

CHAPTER 5

Evolution and Personal Choice

Manifestly, the sequence of degree symbols can be seen as a sequence of phases of self-building. They are like the notes of an as yet unwritten human symphony. The majority of people live fragmented and comparatively unfulfilled lives, making use of only a tiny part of their potential selves. Zodiac degree symbolism, in forming collective pictures, can suggest the nature of potential *dharma*, and pinpoint the chance of new growth for the individual.

Because one's exact birth time is rarely known accurately it is no use being too dogmatic about the selection of a symbol in relation to the ascendant degree and its angular relationships when interpreting a birth chart. The significance of each symbol — of each degree — is released the moment it begins, and there is no hangover period. But this is no real problem; intuition will often indicate the appropriate degree from any set of five. But because the symbols arise from and refer to the essence of *collective* awareness, they can in any case most confidently be applied to the Sun sign, and the slow-moving "collective" outer planets.

The framework of the inner self, as we have seen, is formed of collective rather than personal elements, though actual soul contents are personal to each individual. In this sense all are one, for "soul contents" are not permanent acquisitions; they are mutable. The collective realm must be the chief source of clues to individual development, to rebirth in the spiritual sense.

Every part of the non-polar Earth is bathed in the Sun's light over its whole surface about 365 times a year, and yet there are only 360 degrees with which to record the fact, and apparently only 360 basic human "types" according to the degree symbols. A further spiritual dimension to a degree is hinted at by the fact that, when the average number of days in the year — 365.2 — is divided by 360 it leaves a remainder of 0.014. This is said to be the cabbalistic "mysterious fourteen" latent within every day and every degree — the factor by which we are said to be able to grow culturally and evolve spiritually each year; our coming to the puberty of creative awareness. Nothing in the planetary sense is fixed and static, and the factor of fourteen can symbolize the difference between rigidity and flexibility.

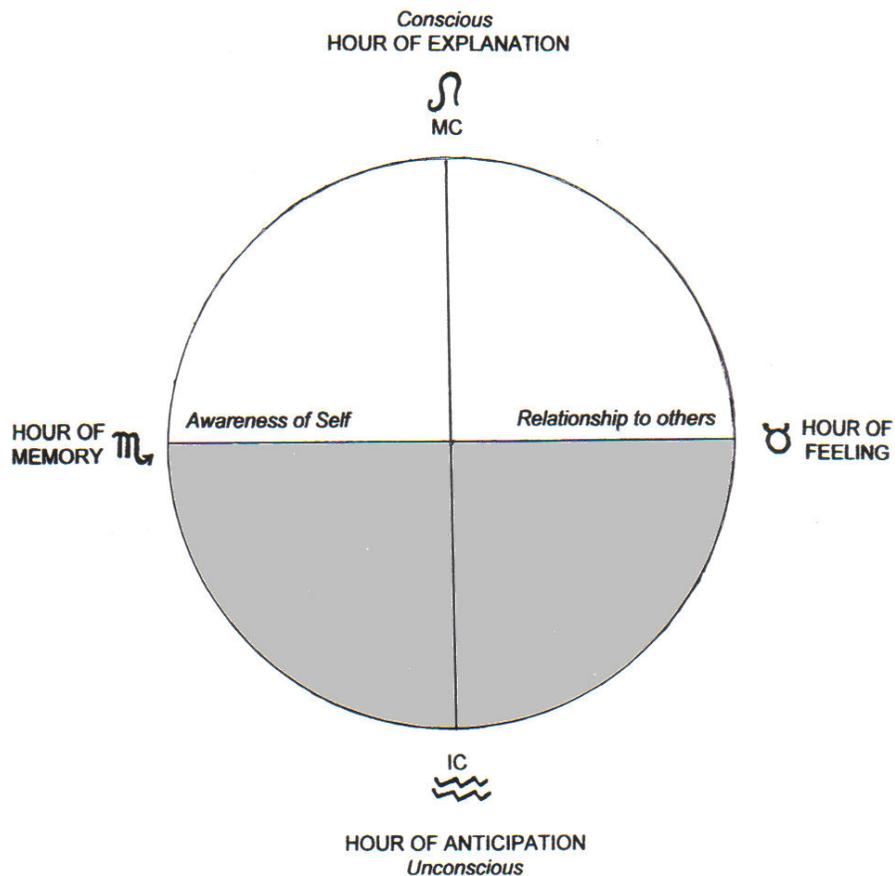
In our context the mysterious fourteen may be taken to represent the difference between form and spirit, between unreasoning adherence to arbitrary law, and the freedom of wisdom. Without this inbuilt room for development it would not be possible for us to progress beyond spiritual ignorance and the bondage of fate. Symbolically, it allows for evolution, for change, for free will, leading eventually to submission to the divine will. It is a symbol of hope that human spiritual aspiration will not go unrewarded. In both the individual and the collective spheres, the potentiality exists for us to escape the influence of the zodiac, through a gradual but steady process of psychic maturity and spiritual growth.

Early Christians noted the fourteen year span of development on a grander scale: the Jewish people took their ancestral descent very seriously, and St Matthew's Gospel records that there were fourteen generations from Abraham to King David, fourteen generations from David to the period of exile in Babylon, and fourteen generations from Babylon to the coming of Christ. A sequence, that is, of fourteen from the original instinctive awareness of spirituality, as yet uncivilized, to the state of stability symbolized by the Judean dynasty; a sequence of fourteen to the loss of freedom and the fate of religious superstition; a sequence of fourteen from this captivity to the possibility of wisdom and spiritual renewal.

Axial rotation of the Earth, as registered by the ascendant degree of the birth chart, certainly represents a process of self development, of increasing awareness, and this process requires a measure of introspection, a looking-inwards in the old, self-centred way. But the

greater orbital movement of the Earth implies a shift in the centre of self and a movement towards the purifying realm of the collective unconscious. We know that the birth chart horizon represents the division, not only between day and night, but also between conscious and unconscious, between objective and subjective. Meridian, on the other hand, could be said to represent the pendulum of karma; in separating sunrise from sunset it divides cause and effect, giving out and taking in, power and submission.

This is the traditional geocentric view. But the heliocentric view is best taken, for a while at least, when the inner self is under consideration. Symbolically, in this case, the Sun is always standing, as it were, at mid-heaven, surrounded by the multiple whirling components of the potentially integrated life-principle which it represents. If anything symbolized within astrology could be said to be imposed upon the individual at birth, it is surely the collective character focused through the zodiac degree of the Sun sign. This never-setting Sun of the collective inner self may be visualized as standing permanently at the objective zenith of the birth chart meridian.



A Character Sketch

When seen in this way, as a simplified alternative to the standard method of erecting a chart, the appropriate degree and its three angular correspondents can be used to produce a meaningful character sketch at a deep level — at that level of character, shall we say, that exists at birth before the childhood development of the conventional personality, before the sophisticated complications of logical thinking, emotional feeling and physical experience have played their part.

The diagram should be seen as a continuous cycle, a constantly interacting stream of influences stemming from and working upon each other, symbolized entirely by the word pictures associated with the relevant degrees. The Sun degree represents the cardinal point of potential *libido*, the uninhibited goal of all striving within the collective zone of human spirituality. The polarity of this Sun degree will then represent the subjective side of the soul-personality, a potentially modifying, cooling influence which operates beneath the threshold of awareness. This subjective degree representing the developing personal unconscious has the effect of balancing the whole evolving personality. It could be identified with Jung's *shadow*, a collection of unrealized urges gradually assembled from unconsciously creative sources. The growth of the shadow along with the developing personality depends largely upon environment and opportunity. Open to the soul but closed to the mind, the shadow is neither good nor bad. Though certainly no more "spiritual" than other aspects of the self, it often seems to have a religious flavour, because its later recognition and conscious acceptance as part of the whole self is a necessary precondition for spiritual development.

Now, in this simplified diagram of the undeveloped self, the ascendant at 90° on from the objectivity of the Sun degree, may be said to relate to the developing ego in the commonly accepted sense of the word. At the point of balance between objectivity and subjectivity, it expresses the individual potential sense of selfhood, the way in which he or she is destined habitually to view the outside world. In taking the place of the birth chart ascendant degree, it represents the newborn infant starting out in life, the birth of *calculated* will.

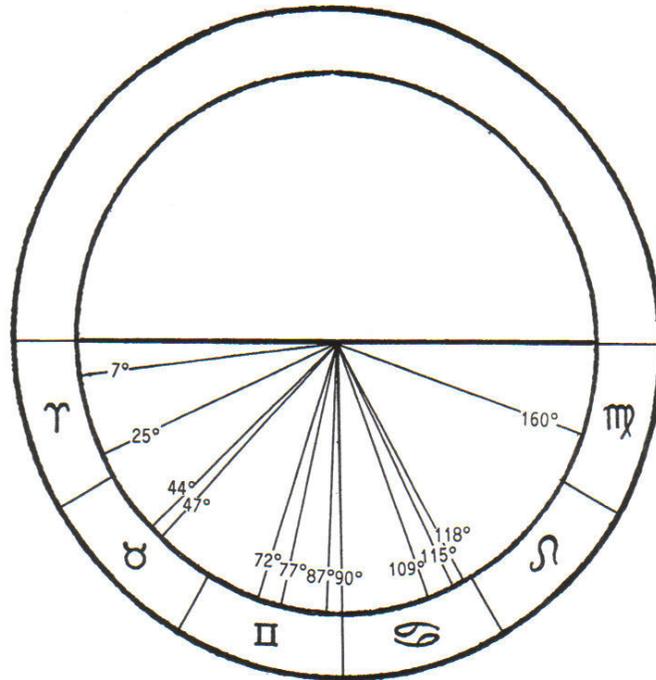
The degree directly opposed to this "soul ascendant" now relates to *submissive relationships*, a cryptic side to the character of a new soul as yet uninfluenced by the surrounding world. Its associate word picture suggests the potentially developing nature of a "spiritual personality", as a culmination of the other three principles present at birth. Each cardinal point within this personal but collective mandala, as in the birth chart proper, registers a culmination or product of its associate degrees working in a continuous cycle. They indicate how powerful is the part being played by the inner feelings in determining how the subject will experience physical life on Earth. As there is no real beginning or ending to a circle, it indicates too how the self at the deep level of soul has already been formed and is full of content, even at the moment of birth.

Character analysis

Having ascertained these "psychic angles", the degree symbols may be applied to provide a character analysis expressive of the "soul nature". Let me take as an example, and with his permission, my friend David Oliver, a fellow astrologer and spiritual seeker whose interesting birth chart is analyzed in Chapter 7. At his birth the Sun registered the final degree of Gemini. Using this system, his objective degree will be 90°, the corresponding subjective degree will be 270°. On the horizon the degree representing his ascendant will be 180°, with 360° representing his descendant.

A few zodiac degree symbols seem to include the quality of duality within their significance, and 90° is one of these. Other examples are: 7°, 25°, 44°, 47°, 72°, 77°, 87°, 109°, 115°, 118°, and 160°. When set against the dial of mundane houses — that is, the chart of the soul — these twelve degrees will be seen to be limited to the lower half of the chart, normally relating to "selfhood", the subjective areas of intuition and feeling. Individuals in whose birth chart one or more of these dual degrees feature strongly seem to be more aware than most of their own underlying nature, do not care to be made to conceal it for whatever social reasons, and

when forced to do so may react oddly. We have already borrowed Jung's terms to describe the psychic angles; to borrow another of his terms, we can say that these symbols hint at the nature of an "introverted feeling" type, or equally, an "introverted intuitive" type. They may refer to what Jung described as the "schizoid" personality.



The Split or "Schizoid" Degrees

The symbol for 90° is: *A beauty contest is being held on the beach.* The dual quality of this symbol can readily be seen: the essence of a beauty contest is to segregate the sexes — or, at least, the comely from the homely — and then to allow the one division to judge the other. Not only that; the section about to be judged, in the manner of beauty contestants, is going to be equally critical in judging itself. There is continual opposition between judging, and being judged. This is typical of a split or "schizoid" degree.

This individual is bound to be sensitive about what people think of him. He plays a dual role: when he feels himself to be under judgment he will be very conscientious, and painfully honest about his shortcomings; and when acting as judge himself he may be fiercely critical of others, though usually tactful enough to keep his opinions to himself. But even though he may not always be willing to acknowledge the fact, he is always able to see the opposing point of view.

The symbolic beauty contest is taking place on the beach, and therefore an impromptu affair rather than a well-established event. This suggests that the subject is not particularly well organized himself. There is nothing to prevent him slipping away on his own, ignoring both the judges and the contestants. It seems he is unlikely to take himself too seriously, despite the sincerity of his feelings.

Elements of both male and female are present within everybody. In this case the individual's "masculine" thoughts — judgment — will be pertinent and openly available, though not necessarily freely expressed. His "feminine" feelings — submission to judgment — are likely to remain concealed. The deeper these feelings run, the more guardedly will they remain hidden.

The eastern or "soul-ego" degree will be 180°: *Dull routine is broken by an emergency call*. This seems to imply that the most personally pressing events in this soul-life are liable to occur suddenly. For long periods he may plod quietly along a routinely dull path; then, suddenly and apparently on a whim, routine will be shattered. Everything — career, social round, personal habits — will seem to change at once, and the whole course of his life may veer into entirely new directions. Once apprehended, his soul-life will seem to progress in a series of intuitive flashes rather than a gradually unfolding process of revelation. Because the Sun degree is split into opposing principles, these unpredictable surges of energy built into the driving force of the psyche may be all the more baffling. To his friends, Oliver is bound to appear temperamental; he will seem peacefully stable for months on end, but they know from experience that an eruption may occur at any time.

Next let us consider the western or descendant symbol of 360°. This occurs as a culmination of the span of reassurance, and completes the zodiac cycle: *A giant face has been carved into the side of a mountain*. This symbol represents all the hopes of mankind; the creation of solid sculpture from mere plans, and real values from vague fantasies. But as a "giving out" point, as a *persona* of the soul, this solidity is not substantial in real life. Oliver may like people to believe that his achievements are wholly complete; this is the impression which he projects. But, counterbalanced by the other three points, the face and the mountain are both illusory. Oliver is not materialistically solid. Neither his achievements nor his shortcomings are of a tangible, historically solid type. The make-up of his soul ensures that, for him, creation is an ongoing and multi-directional process. His life's work will never be truly complete on this Earth, and despite any protestations to the contrary, he would have it no other way. The sum of his knowledge, and the sum of what he is prepared to tell, are not at all the same thing!

While the Sun degree registers a culmination of the span of striving, its polarity, the subjective degree of "soul-shadow", falls at the end of the span of freedom, 270°: *The pope is holding audience in the Vatican*. Every action or impulse that arises from this deep area of the soul, all his instinctive actions, good or bad, will have the flavour of religious approval. The conviction will be implicit that, once an impulse has arisen, like some *ex cathedra* doctrine of infallibility, it will be unimpeachably correct.

It is foregone that Oliver's sense of privacy will be strong, and his own feelings will certainly be kept well hidden. He will devise special methods of communication involving little routines that he expects others to respect. Like a real churchman, he may be alarmingly outspoken at times in condemning something that he feels to be wrong, but surprisingly broad-minded and forgiving over other occurrences that would shock the average person. He is certainly a person of conscience, but he will always remain aloof from the common herd. He gave permission for his birth chart to be analyzed for this book, but I know he would prefer to remain a man of mystery.

All this, as a sketch of soul quality, has been surmised from the Sun sign alone. A horoscope cast in the traditional way, provided the time of birth is known, adds a purely personal element to the analysis. See Chapter 7 for David Oliver's chart. His birth took place during the first hour of ascending Scorpio — the span of memory, or recollection. According to this ascendant of the personality, he is a man who tends to live in the past; you might say that he broods. You will see that this tendency is modified by the subjective element now registered by the IC, the *imūm coeli*, in the hour of anticipation. This is the source of the need to analyze and look for the deepest meanings. The personal unconscious in his case will probably not be entirely unconscious, anticipating absorption into the collective unconscious itself. His objective

southern point will be represented by the MC, or *medium coeli*, the true midheaven at the time of birth. This is in the hour of explanation; his aim will be set on interpretation, on searching, on finding out the whys and wherefores, and digesting that information.

Finally, on the descendant on the western extreme, we find that the cryptic element of submission corresponds with the hour of feeling. The implication is that his relationships, both with others whom he respects, and with the spiritual principle — with the Holy Spirit itself — will be of an emotional rather than an intellectual nature. Both collectively and personally, the "feeling" side of his character will be to the fore during all encounters and confrontations.

A point of decision

But let us return to the simple and seemingly non-specific — though in the inner sense actually more precise — collective chart based solely on the Sun's degree. As already mentioned, each hour or 15° span can be seen as a connecting stairway with three steps. At this point, perhaps, the distinction between inner and outer, between materiality and spirituality, will become clearer. Astrology applied to the inner self suggests that a psychological reversal of the standard evolutionary process is required if there is to be a meeting between mind and soul: to recover *dhyana*, the natural human instinct lost in babyhood, eventually perhaps to discover our own true law of living, our own *dharma*. It is the symbolic descent of this stairway, step by step, from the intellect through the emotions to regain and surmount the underlying instincts, that will actually prove to be an ascent to the source.

Natural evolution, shall we say, follows the sequence of the zodiac from 1° in Aires to 360° in Pisces. The first five degrees of the zodiac — stepping up or down, whichever way you choose to visualize it — represents the instinctive function, the second five degrees the emotional function, the third five degrees the intellectual function. This, we can assume, is the normal course of evolution from beast to human, from child to adult. To reverse the process, to climb back — again up or down in the imagination — entails quietening the mind and heart, symbolically tackling the first and second steps to reach the instinctual level of the first step. To become again like a little child is to reverse the evolutionary tendency towards strengthening materiality; to overrule the insistence of the intellect, and follow the emotional appeal of a search to recapture that original human instinct. The need for symbols will be left behind when the soul has finally regained that childlike state of receptivity. It will be open to receive the *dhyana* that motivates a newborn baby, the freely expressed movement of the wide-awake soul.

One's objective in life is normally a matter for the will, the application of heart and mind, non-instinctive and therefore forward-moving, evolutionary; but if that objective constitutes a *return* to the source, subordinating the conscious will through submission to the truly human instinctive function, then the sequence of that stairway, through the rest of that individual life, really will run backwards from the daily pursuit of worldly advancement, by way of the feelings, to regain those long-lost guiding instincts now intellectualized, perhaps as "intuition". As the universal becomes individual, so the individual becomes universal. In this case the individual' differentiation between "materiality" and "spirituality" is very evident.

If we follow three sets of five-degree steps forward from David Oliver's objective point of 90°, in the usual way according to the flow of evolution, we find symbols that seem to imply a wilful hardening and honing of the personality, leading towards a materialistic and, perhaps, an intemperate goal:

95° *A car driver races a train to the crossing*; a recklessly headlong dash through life pursuing questionable goals.

100° *A magnificent diamond is being cut to shape*; increasing sophistication, and an excessive appreciation of material values.

105° *Sated revellers rest after a banquet*; voracious self-seeking.

Interpretation cannot be made out of context, of course. If either a forward or a backward sequence is continued indefinitely, they will both arrive back at 90°; they are in reality the *same set* of symbols, the same individual staircase. But a reverse sequence, interpreted in the present context, seems to suggest a lighter, more "spiritual" nature, with an air of painless reformation:

85° *A gardener lovingly prunes his flowering shrubs*; one's train of thought and one's intention can be guided by discipline, without any hint of asceticism.

80° *A buffet luncheon with a lavish variety of food*; the inner feelings are freely available and richly varied.

75° *In a schoolroom, two children study together*; this suggests that the initial split is healed. A dual nature may represent outer and inner working together. Soul-life and personality are now in harmony, symbolizing the re-creation of a whole person.

At the peak of the human level, regained, there is no need for symbolism. But in the meantime the zodiac degree symbols offer an insight into the distinction between the qualities of ascending and descending. The "progressed point of self" traversing the zodiac should give significant results for most people, no matter which system has been used to ascertain it. Juggling with numbers can also give meaningful results, if the aim is known and sincerely expressed, for these results are intuitively gained.

Attempts have been made in the past to equate the wilful climb into occult realms with the apocalyptic number of the beast, 666. If we divide 360° by 666 we arrive at 0.54 (and 360 divided by 54 equals 6.66 recurring), and 54 can be taken as a constant, using sets of three degree symbols each separated by 54°. The degree on the point of self is taken to represent the present, with 54° on either side as a possible way forward. One could take the 84-year cycle, setting 1° at the birth date and multiplying the subject's age by a factor of 4.28 to find the progressed point of self (360 divided by 84 equals 4.28, or one year equals 4°16').

Let us take the case of Sarah Davis, born in the early morning of April 11, 1953 (Aries 21°). At the age of twenty-eight she told me that she felt she had reached a crossroads in her life. Within the threefold cycle she had certainly reached a crucial point, depending on her attitude of acceptance or rejection. $28 \times 4.28 = 119.84 + 21 = 140.84$ (141°). Suppose we set this degree on the nadir of the world mandala — the crucial point at which a decision has to be made: both ways are "up", so in which direction to climb?

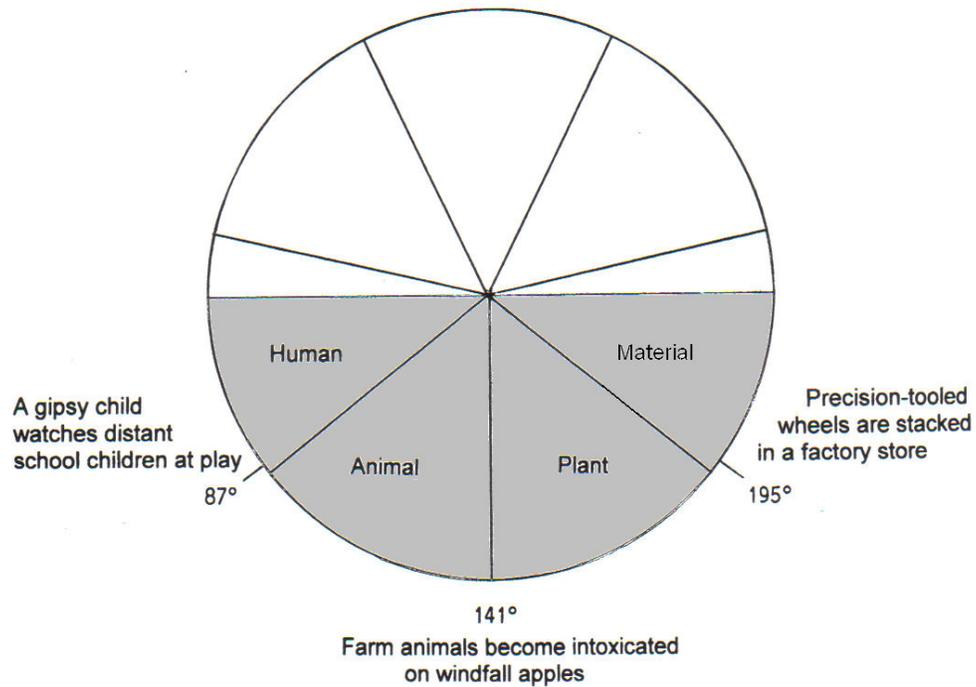
141° has: *Farm animals become intoxicated on windfall apples*. This represents her current situation. 54° ahead at 195° has the symbol: *Precision-tooled wheels are stacked in a factory store*. And 54° back at 87° will have: *A gipsy child watches distant school children at play*.

At first sight, these three symbols may seem to have little in common, until we reflect on the nature of the life forces that form the zodiacal influence. The material influence is very clearly indicated under 195°, with precision-tooled wheels in a factory store. To symbolize Sarah's quandary there is a touch of natural comedy in the word-picture for 141°, with farm animals eating fermenting apples. The animal forces do not seem to be behaving in a typical manner; they seem adversely affected by the plant forces that should be beneath them.

Fermentation, of course, is a natural biological process that occurs when plant material is being broken down, and the micro-organisms responsible are quite possibly animal by nature. Drinking alcohol is a quick and effective way of imbibing the essence of plant forces and their associated passions! The symbol *could* indicate the end of the plant cycle — the decomposition of vegetation. The animals have the upper hand by helping the process along. On a personal scale,

the animal influence with its robust desires *could* be in the process of replacing plant-arrogance as a personal centre of gravity.

Taken as a rising triad, the sequence seems to leave behind both material and vegetable influence, moving in essence to the animal realm. To say that a human is *rising* into the animal sphere of influence may seem ridiculous; we are all above the beasts. But we have already seen how the majority of people are centred low among the heavy forces of materiality. Few indeed are they who normally live even in the spiritual heights of the dumb animals!



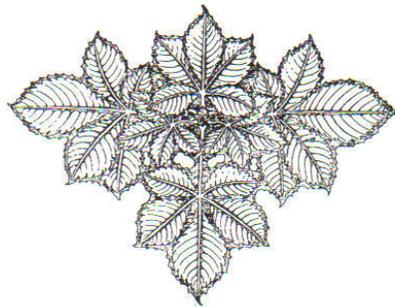
The Crossroads — a Choice of Directions

For the possible future, or the *actual* past, under 87°, *A gipsy child watches distant school children at play*, the triad is completed with a most propitious omen: the subject seems destined to become human! It is interesting to extend the sequence on the diagram and discover that the equivalent of the ascendant (51°) has the spiritually submissive symbol: *A mysterious finger underlines passages in a book*, and the equivalent of the descendant at 231° is: *A young soldier goes absent to visit his wife* — truly a case of wilfully defiant passion!

To retrace the three symbols in the natural sequence of the zodiac, and the automatic direction inherited by mankind, is to follow the way of all flesh. In early childhood each individual was truly human, like the gipsy child wistfully watching the more "advanced" — that is, the more deeply entrenched in materiality and thus more privileged — older children.

Now, in the symbolic present, the notion of intoxicated animals may seem to carry a sinister overtone. The plant forces are again in charge, bringing the animals completely under their spell. The symbolic future now contains nothing but materiality — spiritually barren, perhaps, but full of culture, cleverness, skill and luxury.

So in this life there is no reversal of the course of evolution, of the great descent; not by willing it. It is time to look to the symbolic centrepiece of the birth chart — to that central point common to all. The strength of will can carry the seeker only as far as this: to find a contact with higher influences, with spirit; a contact that will initiate an unwilled inner climb back up the staircase of life.



CHAPTER 6

The planets as symbols

The planets are extraordinarily convenient symbols of synchronicity. They relate in regular measurable terms to their own central point of reference, the Sun, to their background, the zodiac, and equally they can be taken to relate to any place and any time on Earth — in our case, to the points of reference which make up the personal mandala of the birth chart. From this viewpoint the revolutions of these celestial bodies represent the sum of a constantly changing pattern of a larger environment, which may readily be compared with the ever-altering sequences of events upon the Earth and within ourselves. They are yet another readily observable macrocosm relating to our microcosm, the impersonal many representing the personal one.

Taken alone, a symbol can have no meaning apart from itself, and the planets too can have no actual significance apart from their own material presence. When employed as symbols of life, however, they allow the cosmic existence of humankind to be studied as though it were the central feature of a coherent pattern. To the caveman, perhaps, these moving specks of light amongst fixed stars seemed full of life and meaning. And as intelligence developed, the ever-moving planetary system must have seemed a vast timekeeper with which they could measure human life and the earthly seasons, a reassuring hint of order surrounding, if not governing, a puzzlingly erratic world.

In synchronistic terms it was true in the Stone Age, and it is still true today: the many separate parts of cosmic interaction can be taken to represent the whole. Whatever the interests or motives of the seeker, the planetary pattern is something that can be identified as reliably precise, and consulted as a yardstick. But multiple whirling parts, as the wheels of a clock, can have time-keeping significance only when some kind of measuring device, as the hands of a clock, can be inserted, and the reading of that clock is seen to refer to a particular point in time, perhaps to record some special event. In astrology, this event is usually the point of birth as plotted on the birth chart. Measurements, however familiar, are fairly meaningless unless we have something that can be measured, and we understand the function of that "something". Astrology, too, can have no meaning without prior knowledge of the idea to be measured, the individual or the event which has come into being at that point in time and space.

The solar system is whole and complete in itself, and any such manifestation of wholeness outside of humanity can equally be used to symbolize our own inner state, to be understood as a kind of intuitive revelation. The unwilling use of symbols happens often in dreams. The precept "seek and ye shall find" meets reality through the functioning of the collective soul, the pool of combined intuitive wisdom available to humankind. This really sums up the value of symbols as life-guides. Instinctive understanding readily becomes adulterated by individual passions, personal hopes and fears. Symbols are not the same as reality; they express reality only when that reality is not currently available, and there is no doubt that passionate misuse of symbols has led to innumerable superstitions and unpleasantnesses with which individuals and whole cultures and religions have encumbered themselves in the past, and continue to do so.

Symbols work best for those who believe in them, who have faith that they will work. They can pilot the way to self-renewal, even to salvation, but they should be taken in moderation; the middle course is best. Half-hearted symbols are little more than a superstitious nuisance. At the other extreme, when taken as external reality, as supernatural forces of influence that compel, they can bring about all the woes that bigotry implies. At the risk of labouring the point, to believe that a symbol constitutes an external force is to court disintegration of the self. It is one of the symptoms of failure to evolve beyond the first cycle of houses — a clinging to ancestral beliefs. Extremes of fanaticism can arise when an abstract symbol is mistaken for material reality, as

when people become convinced that their religion commands them to harm or kill others who seem to deny the symbol with which they have become identified.

Ripples in the pool of life

Astrologers take the Sun to represent the urge to wholeness in every sphere of life, not merely the spiritual aspirations of humanity. Having given life to the individual, and having, by means of the axial rotation of the Earth, presided over the very structure of our being, our horizons, the Sun comes to symbolize our own potential spiritual centre — a reflection of the potentiality of the Holy Spirit which brings all beings to the point of creative wholeness. As vitalizing power from the Sun distributes itself over the Earth, noonpoint is given special significance on the birth chart as the symbolic point at which all individuals may find their fullest, closest contact with that sustaining life force.

As recorded on the birth chart, the planets may be said to create points of activity on the equilibrium of that chart, or that life. They represent a disturbance in the pond, the ups and downs of fate. Those planets nearest to the Sun can be said to have significance for the human soul, but as they represent the outer qualities of thinking and feeling, during the quest for evidence of soul these inner planets must lose their symbolic power. Once the passions engendered by thoughts and emotions have been stilled, and a quiet sense of receptivity has been established in their stead, the symbolic significance of these fast-moving planets will vanish. Only then can the process of expansion begin.

Bounded by time in the guise of the Grim Reaper, Saturn, the innermost planets — Jupiter, Mars, Earth itself with its Moon, Venus and Mercury — can represent only those possibilities within us that are also bounded by time. We need to look outward towards the collective realm symbolized by Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Jupiter can symbolize the pointer to show us the way. The ancient gods who shared their names with these planets represented the human functions, aspirations and limitations which the planets themselves now symbolize. The highest aspiration of a person ruled by Zeus, or Jupiter, was a place in the abode of gods — also controlled by Saturn, by the restriction of time. Greater possibilities by far lie beyond the bounds of time and through the symbolic sea of collective human feelings, to a greater destiny somewhere beyond the zodiac.

It is only when the functions expressed by the inner planets are actually stilled, when the heart and mind are allowed to subside in relaxation, that higher influences can be received. Such a non-feeling, non-thinking state sounds like sleep, or torpor, or hypnotic trance, or even death. But both Venus and Mercury are still in orbit — within and subservient to Earth's own bodily orbit around the Sun; they are now silent spectators. We do not want to lose their symbolic qualities, to lose consciousness; on the contrary! Our aim is the greatly enhanced awareness that voluntary freedom from these normal human functions can bring, whilst fully conscious and aware. The everyday functions of thinking and feeling should be subordinate to the truly conscious self.

This is why, in our astrology of the inner self, the fast-moving planets within the Earth's orbit may seem to be paid scant attention, the Moon still less. They must remain subservient to the whole Earth-being. Mercury, nimble messenger of the gods, is the symbol of thoughts — the highest function of evolution, that is, nearest the Sun; Venus, brilliant goddess of love, symbol of the emotional feelings, and the second highest function of evolution; the Moon, wholly subordinate to Earth but essential to its well-being, influencing the flow of earthly and bodily fluids; all these represent progress on a *downward* spiral. They are part and parcel of the outer personality in symbolic terms, and if they can be ignored when preparing one's own birth chart, this omission may assist in charting the presence and progress of the inner self, and in assessing the receptivity of soul to spirit.

In traditional astrology, the inner planets whose orbits are embraced or surrounded by the orbit of the Earth itself, are said to refer to "conscious" and personal factors, the outer ones to "unconscious" and collective ones. We are adhering mainly to the latter because any study of the

former will cover well-trodden ground, and we already know that territory well enough. The inner planets are normally used to symbolize the everyday personality, and within this term of reference their symbolism can work only on the individual level. They can have little significance for the collective life of humankind or, by that fact, for the life of the inner self.

Together with the Earth and the Moon, Venus and Mercury present a picture of the physical, emotional and mental being of the individual. The characteristics symbolized by Mercury, Venus, the Moon and even the Earth itself may now be seen as inferior to the truly human function; scarcely relevant, indeed, to human potentiality for spiritual expansion. When considering Mars, however, with its greater orbit, we can go beyond this strictly personal view of humankind. Mars "surrounds" the Earth symbolically with its aggressive male principle, its energy and its basic passions. Jupiter, greater still than Mars in size and orbit, in our cosmology can be taken to represent the human soul — the "ordinary lower soul" not to be mistaken for "spirit"; the soul which I have described as the receptacle of all influences, events, passions, thoughts, feelings and sensations. And Jupiter — the soul — is itself surrounded by the still greater orbit of Saturn.

Saturn, Kronos, Old Father Time, the Grim Reaper ; inevitably the rings around Saturn have been taken to symbolize the encircling limitations of time. Whereas space is unlimited, time is strictly limited. Time, in fact, is the universal limiting factor. And as the symbolic representative of time within our solar system, Saturn has traditionally been analogous with fate, the accumulation of karma.

Symbols of the collective unconscious

The outer planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, whose ancient traditions are in name only, being of comparatively recent discovery, symbolize for us the triad of the collective unconscious. Uranus, first of the three to be discovered, in astrological terms represents origination, the power of projection, and a channel for the unconscious mind to come to conscious awareness. Neptune, the next to be discovered, is said to record the assimilation, the storing, the breaking down and digesting, and the subsequent redistribution of that potent force. Pluto, the last to be discovered, represents for us the regenerative principle of that greater, that is, the collective, death and rebirth; a focus of collective power that normally remains on an unconscious level

Uranus is enormous compared with Earth and, though so far away, is just visible at times to the naked eye. In our language of symbolism, these periods of drawing closer to Earth may be synchronized with times when images from the collective unconscious can most readily reach our awareness. The Uranus revolution around the Sun takes eighty-four years, and in this equates to the Lifespan of the Patriarch — the life of collective humanity — a completion of the threefold cycle.

In its traditional interpretation, Uranus is said to express great nervous energy, heralding the arrival of what may be a creative genius or a violent crank. It always suggests an urge to be inwardly different, to climb out of the rut of conventionality and orthodoxy. In other words, Uranus may be a symbol of the eccentric. But there is more than one type of "individuality". A person may remain outwardly conventional within his or her society, whilst inwardly becoming utterly different; transformed. True spirituality, I assure you, has no need of fancy dress, and seldom appears in unconventional garb.

To astrologers of the inner self, Uranus represents Mars on a collective scale. Where Mars symbolizes the passions which surround the individual, Uranus symbolizes the "collective passions". In this sense, Uranus is the measure of symbols of the unconscious mind as they are sometimes brought to awareness through dreams. It represents the source both of the inspiration and of the vague idea — the "answer from the inner self" that comes when one is hard pressed, and when other possibilities have been surrendered. Such images are the seeds of new ideas, and may be of the greatest breakthrough value for the scientist, or the inspired crusade for social

reformers. Poets and artists also frequently have a favourable aspect with Uranus in their chart.

Neptune takes almost one hundred and sixty-five years to complete its orbit. As a symbol, this planet implies an extraordinary sensitivity to whatever lies deeply hidden within oneself — the seat of wholeness. Its synchronistic possibilities show themselves when great creative talents appear, and its aspects feature strongly at the birth of a sage or mystic, and later, when they come into contact with collective forces, with their spiritual awakening.

Because of this potency of its synchronistic qualities, Neptune seems sometimes to impel the subject of a birth chart to follow whatever lies within his inner feelings, and when this cannot happen for whatever reason, it will signal bouts of depression, or other strange and unpleasant reactions. For this reason it has often been thought by astrologers actually to cause odd behavioural traits; but strange behaviour symbolized by Neptune is rather like medicinal purging — it may be extremely unpleasant, both to those nearby and to the subject personally, but it has the effect of cleansing and purifying the inner self.

Neptune then seems to point the way to higher things, and appears to aspect most strongly in cases where spiritual love and compassion are able to fruit. It always represents a broadening of horizons. As a symbol of the collective soul it represents that greater than individual factor which prevents the earthly ego becoming too powerful or self-satisfied, which avoids narrow mindedness and over-pious limitations of perception.

Yes, Neptune is certainly a potent symbol of inner growth, of the soul that has become filled with divine inspiration. As a symbol too of the sea, it represents that great tide of inner feeling that is to be overcome by the spiritual seeker: the ocean to be swallowed or swum; the towering tidal wave in which to be washed unharmed. Neptune represents the force — the strength of the inner feelings — that lures the ordinary person into spiritual adventure; into seeking the highest of goals. To us, it has to represent Jupiter on a collective scale — the collective soul of humankind.

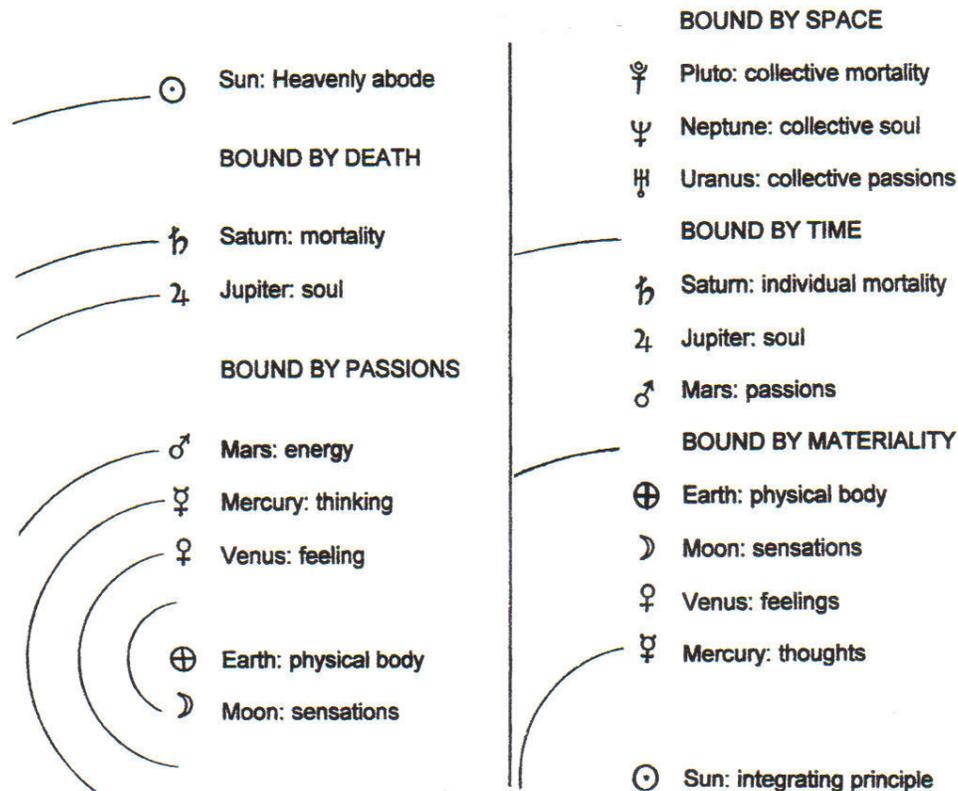
Because Pluto is so small and so far away, and because its orbit of the Sun is so erratic, sometimes cuttings across the path of Neptune, it may as well be called a comet as a planet, despite having its own satellite — Charon. Astronomers voted in 1999 as to how they should define Pluto, and decided that it should retain its planetary status. From our point of view Pluto will loiter for thirty-odd years in passing through some signs of the zodiac, and speed through others in little more than a dozen. It will take some two hundred and forty-eight years to complete a full orbit of the Sun, and at the time of writing we have seen less than a third of that orbit since its discovery in 1930. The year 1989 saw it passing relatively close to the Sun before again wending its laborious way through the outer reaches of the solar system.

There have been numerous suggestions as to the significance of Pluto as a symbol. It is said by most astrologers to represent the actual process of elimination or purification within the subconscious mind. It hints at the consequent revelation of previously hidden contents; it implies a change of attitude or function; and it has been said to symbolize a trigger-point for fanatical extremism, ethnic cleansing, gangsterism and mob rule.

But though of so collective a nature, the symbol of Pluto needs to be understood on a personal basis. Any stirring or partial opening of the normally sealed depths of the unconscious mind, on a public or "tribal" scale, can produce these dark outpourings. But the same change of perception that can provoke a mob to violence may prove a far more desirable feature in the individual, setting in motion a cleansing of the soul. There is no doubt in my mind that Pluto can symbolize the type of coming together that may result in spiritual rebirth. It is not the symbol of the lone fakir or the self-contained yogi. It refers to a coaxing open of the encrusted soul, to the loss of coarse impulses, and the receiving of finer and less selfish influences. It can well symbolize the collective process of inward growth for a group of like-minded souls.

Orbiting where the zodiac is thin, nearest the great unknown beyond our solar system, Pluto represents the cosmic transmitter — the mysterious stepping-off point. We can now say that it represents Saturn, but on a collective scale — lord, not of time, but of the zodiac itself, bounden only by space. Its aspects can plot the opening and entry into the inner self, its discovery and the mind's reaction to it. Having been awakened by Uranian dreams, baptized in the Neptunian sea, the collective rebirth is signalled by Pluto: the becoming again like a little child.

Old superstitions and new perceptions



A Geocentric and a Heliocentric View

For many centuries before the discovery of the outer planets, the human view of our cosmos was exclusively geocentric. With their evolving, downwards-developing souls, our ancestors were orientated towards the distant possibilities of material progress. By following the natural sequence of passions, they would feel drawn towards a destiny that seemed higher than that symbolized by the encircling Sun and Moon. These two attendant deities they would have seen as intimately concerned with the physical needs of nature and everyday life, playing the roles of hero and heroine in their daily and nightly routines and essential for earthly well-being, but not responsible for human destiny. The planetary gods of fate would have been seen as conducting their affairs in the space above and between these reassuringly familiar presences. Religious aspirations would have been slanted towards the cycle of time, and thus towards the distant ruler of all cycles — Saturn. The festival of the saturnalia, with all that it entailed, and with all its numerous worldwide variations, was always the most popular, the most obvious, the most directly inspired, the most instinctively motivated celebration in people's lives. Saturn seen as a living principle, was god-overseer and father of Zeus or Jupiter. Jupiter in his turn was god-judge of all souls, and undisputed king of all heavens within the boundaries of time.

To take the later, heliocentric view, the Sun draws the process of evolution down towards itself through its life-giving energy. Closest to the Sun, the god-messenger Mercury represents the mind and its powers of thought. The evening star Venus symbolizes the feelings — the emotions. The Moon symbolizes and, indeed, actually influences the bodily functions and the apparatus of sensation. But all these are bounded now by the passions, by the male principle of Mars pointing away from the Sun, away from the Earth, towards unknown realms beyond the time-bound limits of Saturn.

But Mars could equally well symbolize the channel by which we humans are made able to receive impulses higher than those belonging to the normal, everyday senses. All the planets with orbits greater than that of Earth could well be thought of as receptacles for those impulses. Astrology in relation to the inner self pays scant attention to the inner planets, not because their symbolism is false, or because we wish to appear superior, but because they represent only those factors that refer to the physical individual. Thoughts and feelings are essential for us all; we are simply looking for higher possibilities.

We have seen how the driving passions, symbolized by Mars, surround the physical vessel of Earth by its orbit. But the human soul, albeit the "lower soul" symbolized by Jupiter, encompasses these passions within its own orbit. The soul, Jupiter, the original Zeus, is indeed the halfway house, able to receive and contain simultaneously the base passions, feelings, thoughts, and such finer influences as may filter in from beyond Saturn, the symbol of mortality.

Saturn's orbit defines the limit of individuality. Death confines the personal human soul and its contents, as well as the body and the mind. But we know by experience that there is a channel through which outer influences may flow inwards. We have moved beyond mere symbolism now. When we speak of fate and the varied traits of human affairs, the planets certainly symbolize "influences". But having acknowledged this, we are not thereby denying the existence of more subtle, more real, more divine influences from beyond.

The passions of Mars can "become" the collective passions of Uranus. Uranus will then no longer seem the symbol of cranks and eccentric seers, as it does to many conventional astrologers, because it is indeed the "seat of images from the collective unconscious". Those strange and fantastic perceptions which have long been sensed as "mysterious" will take on wholly reasonable shape.

The personal soul of Jupiter can "become" the collective soul of Neptune and, by receiving the flow of collective contents, the heavier, lower base passions will be forced out of their hiding place. There are many people alive today who have experienced this, though they may have no use for symbols, and they may not speak of planets. Nevertheless in this symbol — the collective soul of Neptune — all people are linked.

This is the truth of it: the inner self includes and combines the personal and the collective selves. The physical body will still be bound by grim-faced Saturn, the symbol of death. But remember that the innermost planets symbolize what we perceive as physical realities: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Moon, Mars, all these are the solidly rock-based symbols of our physical being. Beyond Mars the visible planets, largely gaseous, must symbolize the non-physical, intangible aspects of humanity. Death, to the soul which has found its own higher purpose, will simply be death to the extent of Mars — the extinction of Earth-bound passions. The timekeeper Saturn's power over destiny will have been broken; Saturn in the inner perception will have "become" Pluto, symbolic keeper of the frontier to a greater world beyond the zodiac. In this role Pluto will be sure to feature strongly in the birth chart of one who has made contact with a life force greater than that usually known by earthly minds.

The blueprint of life

What does it mean, exactly, to say that a planet "features strongly" in a birth chart, or indeed that it "features" at all? Firstly, the very fact that it appears on the chart, within a certain degree of the zodiac, implies that it does indeed "feature", and can be used as a meaningful symbol. It features more strongly when the time of birth is known well enough to allow us to plot the mundane house, the psychological compartment of the self, in which the planet appears. It features more strongly still when by its position it forms a recognized aspect, or angular relationship, with other planets, with the ascendant, or with other significant points in the chart.

We already have a firm idea of the distinctive brand of cosmic energy traditionally associated with each planet, the type of psychic impulse which it symbolizes. We can refer also to the instinctive quality — the dreamlike quality understood by the inner feelings — ascribed to each degree of the zodiac in which a planet may make its appearance. We can see how the quality of a particular degree accentuates and colours and focuses the stream of cosmic energy symbolized by that planet; and we can apply those qualities, modified and blended, to the appropriate mundane house — to the area of psychological concern within which they will chiefly operate.

Even a "weakly" featuring planet will have formed at least one significant aspect in the birth chart, by virtue of its conjunction with the degree in which it appears. We can now see that it will accentuate the characteristics of that degree, the significance of the degree symbol, in its own unique way. Degree quality and planetary energy: a series of such points of emphasis can bring out the essential qualities of an individual in an imaginative way, a way that will stir and develop a refreshing capacity for intuitive appreciation.

If the time of birth is known accurately enough to permit the mundane houses to be plotted, remember to note the position of a planet with regard, not only to the house itself as an area of awareness or phase of the soul, but also in relation to its position within the house. Appearing close to the entry cusp of a house, the planet can be taken to signify a new awareness of the quality that is being symbolized. If it appears towards the end of a house, it will represent rather a fulfilment of the quality it expresses. The ascendant itself indicates the quality of uniqueness; and the relationship of the ascendant to the Sun and the planets symbolizes the type of psychic activity that best characterizes the individual who is seeking a closer liaison with, and a more intimate knowledge of, the greater self.

It is advisable, I think, to forget the old idea of interpreting planetary aspects as though they were fixed "influences". We need to consider them as synchronistic indicators of what is already there within the self, waiting to be uncovered. We need to read the personal mandala of the birth chart as the blueprint of a life, a plan of all its possibilities. The start of a new life is merely a phase in a progressive event, and not a once-for-all occurrence. By analyzing the blueprint, by pondering on the sequence of degree symbols, and by plotting the transits of the outer planets, the interpreter should be able to "see" the course of that life unfolding. The birth chart is like an architect's plan of a projected building. The better the builder understands his trade, the clearer will he be able to assess when each phase is due to be completed, and what the building should look like on completion.

It is useful to reconsider the concept of horizon and meridian on the birth chart in relation to the position of the planets at birth. It is desirable too not to forget the psychological functions symbolized as occupying the four quarters of the chart. In general terms, when all the planets are sited above the horizon, the subject is likely to seem most strongly affected by external, objective events. Conversely, when the planets are concentrated below the horizon, the subject is likely to have a subjective outlook on life. He or she will tend to be introverted, and emotionally rather than intellectually inclined. Such a person will seem, perhaps, less interested in facts than in ideas, inclined to follow the promptings of intuition rather than logic.

A bias of planetary grouping according to the sequence of the zodiac is often found to have significance too: when all slow-moving planets are placed within the first half of the zodiac, between Aries and Libra, the emphasis of the individual life will tend to be "spiritual"; where they are grouped in the latter half, between Libra and Aries, the subject's preoccupations will seem to be materially orientated. The odd one out — a planet that stands alone in one section of the chart opposing the majority — may serve to emphasize rather than detract from these points.

Planetary aspects

The interplay of planetary aspects fits into the blueprint of an unfolding life by indicating tendencies towards a particular end. It is misleading to consider them ends in themselves. In effect, any aspect is, potentially, part of a symmetrical polygon, and when that polygon shows itself as completed, perhaps through the subsequent transits of the planets, the symbol will be complete. We can expect the tendency it portrays to reach fulfilment during the period indicated.

Traditional astrology sometimes tends to polarize the implications of planetary aspects as either good or bad, and frequently they are thought of as influences, or impacts on a life, rather than indications or tendencies. But when using astrology to help gain some inkling of the inner self, it is best to forget about good or bad, fortunate or unfortunate. Ideas of this sort are best limited to the outer personality, to matters of the will; our system explores conditions that are not really subject to ethical choice.

From this point of view, aspects based on the triangle, or trine, traditionally reckoned favourable and fortunate, represent periods of creative possibility, hinting at a new way of thinking, a new direction in life, a new understanding. Aspects based on the square, traditionally thought of as obstructive and unfortunate, to us indicate the actuality of these new beginnings; they represent the circumstance that may allow those creative impulses towards renewal to be put into practice, and they suggest the trigger which can change the course of a life.

The aspects between square and trine represent all those factors in between, all the significances that may occur between the first realization that spiritual attainment is needed, and the impulse to actually set the wheels in motion, the spiritual journey that will culminate in real fulfilment. They represent the subtleties, the stages of psychic realization, the potential of creative capacity, the nature and quality of individual contents.

The aspects most commonly used in astrology relate chiefly to the outer personality, but they can provide valuable insights in our present context too, in terms of realization, and impulse. They are:

Conjunction (0°)	signifying basic activity, powerful emphasis on whatever the planets represent, and a stimulation of their functions.
Opposition (180°)	signifying awareness and interaction between functions, but with possible tension or inner conflict.
Trine (120°)	signifying harmony, being at peace with oneself, the resolution of conflict and the principle of creation.
Square (90°)	signifying construction through necessity, powerful release of feelings involving outward determination, often accompanied by inward conflict.
Sextile (60°)	signifying production or creative activity brought about through submission to a higher (perhaps divine) authority; an abnegation of personal will.

The tolerance or so-called "orb of influence" for these aspects — their approximation — extends to a diminishing extent for a few degrees (perhaps up to 7°) on either side of the actual angular degree. Less commonly used aspects with more subtle implications should not be allowed any tolerance. These are usually best applied in respect of the slow-moving outer planets, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, and they are:

Quintile (72°)	signifying the nature of the innermost passions, the inner level of being, or soul quality.
Septile (51°26')	signifying death of the will, or release of the passions that hold the soul captive.
Semi-square (45°)	(signifying some special awareness of inner factors, depending on
Sesquiquadrate (135°)	(inheritance, karma, and the indications of the birth chart as a whole.
Hendecagon (32°43')	
Nonagon (40°)	(signifying new stages of creative impulses not involving the coarse
Semi-sextile (30°)	(outer will, and of importance to the developing self.
Quincunx (150°)	
Semi-quintile (36°)	(signifying the potential union of soul qualities, and their assimilation
Bi-quintile (144°)	(by the inner self.

A conjunction which involves the outer, "collective" planets, and in particular when Saturn too is involved, carries the implication of a usually violent release of activity. Saturn can be taken to represent the "break-through point" between inner and outer, between the individual and the collective life, and a great deal of energy, in psychic terms, is massed at this point. An aspect can have no spiritual significance in itself, but conjunctions such as this always constitute a psychological crossroads, a choice to be made between positive or negative uses of inner energy.

When two planets are in opposition, they sometimes seem to be calling for a reconciliation of opposite points of view. An attraction of polarities may be the inference in positive life situations, but where opposites seem to clash, the outcome can be destructively negative. In one direction may lie an expansion of consciousness, in the other, psychological confusion. A powerful opposition can signify a time of outward disintegration, but it may also involve the subordination of the outer personality to inner values. Where an opposition involves the ascendant or the descendant, the MC, the zenith or the nadir, the aspect should be understood in terms of potential consciousness of factors that were previously unconscious, a coming to vivid awareness.

An aspect of opposition can be seen as having a positive and a negative pole — though not necessarily with wholly undesirable long-term results. It may imply neutralization of what might have been destructively opposing factors. Stressful results are more nearly to be predicted in cases of near, or inexact opposition. Near opposition implies that intense psychic activity is taking place between two extremes, and the outcome can be expected to be more dramatic than in the case of exact opposition. Perhaps two sparring partners in direct confrontation are more likely to see eye-to-eye.

Running backwards

Depending on the appearance of its orbit as seen from Earth, a planet will sometimes appear to be backtracking on itself. On the birth chart the plotting of a planet's course as "direct" or "retrograde", or indeed if it appears to be stationary at the time of birth, can hint at different qualities of awareness. When a planet, from our viewpoint, seems to be moving particularly fast, its "flow of energy" is said to be equally quick-acting and short-lasting; when, at the other extreme, a planet appears to be very slow or stationary, the function which it symbolizes will seem equally stubborn and fixed in the individual psyche.

A strongly placed stationary planet, when sited in the "unconscious" area of the chart, below the horizon, will always register a peculiarly stubborn, in some ways obtuse attitude in that field. Retrograde planets signify a "regression" of the energy they represent, a turning back from the conscious to the unconscious layers of mind; a certain defensiveness, perhaps, in that particular area of expression. A retrograde planet, or the type of energy it represents, seems somehow to have bypassed the normal mode of expression, becoming focused instead on the under-belly of the mind, working subconsciously from below.

Uranus plots the course of inner purification after the process has already begun, rather than its initiation. Retrograde, it can symbolize some kind of blockage or barrier to smooth progress. There will certainly be such psychic upheavals as are necessary (and they frequently are) to allow ongoing purification of the inner feelings to advance. There seem to be no secrets of the soul when Uranus is running retrograde. Deeply collective as well as purely personal soul-contents tend to be projected outwards, and the images and new understandings that are produced can be of benefit to others. It is as if the collective soul itself can become to a certain extent demystified by their projection. At such times, instead of these images remaining hidden and unsuspected, they become available to all who may seek them.

Neptune often seems to highlight the religious sensibilities of the individual. People in whose chart Neptune is retrograde can usually see straight to the heart of religious matters. There is no pulling the wool over their eyes, and they are not impressed by piety or ritual. The only thing that seems to matter to them is reality, first of the personal soul, then of the collective soul, and thereby the ultimate reality. A direct Neptune "allows" people to be conventionally religious; Neptune running retrograde "forbids" it.

Saturn is said by most astrologers to be the ego-builder, and in those cases where Saturn is retrograde at birth it seems that the ego cannot be developed in the normal way to act as a defence mechanism against the slings and arrows of life. Instead of being fortified against the outside world, such people may appear oddly vulnerable, not necessarily shy, but introverted to a marked extent. Their strength of selfhood will be proportionately turned inwards; their "ego" will function not in their outer but in their inner feelings. Their confidence, their invincibility, will reside in the soul and not in the personality. Retrograde Saturn is a feature usually to be found in the charts of those who live their lives, to some extent, on the inner plane.

Various methods are used by astrologers to assess planetary "influence" — or to predict the events represented by their movements and aspects — at any given period of the birth chart native's life. Progression, a completely symbolic technique for projecting planetary movements forward in time, usually substituting a "year for a day", can really apply only to the fast-moving inner planets, and thence to the outer self. Plotting the transits of the slower-moving planets, however, is always useful. It involves superimposing on the birth chart the actual planetary positions for any later date, using an ephemeris for the year in question. This method can prove a valuable aid when studying the blueprint of life, when looking for future possibilities and past explanations.