vs. east, progress (Uranus) vs. blind belief (Neptune)].

Neptune's issues of victimization are being further emphasized by the current cycle of Pluto in Sagittarius (religion, ethnic cleansing, migration, 1995-2008). Interestingly, Pluto went into Scorpio in 1490 during the Uranus-Neptune Scorpio cycle (1478); and during the Sagittarius cycle of 1650, Pluto was in the opposite sign Gemini. Pluto was activating the areas between Texas and Louisiana in 2005; as it crosses 90° Longitude, tornadoes are occurring east of the Mississippi.

The Future

The violent weather trend begun in the last Uranus-Neptune conjunction (1993) and the issues of global warming, oil and human suffering will remain in the forefront as Neptune begins its sojourn into Pisces in 2011. This could mark a crucial turning point in the war on terror and in the dire epidemic of homelessness around the world as a result of war and natural disasters. The period from 2008 to 2011 could be especially critical when the mutual reception intensifies, reaching the exact semi-sextile for the last time in this cycle. Problems with oil and lack of clean water may top the list. Overall difficulties could remain after Neptune leaves Pisces in 2026 during the unstable times with Pluto in Aquarius (2023-43).

Meanwhile, let us not forget that the geodetic position of these two giants is still right above Greenland, thus activating the entire Atlantic Ocean. Although some expert scientists still argue whether climate change due to human activity could significantly affect hurricanes,¹⁸ it is logical to assume that as the world's pollutants worsen, so will the negative effects on the weather.

In an enlightened world, tyrants would not be able to capitalize on extreme idyllic beliefs that keep people in bondage. The security and health of the Earth and its citizens, regardless of race, creed, nationality or

economic status, would be a priority. In an enlightened world, the heightened awareness promoted by the Uranus-Neptune cycle would be better assimilated in consciousness, thus accelerating the growth process toward progress—revolutionary changes (Uranus) leading to new spiritual realizations (Neptune).

The next Uranus-Neptune conjunction is due to begin in 2163 in Aquarius followed by the mutual reception beginning in 2170. The first Aquarius cycle in over 4,000 years, promises to be the most significant ever.¹⁹ By this time the Aquarius Age will be in full swing, making progress a priority. This cycle will impact the areas from Greenland to the Antarctic and the Atlantic Ocean. Using submarine sonar data, documenting thinning ice in the Arctic, scientists predict that the ice in Greenland could be absent in summer by 2100.²⁰ This scientific speculation could possibly coincide with the next conjunction in the 2160s. Likewise, incessant observations are the basis for astrological verities. Hence, we should continue to observe the on-going mutual reception, stations and other major aspects in between conjunctions, such as the next waxing square due in 2035.

Astrologers can speculate on future possibilities by looking into the past because history reflects the nature of planetary cycles and preventive measures depend mainly on enlightened awareness. A significant observation concerning the Uranus-Neptune cycles from 1478 to 1993, involving the signs Scorpio, Sagittarius and Capricorn, is that geodetically these areas pertain to the continents of North and South America, including the Caribbean. There was fascinating timing between these cycles and the European discovery of the New World. It truly has been an American experiment in process marked by the powerful Uranus-Neptune cycle.*

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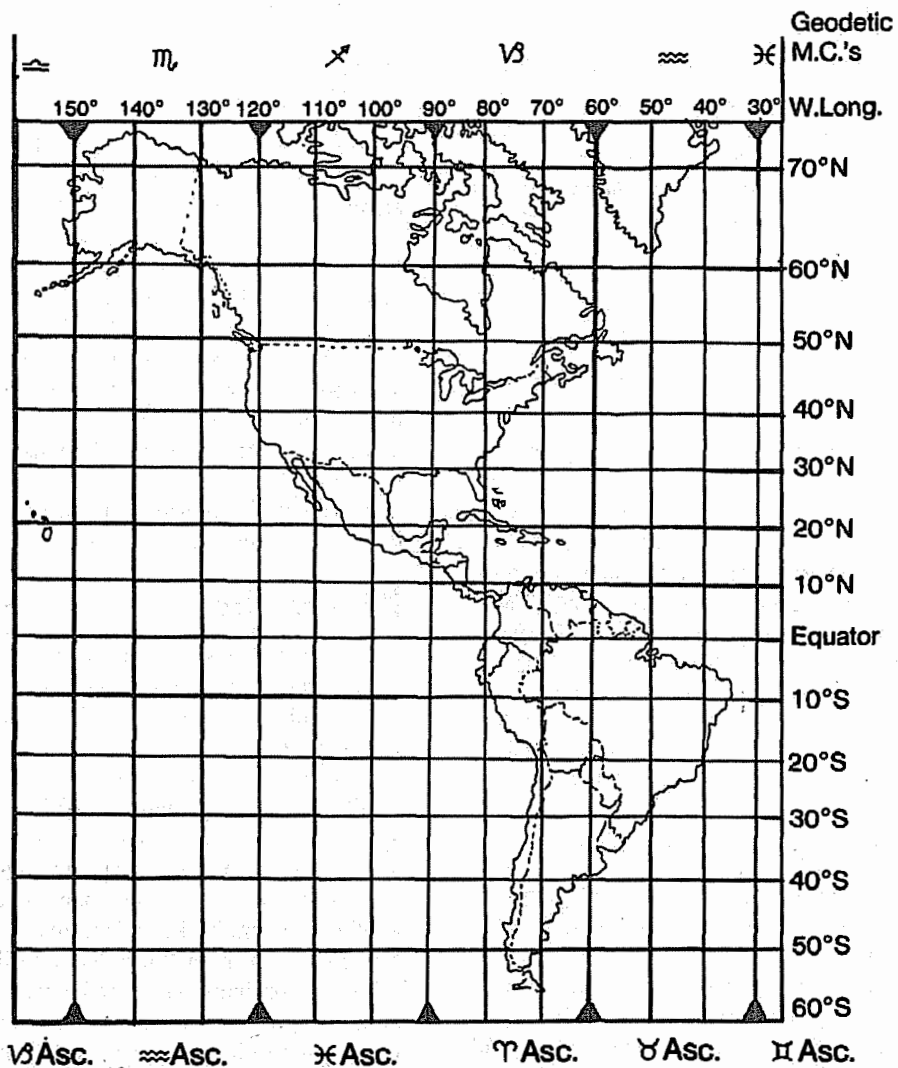
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Geodetic Map of the Americas
 (used with the kind permission of Steve Cozzi from his book, *Planets in Locality*).

Mario Ruiz Armengol

by Martha Goenaga

Heavily influenced by the friendship and admiration for the Mexican composer, Mario Ruiz Armengol, Martha Goenaga fuses her two great loves, music and astrology, to pay homage to this exceptional artist.

Through biography and chart analysis, Goenaga describes his life from an astrological perspective and enriches it with anecdotes that he shared with her shortly before his death in 2002. The Piscean theme, two inseparable fish swimming in opposite directions, is dominant in his birth chart. She shows how this theme is played out in the conflict between destiny and freewill, heredity and individuality, genius and madness, and the spirit and the flesh.

Mario Ruiz Armengol was a musical giant who immersed himself in the worlds of popular and academic music alike. Dubbed *Mister Harmony* by great musicians like Duke Ellington and Billy May, Mario Ruiz Armengol was one of the most outstanding Mexican composers of recent times.¹ Mario was born in Veracruz, Mexico on March 17, 1914 (Chart 1), during the Mexican Revolution, just one month before the United States occupied that port city on April 21; just two months before Pluto entered the sign of Cancer; and just three years before World War I broke out. It was an era of violence, profound changes and tremendous instability. Mario breathed his first breath in a country convoluted by civil war.

At that time Mexico was waging a struggle to achieve equality, procure justice for the poor and oppressed, and gain sovereignty over its natural resources, such as oil, the exploitation of which was in the hands of the British. Mexican President Porfirio Díaz, a military hero of the battles against the French Intervention, had kept the peace at the beginning of his term, but his regime then degenerated into a dictatorship that lasted 30 years. The gap between the rich and poor was unjust and deplorable. While the large hacienda

owners reaped the benefits of enormous estates, their workers toiled in slave-like conditions, with neither the hope nor the means of throwing off the yoke imposed by the powerful.²

Our great leaders, who gave their lives to bring about change, were assassinated one after another. This was an age of blood and fire. Mario Ruiz Armengol was one of those sensitive beings who was profoundly affected by the socio-political life of his country and he expressed all of this in his music. As shown in Chart 2, his Neptune joined with Mexico's Saturn and his Venus was sextile Mexico's Moon; he was able to rise above poverty and other limitations through his music. Mexico's Pluto trine to Mario's Asc and Mexico's Sun at Mario's Jupiter/Uranus midpoint underscored his fierce determination to contribute something valuable and original towards building a country defined by liberty, equality and justice.

Biography

Mayito, as his close friends called him, was born into the world of jazz. The son and grandson of musicians, he was only eight years old when he played the piano for the first time, imitating what he heard. Three years later when transiting Uranus conjoined his Sun, his family moved to the nation's capital, Mexico City. At age 14, when transiting Uranus was conjunct his natal Venus, the precarious security that had existed in his home crumbled. His father abandoned the family for another woman. To keep from making his mother's burden even heavier, Mario voluntarily enrolled in a school for orphans. There he learned to play the piano, trumpet, trombone, clarinet and saxophone; in recognition of his artistic accomplishments, he was sent on to the National Conservatory of Music, where he learned to write music.

Mario never resigned himself to the loss of his father and followed him everywhere. His father's reaction, however, was to get angry, abandon his concert dates and take off with the advance payments, leaving young Mario in charge of everything, accompanying, interpreting, composing and conducting an orchestra. Necessity was the boy's finest school.

In 1929, with Pluto transiting his Mars/Neptune midpoint in the 5th, Mario's career took off in terms of creativity and a spate of musical projects. He made his first record and began to arrange music; yet he still wasn't satisfied. In 1930, and only 16, Mario met Virginia Sánchez Iglesias, a 15 year old girl, whose mother had died and whose father had abandoned her. She was a soprano who sang with his band. The two youngsters, eager to make a home together, married a year later under the romantic spell of Neptune, conjunct Mario's Dsc at the time. Mario and Virginia had three children—Mario, Edgar, and Patricia.

He was hired by XEW (the most important radio station of the times), where he accompanied famous singers such as José Antonio Méndez and Vicente Garrido.³ Mario, who by then had composing experience, sometimes filled in with his own music.

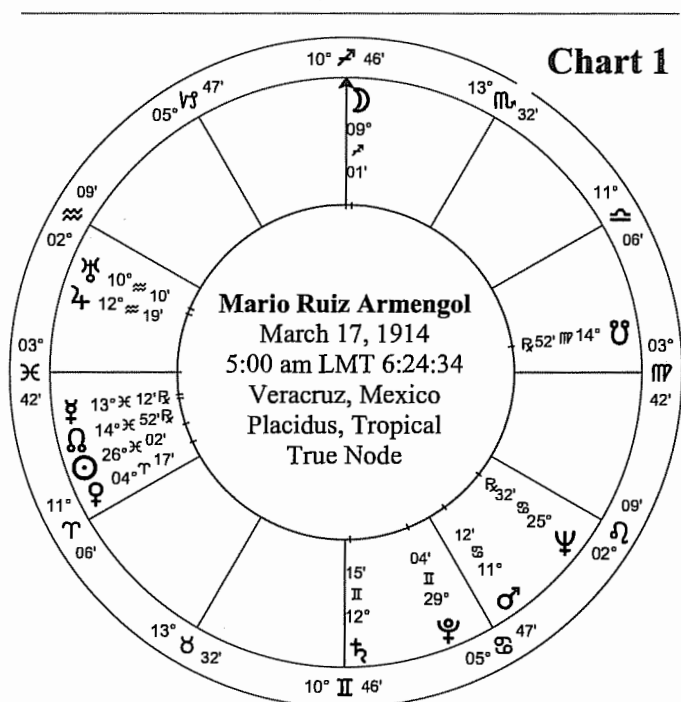
In 1935, Mario had his first extramarital affair, falling madly in love with a singer. His progressed Asc was approaching the conjunction with natal Venus when his willpower failed him. In 1936, when transiting Pluto conjoined natal Neptune, Mario decided to study piano and harmony formally, discovering new facets of his extraordinary musical talent. On August 13, 1937, under the exact conjunction, his son Francisco was born of the union with the singer. In 1940, with progressed Mercury conjunct his natal Sun, he traveled to New York and met the great blind jazz pianist, Art Tatum, whom Mario deeply admired. Shortly after, he landed in Havana, and ever since, jazz and Cuban music were intrinsic to his soul. Back in Mexico, he formed his own orchestra, playing in the most famous cabarets of the times. The money he earned helped to support his sick father and the woman for whom he had left the family.

Mario's career continued on the upswing. He had been arranging music for the motion picture industry since 1933, and by 1943 had

done the scores for nine movies. He would only do two more, however, because he never really liked the atmosphere of the film industry. By that time Mario Ruiz Armengol was well-known throughout the Americas for his arrangements of popular songs performed by the best-known singers of the day. He had gained much experience but still had a long way to go when he met Manuel M. Ponce; although he never studied with him, the composer's influence led Mario to take a more serious and academic approach to musical creation.⁴

Around 1950, when his progressed Mars and Neptune were conjunct, he met a harpist who inspired him to write his first serious composition for that instrument, *Prelude for Piano or Harp in E Major*. The harpist was married when they first met but was soon widowed, and his consolation turned into passion. Nevertheless, she was more level-headed than he, and soon accepted a vacant position in the Venezuela Symphony Orchestra. On August 19, 1955, when Mario's progressed Moon approached the opposition to his natal Moon, his mother died. To relieve the sadness, he composed *Street of Dreams*, an orchestra piece that was immortalized by many musicians including Al Hirt, who opened his show with it for many years. With his powerful, angular, solitary Moon so high in the southwest quadrant, the women in Mario's life were everything to him—nymphs and muses, witches and enchantresses. Many made their way through his life and left their imprints, whether permanent or negligible, consequently, his home fell apart.

In the 1960s, Mario leaned towards academic creation, and his romantic songs took second place. By then, progressed Venus was entering Gemini and progressed Mars was entering Leo, marking a change of perspective both in his music and his love life. Transiting Pluto conjoined his natal Dsc when a 26 year old American model appeared in his life. Mario, who was 47 at



the time, went wild. Even though he continued to support his family, he left his home and started living with the young woman. Little by little, his new love took everything he had, except a thorn in his side. Blindly in love, having reached the pinnacle of fame, something happened that transformed his life. On January 11, 1970, his wife died unexpectedly, and in the midst of desperation and remorse, a sense of never-ending sorrow beset this man.⁵

A few months later he left the model, and one year later, as transiting Pluto opposed natal Sun, Mario lost his will to live. Submerged in alcohol and a deep depression, he put a gun to his head, but couldn't pull the trigger. His children and his music stopped him. He voluntarily entered a psychiatric clinic, where he remained incommunicado for six weeks. He was finally cured, body and soul, but never got rid of the thorn in his side.

In 1971 he focused decisively on classical music. He had come out of his self-destructive stage and threw himself into composing 33 pieces for children; 17 etudes, which are now taught in conservatories in France and Germany; 19 Cuban dances; 16 reflections; two volumes of works for piano; and seven exercises in composition and harmony, upon which all his works for piano are based. Especially memorable are his metaphors and miniatures in which, playing in one key with his right hand and another with his left, he dissipates the original harmony without losing the melody. As he remarked, "*Amidst all the incoherence, it must sound beautiful.*"⁶

Several months later the harpist returned. Transiting Saturn was opposing natal Moon, and nebulous, deceptive Neptune was active once again, squaring his Asc-Des axis. Mario longed for stability. He married the girl and bought a house, but all this finally came to an end, including his desire to live in

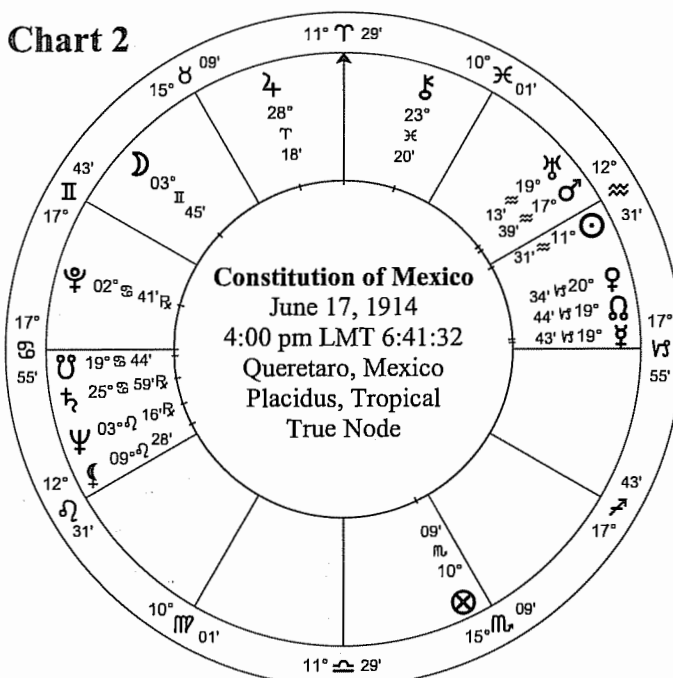
a house. He then rented a room in a modest hotel near XEW, the radio station where he had lived his glory days; he went there daily to study and compose. He lived in the room from August 15, 1983, almost up until the time of his death. Due to the terrible earthquake that shook Mexico City in September 1985, Mario temporarily left the hotel and took refuge with his daughter, Patricia. A few weeks later he returned, but when he fell ill in 2000, he turned to his daughter once again, and stayed with her until his death. Mario Ruiz Armengol died on December 28, 2002, at the age of 88, surrounded by his family.⁷

Just after recording my first CD, which featured several of his pieces, I had the good fortune of meeting him. As a human being and musician, that adorable 88-year-old man won my undying affection. Our friendship was brief because he died a few months later, but I will never forget him. The pleasure that it gives me to play his music, discovering the richness of its harmony, beat by beat, together with my fascination for the anecdotes that he himself related to me, inspired me. Fortunate enough to be his friend and to record his music, I ask myself: How can his compositions, which are truly jewels of popular and classical music, be disseminated? How can they reach a wider audience? His music is now in the hands of his daughter, Patricia, who was born on the same day as Mario, 30 years later. With her Sun partile to that of her father, she has taken up the mission of broadcasting and publicizing his vast musical production to see that it achieves the worldwide recognition and prestige that it deserves.

It has been said that "*the artist sows the seeds of inspiration in an unreceptive, inhospitable land, and later astonishes skeptics and nay-sayers with the fruits.*"⁸ Mario Ruiz Armengol's personal life was not easy, but it caused him to engage in the kind of introspection that later afforded him the vision and tranquility necessary to create an invaluable legacy of fine music. As he used to say: "*Solitude is the best counselor.*"⁹

How many stories run through this man's music? Mario recalled "*the ones that recount each joy and pain, each hit and miss, each illusion and disillusionment, each plenitude and hunger, each smile and tear, drop by drop.*"¹⁰ Perhaps his listeners, his students,

Chart 2



and especially myself, will feel trickles of all these stories running through our veins. We sense the wisdom and humility captured in his compositions, his youthful soul, and the power of his illusions, those of a charming, unpretentious man with a cane and a black beret, strolling arm in arm with his pals through the street—the street of dreams.¹¹

The Birth Chart

I will analyze the Mario's birth chart from three perspectives that gave rise to his career as a musician: identity, women in his life, and musical creation.

Identity

Identity has to do with the father and issues of self-esteem. The ego is represented by the Sun, the personality by the Asc. Both are in the sign of Pisces, as are Mercury, Chiron, and the North Node. This 1st house Piscan stellium produced severe problems of self-esteem. He lived his Chiron as rejection and abandonment by his father, which left him without a model to follow and with a mistaken image of masculinity. The Sun-Chiron conjunction squaring the Moon tells us that the rejection came both from his father and his mother. The Chiron tone of the Moon, by its placement in the sign of the centaur, Sagittarius, square to Chiron itself, gave Mario a feeling that in spite of anything he could do, he would always be rejected by women due to his father's mistakes and his own. The North Node, representing energies that are difficult with which to identify, is at the Mercury/Chiron midpoint, pointing to communication as the possibility of healing a wound.

Mario, with his Sun in Pisces, shared neither his mother's character nor her way of thinking; yet he shared both with his father, from whom he inherited his love for music, women and the tendency to lose himself in pleasures, excesses and alcohol. The placement and aspects of Mario's Sun perfectly describe his father. The Sun-Neptune trine paints the older man as a musician admired by all, a composer and orchestra conductor who introduced his son to the world of music. His father gave Mario his first piano and saxophone and was undoubtedly the model that the boy followed. Nevertheless, the trine is separative, with the Sun departing from Neptune, and so it happened that his father also departed in the company of another woman. Neptune was then associated with sacrifice and disappointment.

The Sun is also approaching a square to Pluto, and one way that Mario experienced this was to lose his guide when his father left; at that time his daily obligations and responsibilities increased drastically without recognition or compensation. Pluto, associated with

losses, snatched away his father, leaving him with a mother who would become bitter, dominating and authoritarian.¹²

As one of the symbols of masculine identity, other difficulties were represented by the Sun's conjunction with Venus, the natural symbol of his mother and sisters, who constantly demonized the masculine sex. This combust Venus in Aries, dispossited by Mars and regent of the 3rd, is in detriment. Just think of all the masculine energies affected by that afflicted Venus that could find no other satisfactory outlet of expression than in music!

Due to the Sun conjunct Venus, Mario did not judge his father as harshly as others did, but neither was he able to accept and appreciate himself. Both before and after the abandonment, he admired the man as a father and musician. Since his mother had a hard, violent character, his father was the one in charge of the family's social life, including the long nights of conversation and music that Mario loved from the time he was a boy. It was his father who placed Mario's fingers on the keyboard for the first time. Mars, the other representative of masculine energy, is the focus of a yod with the Moon and Jupiter-Uranus. This powerful configuration can literally move the life of the individual, once the significance of the energies and the best way of reconciling them have been found;¹³ but, at first, the identity that is forged, especially with the Moon involved, can be confusing, nebulous and erratic. Mars is the ruler of the 9th, the place where we look for meaning and for a way to transcend our boundaries.

When Mars is in the 5th in the sign of Cancer, sharing both sign and house with Neptune, our worldly, individualistic, assertive ability is subject to a lack of differentiation and tends to become confused with the needs of the collective; when we are able to integrate these energies, however, Neptune gives us the inspiration for boundless creation and Mars, the force to put it into practice. The elevated, angular Moon, which partakes of both yod and T-square, exerted tremendous power in Mario's life, not only in his relationships with women, but in his achievements, his glamour, fame and recognition. The concentration of planets in the northern hemisphere indicates that Mario accumulated much more experience within himself than he displayed openly; his elevated, solitary Moon in the southwest quadrant, however, represented an outpouring of his interior life into the exterior world through his musical creation.

The Moon-Saturn opposition on the MC-IC axis was extremely painful. It strongly affected the expression of his moods, which he lived out in his relationships with women, frequently projecting this energy onto them. These planets would have had to have been

reversed, in the houses that came naturally to them, in order to have eased the pain. Afflicted Mercury at the apex of the T-square inhibited the verbal expression of his feelings. Chiron conjunct Mercury, represents the hero who discovers who he is through wounds of rejection.¹⁴ This mutable T-square shook the foundations of his being, but finally led him to self-knowledge and acceptance of his own nature.

With Saturn on the IC, Mario was his own worst judge.¹⁵ When he told me about his life, he relentlessly blamed himself for his errors, as if a justification or motive for acting the way he did never existed, such as his emotional and economic hardships during childhood, or the obligations and responsibilities that were thrust on him at an early age. On the other hand, it was difficult for him to accept his strong points as a son, brother, father and human being. Another imbalance in his identity stems from the lack of earth and the predominance of water and mutable signs. These add up to instability. Nevertheless, he was grounded by houses ruled by earth signs and the people in his life so represented. Taurus on the cusp of the 3rd, represents his sisters, who burdening him with responsibilities; Virgo on the 7th, his wife, who constrained his ability to soar through her zeal for forming a home; and Capricorn on the 11th, the people with whom he shared interests and grounded his dreams. It is common to find a predominance of water in the

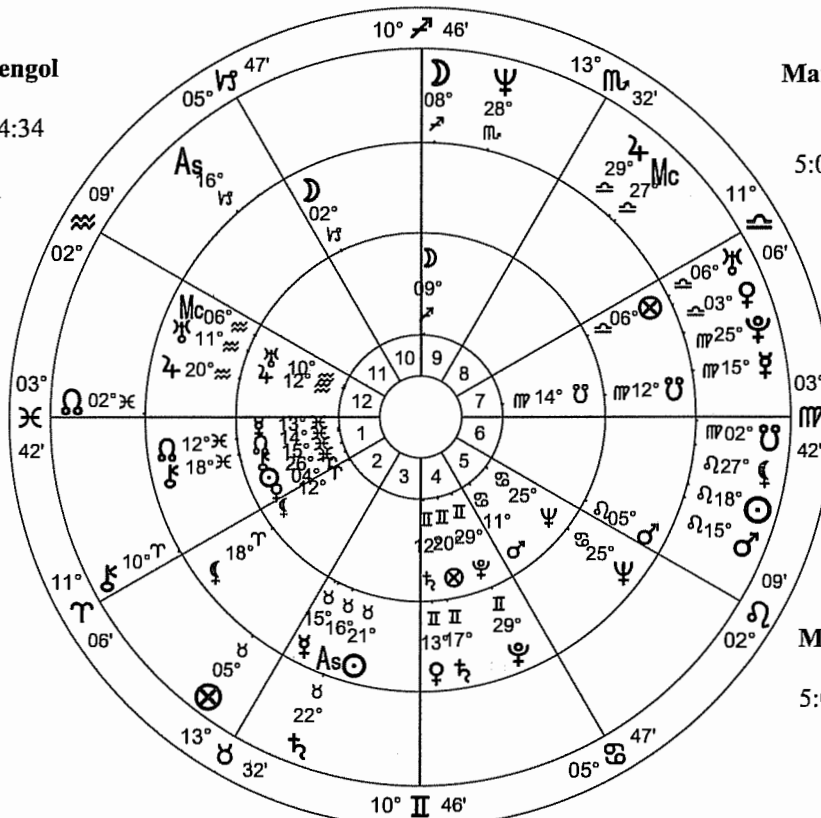
charts of great musicians because of the creativity, sensitivity and vulnerability that this element represents.¹⁶ In Mario's case, the imbalance is intensified by the lack of earth, and this tendency is clear at the end of his life. His life's quest was not for success; his earthly ambitions were eclipsed by his need for transcendence.

With a chart marked by angular planets, passion, and intensity, Mario was unstable in his emotional life, but determined to win victories in his profession; in spite of defeats and disappointments, he always bounced back. He responded to punishment or criticism with renewed energy. When his wife died (Chart 3), the nodes had recently transited his natal nodal axis in the angular 1st and 7th. When this happens, karma surges forth with all its might. These are crossroads that provoke crises of action and of consciousness.¹⁷ At the time of his wife's death transiting Saturn conjoined his progressed Sun, and transiting Pluto opposed his natal Sun, affecting the entire 1st house stellium; transiting Jupiter trined the Asc and natal Pluto; transiting Chiron conjoined natal Venus; and progressed Venus squared natal Mercury, ruler of the 7th and marriage. These aspects made a lasting transformation in his life, values and musical creation.

During this painful process, Saturn symbolized punishment and Jupiter, faith; Saturn, condemnation, and

Inner Chart

Mario Ruiz Armengol
 March 17, 1914
 5:00 am LMT 6:24:34
 Veracruz, Mexico
 Placidus, Tropical
 True Node



Middle Chart

Mario Ruiz Armengol
 Prog. SA Long.
 Aug 11, 1970
 5:00 pm LMT 6:24:34
 Veracruz, Mexico
 Placidus, Tropical
 True Node

Outer Chart

Mario Wife's Death .
 Aug 11, 1970
 5:00 pm LMT 6:24:34
 Veracruz, Mexico
 Placidus, Tropical
 True Node

Chart 3

Jupiter, salvation; Saturn, desolation, and Jupiter, hope. The struggle was between good and evil, the flesh and the spirit and what one is and what one should be. Until that time, Mario had not expanded his consciousness beyond Saturn's threshold of the personal and social; he had not even glimpsed the transcendent and universal. Until then he had lived his Piscan stellium through creativity, passion, inspiration, and sensitivity, but with excesses, evasion and fantasies. When his wife died, he realized that the basis of his emotional and physical security died with her, and all he had left was the beast, the shadow; he was brought face to face with this reality by Pluto and experienced cataclysmic growth, reinforced by Scorpio on his natal 9th cusp.¹⁸ After the experience of loss and pain, Mario opened himself to acceptance. He chose the path of self-knowledge, which allowed him to recover his blocked or repressed energy, and dedicate this new energy to creation. Life's great teachers—suffering, trauma and ecstasy—were all experienced.¹⁹ In the face of pain, we harden, and with pleasure, we grow softer.

We could define 12th house placements as the bridge that connects us with the divine, the direct experience of the infinite. Among other things, the 12th represents creative inspiration, the product of our immersion in the greater self.²⁰ After the loss of his wife, Mario's 12th house Jupiter-Uranus conjunction surely gave

him indications of what must be done to heal his wound: to stop identifying with it, to allow it to become part of something greater and continue living with it, but not to personify the wound itself. It was necessary to break with the established way of life to keep growing and creating from a new perspective. What had gone before was insufficient—popular music, the ambition to possess things, to be recognized. Mario took the important step of making peace with himself, and only then was he able to bring together his skill, experience and innovative style, allowing greatness to emerge.

Mario Ruiz Armengol died when transiting Saturn conjoined his progressed Sun and progressed Saturn (Chart 4). The two major events in his life, his wife's death and his own, were marked by transiting Saturn conjunct progressed Sun. This is an extraordinary coincidence demonstrating that earthly events occur according to the soul's evolutionary intentions of growth and maturity. Besides transiting Saturn, his Moon partile conjoined the MC. Transiting Neptune conjoined natal Uranus in the 12th; transiting Chiron opposed natal Mars in the 5th; transiting SNode conjoined natal Moon; and transiting Pluto conjoined progressed Dsc. It seems that all these transits and progressions have one strong message—mission completed. Now it's time to follow the evolutionary journey of the soul, but with a new investiture.

Inner Chart

Mario Ruiz Armengol
 March 17, 1914
 5:00 am LMT 6:24:34
 Veracruz, Mexico
 Placidus, Tropical
 True Node

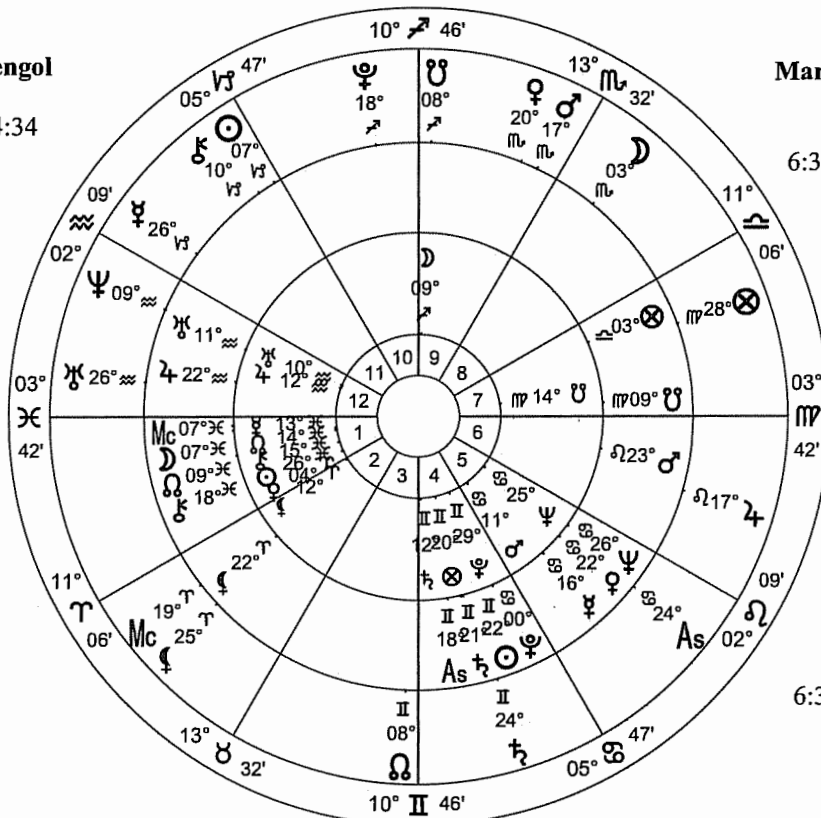


Chart 4

The Women in His Life

The second theme to consider is that of women, due to the importance that they had in Mario's life and the influence they exerted on his musical creation. The theme revolves around the mother, his relationships with women, sexuality, falling in and out of love, deceptions and shattered illusions. For Mario, women were everything—his goddesses and his inspiration, but also his perdition. The Moon on the MC, the most elevated planet in the chart, was decisive in his life. In conjunction with the fixed star, Antares, this luminary perfectly describes his mother: a tense, strong, willful woman overwhelmed by adversity, but hard-working and influential. The opposition of Saturn on the IC (3° orb), speaks of a mother-son relationship involving onerous obligations and scarce maternal affection. Mario lacked nourishment, both physical and spiritual, loving care and attention.

The Chiron-Moon square reflects a wound stemming from the rejection from his mother, who seems to have denied her own maternal instincts. Intensely emotional, yet out of touch with his deepest feelings, Mario often engaged in self-sabotage. He sought to compensate for his woundedness through overindulgence and addictions. Finally, like the mythical Chiron, he had to descend into the subterranean world to heal himself.²¹

Moved by this Moon, which has almost as much relevance to his character as the Sun due to Mario's nighttime birth, the boy voluntarily entered a school for orphans so he wouldn't be an additional burden to his mother. Later on, under pressure from the Saturn opposition, he began to contribute financially to the home now headed by his mother whenever he could. Due to a promise that he made to his mother on her deathbed, he assumed responsibility for his sisters as long as they lived, often to the detriment of his own children.

From the IC, Saturn exerted a constant pull on his Moon on the MC never allowing him to free himself from the ties of the matrifocal family. As hard as he tried, he could never do enough to pay back his mother and women in general for the harm done to them by men like himself. Mario's early childhood marked him forever, underscoring the age-old astrological assumption that the nature of a beginning has a strong bearing on the final outcome.²² When his father abandoned the family, Mario not only suffered from his absence, but also had to assume the responsibility of being the only male in the family. He had to substitute for the previously dominant male and finish what was left undone. He was now the only representative of the masculine sex, the cause of the family's disgrace.

In absence of the father, Mario's mother became a dominant, authoritarian figure in a broken home, represented by Pluto and Saturn in the 4th. As a result, Mario felt a deep need to demonstrate his masculinity and overcome not having been wanted or loved. He sought maternal affection everywhere until finally, with the death of his own wife, he found his own center and attained a higher consciousness and serenity. When he finally integrated his need to complete himself through his relations with women, he became a whole person. The Moon-Saturn aspect presented him with the opportunity for personal autonomy. With Saturn and Pluto in the 4th, he felt judged and condemned by his own family; at first his judges and executioners were his mother and sisters, and later his wife and children. Saturn not only generated limitations, but also strong feelings of guilt and remorse, chains that he wore until he died.

Mario's MC contrasts strongly with his IC. The Moon is at the top of his chart, powerfully close to the cusp of the house of the parent that disciplines and makes demands; on the IC, however, Saturn and Pluto symbolize the loss of the parent who gave him affection and nourished him with love.

Since the Moon is almost as relevant to his identity as the Sun in this chart, Mario frequently identified with the feminine principle instead of the masculine. Emotion won out over reason. Intense, vulnerable, sensitive and passionate, he gave himself over to his women without reserve, blind to their manipulation and blackmail. The Moon-Chiron square refers to Mario's relationship with his mother as a source of deep wounds and rejection from women in general;²³ he usually related to women much younger than himself and played the father role of a father rather than partner. Yet he had an overactive sense of machismo as compensation for his vulnerable Mars in Cancer in the 5th, resulting in a mistaken expression of masculine bravado, produced by the affection that he never received and wounds inflicted on the inner child.²⁴ Fortunately, his artistic talent allowed him to capture these experiences in his musical creation, allowing him to compensate for his inability to express himself in more conventional ways.

Mercury's expression, highlighted by its apex to Mario's Moon-Saturn T-square, was also affected by this enormous vulnerability and need for affection. Mercury gives the ability to relate to others in an objective, realistic way, to break attachments and to say goodbye.²⁵ The planet is comfortable in air and earth signs. In Mario's earthless horoscope, and Mercury in detriment in Pisces stressed by the T-Square, expressed itself in a highly subjective and often irrational manner. Mario was constantly in trouble because he surrendered his heart and soul in every

relationship that would later become the lyrics of a song.

The Moon in Sagittarius, conjunct Antares, with Venus in Aries conjunct Lilith, determined the kind of women he would encounter in his life: warlike, owners of their own space, egotistical, independent, conquering, disobedient, demanding. His Moon is part of his yod, with Mars and Jupiter-Uranus, and also part of his mutable T-square with Mercury and Saturn. These grand configurations moved and defined his life. The 5th is the house of love, of our ability to love, and of the physical creations onto which we project our longings for immortality.²⁶ With Mars and Neptune in Cancer there, Mario sought immortality through his musical creation and woman. He also expressed his creativity through his sexuality, which became another instrument for self-knowledge. Ending a love affair was always a slow and difficult process. His yod involving the Moon on the MC, Uranus in the 12th, and Mars in the 5th, produced a gradual disintegration; although the planets involved are impulsive, there is no mutual recognition of the energies, so the configuration lacks the force for a sudden break.

With 7th house ruler Mercury as part of his 1st house Pisces stellium, Mario was destined to suffer and create through his intimate relationships. There are several placements indicating Mario's inability to be faithful to just one woman—Mercury in detriment and combust, forming a roving trine to Mars and an estranged square to Saturn. Venus, the natural significator of the couple, is also afflicted and in an excitable sextile with Jupiter-Uranus. Then too, Saturn on the IC is in the sign of Gemini, whose cosmic principle has been described as *There's more here than meets the eye*. As if that weren't enough, his angular Moon in expansive Sagittarius sextile to Jupiter-Uranus, always sought something new. In other words, the women he loved throughout his life turned him inside out and backwards and, in so doing, forced him to grow.

Venus, as a symbol of his lovers, is debilitated—in detriment in Aries and combust the Sun, but powerful in its 1st house placement and reinforced by Lilith on the 2nd house cusp. These planets represent women that disobey the rules of society, women who decide for themselves. They may be seductive and sensual, but deceitful and demanding; admired and desired, but conflictive and destructive. Venus, regent of the 2nd and 8th, is part of the 1st house stellium and contributes to his Don Juan complex, wherein his sense of potency and conquest is central to his self-esteem. Mario suffered tremendously from this complex, the shadow side of Venus.

Moreover, a Venus-Mars square often causes difficulties through aggression or imprudence; the hard aspect ties love to war and adds passion.²⁷ With Mars as dispositor of Venus, Moon as dispositor of Mars, and Venus trine the Moon, the maternal principle is confused with the love principle. The woman who gives a sense of security is not the one who attracts lovers. This planetary hodgepodge of masculine and feminine energies meant that in Mario's life fulfillment of appropriate roles was difficult, resulting in an absent father, a mother who functioned as father, sisters who functioned as daughters for whom he had to assume responsibility and a wife and daughter who functioned as a mother.

The element of fire in a chart brings happiness, a capacity for action, optimism and faith in the future. Since the Moon and Venus were Mario's only planets in fire, his main stimulus to action, his inspiration and his joy were women. They pushed him to seek recognition and money to such an extent that after his last failure in love, he stopped striving for material possessions altogether and devoted himself exclusively to serious, academic composition in a quest for transcendence.

The T-square on the MC-IC axis also contributed to Mario's feelings of guilt and unworthiness. The focal planet Mercury afflicted in Pisces, ruling the IC-Dsc, contributed to Mario's desire to give his wife and children the kind of love and respect he had never been given himself, a wish that was never fulfilled because he lacked the emotional structure to do so. He was caught in the contradiction of longing for, yet fearing, the security of the home.

To fully understand his sense of guilt, we only need to look at the lyrics of the song that he dedicated to his wife, called *Que Tristeza (So Much Sadness)*, in which he says:

*I'm not the man you dreamed of,
If you only knew all I've borne
Down deep in my soul, my love.
I could have been all you wanted,
I wanted to be all you asked for,
So much sadness! It wasn't meant to be.
And as you suffer, how I cry...
So much sadness; my love,
I'm not the man you hoped for.*

Musical Creation

The theme of musical creation touches on his sensitivity, madness and genius. It is commonly said that 12th house planets aren't consciously experienced; they represent energies that move us blindly despite anything we may do. It is also believed that these energies gradually become more conscious during the

second half of life and, once recognized, are a bridge that can lead to greatness, transcendence and consciousness of our own divinity. The 12th refers to our direct experience of the infinite, and it is also the house of creative inspiration, the product of our connection with the greater self or the memory of divinity within us. Creative people are the ones who are able to access the unconscious and make it conscious through their own creations.²⁸

In Mario's chart, Jupiter is in the 12th.²⁹ This planet is exceptionally relevant because it rules the Asc and MC and is the dispositor of the Sun and Moon. To me, Mario's own image was evocative of Jupiter—expansive, generous and, at times, forthright. But he could also be authoritarian, demanding and explosive when it came to his music. Jupiter's aspects were a powerful configuration of Mario's creation, conjunct Uranus, sextile the Moon and MC, sextile Venus, trine Saturn and the IC, and quincunx Mars. It should be recalled that Jupiter is also part of a yod. Symbolically speaking, Mario was the personification of Jupiter in the musical sphere.

Seeing him conduct was truly a spectacle—the way he moved around on the podium, the way he motivated the orchestra, never with a baton, always with his hands alone.³⁰

Mario had the extremely rare ability of perfect pitch to the extent that he was able to distinguish a false note even while many musicians were playing different instruments, and he could even call the note by its name.

In order to create at the collective level, an artist must sacrifice his or her own personality. An unhappy or deficient personal life is often a prerequisite for transcending and connecting with the whole.³¹ Jupiter symbolizes creative solar energy directed into mental channels.³² As the king of Mt. Olympus, Jupiter is easier for human beings to touch than the far distant Sun. The Jupiter-Uranus contact gave him the possibility of subjectively expanding his own values and was a key factor in his bold, innovative creation. Jupiter and Uranus together are far beyond the need for societal or parental approval. Jupiter, sometimes seen as a kind of compensation and with Uranus in Aquarius, it produced a renegade boasting, *I'm not your myth. I'm my own myth.* Jupiter is where we must keep on growing without stopping and Uranus is where we must break with all that is established.

The Jupiter-Uranus conjunction trined Saturn. In truth, Saturn and Jupiter are natural enemies; their natures are antithetical. Saturn symbolizes concrete knowledge and experience, while Jupiter symbolizes intuitive perception and faith. Yet when Saturn

concretizes Jupiter's imagination and ideals, something is produced for all to see, representing a bridge between higher and lower planes of consciousness.³³

A Saturn-Uranus contact offers us a connection with the collective unconscious, possibly leading to the a creation beyond the conventional. This higher plane of consciousness made Mario feel that his inspiration was a gift from God. Saturn enabled him to concretize with discipline and dedication. Mario was always in the vanguard. His Saturn-Uranus trine led him to reconcile his ability to be fruitful and productive while including the broader needs of the group to include a contribution to the development of the whole. In the future age of Aquarius, this ability will be more accessible to all humanity; Mario was ahead of his time. His handling of harmony, metaphors and miniatures in his most recent works is original, innovative and bold.

The semi-square of Neptune and Saturn speaks of an abyss between our ideals and our ordinary human condition and how we try to bridge this gap. Love and art are two of the most creative channels offered by Neptune,³⁴ and when Mario succeeded in doing so, the result was marvelous; Saturn provided form for Neptune's inspiration. The Sun also joined in its trine with Neptune and as ruler of the 6th, produced competence. Jupiter-Uranus trined Saturn, giving Mario the audacity to break with the safe and conventional and was especially strong due to Jupiter's rulership of the Asc and MC.

When a powerful Moon in Sagittarius conjunct Antares sits on the MC, the symbol of profession and destiny, achieving excellence and fulfilling a public mission becomes a matter of life or death. The Moon, ruler of the 5th, linked to Mario's creation, art, children, romance and inspiration. With such a Moon, his sense of security depended on the conquest of these realms. The 10th represents what we give to the community, and with his Moon there, the world was waiting to receive Mario who was ready to contribute to the world.

Mercury in Pisces, the closest planet to the Asc, suggests an inward gaze. Because of its tense position in T-square to Moon and Saturn, it was unable to function normally in relationships and self-expression, and not very realistic when it came to dealing with everyday affairs; instead, it became subjective, emotional, creative, perceptive and fertile. Conjunct with the NNode, linked Mario's artistic creation to spirituality, destiny and finality. Due to its square with Saturn, this Mercury was never satisfied with superficiality in relationships or in the creative process; the proof of this is that at the end of Mario's life, when he focused on producing serious, academic music. Conjunct Chiron,

Mercury was a powerful communicator, at times compulsive, not in conventional verbal ways, but through music. If the house where Chiron is found is the place of our incurable wound, it is also the place where we can emerge as healers.³⁵

A T-square is like a sacred discontentedness, keeping one on an eternal quest. Always alert, curious, fresh, open to everything and everyone, Mario was a valiant, original musician. Mario's creation had an important rational dimension, tinged with melancholy, yet daring and vanguard, determined by four air planets, Saturn and Pluto in Gemini and Uranus and Jupiter in Aquarius. The four personal houses, where most of the planets are found, were areas of a constant impulse to grow and expand in his artistic and creative skills. He was never still, never complacent; he always wanted to learn more, know more, give more.

The wisdom of Saturn in Gemini square its dispositor, Mercury, was acquired through his life experiences, not imparted from the lips of others. Wherever Saturn is, there is depth. Mario made incursions into rhythms, songs, popular music, arrangements and boleros, finally devoting himself to the serious, committed music that he composed at the end of his life.

The outer planets acted powerfully in his life.³⁶ Uranus from the 12th, Pluto from the 4th and Neptune from the 5th are all reflected in his musical creation. Mario lived his Uranus, feeling that his compositions were God-given and that he was just a channel, an instrument. Pluto destroyed him and transformed him several times, shaking the foundations of his existence and enriching his creation with experience. Each death and rebirth broadened his art and raised it to a new level, perfecting what he was doing at the time and anticipating all that would follow. Neptune's fantasies, excesses, evasions, illusions, disillusionments, loves and faded loves all inspired his creations. All of these influences, combined with his romanticism and melancholy, helped to make his music a mixture of jazz, pop and classical, but always with an unforeseen, whimsical twist to it, something that is very difficult to achieve. He described it this way: "*My music is an eternal lament, sometimes disguised as laughter.*"³⁷

The energies of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are destructive and malefic only if we oppose or resist them because they are seeking something that doesn't belong to the personal ego's limited sphere, but to the dharma of the greater self.³⁸ At first Mario resisted, but later on he was able to go with the flow of these energies. Neptune in Cancer in his 5th of creativity and love affairs, sought desperately to catch a glimpse of the immortality of his own soul in the reflection of the women he loved and in his musical creation. He only achieved it in his music, however, because this

impersonal planet always goes against personal desires, favoring the collective. Neptunian issues can be very painful, and in Mario's life every issue had a Neptunian tint. Because music speaks to the feelings and communes directly with our longing for unity, love and redemption, Neptune is prominent in many composers charts.³⁹

Mars is the focus of the yod with the Moon and Jupiter-Uranus. The role of action in the creative process is played by this 5th house Mars, and the role of thought by the 12th Jupiter-Uranus, while creation itself is the Moon on the MC. Nevertheless, mere ability does not ensure greatness. On the other hand, the union of ability, undying popularity and an innovative style does speak of greatness and living out a special destiny marked by a yod.

It is especially paradoxical that with all the planets in the 1st, Mario was an instinctive person who needed individuation and autonomy, a man who was compelled to be egotistical and to break rules; yet, the stellium in Pisces pointed to his urge for transcendence, his need to connect and to merge with totality. This was his vulnerability, but also his brilliance. Mario attained transcendence through his 1st house stellium in Pisces, by centering the meaning of life in his creative ability.

The Sun-Neptune contact was Mario's own personal seal indelibly stamped on his creation. His rich, sensual music, so full of color, leads us to contemplate infinity as it expresses stories of passion and human yearning for the supernatural. Mario was a courageous, original musician, always alert, curious, fresh, open to everything. His is a mixture of jazz, pop and classical, incorporating dissonance, sevenths, elevenths and thirteenths; the rhythms and harmonies that he uses makes the listener feel that his music is always in movement.⁴⁰ He wasn't a great pianist of the stature of Liszt or Chopin, but he composed many pieces that are technically and interpretatively difficult for the pianist. His main contribution was his originality.

Such a strong Pisces emphasis gave Mario an abnormally high degree of sensitivity. Of all the artistic expressions, it is music that is closest to the kindred planet Neptune's aquatic realm of feelings and emotions, and this is why I largely attribute his creation to this planet. With his Pisces Sun trine Neptune, it is only natural that Mario loved the composers from the Age of Romanticism. In just one decade, the Romantic movement—Neptunian par excellence—modified the existing harmonic language of musical composition,⁴¹ placing emotion above reason, expression above meter, feeling above intellect, fantasy over limitations and spirit above matter. The Neptunian connotation is also evident in the jazz that runs through Mario's

music, in which improvisation takes place without major limitations, while the structure is subtle and tenuous.

In the ancient world, astrology and music were closely linked as both were seen as aspects of the same harmonic principle.⁴² Even today we find many famous astrologers who are also musicians. The Greeks said that “*music and the human soul are two aspects of the eternal.*”⁴³ The shadow of Pisces can be madness, but only by immersing ourselves in it, can we accept it. It is often said that genius and madness go hand in hand. When geniuses lose sight of the fact that they are only channels of higher forces and believe that talent is theirs alone, they may lose their way until one or more outer planet transits opens up their consciousness and allows them to find their path once more.⁴⁴

For many years, Mario Ruiz Armengol did not receive the recognition that he deserved, but now things have changed. A few years before his death, his name began to be mentioned as one of the great Mexican composers of all times. Tributes were organized in his honor, and on April 7, 2002, the Mexican government paid homage to him as the National Symphony Orchestra played symphonic arrangements of his music at the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City, making his dream of composing symphonic music a reality. He continues to be remembered and admired after his death; in fact his fame is building to a crescendo, especially among important musicians and today’s music-lovers.

Mario Ruiz Armengol is a pillar of the modern bolero, a precursor of the *Feeling* movement that originated in Cuba, and a pioneer in the jazz fusion with symphonic music. In the realm of classical music he is recognized as a contemporary genius on the world level, who created a unique musical language, his own language. I would like to close with a quote from Mario, “*Great men free themselves in their quest to BE.*”⁴⁵*

Endnotes

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2. Krauze, Enrique. *Siglo del Caudillo*, Colección Andanzas. Mexico City: Tusquets Editores, 1993.
3. Outstanding Latin-American singer-songwriters who had won international fame.
4. Manuel M. Ponce was a great Mexican composer and musician of the early 20th century.
5. Transits for this moment are analyzed in greater detail later in this piece.
6. Diaz Barriga, Carlos. *La Calle de los Sueños*, Ediciones Pentagrama, Mexico City, 2002, p.136.
7. Transits for this moment are analyzed in greater detail later in this piece.
8. Diaz Barriga, Carlos. *La Calle de los Sueños*, Ediciones Pentagrama, Mexico City, 2002, p.160.
9. Goenaga, Martha. Interview with Mario Ruiz Armengol, Mexico City, July, 2002.

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39. Greene. *Neptune*.
40. Santamaría Pliego. Op. Cit.
41. Greene. *Neptune*.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Diaz Barriga. Op. Cit.

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Martha Goenaga, a professional, consulting astrologer, has worked for major radio and TV stations in Mexico. She studied and practiced astrology for the past 15 years with Luis Lesur, President of the first NCGR Mexican Chapter. She completed Zoller’s Medieval Astrology correspondence course and is now specializing in Evolutionary Astrology with Steven Forrest. Martha is also a concert pianist who has performed in some of Mexico’s most prestigious concert halls and has just recorded her third CD. She has several recordings of Mario Ruiz Armengol’s piano music in her collection. Martha submitted a version of this paper for her Level IV NCGR exam. Email: mgoenag@yahoo.com.mx.

Reviews

Astrology: A Place in Chaos

by **Bernadette Brady**

The Wessex Astrologer, 178 pages, \$28.00.

There is something to be said for going into a meeting or gathering of people without a plan, script or agenda. For this, Bernadette Brady explains, is one example of how the magic of chaos can happen.

In her short, but potent book, Brady presents chaos as a theory that provides language for the experience of astrology. Through the terrain of historical, mythological and philosophical contexts, she emphasizes that astrology does not need to be viewed as a religion or a science. Instead, she suggests that the debate of the last 200 years, which has contributed to astrology's confused identity, can be replaced with an alternative view: the chaotic perspective.

Chaos, Brady explains, offers an unpredictable, spontaneous emergence of order and in so doing, presents the unique qualities of self-similarity and scale invariance that are mirrored in nature (think broccoli or cauliflower, as two examples). With her gift of simplicity, she describes how chaos is evident in intuitive knowledge, and thus rich with psychological implication and astrological relevance. Using concepts such as bifurcation, saddle points, strange attractors and their basin-like zones of influence, Brady provides the basic vocabulary for the language.

She also describes the process. Brady points out that change, a consistent life calling, requires chaos. She contrasts entropic stagnation with deterministic chaos, and explains that at the unstable edge between a comfort zone and complete overwhelm, new patterns and opportunities can emerge and order themselves.

Brady paints a picture of the void as the creative source, and of people, complete with family, culture, life, fate and destiny, as reflecting a fractal image of the void. But she does not leave the reader stranded in the limitless philosophical wonder of freewill, soul and experience. Instead, she points out that the aim is change, and clarity of intention, shift ritual and awareness of the subtleties of manifestation are important components of the process. Coincidence, serendipity and synchronicity support the process, and present moments that require acts of courage and trust.

(Continued on page 102)

The New American Ephemeris for the 21st Century Michelsen Memorial Edition (Midnight 2000-2100)

by **Rique Pottenger**

Starcrafts Publishing, 624 pages, \$26.95.

The astrologer's reliance upon the numerical data of others to achieve an accurately calculated natal chart is an act of faith, and something entirely separate from the efficacy of technique. It is common to double check the accuracy of a client's birth data, yet most of us, as astrologers, take it for granted that information within an astrological ephemeris is as good as gold.

Falling in that golden category is the recently published, *The New American Ephemeris for the 21st Century*. Historically, the earliest surviving astronomical writings that reflect the portable modern ephemeris are papyri that date to the first four centuries CE of Egypt. According to Alexander Jones, these papyri contained daily positions of the Sun, Moon and planets. The first *printed* ephemeris in Europe is supposed to be the handiwork of Regiomontanus who published one in 1474 at Nurnberg for the years 1474-1506. For those of us who came of age in the 1980s, a significant name associated with the 20th century historiography of the ephemeris in America is that of Neil F. Michelson, founder of AstroComputing Services, "a man who never practiced as an astrologer himself, but became one of the most influential forces in the development of modern astrology by providing tools that facilitated the work of astrologers worldwide."¹

Mathematician and computer programmer (and metaphysician), Michelsen became a self-tutored student of celestial mechanics in order "to investigate how one determined the position of the planets."²

The original *American Ephemeris* was published over 30 years ago and like the new edition, included sections that tracked the void-of-course Moon, lunar phenomenon, sign ingresses, planetary stations, as well as an aspectarian. Since this is a memorial volume, the introductory section contains a brief biographical sketch of Michelsen, an analysis of his birth chart³ and fond recollections by friends and colleagues.

Nonetheless, author Rique Pottenger, has substantially updated the original work and states, "a few changes have been made in format, data included and

(Continued on page 100)

improved calculation routines”⁴ “Since 1988, files and algorithms from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory [JPL] export ephemeris files have been used”⁵ in order to determine the positions of the planets, lights, and additional astronomical points; the author notes that “successive editions of the [American] ephemeris differ slightly from earlier versions because of increased accuracy of data available from JPL.”⁶

In the name of increased accuracy, all ephemeris positions are now given in Ephemeris Time [ET] as opposed to Universal Time [UT] since “it is not feasible to predict so far in advance into the 21st century what the Delta T values will be.”⁷ Also, “all positions are apparent, meaning they are corrected for light time”⁸—which makes an accounting for the 8.5 minutes that it takes for the Sun’s light to travel to Earth. Astrologers who are so addicted to extreme precision that they have issue with this time lag, are advised to seek help now—or better yet, to start worrying about the impact of the Equation of Time upon all their past readings!

As for the rest of us, we’ll note with interest the presence of Ceres (known as minor planet number one) sandwiched between Mars and Jupiter. What about the rest of the asteroid goddesses? The monthly positions of Pallas, Juno and Vesta are at the bottom right of every page along with listings for Eris, Chiron, the Mean Node and a new and improved Galactic Center.

Each page features the following lay-out: an upper and lower rectangular table for consecutive months, both of which contain daily longitudinal values for 11 celestial bodies⁹ and one astronomical point (True Node), and under these, six smaller tables (Astro Data boxes), describing planetary stations, ingresses, outer planet aspects, lunar aspects which establish void periods, Moon phases, eclipses and miscellaneous stuff that most hardcore astrologers cannot do without (like Julian Day numbers and Synetic Vernal Points¹⁰).

An expanded Key to the Phenomena Section is a welcome addition and vast improvement over the last edition’s abbreviated legend. A Key to the Ephemeris Glyphs and Mean Node Interpolation Table also provide user friendly information. Traditional astrologers, who do not count ptolemaic aspects between the Moon and Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto¹¹ when reckoning the void-of-course Moon, will have some extra work to do since, as usual, the outer planets are included in the Moon’s Last Aspect table (Sections 3 and 4).

Section 2 presents an easy to read Planetary Ingress Table. Section 1 contains data about planetary stations and when the Moon will hit 0° North or South

declination—which is an important, but often overlooked factor in chart delineation! Furthermore, the S or N by the Moon’s glyph in the ephemeris Astrodata box indicates which direction the Moon is traveling in by declination—another essential bit of information. (Note: A recently published 20-year *New American Ephemeris* offers daily declination and latitude listings and a detailed aspectarian.)

Some readers may inquire: why buy a hard copy ephemeris at all?—especially when many new astrological software programs will generate customized ephemerides with a few wayward keyboard clicks. It’s all about convenience!

Which is quicker? To open an ephemeris and look—or turn on your computer, wait for it to boot up, open the program, choose the correct chronological parameters, enter the data, wait for the calculations, then print it out or (much more likely) scroll down the resulting data columns and hope that you don’t have to recalculate. Besides, what if there’s a power failure and you’re reduced to casting charts by candlelight? Just ask an astrologer in New Orleans. *It happens!*

As for me, I’m still trying to get a handle on exactly how those nice folks at JPL arrive at their planetary position data, apparent or otherwise. Evidently, there are still some things that I must still take on faith.*

Endnotes

1. Rique Pottenger, *The New American Ephemeris for the 21st Century*. (Exeter: Starcrafts Publishing, 2006), p.7.
2. Ibid, p. 5.
3. Michelsen’s birth data: 5-11-1931, 8:34 am CST, Chicago, IL.
4. Pottenger, p. 9.
5. Pottenger, p. 11. The US Naval Observatory and the Royal Greenwich Observatory both use JPL data to co-produce *Almanacs*.
6. Pottenger, p.11. According to Pottenger, most of these “[d]ifferences are so small that they will show up mainly in the times of aspects, sign ingresses, 0 declinations and stations that appear in the phenomena section at the bottom of each page.”
7. Pottenger, p.11. Minor planet Mnemosyne reminds us all that “[t]he difference between ET and UT is called Delta T”. Most current ephemerides use ET; my old *American Ephemeris for the Twentieth Century* actually used UT values. Ephemeris Time compensates for the Earth’s irregular rotation (what with tidal pulls and earthquake pushes) by utilizing a slightly more uniform measurement of time to calculate planetary positions.
8. Pottenger, p. 11. Precession and nutation (the wobble of the earth) are taken into account as well.
9. These eleven bodies are the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Ceres, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.
10. SVP stands for “the tropical 0 degree point in the sidereal zodiac, as defined by Cyril Fagan,” which as an arbiter of precession, slowly travels backwards as time goes by. See Pottenger, p.15.
11. Ceres, although listed with the other planets, is not included in the void-of-course last aspect data box, whereas Pluto retains his right to interact by aspect with the Moon.

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—Reviewed by Scott B. Silverman
(See biography on page 102.)

Intrepid (Astrological Software)
The Astrological Bureau of Ideas
\$125, \$200 after December 31, 2007.

Here's a new software program on the block called *Intrepid* from The Astrological Bureau of Ideas (www.aboi.com). The author of this program, Jeffrey Sayer Close, believes that *Intrepid*, like its maritime namesakes (the famous WW II battleship and the yacht that won America's Cup *twice*) will indeed, ferry its users into uncharted territory.

Right up front, this program is easy to use and the interface between user and program can be genuinely described as intuitive. One of the great strengths of *Intrepid* is that a *single* click on the main display window will put a natal chart through its paces. For example, to find the prior or upcoming Moon phase (quarter, full or new), one need only click on an arrow. The same feature is right there in the same window to generate eclipses, planetary returns, retrograde stations, etc., for when one planet will aspect another (your choice of planet and aspect) or even when a particular star will hit a specific degree and minutes of a sign.

Intrepid may be the program of choice for anybody who finds it distracting to keep multiple windows open when working with a chart.

A slide bar situated directly under these options allows one to set a time increment of seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years by which to advance a chart with again, a humble *solitary* keystroke. To the lower left of the displayed chart, there are sequential numbers ranging from one to nine that identify a radix chart and up to eight variations—or subsequent charts cast. The ability to swiftly save and retrieve such chart sets is among the many conveniences.

In addition to returns and advancing a chart by good ol' Solar Arc, secondary, tertiary and minor progressions or even converse, five other types of advancement are offered that are, as far as I know, unique to *Intrepid*. Two of these equate Days with Lunations and Lunations with Years. The other three address the slower moving cycle of the Moon's Nodes and embody the symbolism of Day per Node, Lunation per Node, and Year per Node Cycle.

Among multiple enabling features are: keyboard shortcuts, the Grand 360 Degree Birth Sort (a listing of 78 midpoints and all chart factors including the planetary nodes), a chart display of those 78 midpoints, and the colorful and easy to use transit search. Coming down the pike in v 2.0 (available in January 08) are Fixed stars, a graphic ephemeris with

additional declination listings, an online help button, and the ability to cast *precessed* solar and lunar returns as well as heliocentric charts.

Close has been developing his own unique system of astrology since 1986 and its symbolism is derived for the most part, from *modern* astronomical knowledge. He bought the Astrological Bureau of Ideas from his mentor, Capel McCutcheon, in the mid 1990s. According to Close, "*the basic principle of Self-Evident Astrology is that the meaning of the Heavens is inherent in their physical characteristics and by the same token all bodies in the solar system have a meaning.*"

Get ready, adventurous astrologers, because some of these bodies which Close refers to above, include planetary moons such as Deimos, Ganymede, Titan, Miranda, Triton, and Charon which, along with the minor planets, Flores and Juno, are grouped together in an on screen sort labeled Upper Harmonics. A sort of 13 additional planetary moons is also available to place in charts. Close regards the relationship between planets and their moons as similar to the one between parent and child and assumes "*a degree of inheritance of meaning from a planet to each of its moons.*"

Up to 7000 named asteroids can be calculated, and a numbered data base can accommodate many others. New arrivals, Eris and Sedna, are among the celestial bodies on board. Two lists, or sorts are available from which to choose; the first is based upon the elegant and empirical work of Martha Lang Wescott and the second upon Lee Lehman's research that culminated with her *Ultimate Asteroid Book*. Most important is the option to create user defined lists of asteroids (devotees of Wescott's most recent work will want to add the missing minor planets to the sort of 54 asteroids already present). Close is to be commended for giving credit to Wescott and Lehman where credit for this work is due!

One may chose to sort asteroids by name, number, declination or longitude; there is also the option of inserting any two asteroids into a given chart as additional chart points. I recently generated a chart for a friend's infant daughter, Amelie, and so added the name asteroids of Amelie (#986) and Scott (my name, #876) just to see if anything interesting was going on. Other pairs of onscreen extras one may likewise investigate, include any two planet nodes, any two midpoints, and any two of the thirteen planetary moons, not already included in the Upper Harmonics set.

Another unique feature, is the bi-platform, in that *Intrepid* will work on both Mac and IBM type

(Continued on page 102)

(Review: *A Place in Chaos*Continued from page 99)

This book affirms that as spectators of patterns in a mysterious world, we are not really in control. Instead, in collaborating with the creative void, by allowing the magic of chaos to happen, we invite slight shifts at just the right time to unveil a new order. Through this depiction of chaotic paradigm, Brady gives melodic voice to the inherent language of astrology.*

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—Reviewed by **Paula R. Gassmann**, an astrologer with a practice in the Boston area. She is the author of a number of books of poetry and writes articles and reviews on many esoteric subjects. She is the Publications Director of NCGR, and served as co-editor of the Boston Chapter's *The Astrologers' Newsletter* and moderator for AstroDatabank's Newsmaker Forum. She can be reached at 781862-5104, prgassmann@comcast.net, or through www.invisibledynamics.com.

(Review: *Intrepid*.....Continued from page 101)

computers and because of a smart interface, one can successfully transfer saved data from an Apple laptop to an IBM type PC and back again—no worries or formatting issues.

Although the formulas come from the JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) data courtesy of Swiss Ephemeris, Close notes that “we wrote our own codes for all the planetary moon positions” which retain an accuracy of +/- 30 minutes from the span 1900-2100, according to JPL Horizon specifications.

All things considered, *Intrepid* proves to be an excellent additional tool for the working astrologer who knows exactly what type of information he or she needs to see in a chart and needs it fast!*

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—Reviewed by **Scott B. Silverman**, a practicing astrologian in Miami Beach. He was born in NYC at the very start of Pluto in Virgo, and later attended Vassar and Kepler Colleges. Trained as a Uranian astrologer, his special areas of astrological interests and inquiry include Uranian, ancient astrologers, horary, minor planets and declination.

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The National Chart

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Celestial Tarot: Projecting the Journey of the Tarot onto the Celestial Sphere

DAVID FRAWLEY
Ayurvedic Astrology

ROB HAND
Dealing with Difficult Chart Combinations

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Deepening Transit Analysis

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The Moon: Its Subtle but Powerful Impact

BERNADETTE BRADY
Personal Patterns – Your Unique Way of Working with Time

STEVEN FORREST
Finding Your Natural Mate

ALAN OKEN
Pluto and the Path of Regeneration

JANE RIDDER-PATRICK
Medical Astrology in Action