

THE ASTROLOGER'S APPRENTICE

THE TRADITION AS IT LIVES

Issue 12.

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GULIELMUS LILLIUS Astrologus Natus Comitatus Scicest:
1^o May 1602.

**England's Merlin:
we search for the truth**



THE ASTROLOGER'S APPRENTICE

Prospective contributors are advised to write or phone first with an outline of their projected article. They should bear in mind that The Apprentice's bias is towards sound traditional practice. Some charts have a crystalline beauty all their own; we would generally, however, prefer to see charts that illustrate or elucidate some particular point of technique.

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PICTURES OF LILLY

So much utter nonsense is written about and in the name of William Lilly that it is not before time that we examine the man and his background in more breadth than our article in Apprentice number 3, where we concentrated on his political attitudes. No student of horary can do better than to concentrate his studies on Lilly's masterly textbook, *Christian Astrology*, and as we have found our own studies greatly facilitated by some understanding of the man and his times, we believe attention directed to correcting some of the erroneous images thereof will not be wasted.

There are many pictures of Lilly in common circulation. The prevalent one, of course, is "Lilly who?" The brief answer to this is that he is, by all evidence, England's greatest astrologer, whose spirit dwells happily among these very pages while his body lies beneath the choir-stalls of St Mary's Church, Walton-on-Thames, where it turns violently in its grave every time someone mentions Chiron or talks about the eighth house and transformative experiences. We shall return here shortly.

The favoured picture among those who have heard of him is of an austere figure who was leading astrologers through the wilderness when he ascended Mount Sinai and came back down with the Laws of Horary inscribed on two stone tablets - "Thou shalt not not judge a chart with less than three degrees of a sign on the Ascendant," and so forth. Which has inspired a large number of people who clearly have nothing better to do with their lives to spend a great deal of time and a great deal of passion arguing about exactly what is written on these stone tablets. And woe betide anyone who dares to disagree with their conclusions! Consigned to an eternity of wailing and the gnashing of teeth (or in the short term, a writ).

A third picture, just as unhelpful as either of these others, is of a man just like us. We are lulled into this by the seductive democracy of the library: after the first couple of paragraphs, through which we are still vaguely aware that we are reading something old, the text becomes timeless, entering that bloodless limbo of the illustrious dead - or, more accurately, it becomes distorted into our twentieth century mentality. We forget that Lilly lived and wrote blissfully free of such mental pollutants as Darwin and Jung, and in an age when one or two people were still capable of thinking, not just of rationalising their emotional responses. Just like us? No, he most definitely was not.

Then we have the academics' picture. They start off with the

assumption that astrology is obvious rubbish, so an astrologer must be a person of rather dubious morals for attempting to gull the public by practicing it. On this foundation, they construct an image of a Rasputin figure, knowing exactly what was going to happen years in advance (how he knew this if astrology is rubbish is a bit of a grey area), but in his fiendish machiavellian way letting this information out only in dribs and drabs as it happened to suit his financial or political interests. Wonderful indeed are the structures they create to close the circle of their arguments.

The Golden Age?

Lilly lived from 1602 to 1681, times of great turmoil in England. He had a reputation for accurate, predictive astrology which stretched across Europe. The words 'accurate' and 'predictive' are to be stressed, because, in the charming phrase of Gianluca Vialli, his bottom was on the line all the time. Lilly wasn't in the business of telling people they were more sensitive than their partners realised, or had unfulfilled creative potentials. His astrology was hard, concrete and provable. So if he had this reputation, which he did, we must conclude that either our

ancestors were quite remarkably stupid and couldn't work out who'd won a battle or whether someone was alive or dead - or that Lilly was rather good at what he did.

The years in which his practice flourished are commonly regarded as the golden age of English Astrology, posing the riddle of how this Golden Age, when astrology prospered so highly, was also its death throes, for just fifty years later astrology was in much the same parlous condition that it is in today. But it seems probable that this idea of the mid-seventeenth century as a Golden Age is at least



Lilly goes to buy his dogge

exaggerated, if not quite false. The difficulty is that this idea comes through the written word, and those who traffic in this coin - bless their dusty little hearts - have a touching belief that the people of real importance in the past are others of their own tribe, and that if anything of real significance were going on, someone would have had the decency to write it down.

With no written record it is, of course, hard to establish what was happening: we can easily create idyllic fantasies about the past when there is little evidence either to work on or to contradict us. But the main reason that the mid-seventeenth century seems to be this astrological Golden Age is because so much written astrological evidence survives - and the reason for that has nothing to do with astrology. For a brief period, there was an almost total suspension of censorship, resulting in an avalanche of printed texts. Based on the amount of published material, the mid-seventeenth century seems to be the Golden Age of just about everything. Political historians are faced with their own avalanche of radical political and social writing. It is possible that this wealth of sophisticated radical argument appeared from nowhere, but this is unlikely: far more reasonable is the assumption that what was now being printed was what had previously been spoken. And so with astrology: it is possible that there was a sudden great flowering, which happened to coincide with the years without censorship, but it is unlikely.

We may look at the secondary sources. John Dryden, a contemporary of Lilly, was an enthusiastic astrologer. We should then expect to find astrological reference in his work, as astrology is part of his mental framework - and reference there is. But Shakespeare and, even further back, Chaucer, writing some 300 years before this supposed Golden Age, not only use astrological reference, showing that they themselves are familiar with the concepts, but they assume a sophisticated knowledge of astrology in their audience - as much, or arguably rather more than, Dryden and his contemporaries. This knowledge that their audience possessed must have come from somewhere: it wasn't gained from sun-sign columns in the daily papers. This is speculation and debatable - Chaucer's audience was an exclusive one - but it seems reasonable to suggest that the age of Lilly was, if anything, a silver age, the final flourish before decay. Quite possibly not even that.

Lilly's Days.

Before looking specifically at the life of William Lilly, it is worth emphasising that he inhabited a world utterly different from our own. There are few places on earth today that are as different from our own

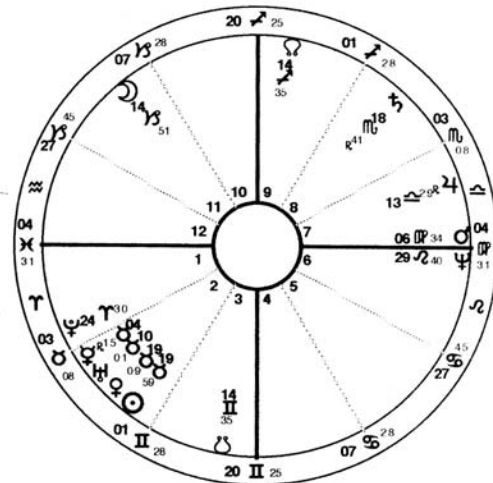
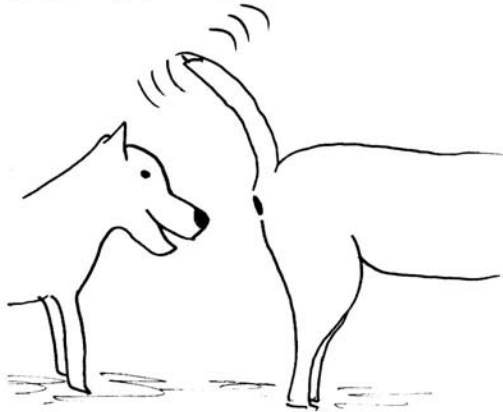
experience as the world that he knew. Lilly did not unwind after a hard day at the horary mill by putting the kettle on and watching TV. This is of course obvious - but for only as long as we deliberately keep it to the front of our mind: we tend naturally to slip into a vague background assumption that everything went on much as it did today. In some ways it did: the basic human concerns have not changed, so Lilly answered horaries on "Does he love me?" and "What on earth can I do to earn a living?" There was a greater emphasis on some matters - "Does she have any money and can I get hold of it?" - and less on others, as people didn't have to pay to be told "No, he's not going to leave his wife;" but the physical, mental and spiritual world in which these questions were cast was not as ours.

To cite just a couple of examples: most people would go to bed as soon as it got dark. We have a romantic picture of our ancestors spending their evenings sewing and singing psalms by candle-light; but candles were far too expensive for most to have in daily use. Even tapers were pricey, as well as being inefficient. And the magic candles of TV costume drama that can be walked around a house without blowing out had yet to be invented. One could go either to bed or to the inn, and navigating ones way home from there could be rather more complicated even than it can be today. Our second example concerns the image we have of people in the pillory or the stocks being pelted with rotten tomatoes by rosy-cheeked urchins. They weren't: they were pelted with the animal or human excrement which was always in much more plentiful supply than tomatoes. The favoured projectile - either for pelting people in the stocks or for throwing into the windows of rich people's carriages - was the dead cat, stock-piles of which seem to have been available on every street corner.

Lilly's practice would have been quite different from that of any western astrologer today, though having strong similarities with the norm in India. Entering his consulting room as he clocked on for work (no clocks in his house, and the town clock would not have told the minutes) he would have found a queue of people waiting for consultations. He would have set a chart for the day, which he would then have adjusted from time to time as necessary. Lilly was not overly troubled by niceties of precision. So long as his planets were within a degree or so, he wasn't much fussed - an example to us all. On occasions where he felt an exact chart was needed, he would send it out to be cast by someone lacking his taurean unconcern for intricacies - a situation not dissimilar to the one we know, where the computer sets the chart and the astrologer judges it.

Dealing primarily with horaries, he would have spent around fifteen or twenty minutes with each client. This would include knocking

Wm Lilly: his dogge



Don't tell me! You must be a Capricorn.

*William Lilly
May 11 1602 N/S 2.04 am LMT
Diseworth*

the chart round to the current time; listening to the situation and cajoling the client into phrasing the question in some tolerably coherent fashion; possibly telling the client the whereabouts of their warts and scars, as a convincer; and finally judging the chart. The reason he could do this so quickly was partly because of the amount of practice he had, which was, by modern standards, enormous; but more because of perhaps the most significant practical difference between the astrologers of the past and those of today. Lilly and his peers were professionals - professional not merely in that they charged for their services, but in their whole approach to their practice. This is one of the razors which we must apply to our image of Lilly to cut it down to the truth. He treated astrology as a serious professional calling in a way that few if any of his descendants follow. His attitude to his clients reflected this approach to his craft: he turned them round quickly, providing them with concrete information: "You want to know X? - OK, here's the answer. Thanks for your money. Goodbye. Next please." One important consequence of this is that it becomes quite impossible to imagine Lilly looking at a chart and saying "Oh dear! Only two degrees rising - I can't judge that. Put your money away." This did not happen.

He charged a sliding scale of fees. It cost a great deal for a rich man to have a consultation with the famous Mr Lilly; little or nothing for a poor one. To some sentimental minds this shows the man with the heart of gold. With such heavy emphasis on a Taurus second house, it is more the practical realisation that there is no point in trying to charge

the poor lots of money, because they haven't got it. The soda customer today may have been the soda customer tomorrow; but at least he was still a customer.

The Life.

Unfortunately, our main source for Lilly's life is his autobiography. It is said that everyone has a novel inside them; their autobiography is usually it. For reasons that have more to do with wish than reality, however, it seems common to take autobiographies seriously. Work on the Apprentice's own has just reached the chapter where Pamela Anderson threatens to leave him if he won't stop seeing Julia Roberts. Lilly's is written on much the same lines. It is also remorselessly dull, which is something of a shame, as even at his most purely didactic his astrological writing is vibrant with life. We have a string of less than interesting anecdotes about people who had some secondary significance in the affairs of the time, but have now mainly been forgotten. Lilly's lack of precision extends also to names: if it looked roughly right, that was clearly good enough. But the main problem is that it was written after the restoration of the monarchy, a time when our friend Mr William Hill would have offered very short odds indeed on Lilly's execution. It is largely an exercise in proving that he had never done anything remotely reprehensible, which was a hard corner to fight. His lengthy explanation of exactly what he was or was not doing at the execution of King Charles is a remarkable attempt to drown guilt in a sea of fog. Rather than the autobiography or the Parkers' *Familiar to All*, which leans far too heavily upon it, we suggest a reading of Christopher Hill's *Milton and the English Revolution*, which despite mentioning Lilly only in passing, says more about him than any other book. While we cannot take one man's life as another's, fleshing out the bare bones of fact with the attitudes of Hill's *Milton* will give us a picture that is close enough to the truth.

Briefly, Lilly was born in Leicestershire in 1602. His parents falling on hard times, he walked to London for work: not quite the romantic Dick Whittington picture of the youth with all his belongings in a spotted kerchief, wandering along the hedgerows; but trudging beside the cart that carried his belongings in a way cheaper, as fast and possibly less uncomfortable than actually riding upon it. He never worked as a scrivener, as he emphatically declares, but was a high-grade servant, one of his first duties being to perform a mastectomy on his master's wife. This operation was carried out in stages, but failed to arrest the cancer from which she died. His master remarried and then died himself; Lilly married the widow, thus achieving the financial security to play bowls, attend sermons and take up the study of

astrology.

In this brief picture of his early life, one significant fact has been omitted: Lilly's taking three years out on his way to London to gain a university degree. It has been omitted because it didn't happen - a point of the utmost importance in our understanding of his work. Most of what is written on Lilly is, by the nature of those who write things, written by people with an academic background. This is not necessarily helpful. There are certain well-known astrological figures who regard a university degree as some kind of astrological qualification, proudly displaying it on all their publicity. This is not so.¹ And treating the astrological writings of Lilly as if they were a lost volume of TS Eliot and subjecting them to the same kind of analysis that was introduced into the academic world early this century largely for the purpose of providing Mr Eliot with a living is most unhelpful. Lilly was not an academic, and should not be treated as if he were.

Anyone who has ever learned a craft will be familiar with a basic situation in training. The craftsman is working busily. The apprentice asks "What are you going to do about that there?" to which the craftsman replies, "Pass me the whatsisname; I'll give it a bit of how's your father and Bob's your uncle." Unlikely as it may seem to the uninitiated, 'whatsisname', 'how's your father' and 'Bob's your uncle' are in fact precise technical terms - which can mean absolutely anything, depending on the context. But in the situation their meaning is quite clear to both master and apprentice. The academic who constructs an analysis of the master's use of the term 'whatsisname', comparing its meanings in different situations, is going to tie himself and his readers in all sorts of unproductive knots. This is exactly what we see in so much modern writing on traditional astrology.

Astrology is a craft. That is, it is a hands-on working in the real world; and because it deals with the real world, it doesn't correspond with the tidy, abstract rules of grammar by which the academic attempts to render reality explicable. Lilly was a craftsman, and he wrote as such. We would save ourselves a deal of ink, a deal of bad feeling, and a writ or two if we realised this.

Lilly began seeing clients in about 1635. In 1641, Civil War broke out. The hurly-burly was not done until the mid-1660s, when the monarchy had been restored and a satisfactory degree of vengeance taken. Lilly's life must be seen against this backdrop; without some understanding of what was going on, many of his actions make little sense.

We have already examined some of the intellectual changes that were taking place and pointed the fact, which seems to have escaped

¹: There are even those who claim to have a degree in astrology! No you have not.

certain writers, that the war was not over in an afternoon, leaving time for both attitudes and what it was possible for an astrologer to predict to change as men aged and events unfolded.



The war was so important a part of Lilly's life that we must have some understanding of it if we are to understand the writings he has left us.

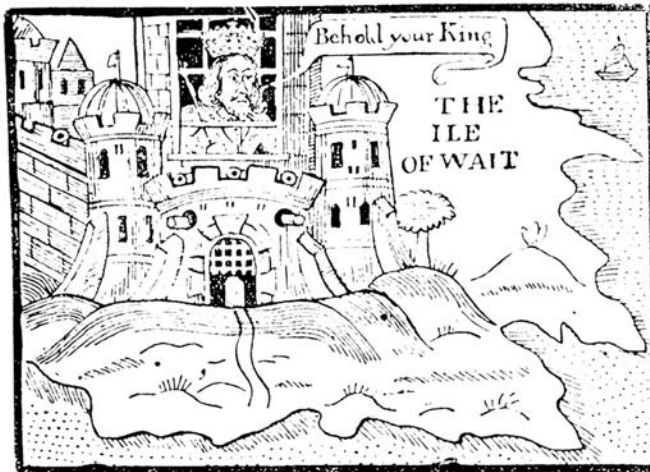
There is evidently something about that particular period that provokes impassioned conflict, because, just as astrologers beat each other over the head in arguments over the astrological practice of the time, so historians, usually a mild-mannered bunch, have similarly impassioned battles over what was happening in the political world. Right-wing historians refer to the Interregnum, regarding it as just a minor blip in the stately progress of monarchy, as if Charles II turned up a few minutes late for his coronation. Historians of the left call it the English Revolution, seeing it as the noble forerunner of the French and Russian Revolutions.

Hugh Trevor-Roper claimed that there were no problems at the start of the war that could not have been settled by a group of men sitting around a table. If this group would not have had to include King Charles, this might have been true - if the problems could have been handled one at a time; but they came in their battalions. There were massive strains at all levels of society as the economy was realigned to the prototype of what we have today, and a powerful ground-swell of revulsion at the debauchery and decadence of the court. Although the moral tone had improved somewhat with the accession of King Charles, the damage had already been done. But most significant of all was the intertwining of religion and politics in a way that is incomprehensible to us today - far beyond anything we might see in Northern Ireland. Political and religious radicalism went hand in hand; more precisely, political radicalism was conceived in religious terms and religious radicalism had what were regarded as inevitable political consequences. Lilly was deeply and passionately involved in this. He was one of Parliament's leading propagandists. On the upper decks, Milton fought the intellectual war with the leading thinkers of Europe, justifying the cause; down below, Lilly fought the popular war by demonstrating that these changes were divinely ordained and inevitable, as shown in the

stars.

Our view of the conflict is heavily coloured by the TV dramas we watched over Sunday tea. The Cavaliers had long hair and fancy clothes, while the grumpy Roundheads closed down the theatres and were indisputably the bad guys: an image more romantic than accurate. The Cavaliers may have worn pretty clothes, and to deny them the better cause is to deny the truths at the heart of our astrology, but their prevailing interest was the lining of their own pockets. The British voter who so decisively rejected Tory sleaze and self-serving at the last election was but a pike-length away from his Roundhead forebears. The Roundhead leaders were rather better behaved, but just as self-serving. A high proportion of the parliamentary rank and file, however, was fighting for a political and religious ideal. Lilly was as idealistically committed to this cause as any.

Our picture of this Puritan cause is again a distorted one. Our image of the Puritan has much more to do with late Victorian non-conformity than anything recognizable from the seventeenth century. The common idea is of someone like Hudson the Butler in *Upstairs Downstairs*. If we remember that one of the staple beliefs shared by many of the Puritan sects was the urgent necessity of free love, we begin to see the flaws in this picture: Hudson the Butler wasn't big on free love. As for the closing down of the theatres, this was not a moralistic wet blanket, but an act of political pragmatism: as the theatres were centres of dissent, to have allowed them to stay open would have been suicidal. As is clearly shown in his writing, Lilly, a committed Puritan, was no more the sour-faced spoilsport than were either Cromwell or Milton.



Charles imprisoned on the Isle of Wight

Exactly where Lilly stood on the broad platform of beliefs that was Puritanism is unclear. On a scale of radicalism from one to ten, he probably clocked in at around the 6 or 7 mark: he had no time for the ranters, extremists whose favoured recreation was tearing off their clothes and grinding

their teeth in the windows of rich people's carriages, but believed firmly in the approaching millennium - the coming of Christ's kingdom on Earth, for which end earthly kings must first be overthrown. Those who ordered the execution of the King did so from the conviction that by doing so they were furthering the cause of the saints; if we compare the enthusiasm with which Lilly cheers this cause with the coldness of the autobiography in which he claims to have done no such thing, the truth of his feelings is evident. There is a cosy belief among the moderns that Lilly hated the monarchy but thought the King a decent enough chap. This is simply untrue. To accept it means foisting completely anachronistic ideas onto Lilly - apart from which, Charles I wasn't. Lilly would have regarded this sentimental humanism as a betrayal of faith: he was not a twentieth-century man.

There is the story that Charles sent to consult Lilly while imprisoned. Lilly gave his astrological advice and, being a good practical Taurus, a saw. The King sawed through his bars, but when half-way through the window he stopped, just as his guards entered the room. Accounts differ over why he stopped: some say he thought it unbecoming a king to scramble through a window; some say he got stuck. The only evidence of which I am aware for Lilly's involvement in this is his own mendacious autobiography; even if true, it surely cannot be taken at face value as evidence of sympathy for the King. If Lilly did cast this horary, he would presumably have known that the King would not escape. While to have risked his own neck in this way would have tested the zeal of the most ardent royalist: it is not the result of a vague humanitarianism.

Lilly, in his own way, was a soldier for this cause, as involved as any in the line of battle. His almanacs were the best-sellers of the day, a favourable prediction from Lilly being said to have the value of a battalion of soldiers to the Parliamentary armies. Lilly was not impartial. Far from it: he was deeply engaged with that strange stuff that proceeds outside astrologers' windows - that mysterious business called Real Life. His astrological writings were not composed for the benefit of a handful of half-dead scholars in some academic ivory tower. They were his utmost contribution to ushering in the rule of the saints and the second coming of Jesus Christ on Earth. Astrology without engagement is an utter waste of time: without engagement it is nothing but a glorified crossword puzzle. Lilly never aspired to the dubious ideals of academic abstraction of which he is accused of falling short; his great achievement lies in managing to be engaged without the total compromise of all astrological credibility that we find in his royalist rival, Gadbury.



The aura of majesty was such that, despite its being exposed as a fraud, Charles's apologia, Eikon Basilike, massively outsold all anti-royalist tracts.

But just ten years after Charles I was executed, the brave new world was falling apart. The Revolution had been killed off very quickly: immediately victory was theirs, the Parliamentary leaders explained to the ardent rank and file that they hadn't actually meant any of that idealistic rhetoric, shot the cadres and packed the rest off to fight the Irish. By 1660, the least bad option seemed - even

to those who had helped pull down the monarchy - to be the Restoration. This was devastating. The dream had failed. What was worse, it hadn't failed through being beaten in the field: it had fallen apart through its own internal faults, through the inadequacies of those who had carried it. So much had been promised: the unprecedented event of a king tried by his subjects and then condemned; the execution, so staggering that "women miscarried, men fell into melancholy, some with consternations expired"; and then nothing.

Here we see the cause of Lilly's gradual withdrawal from astrology. We must remember that he had seen these as the Last Days - that is, as an ordered part of history. Far more than the crushing sense of failure felt by anyone who has fought for an ideal and lost was the failure of (his understanding of) divine order, which is of course, the basis of astrology.

Medicine had always been an enthusiasm; now he concentrated on it more and more, finally obtaining a licence allowing him to practice officially in 1670. This was not an uncommon path for failed revolutionaries either then or since: the medical profession has always provided more than its fair share at the barricades,² and Lilly was just one of many idealists who turned to the immediate practical help they

² One of the reasons for the success of the New Model Army was that it had many more doctors and surgeons than the Royalist armies. This not only helped in physical terms, but had immense benefits in morale, as the troops felt they were being well looked after.

could offer through physical healing. One of his most spectacular astrological successes was yet to come, but his prediction of the Great Fire of London in 1666 had been made long before in his publications of 1648 and 1651. Although still working with astrology, a combination of caution in a hostile world and the wisdom that is found in the withered field where the farmer ploughs for bread in vain had changed his focus from the public to the personal. By this time he had buried his second wife and married someone he actually liked - Ruth, with whom he had a long and happy marriage. His time was spent quietly, treating the ills of the populace of Hershams - often for free, which was itself considered a revolutionary act - until he died in 1681.

That his nativity was published by his enemy, Gadbury, has raised doubts about its veracity: in an astrologically literate age, a common means of attack was, rather than vilifying ones foes, to adopt the subtle method of publishing a plausible but unfortunate birth-chart, relying on ones readers to draw their own conclusions. The chart is its own advocate, and the internal evidence is such that it must be accepted. More even than that picture of his notable contemporary, it reveals the man 'warts and all'; for all his failings, however, we lack his peer, and in the workshop a kettle is kept forever boiling on the hob and a cherry-cake kept freshly sliced in case he should drop by.

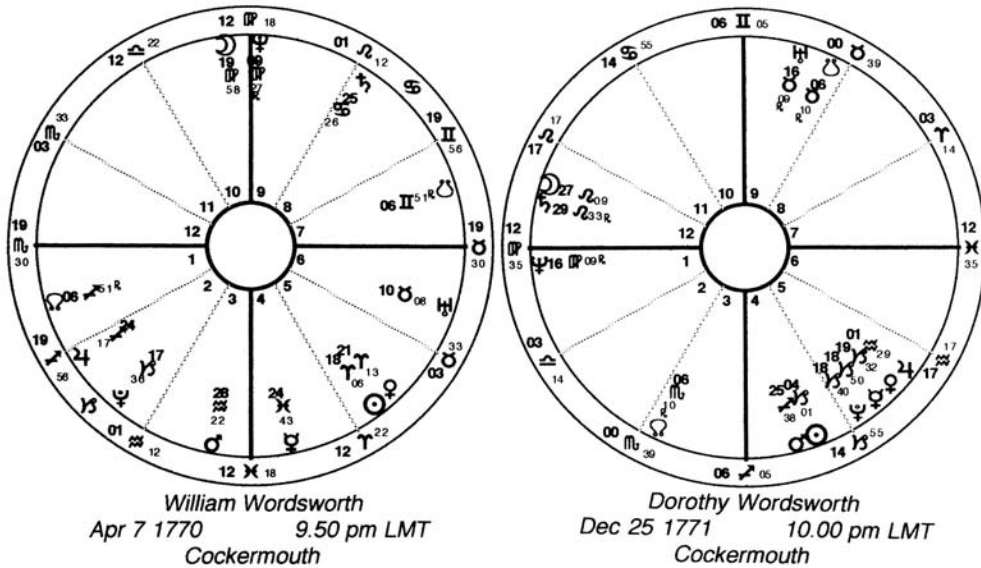
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THE LOST LEADER

In our last issue, we thrilled to the adventures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge; here we shall cast a briefer glance at some points of note in the nativity of the other half of the Dynamic Duo, William Wordsworth.

With an excess of heat and moisture, the chart reveals a strongly sanguine temperament - in modern terminology, airy. With such emphasis below the horizon, we have the chart of a man working behind the scenes, typical of poets and artists. It is overall a chart with rather more obvious potential than that of Coleridge, where not one planet has any notable strength. Here, Jupiter and both the lights are strongly dignified, while Mars has dignity by term; the grievous weakness of the other planets prevents the biography being one of unalloyed success, but four dignified planets is a good base from which to work.

If the temperament is airy, and as such centred in the mind, it is important that the mind should function well. Here, alas, it does not. Mercury is one of the seriously debilitated planets, being in both its



detriment and fall, and the opposition from the Moon indicates ‘a dull and doltish Capacity or Wit’. Lilly continues by saying that when this opposition is in angles with either planet in its detriment, as is the case here, ‘it argues seditious Wits, blockish, hair-brained counsels, destructive and impudent.’ It is notable that the first point Hazlitt, who knew the poet well, makes in his essay on him is that ‘he has some difficulty to contend with the hebetude of his intellect’. ‘Blockish’ does indeed seem the apt word.

If that were that, we might have here the nativity of a Distributor of Stamps, as Wordsworth was to become, and nothing else. But all things can be rescued by a benefic, and here the seventh cavalry rides up in the guise of Jupiter. ‘My own favourite star’, as Wordsworth calls it, his proprietorial claim shown by its falling just tucked inside his second house of personal possessions, is the dominating factor of the chart. It is Lord of the Geniture, being the most strongly dignified planet, and aspects (if we can for once allow a quincunx to stick its grubby nose into our refined pages) every one of the other planets, drawing them together almost as a puppeteer holding their strings. Its aspect to Mercury is a square, but from so strong a benefic even a square is a fine thing, especially as Mercury is dispossited by its powerful benefactor. As always with a strong Jupiter, however, there is the risk of excess.

The first reaction to Wordsworth’s opus must invariably be that there is so much of it; the second that he makes so much of every point,

never being one to use one word where fifty would do. We see clearly the excessive effects of this Jupiter, as pointed by the parodist:

*But Peter Bell he hath no brother.
Not a brother owneth he,
Peter Bell he hath no brother;
His mother hath no other son,
No other son e'er called her mother;
Peter Bell hath brother none.*

Mercury is also closely aspected by Saturn. Just as a square from a dignified benefic is helpful, a trine from a debilitated malefic is worth avoiding. Of these two planets affecting Mercury, Saturn is the one above the horizon - out in the world - showing a man taciturn in company; Jupiter below the horizon shows the man who couldn't stop talking once in his study. In the combination of the sheer quantity indicated by Jupiter and the coldness of Saturn (which is especially significant as it is the dispositor of the Ascendant ruler), we find the flatness of so much of the work. With Mercury, given effusiveness by Jupiter, disposing the Moon, we have the compulsion to render every fleeting thought into something that might pass for verse. Even Saturn, exalting Jupiter, relaxes its bounds, removing whatever traces of self-criticism an Aries Sun allied with so strong a Jupiter might otherwise have possessed; if Homer nods, Wordsworth falls off his chair, publishing work of a banality unapproached by any other major poet. It is doubtless the cold hand of Saturn on Mercury's shoulder that gives Wordsworth's distinctive verbal tic, the inability to say something positive, negating instead the negative, a not un irritating trait.

But on the occasions when he did have something to say, he produced some fine poetry. Hazlitt's verdict is that "Mr Wordsworth's genius is a pure emanation of the Spirit of the Age." A pure emanation of Mr Wordsworth might be closer to both the poet's aims and practice; at times these emanations coincided.

*"Bliss was it in that dawn to be
alive,
And to be young was very
heaven,"*



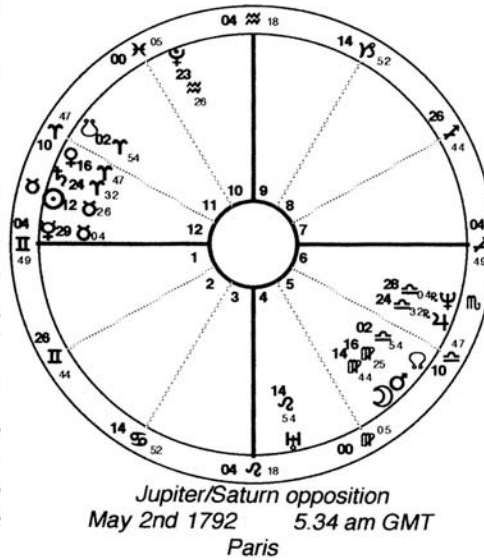
*Wordsworth and Coleridge
prepare for a new mission*

wrote Wordsworth of the heady days of the French Revolution. Can there be a more concise description of the Aries Sun?

It was not the initial revolt of July 1789 of which he was singing, but the tumultuous period of his own residence in France, when conflicting parties wrestled for power. Wordsworth seriously considered offering himself as a leader of la Gironde, though exactly why he should think the French might need him to lead their revolution is a mystery insoluble to anyone not sharing his Aries Sun - though doubtless perfectly plain to anyone who does. So to identify the Spirit of the Age we should look not

to the Great Conjunction prior to 1789, but to the opposition of the great chronocrators in 1792. This chart hit his own nativity hard and favourably. The opposition itself activates his Jupiter/Mercury/Saturn matrix. The Ascendant in Paris at the moment of opposition conjuncts his natal Saturn by antiscion. Mars, dispositor of the end of the opposition above the horizon, is close to both his Moon and MC, while Venus, dispositor of its other end, is just over a degree away from his Sun - and exactly conjunct his Part of Fame (13.19 Pisces) by antiscion. With both Venus and Mars in the opposition chart exactly aspecting his part of Marriage, we see the other reason why it was bliss to be alive - his romance with Annette Vallon.

Which confusion of the sowing of wild oats with international revolution leads us to Wordsworth's great theme: William Wordsworth. The first poet of note to conceive the puzzling idea that the inside of his head should be of interest to anyone other than himself was Walter Raleigh, the poem in question appropriately enough entitled *Cynthia*. Wordsworth was the first with sufficient lack of decorum to write an epic on 'the growth of the poet's mind' (note Mercury in Jupiter sign). There would be an interesting comparison between their nativities; unfortunately, however, even the year of Raleigh's birth is conjectural. Apart from its concern with personal possessions, the second is also the house of self-worth; with Jupiter so strong just inside it, trining the exalted Aries Sun, we have a man not overly troubled with self-doubt: "My Ballads are the noblest pieces of verse in the whole range of English



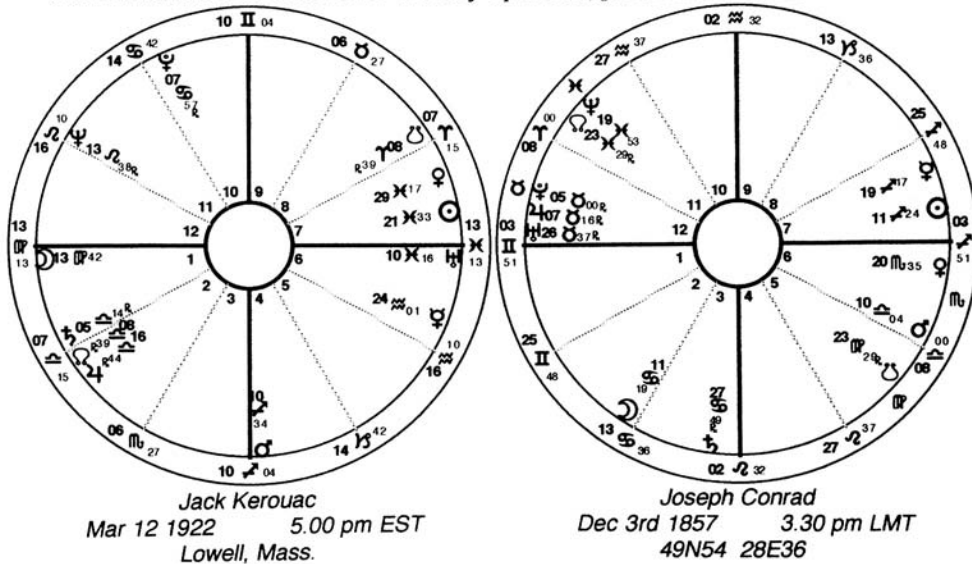
poetry: and I take this opportunity of telling the world I am a great man.” The midpoint of this Sun/Jupiter aspect falls on the Mercury/Pluto midpoint: “successes as a speaker or writer (mostly in specialised fields),” Ebertin gives us, it being clear from the planets concerned (Sun with the Lord of the geniture) that Wordsworth’s specialised field was himself.

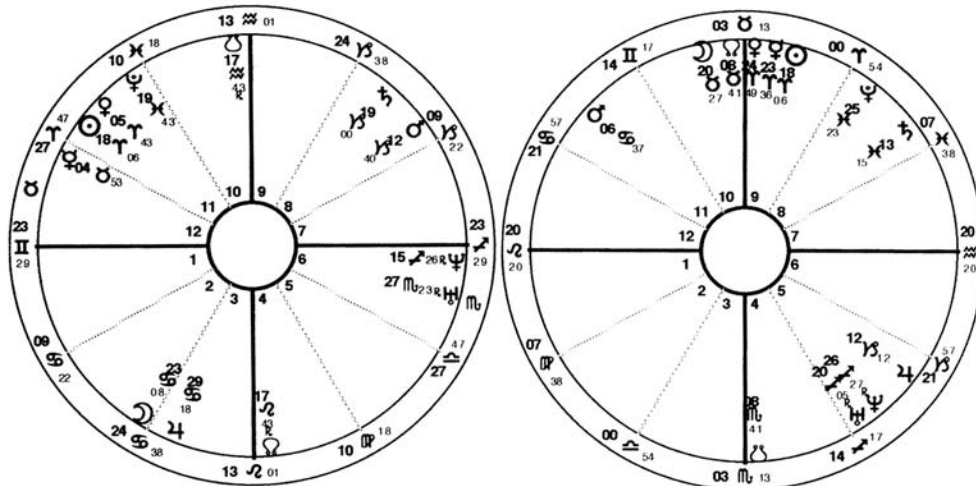
Wordsworth’s conviction of his own value was strengthened further by his adoring sister, Dorothy. The synastry between their charts is intense; we shall not go into it here. Of the two, Dorothy was by far the more devoted, her attachment to her brother being of pathological degree. Mars, ruler of her third house, shows her brother; her Sun exactly conjuncts this by antiscion, while her Moon trines it. With this Mars conjunct Wordsworth’s powerful second-house Jupiter, we see how this constellation fuelled the poet’s sense of value. Note also the typical familial coincidence of the Midheaven of the one chart with the Ascendant of the other.

In 1813 came the great apostasy: the civil servant that had been trapped inside the body of the romantic poet finally managed to get out, as Wordsworth took a job as Distributor of Stamps.

*For a handful of silver he left us,
For a riband to stick in his coat,*

wrote the disgusted Browning of the one-time Hero of the Revolution. The potential for desertion is clear in the nativity: the angular Moon (silver) in an unstable, mutable sign, of earthy, material nature, ruled by Mercury, planet of commerce and untrustworthiness. We find the same indication in that other literary apostate, Jack Kerouac: the





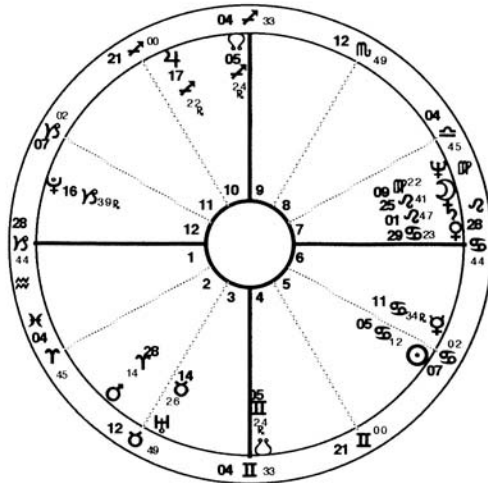
1813 Solar Return

1818 Solar Return

different angle in which we find this Virgo Moon shows their different actions - the one took a job; the other worked out his betrayal on a more personal level, going home to mother in a bottle. Wordsworth's natal Saturn has finally gained the upper hand. The Solar Return shows this clearly. Saturn, now strong in its own sign, squares the Sun and trines the seductible natal Moon, while the return Moon - the handful of silver - conjuncts the natal Saturn. As the nature of this silver was in distributing stamps, it could not be more appropriately placed than on the cusp of the third house. Cauda Draconis in the tenth shows the effect on his public reputation; Mercury, natal signifier of his poetic vocation, retires to the twelfth house in shame; while the fuel for his poetry - the natal second house Jupiter - is now setting in the west.

In passing, we briefly draw the connection between Kerouac and Joseph Conrad, both of whom achieved literary fame writing (or, as Truman Capote said of Kerouac, typing) in a language that was not their own. In both charts, we find the Lord of the eleventh house - that is, the third from the ninth, or the language of a foreign country - conjunct, in Conrad's case by antiscion, the Ascendant, showing the native finding expression through a foreign tongue.

By 1818, Saturn in the Solar Return chart was sitting exactly on the natal Part of Fame. As Saturn (Wordsworth as sinecurist) is the Great Malefic, this is not fortunate. Keats, on his tour of the Lakes, found the elder poet canvassing for the Lowther family - who ranked among the more unappealing faces of reaction - in the forthcoming election; it



*William Wordsworth
Progressions for death*

was much as if Joe Hill had been discovered campaigning for Reagan. "Sad - sad - sad," was Keats' verdict. The return Moon, strong in its exaltation, trines the natal handful of silver.

Suitably appalled, the muse had the good sense to desert him; this did not stop Wordsworth writing, however. What did was his death on the 23rd of April, 1850. We have done death to death in Apprentice issue 8, so here shall point just a few of the main indicators. As always, we stress that it is the accumulation of major adverse testimonies with no redeeming aspects from benefics that shows death: if you have one or two of these points hitting your own nativity, it does not mean that you are going to die (at least, not yet). And if you are worried about Pluto transiting your natal Sun, remember that this is just God's way of telling you to stay out of astrological bookshops.

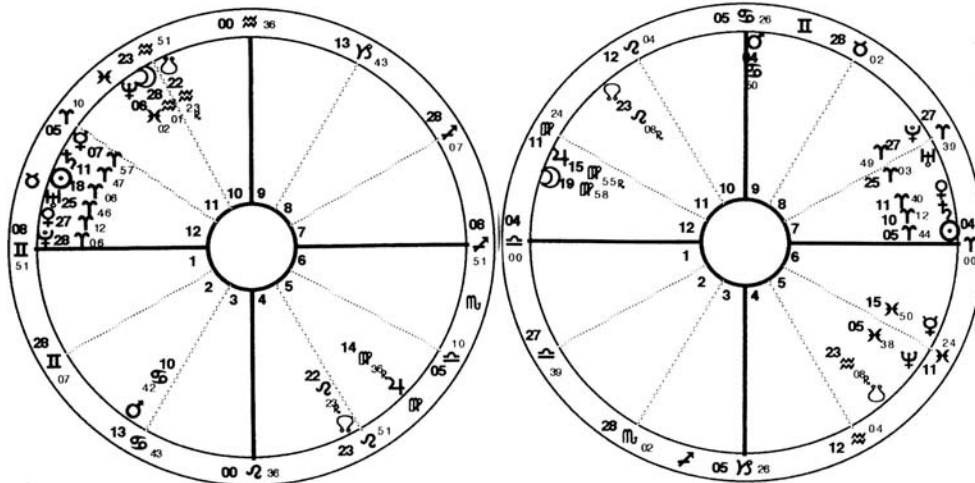
As Wordsworth was born at night and the Moon is in the tenth, an acceptable hylegal house, it is technically hyleg; that said, we find that all the major points of the chart - angles, both lights, Fortuna and the Lord of the Ascendant - need to be considered. The progressed chart shows the Moon hitting a selection of highly unsavoury fixed stars; it is also trine the natal Part of Death (25.24 Aries) and has just entered the terms of Mars, on which Lilly advises "the Native shall doe well upon this alteration to advise with his Physician," - in this instance about the delivery of a cockerel. The Midheaven exactly opposes natal Saturn by antiscion (we have previously noted the extreme importance of antiscia in death charts: this is illustrated again here), while the Sun has progressed to square Mercury by

was much as if Joe Hill had been discovered campaigning for Reagan. "Sad - sad - sad," was Keats' verdict. The return Moon, strong in its exaltation, trines the natal handful of silver.

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Wordsworth was an ardent revolutionary



Pre-death Solar Return

Pre-death Lunar Return

antiscion. This might sound innocuous enough, but Mercury as ruler of the natal eighth house is anareta, or bringer of death. So we have both lights and the MC grievously afflicted.

The Solar Return chart has an obvious twelfth house emphasis, which does not presage well. The Moon conjuncts natal Mars and squares, by antiscion again, the progressed Saturn, an unfortunate contact repeated by the return Saturn falling conjunct the natal Moon by antiscion. Mars - important as Lord of the natal Ascendant - conjuncts the natal eighth cusp and squares the natal Moon, both by antiscion.

The Lunar Return chart is even more obviously unfortunate, dominated from the MC by Mars, ruler of the eighth house, in its fall and so even more malign than usual, and squaring the Sun. Just as the Moon is our first point of reference in a Solar Return, so is the Sun in a Lunar Return: here it is setting, with obvious significance, and by antiscion exactly opposes the anareta in the natal chart, Mercury. As in the Solar Return, Saturn, also in fall, conjuncts the natal Moon by antiscion. On the 23rd, his friend recorded, "Mr Wordsworth breathed his last calmly, passing away almost insensibly at twelve o'clock (this midday), while the cuckoo-clock at his bedroom door was striking the hour." And so, in the immortal words of John Hamilton Reynolds,

W.W.

Never more will trouble you, trouble you.

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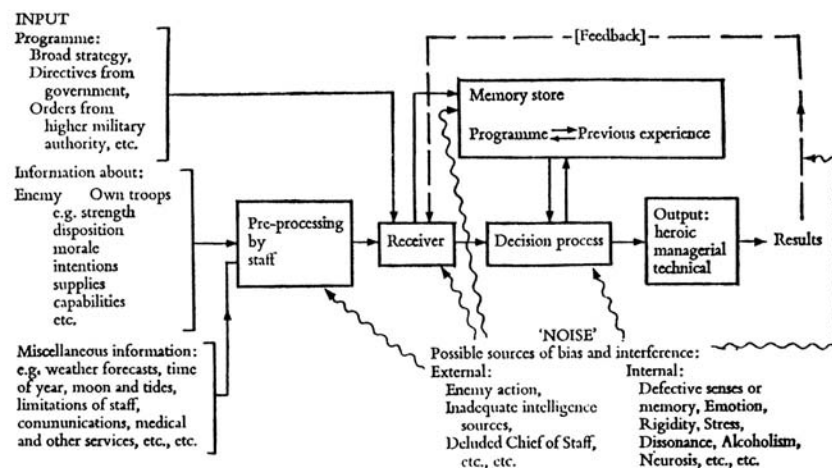
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WHY IT GOES WRONG

There is an enduring illusion among students that their study of astrology is furthered by reading astrology books. In fact, apart from the perhaps half a dozen titles that make some substantive contribution to astrological knowledge, most books that repay the student's attention will not be found in the local branch of Stars-R-Us. Many, indeed, of the most worthwhile of these books make no mention of astrology from beginning to end. Yet they offer far more of value than the latest collection of hair-splitting from Project Hindsight or, of course, the latest work of sentimental fiction from any of the moderns.

The most illuminating astrological text that we have found recently is Norman Dixon's *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (London, 1976). As the title suggests, it attempts to unravel the causes of the recurrent military propensity for blunder - without resorting to transits of the outer planets in order to do so. Dixon spent ten years as an officer in the Royal Engineers, turning to psychology - in which he has high qualification - after leaving the army. The resistance which the writing of this book met from certain sections of the military offers an immediate comparison with the world of astrology: suggesting that anyone might be capable of error clearly impugns their 'professional reputation' in writ-worthy fashion. The comparison between astrology and war is emphasised by the epigraph, from T.E. Lawrence: "With 2,000 years of fighting behind us we have no excuse when fighting, for not fighting well." Indeed; yet there can be few of us who do not look



Dixon's model of military decision-making

back on astrological troops whose lives we have squandered, and who are not, on our day, capable of misjudgements as gross as those on the Somme or Spion Kop. Theoretical knowledge and good intentions do not an astrologer make; nor does experience in no matter how great quantities give us the shield of infallibility.

So why do things go wrong? We may not follow the Freudian Dixon in locating the root of all evil in toilet-training, but the secondary causes he suggests ring as true in the astrologer's den as they do on the battlefield. "The ideal senior commander," he says, "may be viewed as a device for receiving, processing and transmitting information in a way which will yield the maximum gain for the minimum cost. Whatever else he may be, he is part telephone exchange and part computer." Much like an astrologer. "On the basis of a vast conglomerate of facts (ie as drawn from the chart) coupled with his own long-term store of past experience and specialist knowledge, the senior commander makes decisions that, ideally, accord with the directives with which he has been programmed," or are, in an astrological context, true.

Dixon gives two main reasons why this ideal is hard to realise. First is the number of incompatible roles that the commander/astrologer has to fill: "These include 'heroic' leader, military manager and technocrat... politician, public relations man, father-figure and psychotherapist." Second is the existence of 'noise in the system', interfering with the smooth flow of information that must be processed if a sound decision is to be reached. Noise is of two kinds: internal and external. For the military commander, an example of external noise would be the enemy bombardment beneath which he is sheltering; internal noise might be his regiment's proud tradition of never retreating, or the unfortunate fact that he is drunk. Any source of noise makes it that much more difficult to determine the best course of action.

Let us deal first with the nice causes: those for which we may plausibly blame others. The telephone-exchange part of the astrologer's nature faces inordinate difficulties with the human tendency to hear only what it wishes to hear. In the workshop, it is now our practice to tattoo all judgements onto the client's forehead, as any other means of communication is open to distortion. We have been mocked for getting predictions wrong which were clearly and verifiably right, and - in roughly equal measure - been praised for getting predictions right which were clearly and verifiably wrong. So making our own communication as clear as possible must be a priority: just doing the astrology is not sufficient if we are unable to effectively communicate our result (although as even the apparently lucid "1-0 to Italy" is capable of misinterpretation, there are limits to our own responsibility

for this). Or we can solve the problem by adopting the modern technique of never saying anything of any substance: the equivalent of keeping all our troops in barracks for fear of losing a man.

Our telephone exchange must be clear also about in-coming calls. If all our information tells us the enemy is in the east, it is reasonable that we do not expect an attack from the west - as long as we have ensured that our intelligence services are up to scratch. If the client chooses to tell us he was born on June 3rd when he was really born on May 4th, there is not a great deal that we can do about it; but in many situations we can act to sieve the incoming information, always remembering that we too are prone to hear only what we wish or expect to hear. It is easy to leap to unwarranted assumptions about the client's situation or his attitude towards it. We must be aware that the



William Lilly falls foul of his amiable but clumsy pupil, Coley.

client's words can act like triggers, setting off whole stories in our heads that have nothing whatever to do with the client's own experience. Even if we appear to be labouring points of painful obviousness, time spent interrogating the client to assure ourselves - as much as is ever possible - that we are answering his question and not one of our own is time well spent. The client is not ourselves, and we are unlikely to exaggerate the possibilities of just how bizarre or extreme the differences can be.

We too play a variety of incompatible and largely unhelpful roles. The 'heroic leader' part which has heroically led so many soldiers to a needless death corresponds to the 'omniscient sage' who must be

able to provide an accurate answer to every query. In William Lilly's army, we are allowed to display the better part of valour without being left alone with a loaded revolver as a consequence. We are managers in a way that is no longer common in the military: the general does not have to pay the rent on the barracks; the necessity of our doing so is one of the loudest sources of noise that we encounter. We are technocrats, and must resist the temptation to play with our favourite toys of technique or software in circumstances where their use is unhelpful. We are our own public relations men - and the claims of our

internal PR department can conflict with those of sound astrology (“Die? You? Never!”) Most of all, there is but a small proportion of our clientel that does not to some extent attempt to ease us into the roles of father-figure or psychotherapist, even if we have the good sense not to seek out these roles for ourselves. Still more parts beckon us: Man of Mystery and Santa Claus are two of the more seductive ones. The conflicting demands of these roles are no more helpful to the astrologer than they are to the general; if we cannot shed them all, we do well at least to be aware of them: a large mirror is a useful tool. Thomas Merton was speaking of spiritual vocation, but his words are none the less relevant to us labourers at the forge: “In any vocation at all we must distinguish the grace of the call itself and the preliminary image of ourselves which we spontaneously and almost unconsciously assume to represent the truth of our calling. Sooner or later this image must be destroyed and give place to the concrete reality of the vocation as *lived* in the actual mysterious plan of God, which necessarily contains many elements we could never have foreseen. (Our work involves) learning the fatuity and hollowness of this illusory image, which was nevertheless necessary from a human point of view and played a certain part in getting us into the desert.”

“I must have silence in my passages.”

Let us consider in detail the problem of noise, external sources first. The commander might well suffer from unclear directives from above; so too the astrologer. What does the client want? Does he want to know what will happen, or does he want a suggested course of action, or does he want to know how he got into this mess? Or maybe he just wants validation. We may not choose to offer all these services, as we may choose not to send our troops over the top for insufficient reason; we do need to be aware of what battle we are actually fighting.

The astrologer is blessedly free from noise caused by enemy action, unless perhaps the quiet of his study is disturbed by the myrmidons of the Centre for Psychological Astrology chanting derisive slogans about horary outside the window. The inadequacy of his intelligence sources is down to him to rectify by sharpening his interview technique. There remains the possibility that his computer has been subverted by the enemy: our own has been brainwashed into believing that Miami is a town in the north of England, while Lancashire appears to share a border with the Ukraine. What goes in to the computer is not necessarily meaningfully connected with what comes out, so this does need to be checked.

More significant in the eremitical stillness in which we labour is the internal noise, sources of which are manifold and often apparently

unavoidable. The virtue of astrology is that it promises a 'noise-free' understanding of the situation, circumventing the illusions of hope, fear and desire that prevent the client understanding it for himself. He is not well served if all he has done is exchange his own noise for the astrologer's: a silent environment must be our ideal.

It is this end to which the Considerations before Judgement are directed. Some are concerned with external noise: the problem of inaccurate time-keeping is handled by the caution on judging charts with early or late degrees rising. If our timing is accurate, these cautions can be ignored. Some are concerned with internal noise, particularly those regarding the condition of the seventh house and its ruler (ie the astrologer). If we have a burning temperature, or have just experienced some personal trauma, or have all our attention focussed on the man-eating spider crouching beside our chair, we are unlikely to give sound judgement; thus if the Lord of the seventh is afflicted, we see the astrologer below his best. (Let us deal here with a pervasive error: if you are casting a horary for your own question, you are *not* shown by the Lord of the seventh because you are also the astrologer. How many houses do you think you're entitled to?)

We will assume now that our astrologer is healthy, sober and untraumatised. The internal noise, however, is still at high volume. Shouting loudest is often the demon Self-Regard. His forms are manifold; his weapons those stored in the 7th/5th, 2nd and 10th houses. The astrologer is not a machine, but a human being attempting to act with a mechanical degree of dispassion. We may not often find Mademoiselle Fifi entering our consulting room and asking "I had a dream that I must throw myself at the first astrologer I meet; is this dream true?" but we must be aware of the noise-producing qualities of a pretty face, as in any circumstance of the natural preference for being liked, usually as the glad bringer of good tidings. Our personal practice is never to see clients face to face, working always by phone or post, for just this reason; but while this may muffle the volume, it certainly does not impose silence.

Then there are the tenth and second house temptations. The desire for reputation is pernicious; the desire to give right judgement is a hindrance. Our focus must be on the chart, not on its consequences for ourselves. The dangers may not be immediately obvious: but consider the general whose desire is to be seen as the Heroic Victor or the Winner of All Battles, and think of the effects of these desires on his decisions.

William Lilly stormed off from his first teacher when he found him altering his advice to a client because "had he not so judged to please the woman, she would have given him nothing." It is warming to

think that as we would not so grossly betray our art, we are above the clamour of money. Unless our gentle reader is significantly more saintly than ourselves, however, this is unlikely to be true. We need not grasp at money for it to be an issue: just the awareness that we would like our client to come back again - and the awareness that our client doubtless knows this too - is enough. As an example, whenever we give judgement that “No, this is not a suitable person to employ,” we hear a small voice suggesting that the client will think we judge thus only to ensure ourselves of another question about the next candidate. Any such voice is a distraction from true judgement.

Ann Geneva, from whom as an academic we do not expect any understanding of practical astrology, and her followers, some of whom really ought to know better, quote Lilly’s annotation on a chart he had evidently got wrong: “God Almighty bless me from the punishment due to an auld dissembler. Money, Money.”³ Displaying a remarkable lack of any introspective capacity, they see the anguished Lilly in sackcloth and ashes after having deliberately prostituted judgement. Quite clearly, what we have is Lilly lamenting that his judgement has been clouded by the financial noise inevitable with a paying client. When applying for a William Hill Award, the very fact of the financial involvement distorts judgement; we have found our ability to predict accurately improving no end since we stopped applying for awards ourselves; yet it is (or really ought to be, Ms Geneva and friends) obvious that the distortions of judgement in these circumstances are detrimental to ones own interest: judgement wrong - money lost.

Dixon identifies an anally-inspired fixation on bull as a major source of noise: an obsession with doing what ‘ought’ to be done at the expense of what make sense. He makes the point that there is often a high turnover of senior commanders at the start of a war, as these senior positions are perforce occupied by those whose only knowledge of the skills these ranks demand is gained on the parade-ground. They often fall short in practice, and those who talk a good battle are replaced by those who can actually fight one. We might speculate that the appreciation of discipline and order that leads one man into the higher echelons of the military is not very different from the appreciation of discipline and order that leads another to study the traditional branches of astrology; as such, the astrologer faces the same danger of placing too great an emphasis on the letter, of denying his own perceptions too much, of passing the buck upwards (in his case to Lilly or Bonatus) and of opting out when faced with the novel possibility of employing his brain. It is notable that the powerful saturnine influences common in those who study traditional astrology are also

³: Ann Geneva, *Astrology & the 17th Century Mind*.

prevalent in those whose work we study (see Lilly's nativity in this issue as an example), suggesting that it is the order rather than the antiquity of the knowledge that contains its appeal. But if the gifts Saturn offers are not leavened with some sound common sense, they become strait-jackets within whose grasp we cannot move. This is one form of noise by which the moderns, with their 'make it up as we go along' philosophy are less troubled; working within a tradition we need to be constantly aware of it: there is a fine line between discipline and stupidity. The generals who had learned to form their troops into squares to face cavalry found them massacred by machine guns; too often we find a slavish adherence to the letter of even the best of our authorities resulting in statements that are palpably daft.

We shall skim over some of the other recurrent features of military incompetence that Dixon identifies. We have "the failure to observe one of the first principles of war - economy of force" manifesting in the astrological world as a tendency to waffle interminably, either to obscure whatever definition ones judgement might ever have had or to delay the dreadful moment when one actually has to say something concrete. This tendency is notable in many computer programmes, even those that claim to help the horary astrologer, supplying him with so much irrelevant information that the client has turned safely senile long before that risky moment of giving judgement has ever arrived.

"A tendency to reject or ignore information which is unpalatable or which conflicts with preconceptions." This is most evident in judging ones own charts, where the most tenuous of favourable testimonies assumes overwhelming significance, while the massed ranks of negative indicators are completely ignored. But it occurs in any chart, usually when we are building a happy little story, testimony by testimony, and then suddenly notice an exact opposition from Saturn to our main significator, which had somehow avoided our eye till now. A moment of battlefield crisis: do we pretend we haven't noticed the Russian guns and let our cavalry ride up the valley, or do we have the courage to change our orders to accommodate this new information? Dixon quotes Festinger: "Once the decision has been made and the person is committed to a given course of action, the psychological situation changes decisively. There is less emphasis on objectivity and there is more partiality and bias in the way in which the person views and evaluates the alternatives." This decision can be made at any time - sometimes, sadly, before the chart is even cast, based solely on the astrologer's personal prejudices and assumptions. The earlier in the judging process it is made, the worse the judgement is likely to be, as it will consist merely of distorting or ignoring testimonies to make them

fit.

There is the “failure to exploit a situation gained and a tendency to ‘pull punches’ rather than press home an attack”, as if it is not quite the decent thing to strive to ones utmost, or to apply the *coup de grace* to a chart that you have managed to wound. Hedging and demurral may perhaps be virtues in the Diplomatic Corps, but not in either war or astrology. It is a familiar situation that the mobile units at the top of ones mind have achieved a break-through in a chart, but judgement is lost through the reluctance to



At the Apprentice's evening-classes, students are required to show they are carrying no preconceptions before attempting judgement.

commit the whole army to follow them up. If the mobile troops have achieved a break-through it is because a break-through can be made; we suggest that the astrologer who fails to drive home his advantage should be shot at dawn *pour encourager les autres*.

“Failure to make use of surprise” is an interesting astrological concept, suggesting many a strange consulting-room scenario. “A belief in mystical forces” is rather more common. How often have we heard the claim that “I’m an intuitive astrologer”? “I’m an intuitive engineer - let me build this bridge.” Intuition is fashionable; one is not cool without it. It has little if any place in astrology, being almost invariably either an excuse for laziness and lack of knowledge or a synonym for prejudice and immovable preconception. The client’s next-door neighbour has intuitions; from an astrologer he expects the truth.

“A suppression or distortion of news from the front” hardly needs comment. I, of course, have never made a mistake; but those astrologers who have are reluctant to admit it, even, often, to themselves. This relates to “an undue readiness to find scapegoats” - every other astrologer being incompetent - and “a distinctly paranoid element in the way some senior commanders have reacted to even the faintest breath of criticism; to the vaguest and most tactful suspicion of a raised eyebrow or cleared throat.” As it has now become unwise to mention any living astrologer without suggesting that he be immediately

awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, it does seem that the military is not the only sphere in which the reaction to criticism is 'distinctly paranoid'.

There is far more of value in Dixon's book than we can begin to address here. It does, indeed, perform for astrological practice one of the more valuable functions of astrology on daily life: it holds a mirror to it, through which we can see it from an unfamiliar angle and grow in understanding. We strongly recommend anyone with any interest in practical astrology to set aside Spurious Superfluous's "Treatise on Nit-Picking, Part IV" and reassess their practice in this light; for once the basic methods are known, it is by refining our hearts, rather than piling technique upon technique, that we shall achieve mastery of our craft. Dixon enumerates many of the snares of the fowler into which we are prone to fall, and from which we may escape only by making a final decision as to which of the two masters we wish to serve. William Lilly's advice *To the Student in Astrology* is more than just conventional piety, but a sound practical lesson in astrology, by following which we may become deaf to both the internal and external noises which cloud judgement. As Lilly tells us, "the more holy thou art, and more neer to God, the purer Judgment thou shalt give."

—————*—————

CHAMPION THE WONDERING HORSE

During an idle moment in the workshop, the Master scratched a chart in the sawdust on the floor in order to put the apprentices through their paces. Once the initial question, about the whereabouts of a lost cat, had been solved - thanks mainly to young Seth, who has recently won the Barclay Award for services to small furry animals and has now set his sights on becoming Craftsman with Special Responsibility for the Sixth House when Ebenezer, who looks more frail each day, finally retires - further questions were propounded by the cluster of eager youths. The trail led us first into the twelfth house, with some questions about a horse; then, it was suggested, the horse itself might ask a question. This brought up some interesting points of technique, and is worth opening to a wider audience.

We had judged that the horse might receive a good education by being sent away to the Spanish Riding School in Vienna to learn some manners (ninth house), but that it would not be able to earn much

money from its new-found knowledge (tenth and eighth houses both afflicted by malefics). The horse itself was worried, however. "I fear," it told us, "That some unknown hand will do foul deeds to me to prevent my performing to my full ability. Is this true?"

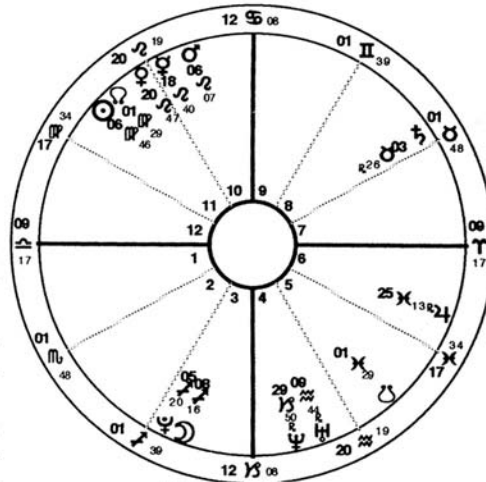
Like any other querent, the horse is shown by the Ascendant, so he is now signified by Venus. His worries concern a secret enemy, so we must look to the twelfth house and its ruler, Mercury. Alas! the chart makes quite clear that his fears are completely justified, for Mercury applies immediately to conjunct Venus. Mercury is the natural planet of anything sneaky

or underhand, and is peregrine, so all the more sneaky here: this is indeed someone the horse would do well to avoid.

"But," said the horse, "He should not be able to gain access to my stable, for my master loves and protects me. How can this be so?"

Sadly, we had to disillusion him, for although surprisingly articulate, our horse was but a poor judge of character, as the chart reveals. "What does Mercury have in his favour, that might help him in his dastardly deeds?" the Master asked.

As one voice, the assembled apprentices replied: "His mutual reception with the Sun." Pausing only to box the ears of one young lad who thought that mutual reception prevented a planet being peregrine (a peregrine planet is traditionally likened to a homeless wanderer: the fact that two tramps happen to like each other - mutual reception - doesn't provide them with a home) the Master explained that this was indeed the key. For what does the Sun signify here? Our usual course would be to look immediately to the house that it



Where is the cat?
Aug 30th 1998 9.20 am BST
London

Wm Lilly: his dogge



- Will my sore throat get better?
- No, you'll always be a little hoarse.

rules, in this case the eleventh. In this chart, there is a more obvious path to take (and no horse with this amount of interest in astrology could possibly have any friends), as the Sun disposes Venus. So the Sun is, literally, the ruler of the horse. In some circumstances this might be the horse's jockey; in this chart, it must be the owner. He is in league with Mercury, as shown by the mutual reception. Mercury, being small and slight by nature, is probably a jockey or stable-lad in his employ (also ruled by the Sun).

The Sun is ruled by and also exalts Mercury. Mercury is the secret enemy, and the Sun clearly has an interest in what he is up to, but it is also ruler of the Sun's own second house, the house of the Sun's money. So we have the motive that has occasioned this fiendish plot, doubtless an insurance scam or betting coup. There is also mutual reception between Venus and the Sun; but while that between the Sun and Mercury is beneficial to both parties, that between horse and owner is not. Venus is in the sign of the Sun, but is received into her fall. They are each in the other's triplicity, showing friendship, but fall is a stronger debility than triplicity is a dignity, so the relationship will do the horse no good - his owner is prepared to sacrifice this friendship by arranging for harm to be done to the horse (taking Venus into her fall), spurred on by the over-riding desire (the immensely strong reception of sign, exaltation and terms of Mercury) for money.

The Jockey Club has been informed.



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THE WILLIAM HILL AWARDS (cont.)

So all year long the noise of battle rolled
Among the stadia by the winter sea,
While Merlin, mid his tomes of knowledge old,
Foresaw which teams should gain the victory.

And so battle royal with the Dark Knight, Sir William of Ye Hill, continues. Dispatches from the front have previously concentrated on the one-off games, either finals of various competitions, or the televised matches which take place at times when no others are going on. Using the techniques we have outlined in these articles, results on finals are excellent: I cannot recall a final in any competition where these methods have failed. Results on the Monday and Friday night league matches, which are usually the only first-class games played on these evenings, are not quite at that level, but are still very good - and, importantly, the errors are visible: almost invariably it is the difficulty computing the balance between conflicting testimonies. Does Neptune on the Descendant outweigh a sextile from the MC to the MC ruler?

On Sunday afternoons, there are usually three televised games, starting at different times, and often one or two other matches. Our results here are not as reliable as Monday/Friday, but still good. Even though the charts between, say, a one o'clock game in Bristol and a six o'clock match in Aberdeen can be quite different, it seems as though there is a lowering of astrological intensity - or perhaps a wavering of the astrologer's concentration. This intensity reaches its peak in the finals: it is almost as if they are grosser or more tangible in some way, possibly because of the public attention that is focussed upon them.

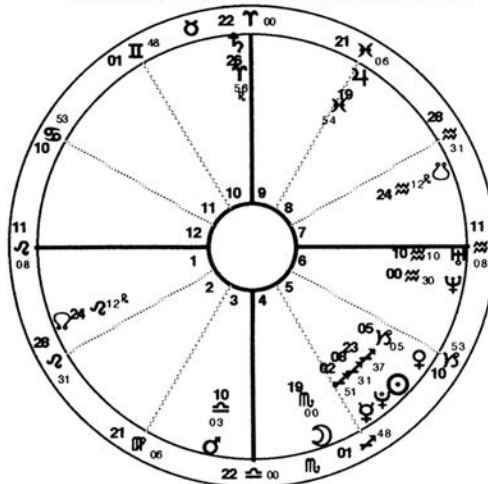
Our continual puzzles are with the midweek and Saturday programmes. On Tuesday, Wednesday and sometimes Thursday evenings there are usually a some six or a dozen matches in England, most of them kicking off at the same time, the others within fifteen minutes of that time. On Saturdays, there are around fifty first-class games, all or almost all starting at the same time. We have tried various methods for forecasting the results of individual games here, and have yet to find a reliable one. As we have pointed out before, you will read elsewhere that transits to the managers' birth-charts give this reliability. Believe this and you'll believe anything; in the Astrologer's Apprentice, we restrict ourselves to the non-fiction branch of astrology.

We are beginning to produce results on the midweek matches.

Before describing the method, however, we must first advise that those odd matches on those evenings that kick off at a different time should be ignored. If there are six matches at 7.45 and one at 7.30, it is tempting to think that the eccentric one can be treated as a singleton match and judged in its own right with our usual techniques: this is, for some reason, not so. This is true even on Saturdays, when there are sometimes one or two games kicking off several hours before the others.

What we are currently finding is that most of the chart for these midweek programmes can be ignored; all that is relevant is whatever testimony varies geographically. These testimonies can be isolated, and will apply in those matches where they are most exact (or not at all if they are not exact anywhere). This means that the Moon's aspects to main significators, which are usually so important, can be ignored, as they are the same everywhere. Similarly with aspects from the significators themselves. Suppose, for instance, that the charts for all our matches have Taurus rising. Venus, therefore, signifies the favourites. Moon applying to conjunct Venus would be a powerful sign that the favourites would win - but here it can be ignored. Similarly, Venus on the antiscion of Saturn would show the favourite losing - but it is most unlikely that all the favourites on this evening are going to lose: so this too can be ignored.

Suppose, however, that the antiscion of Saturn were close to the Ascendant. This is a powerful negative testimony for the favourites. The Ascendant will vary over a few degrees with the location of the matches. In that match where it is most exact, it seems that the



Kick-off
Dec 15 1998 7.45 pm GMT
West London

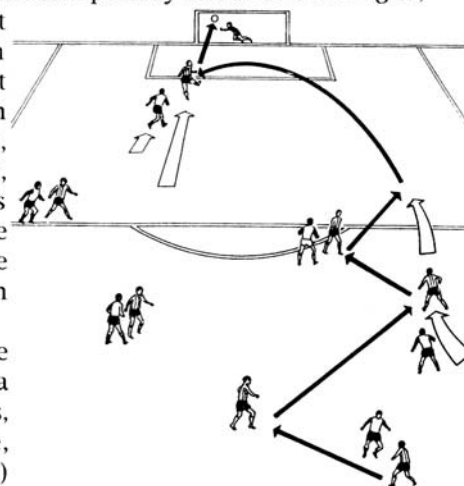
testimony will apply. What this means in practice is that we are looking almost exclusively at the angles and the positions of Fortuna and its antiscion (this is certainly simple!). As another example, suppose the Ascendant ruler is wandering around the seventh cusp. In one location, it is applying to the cusp by just half a degree: powerful testimony of the favourite winning. In another, it is inside the seventh house by just half a degree: powerful testimony of the favourite losing. The other charts can be ignored. In a country the size of England, all matches starting at one

time will usually have the same sign rising; even when there is a change, we have not found testimonies involving aspects to main signifiers reliable. When the European competitions are being played, even though there can be big differences in kick-off time, the local time tends to be much the same, resulting in similar charts which can be judged in the way we outline here.

As an example, we can consider the games on the evening of Tuesday, December 15th. There were eight FA Cup-tie replays and one league match, all kicking off at 7.45. Leo rises, so the favourites are shown by the Sun; their opponents by Saturn, Lord of the seventh. The geographical variable in which we are interested is the opposition from the Sun to the antiscion of Fortuna. This would show the favourite losing.

According to Sir William and other students of form, only one of these matches would be a contest: all the others were expected to be easy wins for the favourites. Our prediction was that the matches in Brentford, Wigan and Manchester could see the favourites defeated, as these were the locations at which this opposition was closest. All three of these teams were at short odds to win. In the event, all the other matches (six out of nine) were won easily by the favourites during normal time. All three of our fancied underdogs took their games into extra time, and the final outcome of these matches repeated what we have previously found - that, all things being equal, the longer the odds against them, the stronger the testimony must be if that team is to win. In Manchester, Darlington, at the longest odds of the three, lost after extra time. Both the other games went to a penalty shoot-out. In Wigan, Notts County, at the next longest odds, lost on penalties; while in Brentford, Oldham, the least unfancied of the three, won. In judging the charts for these games, it must be remembered, as ever, that the size of the Sun's disc means that aspects which would be considered separated if they were cast by other planets may still be in play if cast by the Sun.

Results with this are interesting when faced with up to a dozen or so matches. On Saturdays, we have not found it effective, though as the one (out of fifty) games it high-lighted on a recent



Multiple translations of light

Saturday was Manchester United's shock home defeat by Middlesbrough, there might be something in it. More promising, we suspect, would be an investigation of the dodecatemoria or even finer divisions of signs; this would give subsidiary rulers on the angles, which might well prove more important here than the main significators. If dealing with this level of intricacy, the exact location of the grounds would have to be taken: the difference from one side to the other of even a small town is exactly the kind of geographical nicety that we are trying to pinpoint. Any of our readers with an excess of Virgo in their naticities could usefully amuse themselves investigating this further.



THE DEFAULT OPTION

The great virtue of astrology is that it allows us a completely dispassionate view of whatever situation we are examining. So when I look at a chart cast for my question "Does Susie love me?" I can set aside my assumptions that no woman can resist me and see quite clearly that Susie is the exception who can. Simple enough in theory, and, indeed, simple enough most of the time in practice.

Most of the time, then, astrology enables us to keep our presuppositions locked securely out of the way of our judgement, and we are well advised to cooperate with astrology by striving to our utmost to avoid importing our prejudices. Every romance I have ever had might have been an unmitigated disaster, but if my client's question is "Is there a future in this relationship?" I must avoid judging the chart according to the yellow light of my own jaundiced view and see instead only what is before me.

On occasion, however, we need to be aware that we are judging within our own, necessarily partial, view of the situation. This concerns what we might call 'the default option': that is, what happens when the chart shows nothing happening? In most questions, the default option is inbuilt: "Will I marry Susie?" and nothing in the chart, the answer is No; as with "Will I get the job?" or "Will I win the lottery?" But if the client phones on the morning of his wedding, just to make sure everything is on line, asking "Will I marry Susie?" our chart with nothing in it would give the default answer Yes. If no disruption is shown, all will proceed as planned.

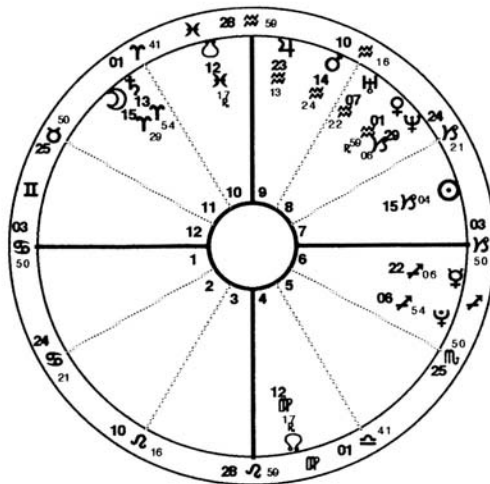
The problem is really one of accurate phrasing of the question.

Our bride-groom-to-be does not really mean “Will I marry Susie?” but “Is anything going to go horribly wrong?” so our default option is as before: No - nothing happening in the chart, nothing happening to disrupt the wedding. As, however, it is unlikely that our clientele consists entirely of schoolteachers, it is unlikely that the questions we receive will all be phrased with pedantic nicety; the consequences can be confusing. I was asked whether the election in Pakistan would take place. The picture I had of the situation there was one of extreme volatility, and my assumption was that it very probably would not. The chart showed nothing happening, so I judged No. Had my understanding been clearer, I would have known that the chance of the Pakistani election not taking place was little greater than that of the elections in Britain or America failing to happen, so the chart with nothing happening should have given the answer Yes: no disruption is shown, so nothing untoward will happen and all will proceed as planned. The astrologer’s failure lay not in the judgment of the chart, but in his inability to elicit the necessary degree of clarity in the client’s question.

This is something of which we must be aware. Particularly, it seems, in questions of conception or relationships, it is sometimes necessary to beat ones clients violently to make them give up simple pieces of information which are vital for the correct understanding of the chart. The perennial difficulty with judging ones own charts has much to do with this, though here the major problem is of too much, rather than too little information. The Saturn on the Ascendant which destroys our client’s question is easily explained away as Granny coming to tea if it occurs in our own chart, allowing us still to live in hope of whatever unlikely gratification we have decided we deserve.

We must also be aware of this question of defaults when considering separating aspects. The separating aspect in the chart, having already happened, usually shows an event that has already happened at the time the question is asked. But it can show that all will proceed according to plan. It is as if the separation has already been put in motion, and as there will be no obstruction, so far as the chart is concerned it is already over.

This client had booked a long trip overseas. To make this trip, she had to let her house; this she had arranged, but she was worried that the builders who were making some improvements to it would not finish before she left, the deal would fall through and she would have to cancel or postpone her journey. The relevant aspects in this chart are all separating. If we stick to a literal interpretation of the rules, this makes no sense; but if we invite Nicholas Culpeper’s esteemed brethren, Dr Reason and Dr Experience, to assist in our judgement it falls into place.



Tenants/builders/trip?
 Jan 5th 1998 3.05 pm GMT
 London

With Cancer rising, the querent is shown by the Moon. She is separating from a conjunction with Saturn, Lord of the ninth house of long journeys. Obviously, the querent has not made the journey already, or the question should not be asked; we must judge that it will proceed as planned. The ninth house is afflicted by the presence of Mars, which rules the sixth house of slaves and hence shows the builders. With both Saturn and the Moon (the journey and the querent) ruled by Mars, the importance of the builders is apparent; that Mars is itself ruled by Saturn, Lord of the ninth, indicates that the builders are there only because of the

journey - the work would not otherwise have been ordered. The Moon separates from easy aspect to Mars: again, the querent and the builders have not yet parted company, but we must judge that this parting is under way. The affliction to the ninth still holds, but it will not come from the builders: the placement of both Moon and Saturn in the eleventh house of hopes and wishes, also ruled by Mars, shows the particular source of the problem - one that would involve an unnecessary digression to deal with here. Finally, we have the business of letting the house. As ruler of the seventh, Saturn would also show the tenants, while the Sun, Lord of the fourth, is the house. Again we have separating aspects, both between the house and the tenants and between the querent and the house (the Moon has just translated light between tenants and house, bringing them together). Again, these events have not yet actually happened, but must be judged as all proceeding according to plan. The mutual reception between the house and the builders is a cause for concern: with the house being received into its detriment by Mars which is itself peregrine, we must doubt their competence. But they will at least be finished.

And that is what happened: the builders finished their work, the tenants moved in and the querent jetted off on holiday. We must also note here two important points about mutual reception, as the receptions between the various players in this drama are of significance in determining the outcome of her trip: mutual reception can strengthen a planet only insofar as the planet with which it has this reception has

any strength to give it; if the planet itself is too weak, it cannot be helped much even by the strongest of partners.

The first of these is obvious common-sense: if neither planet has any strength, this strength is not going to be conjured up from nowhere just because they receive each other. Two tramps may like each other no end (mutual reception), but they are still tramps. Thus with planets that are peregrine, or, in the traditional term, 'like homeless wanderers'; all the more so if the planets in question are in detriment or fall: my best friend may say, "I've lost all my money - help me out," but if I am in the same boat, as debilitated as he, my pockets too are empty and I can be of no assistance.

So a weak planet cannot give substantive help. Nor can it receive it. This is known as 'reflecting light': the light is given through the reception, but if the planet is in detriment or fall it cannot hold onto it, rather like a sick man who is fed but cannot keep anything down. Some of the authorities state that planets thus debilitated cannot be in mutual reception at all; this seems an exaggeration, as even in that state, Dr Experience tells me, it does take the edge off things a little - as with my impoverished friend and I: we cannot offer each other material help, but we can give sympathy. This may not pay the bills, but it is better than nothing.

TERRIBLE DREAMS

Lilly gives an example of a horary about bad dreams. In non-fictional astrology, dreams are a ninth, rather than twelfth, house matter. That is, they are regarded as a form of learning, the reliability or otherwise of the message imparted being shown by the condition of that house and the relevant planets. In this chart, Jupiter and Saturn rule the ninth house between them and Lilly says that most authorities would judge that the dreams were of no significance: "their position in the twelfth according to the best Authors, intimates the vanity of the Dream, and rather a Person or fancy oppressed with various perturbations and worldly matters, than any other matter." Lilly, however, overrules the best authors and judges from Mars, as it is the only planet in an angle.

Mars rules the Ascendant and also disposes of Fortuna. It is opposed to Fortuna as well, so he judges that the querent is worried about his finances. As Saturn is also Lord of the tenth house of position and eminence, and afflicts Jupiter by conjunction, he is also worried

about how he might maintain himself after losing a position of authority. But from the close sextile of benefic Jupiter to Mars, he judges that there will not be any major problems, just some damage to his estate. This, Lilly says, proved true.

By taking the most angular planet as the key to the chart, what Lilly is in fact doing is treating it as an event. Following this lead, we can fill in some of the details. With a debilitated malefic in the first house, we can see that the querent has problems. As this malefic is ruler of the first house (that is, it represents him, so he is afflicting himself) these problems are of his own creating. This malefic planet is separating from opposition to Fortuna. Separating aspects show what has happened in the past, so we can see that the cause of his troubles is some bad decisions he has made about his estate, which is 'intrusted out' (in the seventh house - in the hands of others).

This is confirmed by other testimony in the chart, which also indicates exactly what these bad decisions were. The Moon often shows what the querent is thinking about: here, it is in the sixth house of servants. The most prominent feature of the chart is the combustion of Mercury - that is, Mercury's affliction by the Sun. As always, we find out what the planets represent primarily by seeing which houses they rule. What is Mercury? Ruler of the second, so the querent's money. What is the Sun? Ruler of the sixth, so the querent's servant. He has entrusted his estate to someone who is not fit (Sun is in its detriment) to run it. As Mercury is moving deeper into combustion, this situation is going to get worse. The crucial importance of the bad servant in this situation is emphasised by the position of the Sun, squaring both Mars

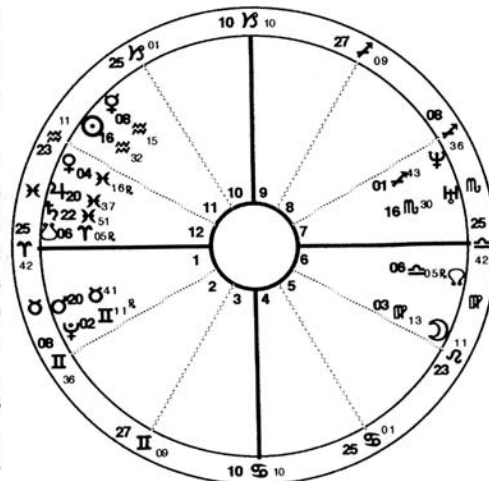


Lilly dreams of fish

(the querent) and Fortuna (his estate). That the servant has control of the estate is confirmed by Fortuna being conjunct the Sun by antiscion.

This is not good. But, as Lilly says, the sextile from Jupiter to Mars prevents anything too dismal happening. It seems that the querent has been alleviating this situation by dipping his hands into his wife's pocket. Venus rules the seventh house, and so signifies her. Mars in the sign of Venus shows her importance in his thinking. Jupiter - the bringer of good fortune to this beleaguered Mars - rules the eighth house, that is, the second from the seventh, the house of the wife's money. As the Moon, the querent's co-significator, applies immediately to oppose Venus, however, it appears that she is less than thrilled with this turn of events and there is trouble brewing. It is not surprising he is having bad dreams.

With thanks to Gerasime Patilas for raising this discussion.



Terrible Dreams
Feb 5 1643 N/S 9.43 am LMT
London

THE POWER OF TERMS

- a horary from Alexandre Nigri, our Brazilian correspondent

Bumping into Neptunia on Copacabana beach, she told me that the Astrologer's Apprentice is always pleased to see interesting, verifiable horaries and would appreciate this one. The Solar Eclipse of August 22th falling at 28.48 Leo, conjunct the Lion's Heart, with Mercury, Venus and Mars also in that sign, made me wonder what would happen in Italy, a country traditionally under Leo. Two months later, I was reading that the Italian Premier was about to fall from power, so I decided to set this horary: 'When will the Italian Premier fall?'

Predicting that an Italian government will fall is rather like predicting that the Sun will rise; but the issue here is the exact timing. This is shown by Mercury stepping out of his terms, which illustrates the importance of these peculiar dignities that traditional astrologers

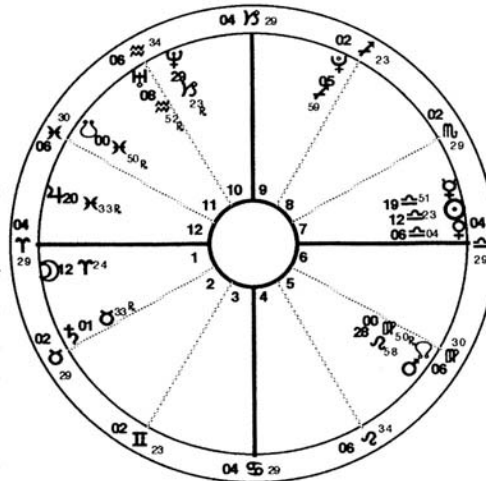
will insist on using.

The hour ruler is the Sun, and Aries is rising, so the chart is radical by hour; more significantly, the Ascendant ruler is Mars, conjunct the North Node, and exactly conjunct the position of the eclipse. Small wonder that I felt inclined to set this chart.

The Sun is the natural ruler of Italy. It is in Libra, the sign of its fall, and is also peregrine. This well describes the situation of political turmoil. The Moon is in Aries, just two minutes away from an exact opposition with the Sun, showing the situation reaching its climax. As the question is about the Italian Premier, we look at the radical sixth house, the tenth (Premier) from the ninth (foreign country). Mercury, the Premier, is combust: that is, afflicted by the Sun, which represents Italy. It is also having an torrid ride through the the Via Combusta.

Mercury is in his own terms. Were the Premier strong, we would have expected to find Mercury in his own sign or in the sign of his exaltation. But this is not the case, and a term is a small dignity to keep him in power. Mercury is escaping from combustion so we might expect that things will turn out well; but the Moon separates from opposition to the fiery Sun, and applies to oppose Mercury, re-activating the combustion. Mercury is burned out.

So far we have determined that there will be a fall. We must now determine when. The planets involved are the Moon, the Sun and Mercury. All these are in cardinal signs and angular houses. The angles are in cardinal signs. This speaks for days. There are seven and a half degrees from the Moon to Mercury. As the Moon is swift, we might take this as seven days. But no: Mercury is in its own terms, which run from 19 to 24 Libra. It is four degrees away from the end of its terms. This shows the Premier stepping down, before anything worse (the opposition) occurs. Four days later, he gave up the struggle.



When Premier fall?
 Oct 5th 1998 5.15 pm BZT
 Rio de Janeiro

—————*—————

A humble country-man who serves God is more pleasing to Him than a conceited intellectual who knows the course of the stars, but neglects his own soul. - St Thomas a Kempis

NEPTUNIA REPLIES...

- a word from our sensitive seer

Dear Neptunia, I'm so confused, I know no one can help me but you. Every morning I cast a horoscope for the day, and each day, just when I've worked out what a happy time I'm going to have, my boyfriend points to one or other of the planets and says 'That's sextile the Nodes: you get to clean the oven,' or 'That's square the South Node: you've got to scrub the floors'. He says it's 'a degree of fatality' and it's necessary for my inner growth; but I'd rather eat chocolate and watch TV. It doesn't seem fair to me, Neptunia, but I know you'll be able to explain it so I can understand. *Yours in desperation, Tracey*

Dear Tracey. I do sympathise. It sounds to me as if your boyfriend has been picking up on the sordid practices that the colonists resort to, hidden in their lonely outposts far from the restraints of civilised society. Why does he think we sent them abroad in the first place? Their antics may make for entertainment, but are not a guide for life or astrological practice. We all know that 'Country and Western' music of theirs has some good tunes - but, Tracey, you're not supposed to take the lyrics seriously. How many dead dogs can one child have?

If I'm not very much mistaken, your boyfriend has been listening to that old Barbara Watters album, "Live at the Grand Old Opry", where she stomps her way through many of the old country classics: "Pluto Transit on Highway 49," "Chiron in a Bottle", "U.R.A.N.U.S." and such-like. This isn't to my taste, but I know that some folk like it. But then she puts in some of her original compositions - and, Tracey, they sure don't write songs like they used to! It's stuff like "The Moon's Nodes (are a degree of fatality)" that make me wonder if there's anything under her stetson except hair. I'm amazed to see that so many other singers have recorded their own versions of this dross.

"The Moon's Nodes" is one of those dreadful 'story' songs, where Watters makes out that whenever a planet is in the same degree as the Moon's Nodes, no matter in which sign it falls, everything goes wrong with her life. If you remember the first verse, you'll see what I mean:

*My baby left and went back to the bar-room;
He shot my dog as he walked out that door.
Now little Tammy looks up from her wheel-chair,
Asking "Why don't Daddy love me any more?"*

Then the steel guitar chimes in and Watters starts whining:

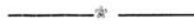
*Them Moon's Nodes - they're a degree of fatality,
Them Moon's Nodes - girl you'd better stay clear.*

*Sure as Monaco is a principality,
The degree of the Nodes, girl, you'd better beware.*

Maybe I'm being over-fussy, but her philosophical argument does seem a mite slack.

Country fans will no doubt argue that criticising this song on the basis of astrological principles is like taking a knowledge of anatomy to "Achy Breaky Heart"; but - call me old-fashioned if you will - I think that even in the colonies, where astrology is a branch of the entertainment industry, some semblance of logic should be retained. It is the fundamental principle of astrology that without light nothing happens. The Moon's Nodes are points in space, not objects. They have no light, so they cannot possibly cast aspects. There is great significance in a planet falling on one or other of the Nodes; within the classical conception of astrology there is no reason whatsoever why that degree in any other sign should be treated differently to any other. Nor is there evidence in practice.

So I suggest you tell your boyfriend that he can whoop and holler along to Ms Watters (the Las Vegas recordings are a personal favourite of mine - check out "It's Lonely in this Fifth House Without You") but if he tries to put the lyrics into practice, you just hog-tie the varmint and whup his ass. Though why his donkey should take the blame for his misdemeanours we can never know. *Yours caringly, Neptunia*



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