

Astrology: The Topography of the Subtle World

*I*T IS OUR BELIEF THAT THE ASTROLOGICAL MANDALA is a fragment of an archaic wisdom, and was devised by the profoundly wise sages of the past. This mandala of the signs and planets is a rare instance of—and product of—the archetypal imagination; it presents the topography of the subtle world through the forms available in sensible becoming. [53, P. 35¹] This root symbol of astrology represents the formulation by reason-principles of a symbolic method through which those very reason-principles are being manifested. Reason-principles are those living meanings or categories of thought that are the substantial aspect [forms] of the soul.

ANTHONY DAMIANI, NOTES AND PAPERS, P. J-1

THE NATAL CHART

A thoughtful consideration of the natal horoscope—our cosmic identity—suggests the particularity of the individual soul’s status, which is a description rather than an explanation. [fig. 114]

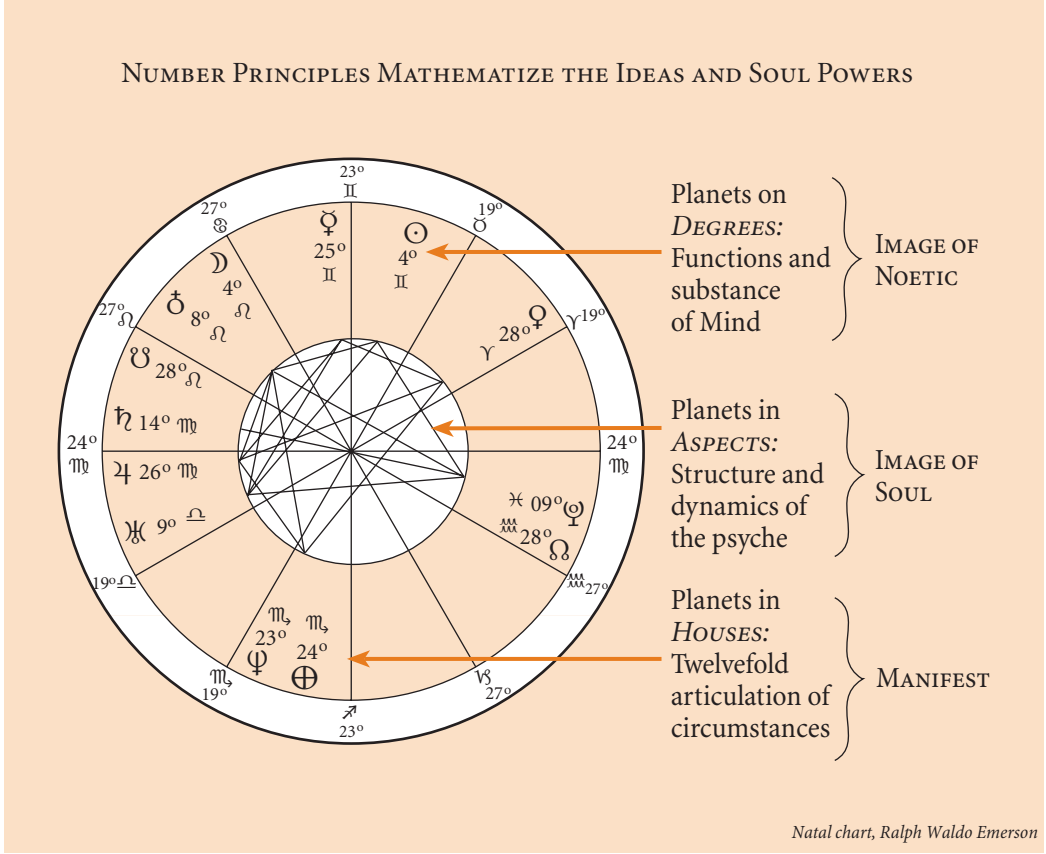


FIG. 114: A SUGGESTIVE SCHEMA OF THE COMPONENTS IN A NATAL CHART—
NUMBER, PLANETS, DEGREES, ASPECTS, HOUSES

At the moment of birth, the planets are conjunct with certain degrees and an aspectual relationship arises between all the planets and the degrees they conjunct. All the geometrical and arithmetical relationships are precisely indicated and announce the nature of this imitative being which participates in the functioning of the soul powers figured in the chart.

Thus, at the very origin at birth, the entity is already endowed with meanings that will be manifest in the course of the person's life.

Meaningful experience always contains both functional and substantial aspects. In the chart we will represent the functional part by the planets and the substantial part by the degrees. That is, in a given life there is a development both of the powers of the soul as specific abilities and of reason-principles as specific ideas.

Let us call the seven Chaldean planets representative of the powers of the soul, and the degrees of the zodiac representative of the reason-principles (or units of life-wisdom). These, taken together, are the basic meanings to be established in the native's life; these reason-principles and soul powers are invincible potencies at birth, and will become actual perception drawn from the life itself.

In the chart, a *planet conjunct a degree* indicates, on the one hand, how that function which is represented by the organ or category of imagination is influenced by the trope [degree], and on the other hand, how that planet will manifest the significances within the trope [degree]. ▼

To recapitulate: In the *degree symbolism* is inextricably buried a hierarchy of meanings—significances that are attached to the functioning of the tropes. It can be shown that the understanding of a given entity, in all cases except the person liberated from the ego, can be traced back to these ideas which the categories of the imagination have manifested. It can also be shown that a deeper understanding accrues when the natal chart makes certain aspects with the planets by transit. + It can further be demonstrated that a vastly superior and universal consciousness is transmitted through an individual soul that has particularized itself within the system of tropes that represents an individual entity.

▼ EDITORS: A planet and its degree are intrinsically tied together. The planets represent the activity that will manifest the Ideas as a person's life. The life will be an Idea working its way out on various levels: emotional, physical, mental, etc.

+ EDITORS: "... certain aspects with the planets by transit" refers to the continual and changing formation of significant angular relationships by the ongoing motions of the planets. The process of "transiting" is briefly elaborated in our Epilogue, pp. 294 ff.

EPISTEMOLOGY OF ASTROLOGY

We naturally assume that there is a significance and meaning to life; that there is some sense to the sensible. Beyond that, there are principles ordering that sense in the sensible, and these principles are the native's unconscious presuppositions. ▼ It is difficult to emphasize the magnitude of this point. Even with a sufficient maturity of philosophic understanding, we cannot stand aside from our presuppositions, or even recognize them. These presuppositions are behind both the perception of the world and the understanding of that perception; they underlie and order both the psychic and the somatic elements of experience. The structure of these presuppositions is indicated by the natal chart.

The origin of these presuppositions is in the higher soul's vision of the intelligible world, or what classical Greek philosophers call the Divine Mind. The chart is a reflection of that, and is part of the working out of that vision. So the chart is like a miniature of the metaphysical mandala.

Each soul's development is unique, as is its vision of universal Truth. Hence all it expresses in the symbol of the chart is from within itself. So, as the mentalist points out, the entire unfolding of the chart (including the chart itself) is a projection from within the individual soul, and as such reflects the soul's unique vision of the Truth. This is quite different from thinking of the individual as some structureless innocent enshrouded by a clockwork cosmos. Rather there is an organized interiority to the subject, one which develops the powers of the individual soul.

To be precise, one must add that this organization of the soul is coordinated with the evolution of the world or the World-Idea—and it is through this same World-Idea that the soul manifests its vision of the intelligible world as sensible. The sensible image of the World-Idea is the cosmos itself—the stars and the planets. [*fig. 115*]

Here we are stating that these reason-principles (the totality of the 360 degrees) are being arranged and combined in an indefinite variety of ways by the intermediary powers of the soul according to the Ideas in the zodiac. +

▼ EDITORS: An individual's "unconscious presuppositions" are indicated by the planets on certain degrees, the aspect pattern, house positions, and so on. These presuppositions determine our experience, and also—as expressions of the soul's functioning—bear the meaning of that experience. The structure of the natal chart indicates the form of our individual mind, which receives and manifests the World-Idea, and also understands that world.

+ EDITORS: Anthony is implicitly referring to three levels of the cosmos: "reason-principles" are degrees in the tropical zodiac; the "intermediary powers of the soul" are the planetary cosmic powers, primarily as transiting; and the "Ideas in the zodiac" are the sidereal zodiac, referred to in his Invocatory Prelude (p. 14) as the "Nous in the heavens." The arrangement "according to the Ideas in the zodiac" means according to the vision Soul has of the Nous, which is represented by the paradigm of the twelve signs of the zodiac. This description parallels the one in the Intellectual-Principle chapter (pp. 105–107, in particular figure 41) of Nous looking to the One and receiving "successive impressions." These levels (with unity or void as the first level) are discussed on pp. 206–208 of the paper "Omnipresence of Soul to the Cosmos."

It is these reason-principles projected into physical circumstances that are the very understanding one must assimilate in order to become the knower, the higher soul. The astrological chart therefore attempts to join the processes going on in the subtle world with the experiences going on in the sensible world. + These experiences have a

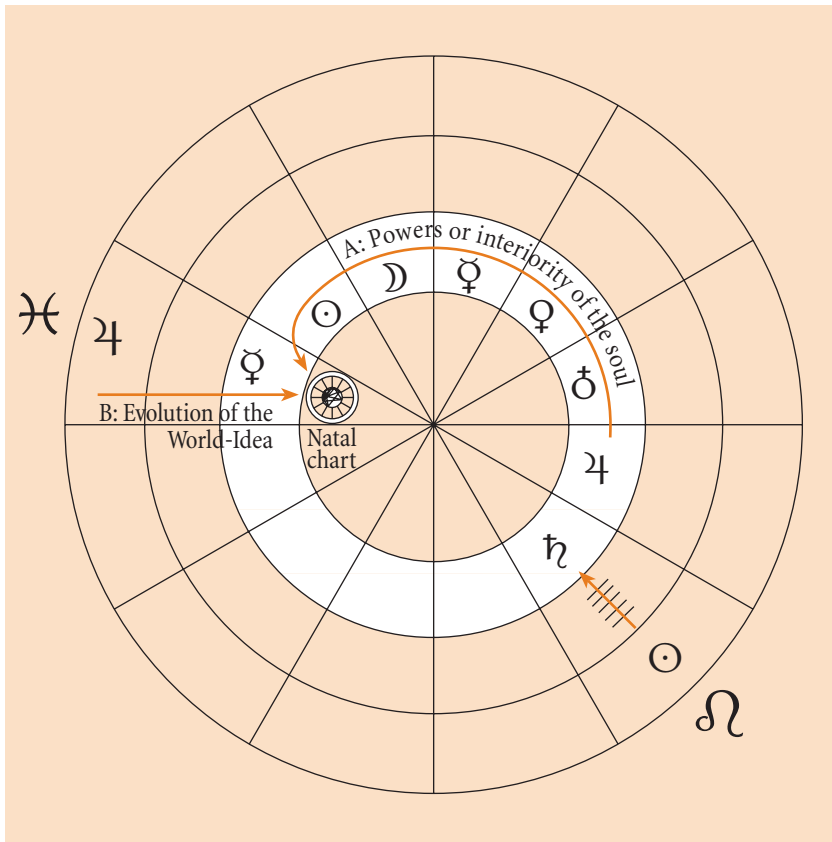


FIG. 115: THE TWO STREAMS OF SOUL, A) FROM SATURN IN LEO THROUGH THE SOUL RING, AND B) WORLD-IDEA (PISCES/HOUSE 12). THESE COMBINE TO CONSTITUTE THE NATAL CHART.

+ EDITORS: The individual mind, represented as the natal chart, is the link and continuity between inner meaning and outer manifestation. Each moment, the individual mind transforms the consciousness of the cosmos into an individual subject and object—like the dream mind manifesting the dream. As the mind transforms the inner cosmic process (World-Idea forces) into experience, the transformer is itself transformed in the process (cf. C.G. Jung in part 7 of “On the Nature of the Psyche”: “consciousness is not only itself a transformation of the original instinctual image, but also its transformer.”). As Anthony puts it in *Living Wisdom*: “Think of wisdom in the sense that the mind. . . . Your mind is becoming the universe. . . . In that process of assimilating the World-Idea, the mind is assimilating the wisdom that is inherent in it.” (p. 59) By the very act of being manifest as experience, the reason-principles in the World-Idea permeate the experience. Something of this cosmic meaning is indicated by the transiting soul powers. Our Epilogue, p. 285, gives an overview of this process.