

enabled him to be sympathetic to all these ways of healing or wholing. However, he thought that perhaps for the Western man the contribution of these Eastern systems would best be served by their becoming the initial stimulants to start off a search for his own self-realization through introverted reflection on his own inner realities in terms that obtain naturally within himself and his cultural background.

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## Growth and the Symbols of Astrology

*How the Growth Movement and Humanistic Psychology has enabled traditional astrology to evolve and what astrology has to offer in return.*

This article covers a rather off-beat subject, if I may use the term, or rather a subject that is often rejected as having no relevance to our present day knowledge of the functioning of the psyche. But in any study of symbolism, one invariably comes across a rich vein of information that stems from the esoteric and rather philosophical schools of astrology that deals with the study of subjective cause and effect and of alchemy dealing with psychological processes in strictly symbolic and therefore undefinable terms. My aim here is to stimulate interest in the exploration of these subjects, not to persuade that their philosophical basis is sound, and to demonstrate the rich source of relevant information that they contain pertaining to an understanding of the human mind and to the interpretation of symbols. Two stumbling blocks need overcoming. First, the problem of misconception - suffice it to say that they are *not* subjects to do with prediction of any sort or of transmuting base metals into gold! The second stumbling block is more serious, in that the approach to these subjects, is Eastern by which I mean that we are concerned with an answer to the question 'why' rather than 'how' or 'what' which are the domain of the strictly objective, scientific approach.

Thus the study of the human psyche from this point of view deals with more than Western science is capable of encompassing and more than most schools of Western psychology can deal with.

In dealing with these subjects we are coping in part with Factor X, with Synchronicity, with a system of cause and effect that lies outside the strict, sequential limitations of the time domain. In other words we are dealing with the contents and processes of the unconscious and with the primal myth or archetype contained therein.

Synchronicity, Factor X, psi energies and so on are all modern terms that have a certain amount of respectability attached to them, but they are really a study of very unrespectable things - the sort of things that have been studied for thousands of years under different guises and often under cover: the study of archetypal energies, their interrelationships and projection into the sensory or experiential world. We are now getting to the stage where the wraps are being taken off the closely guarded, secret world of the alchemist

and the astrologer for we are now more ready to handle the sort of archetypal energies that the use of these subjects evokes. Western man is beginning to explore his individuality more and more and to do this he needs a map, a guide, or when in difficulty, a therapist or counsellor to lead him through the world of his own being where the rules and laws of rational thought, of causal events, of a sequence in time no longer rule the roost.

To understand the language of the unconscious psyche we need to draw on as many sources as possible. This is a realm where as soon as we begin the exploration, we realize that we know nothing. We need help, and hence the great turning towards the wisdoms of the East and in some cases towards a study of the rich, meaningful symbolism of astrology and the rich, meaningful processes of alchemy.

Part of my own work as an astrologer has been in observing the links between the theories and insights of humanistic psychology and the traditions of astrology links that are so inextricably interconnected that you really begin to wonder at the chicken and egg situation that exists.

The humanistic psychologist and the growth movement in general have given to astrology a language that brings up to date the modes of expression traditionally used when interpreting an individual's symbol of wholeness - the birth chart. The situation we have at the moment is that astrology is being given new life as a powerful tool for use in psychic exploration and in helping the psyche to grow. Astrology is the oldest known method of studying the human psyche and its practice and concepts have been in the cooking pot for thousands of years.

### **Links**

The correspondances or links that are forming between modern models of the psyche and astrology can lead to further insights. For example the four psychological types - thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting - can be linked directly with the symbols of the four elements of Air, Water, Earth and Fire respectively.

A birth chart with, say, a majority of planets in the Air signs (Aquarius, Libra or Gemini) could indicate a thinking type with feelings as the inferior function, banished to the personal unconscious (this is an oversimplification), to emerge usually as projections upon other people or as an obsession with undifferentiated feelings and emotions.

Astrology goes further and divides the four elements (or types) into three 'qualities' or 'quadruplicities' - Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable. Key words linked with these further divisions are generative, concentrative and distributive. For example, a person with a majority of planets in the Cardinal signs (Aries, Libra, Capricorn or Cancer) would tend to be an energetic, initiating, driving, purposeful type.

Astrology makes yet another division into the positive and negative symbols, indicating the outflow and influx of energy respectively. The whole system

is in fact based on the tension and balance of polarity - positive and negative, male and female, day and night, Yin and Yang. The tensions between opposing functions are the source of life and of movement. Not only must they be correctly balanced, but the individual must be aware of what the opposing functions are. The contents of the unconscious are the balancing, autonomous factors that counter the contents of the conscious ego.

And now we are delving into the contents of the personal unconscious where depth psychology has placed the Shadow. Again the Shadow figure can usually only be detected through its projected contents, often onto a person of the same sex of the subject under consideration. The birth chart symbolism associated with the Shadow is the planet Saturn. Its position in a chart in relation to the rest of the chart can show the area where personal lessons have to be learnt and where deep seated fears may lie. Our Shadow is all that we deny ourselves to be, but unfortunately or not there is a position for Saturn in everyone's chart!

Delving further into the unconscious, we reach the portals of the collective layer where the anima in man or animus in woman is the link between the collective and personal aspects of the unconscious. Here again there lies the tension of polarity between the man and the woman that lies within him or between the woman and the man that lie within her.

The link with astrological symbolism is complex, but definite. In a man's chart symbols of the Moon and Venus represent the personal aspect of his anima - those contents of the anima coloured by his own, personal experience, while Neptune and Pluto represent the collective aspect of his anima - that aspect whose content is coloured by the experience of Man as a whole. Conversely, in a woman's birth chart, the symbolism of the Sun and Mars represent the personal aspect of her animus, while Jupiter and Uranus represent the collective aspect.

Saturn and Mercury are neither associated with masculine nor feminine qualities, but are androgynous in nature and rather than being associated with animus or anima are, in this area, symbols of the drive towards integration, and indeed the means by which it can be achieved. The symbolism associated with Saturn is dark and foreboding - its purpose is to bring forth light whose seed is contained within that darkness.

## **Method**

However, not only can the language of depth psychology and the Growth Movement be used to achieve understanding, but its techniques are valid also.

For example, guided imagery and the use of active imagination (long since used in esoteric circles as keys to the numinous world of the spirit or essence of man) can be adopted so that an astrologer's client can actually make use of his or her chart after the initial interpretation. The chart in other words can be used as a guide or map for inner exploration - remember that the birth chart is itself circular, a mandala, or symbol of wholeness and

if its patterns are followed it leads towards completeness and the wholeness of the individual who relates to it. The way that the birth chart may be used is to mirror *all* aspects of the individual who projects the contents of his or her unconscious onto the archetypal symbols in the chart. All the astrologer does is interpret the symbols of the archetypes into a common language, the individual concerned then has to translate the translation into a language that is meaningful for him or her - has to clothe the symbols with personal content.

I use a method whereby each planetary symbol or sign of the zodiac is linked with a specific image depicted in each of the twenty-two major arcana cards of the Tarot (for example the Moon may be personified as the archetype of the High Priestess). After finding his or her inner guide, the client can be guided into an introduction with any of these symbolic images. For example, if it is desired to work on the Shadow figure represented by Saturn, the client can be introduced to his own visualization of the equivalent Tarot image. In this case it is the World in the system that I use. The client chart can be used to mirror any other associated and possibly conflicting planetary energies, so that these may also be introduced into the guided imagery. The client then observes how the conflicting energies act upon one another and tries to discover what he needs to do in his every-day life in order to resolve the conflict. Using the chart as a focal point and as a ready-made structure for exploration of the unconscious, the process can be as comprehensive as desired. The beauty of the technique is that most clients can conduct the process on their own after the initial sessions in which they make contact with the all important inner-guide, Wise Man, symbol of the higher self. Taken to its logical conclusion, the birth chart itself becomes unnecessary and irrelevant, as the client, if aided properly, is discovering for himself the relationship between the astrological symbols as they actually exist within himself. . . .

Perhaps what astrology has to offer the Growth Movement is a tool which many people will find easy to work with as a starting point. It would indeed be useful (as Jung himself found) for a therapist to know the basic natal chart details of his client and be able to give a rough interpretation for his own use. The chart can be used (as is its purpose) as a reflector between client and therapist, a mirror in which can be seen in symbolic form the possibility for growth and the wholeness of the individual. The chart not only mirrors the conscious aspects of a person, but his unconscious too and as the language of the chart is expressed in symbols it can be understood not only by the intellect, but can be intuitively known, felt or even sensed. The language of astrological symbolism is therefore accessible to all and is a potent tool, especially for those who have already studied aspects of depth psychology and know of the manifestations of the unconscious through dream symbolism, know of projection, archetypes, the polarity and tensions of energy flow and the handling and dispersal of complexes. These are all the concern of the humanistic astrologer too.

Another valuable source of information lies in the links that astrology makes between its archetypal symbols and parts of the anatomy or with physiological processes. It is known that certain symbols obtained in an analysis of the

unconscious can point directly to physiological anomalies in the part of the human anatomy associated with that symbol - an obvious possibility if we accept the close link between mind and matter. Astrologically, the energy of each sign or planetary symbol is linked with a particular part of the body or with one of its processes. A study of these links reveals much valuable information especially where blocked psychic energy is being channeled to cause anomalies or illness in the body itself.

Another area of possible investigation pertains to energy channels in and around the body which often become blocked as the result of psychological experience and which can be released through the employment of certain well-documented and tried techniques. However, the use of personal symbols can be a help in leading straight to the area of these blocks and again astrological symbolism has developed a correspondence with particular energy/centres and modes or levels of operation - the chakra system.

Now finally here is a sort of introductory outline to an astrological approach - I hope it stimulates further investigation from those interested in learning about the symbols that we *do* use - whether we should or not!

The human psyche experiences four basic functions: 1. the urge to be an individual, and to form an ego, 2. the urge to maintain the form and quality of the ego that is developed, 3. the urge to reproduce the quality of the ego and 4. the urge to evolve and undergo transformation with some purpose. There is a pair of planetary symbols associated with each of these basic functions. Associates with (1) are the Moon and Saturn, with (2) Jupiter and Mercury, with (3) Venus and Mars and with (4) there are three sets of planetary pairs, each with a particular function, namely Uranus and Mars, Neptune and Jupiter and also Pluto and Saturn.

For example, if we wish to examine any of the basic functions with an individual we can study the relationship and processes operating between the relevant two symbols - however the individual may represent these two symbols - and any method of analysis may be used from creative expression and word association tests to guided imagery.

Mythology, legend and fairy tales and other fields can help in the interpretation of archetypal symbols - and can help an individual to live out his own symbols or myth, the myth of our time.

