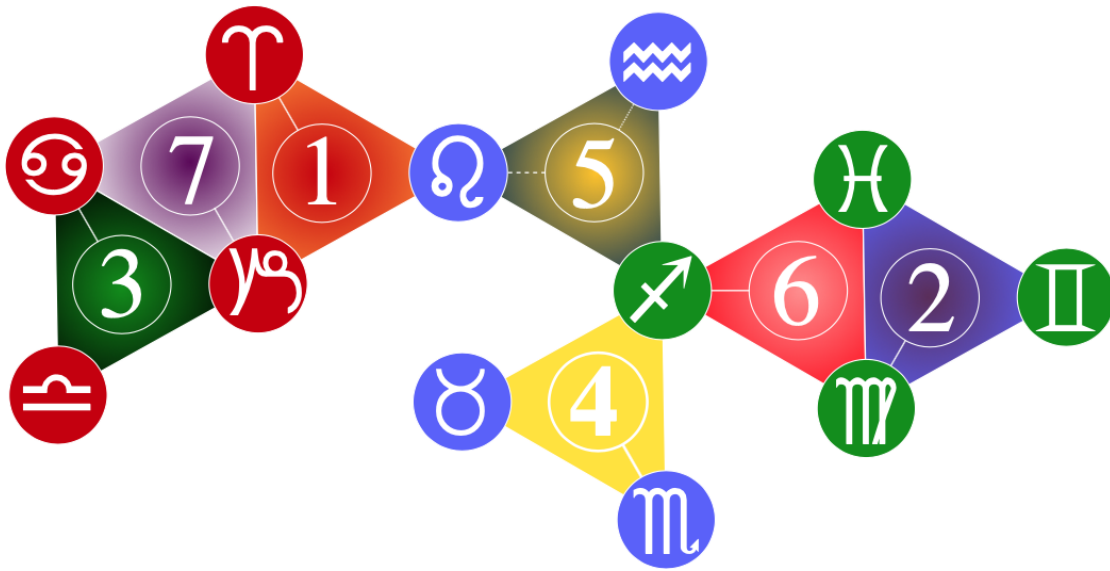


# Modern Esoteric Astrology



© 27th May 2000, updated 1st August 2021

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>



# Contents

<b>I</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	The illusory nature of astrological concepts . . . . .	2
1.2	The ‘big to small’ principle . . . . .	6
1.3	Change in the models of astrology . . . . .	6
1.4	Emotional infancy and the pitfalls of belief . . . . .	8
1.5	Mass, individual and group: the spectrum of response . . . . .	10
<b>2</b>	<b>Three areas of development, three Astrological Crosses</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1	The Zone of Experience . . . . .	15
2.2	The Zone of Intensity . . . . .	16
2.3	The Zone of Synthesis . . . . .	17
2.4	This is not a linear path . . . . .	18
2.5	How these three areas relate to esoteric astrology . . . . .	19
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>20</b>

## **Part I**

# **Introduction**

# Overview

## 1.1 The illusory nature of astrological concepts

The building of concepts and cultural paradigms that reflect the cultural search for pattern and meaning implies a need for revisions to astrology as it reflects this process. The individual horoscope is an indication of inner choice within this framework.

*“All astrological systems, I suggest, are creations of the human mind in its attempt to find order in its experience”* — (Addey 1976, p21)

The astrological signs bearing the names of their original corresponding stellar constellations carry an aggregation of thought-forms contained within a western astrological paradigm that spans a staggering period covering three millennia of active use. The mythology of these signs has become a powerful set of symbols in the architecture of the human collective unconscious. The various astrological signs of different cultures, like the hours of the day or the seasons, reflect the way humanity perceives its place on earth, and are effectively patterns imposed upon the natural scattering of stars—patterns that persist even in current astronomical terms. Mayan, Chinese and other historical and contemporary cultures created astrological systems that divide the stars into their own unique groupings, each with a significance invested in them that creates a sense of place in the global and cosmic environment. For instance, the ‘dark constellations’ of the Andean Incas map the stars, but also find patterns where there is little light (Pacheco, Flores, and Salazar 2009; Joneson 2014). Further, the familiar annual signs of contemporary western astrology have shifted over time so that they are no longer synchronised with the astronomical stellar constellations that inspired them; an issue popularly invoked to ‘discredit’ astrology. However, Vedic astrology retains this sidereal alignment (for an excellent introduction see Defouw and Svoboda 1996), as does the western sidereal approach. This issue is also covered in Alice Bailey’s *Esoteric Astrology* (Bailey 1951).

Another issue: the spatial divisions devised by Greek astrologers that form the daily

anti-clockwise astrological houses break down at extreme latitudes (except with equal house divisions), and the symbology of the four seasons fails in the Southern hemisphere where the Southern Spring parallels the Northern Autumn. Added to this is the fact that many of the original features of early Greek, ancient Egyptian and Babylonian astrology have fallen into disuse and are forgotten by contemporary astrologers.

In short, any astrological system can be seen either as an illusion or as a symbolic system that maps human experience into a cosmic perspective. Generally, astrology is a means of creating a sense of order and human context by placing the movements of planets relative to the Earth, and the movement of the Earth itself against the stellar and solar background, in formalised temporal-spatial divisions that charts daily and planetary cycles, the solar year, and the stellar constellations in culturally-meaningful patterns. Some of these patterns have come to transcend many national boundaries; others are specific to certain cultures.

Major contributions to astrological mythology have come from groups and individuals who know—consciously or unconsciously—how to build and contribute to such thought-forms so that they can be used as gateways to archetypal principles. Each culture has its ‘pattern-makers’; key thinkers who determine the way in which symbols, mythical systems or ideas are adopted, adapted, invented and utilised to serve psychological needs. This is also true of broader cross-cultural groupings, for instance, astrologers worldwide who utilise current western, Vedic or East Asian systems.

### **Astrological evolution**

However, when the use of such forms reaches limits within a culture, its astrological systems demand an update. As astrologers in the western tradition search for what might be eluding them in current systems, this has produced a forest of permutations designed to enhance the original methods. These developments represent the need to reflect recent developments in collective human consciousness. They are a reflection of the widespread urge for inner growth and self-knowledge, evidenced not only by the New Age movement, but also within psychology and many other areas of human life. They have arisen with an increasing collective sense of the crucial global issues that transcend national boundaries, such as environmental damage and social injustice.

For developing individuals using astrology as a tool, this means that a horoscope must be interpreted from within. The viewpoint of consciousness, opportunity and choice replaces the concept of forces *acting on* the individual, even if these forces are seen as

collective or archetypal. Fresh and detached insights are required to accept statistical and scientific findings, placing these within historical and esoteric astrological traditions, or at least acknowledging the findings without defensive reactions based on belief. The resulting demand is for an astrological framework into which innovative insights can be integrated within a coherent whole, and for an astrology that specifically serves those who have chosen to grow and work on themselves; to expand and liberate their awareness from limitations they are beginning to recognise as self-imposed.

The origins of western astrology are bound up with the need to forecast the cycles of history. Its primary use in the originating cultures was as an oracle concerning the fate of the nation and its rulers (Campion 1994; Barton 1994). The graduation of astrological doctrine to individual interpretation in historic Europe began with the translation and interpretation in the Italian renaissance of Greek texts, most notably by Renaissance Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino, whose influential 1489 publication *De vita libri tres* (Three books on life) helped shape current astrological tradition (Ficino, Kaske, and Clark 1989; Celenza 2015). Greek texts contain the earliest known *individual* horoscopes (Campion 2003).

The cosmological viewpoint of Bailey’s Esoteric Astrology has its roots in the theosophy that emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century, which in turn takes Neoplatonism as one of its influences (Kazlev and Harvat 2007). Two of the most notable contributors to this school of thought (which had a significant influence on a number of prominent thinkers and creative people of the era such as Kandinsky, Mondrian and Scriabin) were Theosophical society founder Helena P. Blavatsky, author of that ‘bible’ of theosophy (Blavatsky 1888/1984) and her successor Dr. Annie Besant.

After Blavatsky pointed the way in the Secret Doctrine, Alan Leo (who was actually charged with ‘fortune telling’ in 1914) was the first astrologer to adopt theosophical ideas and publish them as a workable astrology; his work (Leo 1913) is often referred to in Bailey’s own *Esoteric Astrology*. In the first half of the twentieth century, other thinkers such as Max Heindel (M. Heindel and A. F. Heindel 1918/1989; M. Heindel 1919/1984) and Rudolf Steiner (Rawlings 2013; HHteam 2011) refined or adapted the theosophical philosophy at the same time as Jung had become independent from Freud and was refining his approach to the inner life of the collective human psyche (Jung 1921/1971). With Steiner, Alice Bailey proved to be one of the most enduring—if somewhat veiled and oblique—influences on contemporary thought, occult and psychological.

These ideas fostered an astrology that places universal principles and inner, collective

growth before individual character issues and prognostication. Later, Arcane School members Dane Rudhyar and his friend and student Alexander Rupert (Rudhyar 1971; Rupert 1978) re-examined astrology from the perspective of cycles, and used these Theosophically-based ideas as a springboard for their own unique approaches. To highlight the connection, Rudhyar's *Astrology of personality* was originally published by Alice and Foster Bailey's Lucis Trust in 1936 (Rudhyar 1987).

Humanistic psychology, with its emphasis on personal respect and on being true to oneself, followed soon after. The paths outlined by esoteric astrology and its psychological siblings trace similar lines, based on a general shift in human consciousness towards self-responsibility and awareness. Thanks to the work of pioneering individuals like Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas (Greene and Sasportas 1987), psychologically-based astrology is now well-established. In a parallel evolution, with Alan Oken being one of the first astrologers to reframe esoteric astrology in a practical, usable way (Oken 1990), more writers have continued this initiative such as Kurt Abraham (Abraham 2009) or Ruth Mierswa (Ruth Mierswa and Richard Mierswa 1987). Several other astrologers have also taken Bailey's work as a starting-point, for example: Phillip Lindsay, Torgny Jansson, Donna Mitchell-Moniak.

### **Outing dated language and prejudice**

Early esoteric writers—under the spell of modernist notions concerning abstract ideals about progress—had no idea how misinterpretations of the theory of evolution would, when combined with existing cultural prejudice, lead to the horrors of social Darwinism and consequent waves of racial and ethnic ‘cleansing’. They failed to see how the ‘hierarchy of evolution’ could be misinterpreted, and lacked the knowledge to challenge Victorian notions of ‘primitive races’. Some quotes from that time—e.g. from Rudolf Steiner—are shockingly racist, although they were commonly-held by many supposedly educated people at the time. Bailey's assertion that the Jewish ‘race’ was from an ‘earlier solar system’ is also deeply questionable, given the anti-semitism of the age and her Christian background. Although science has corrected these errors, it is regretful that such ignorance persists and many people have yet to catch up. Ideas are dangerous, and we need to be vigilant at all times of being swept along by cultural trends that can lead to grotesque outcomes far from the originating source and intention. In the case of Bailey's cosmology, this project will explain the key points in contemporary language, sidestepping or restating any outdated occult ideas and cultural presumptions. We may think we know better now, but vigilance is prudent when history can repeat itself.

## 1.2 The ‘big to small’ principle

*“Under the occult method, we must begin with the universal and the whole; in time the individual and the particular will stand revealed, but in relation to the whole.”*  
(Bailey 1951, p591)

The shift from an outwardly-determined ‘fate’ to an inwardly-sourced consciousness is a reflection of a growing sense of spiritual independence that demands choice and self-determination. Astrological interpretation has undergone a parallel expansion to which esoteric astrology has made a significant contribution, reflecting the need for human development by offering a sense of context that both transcends and enhances the individual life path, and contextualises it in a more inclusive cosmic framework.

One of the initial problems with applying Theosophically-based ideas to astrology is that of scale: there is a great deal of material concerning vast cosmic processes that appear to have little relation to the individual horoscope. However, in the true esoteric tradition this broader material is offered for scaling down through *correspondence* to the human level, following the hermetic axiom ‘as above, so below...’. The aim is two-fold: firstly, to foster individual realisation and intuition over procedural or over-analytical approaches, and thereby to encourage wisdom to emerge from knowledge; and secondly, to filter access to the material so that benefit is gained by those most willing to put in the effort required to extract and apply the desired knowledge. A casual or superficial application of esoteric principles serves only to confuse and, in the case of astrology, would only cloud the already complex and sometimes cloudy astrological heavens. If a criticism can be made of contemporary astrology, it might be that—influenced by the intense cultural individualism of the recent past—it has increased focus on the individual at the expense of that individual’s place in the overall picture. Personal growth can consequently appear barren and somewhat solitary, divorced as it has become from the broader cosmic picture that movements like Theosophy attempted to provide.

## 1.3 Change in the models of astrology

Human shifts are mirrored in astrological culture, so psychological and scientific approaches can enhance the body of astrological practice.

*“Most astrological research is marred by errors in methodology and statistical treatment. It would seem that such methodological errors are made not only by as-*



*trologers, but equally by critics who attempt to disprove astrological claims.” (Eysenck 1983)*

Given that astrology is—as Addey puts it—a ‘creation of the human mind’, what might inform a future astrology? A more robust approach must find a deeper symbolic dimension—one that enables us to contextualise our individual development within a bigger picture. A wider view may also include developments outside its own discipline—of particular interest are the following three areas:

1. psychologically-based astrology, focussing on the development of human consciousness;
2. the study of cycles and their interplay: solar, lunar, planetary, diurnal, annual and cosmic;
3. scientific findings with relevance to astrological practice, including astrological research that follows a scientific method with statistical correlation and carefully-chosen data.

These all connect with current trends in human development. **The first**, because as a species, our most significant development is in the field of psychological awareness. This includes a strong focus on emotional intelligence as a major area in human relations; hasty reactions and fanatical or dogmatic responses due to personal investment in a particular viewpoint can be seen as the root of many conflicts: interpersonal, regional and national, right up to to the global issues that are now part of everyday life. **The second**, because our connection to the natural world is most clearly enhanced by an appreciation of our relationship with the rhythmic patterns and complex interactions of many differing natural cycles, from our internal biological systems to the planetary interplay relevant to astrology. **The third**, because our striving for knowledge is most evident in the more adventurous areas of scientific discovery, although such findings are often met with indifference by some astrologers (Dean and Mather 1977; Smit 2000) and—to date—largely serve only to demonstrate the symbolic nature of astrology. It is a mistake to hope for ‘proof’ of a symbolic system.

However, after much painstaking research, the Gauquelins (Gauquelin 1969; Gauquelin 1991) nurtured a promising scientific seed with the statistically significant ‘Gauquelin zones’ and other (sometimes repeatable) findings now accepted in the practice of some astrologers. A glance through the 1970’s *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology* (Dean

and Mather 1977) demonstrates the powerful human urge to push the boundaries of the discipline. Throughout the 50s, 60s and early 70s (when most of the key figures died) sidereal astrologers carried out in-depth research into several crucial questions in astrology, attempting to incorporate and critique the findings of scientific research, which many astrologers found contentious. Some of this work may be flawed or incomplete but—like the Gauquelins’ findings—it is extremely thought-provoking, especially if it highlights facets of astrology that might at least be suitable areas for deeper analysis. The question is, how many astrologers want to see parts of astrology systematically examined when, for them, it has become primarily a belief system?

In an attempt to help address this challenge, a developing esoteric astrology must take account of such developments, and address shortcomings and inconsistencies in the original *Esoteric Astrology* of Alice Bailey. Despite these issues, there is an essential underlying simplicity to its basic tenets, and the emphasis on human development within a larger universal picture provides a useful framework for new astrological findings and developments. The underlying simplicity of esoteric astrology can help simplify otherwise confusing facets of astrological complexity (for instance, aspect families).

Most significantly, much of Alice Bailey’s work encourages us to step back from the self-absorption evident in various corners of the New Age, and move towards a broader and more inclusive view of human evolution.

#### 1.4 Emotional infancy and the pitfalls of belief

How belief, fear, and emotional defensiveness hinder development and open discussion.

*“Your society [...] seems not to understand the fundamental inconsistency between individual freedom and the common welfare. The two must be carefully balanced. No group can survive, let alone thrive, unless what is good for the overall community is more important than individual freedom . . . How can anyone with any intelligence possibly justify, in terms of the overall community, the accumulation and hoarding of enormous material assets by a few individuals when others do not even have food, clothing and other essentials?” (Clarke and Lee 1996)*

A truly empathic or emotionally aware culture can’t enjoy comforts gained at the expense of others. There is something seriously unbalanced about ancient spiritual practices being a form of New Age commercial currency, while some of the nations in which those

practices originated supply cheap labour to transnational corporations, or their peoples have been marginalised.

The changes many of us are aiming to help create can only occur when individuals adopt the kind of approach outlined (to take one example) by humanistic psychology (O' Hara 1963). Simple ideas like congruence between inner motives and outer actions; self-respect leading to respect for others; emotional security leading to freedom from defensive aggression; self-acceptance leading to a tolerance of difference. Expanding this approach, personal wellbeing depends upon the welfare of the social and natural environment, and the insight that this environment—while it begins in neighbourhoods, regions and nations—actually covers the entire globe.

Physical maturity for our species occurred long ago—the human form has hardly changed in over two million years—but we are only at the threshold of our emotional and mental potential. Freeing the life of feeling from defence and fear is the first step towards a more conscious use of our extensive emotional skills—in the esoteric philosophy of Alice Bailey, this involves what is termed the *second initiation*, and is intimately bound up with the basic approach behind esoteric astrology. It is encouraging that initiatives to promote a 'language of sensitivity' or 'emotional intelligence' already exist in a world where value judgements, fanatical reaction and vested interests are already challenging the authority of national governments and international organisations. The need to relate effectively—that is, really understand each other individually and nationally—remains a challenging issue. It is hampered by the same disregard for consequences that hinders the development of personal awareness and self-responsibility. In its own particular area of human interest, esoteric astrology can contribute to this development by revealing how individual development is inextricably connected to more inclusive groups. The intensely individual path of the *second initiation* eventually gives way to a wider purpose and—rather than struggling alone—fulfilment becomes a group humanitarian goal.

If human technology and intellectual achievements are ever to be distributed for the benefit of all, there is a pressing need for humanity to explore and develop these emotional skills. The evidence that they are in their infancy can be traced across social and cultural boundaries, and stands in the way of what Alice Bailey called 'right human relations'. This situation hinders the potential freeing of global resources from selfish interest, stifles equality of opportunity by engendering defensiveness, thoughtless projection and counter-projection of perceived 'negative' qualities, and perpetuates simplistic attitudes to 'right' and 'wrong' based on moral codes aimed mainly at the maintenance of accepted behaviour and established systems, rather than encouraging self-responsibility. It is

embodied both in the misappropriation of ideas like ‘defence’ and ‘national pride’, or when opinions and prejudices are aggressively asserted and defended in the face of valid criticism.

Wherever there is a strong emotional investment in something, it becomes rigid and resists the rigours of argument and open discussion. Although this is obvious in cultural and religious conflicts, on a smaller scale it also surfaces when refutations of astrology provoke astrologers to take valid questions personally and respond with defensive assertions or verbal attacks aimed at ‘scientists’. *Belief* is the key word here, for such attacks often come from those with a similar investment in a culturally-accepted version of the rationalism developed between the historical dominance of religion and the advent of quantum physics and—later—complexity theory and the interdisciplinary sciences. The enlightenment was a crucial shift, but science has since progressed much further, and offers quite astonishing insights into both the universe and human behaviour. These findings cannot be ignored or overlooked, either by astrologers or by those who wish to discredit the discipline.

Any strongly-held viewpoint tends to be invested with the emotional force of belief. But belief is not knowledge, wisdom or intuition. It is a viewpoint in which individual and collective self-worth is invested, which is the very reason it is defended so vigorously. It does not offer any real contribution towards knowledge, and can hinder the open discussion of contentious issues. Optimistically, the more rigid a viewpoint or attitude, the more vulnerable it is to the shattering of its form, thus releasing the imprisoned lives within.

### **1.5 Mass, individual and group: the spectrum of response**

From unconscious mass response to group awareness via self-responsibility.

*“As the world’s people demand freedom and self-determination, it is urgent that we learn how diverse communities of empowered individuals, with freedom to construct their own stories and identities, might live together in mutual peace. Perhaps it is not a vain hope that life in such communities might lead to the advance in human consciousness beyond anything we have yet experienced.” (O’ Hara 1963)*

As an alternative to traditional astrological rulerships, the planetary rulers of esoteric astrology—the *esoteric rulers*—encourage a reinterpretation of the traditional meanings of the signs, just as understanding the psychological implications of their mythological origins aided the transpersonal perspective on astrology. The overall effect is to

shift emphasis away from the isolated individual as a recipient of circumstance, or as an assemblage of externally-determined personal qualities, towards a realisation of co-responsibility in creating circumstances. It follows that the management of personal qualities then becomes a matter of developmental choice.

The crucial intermediary stage (or preparation for the *second initiation*) is exactly what many people are now experiencing as a psychological growth process, search for meaning, or personal crisis. By internalising the causes and qualities evident in the outer conditions of their lives, people empower themselves to take control over what were once seen as the immutable dictates of fate, or more recently (in the incomplete western adoption of the ancient Indian principle) as their *karma*. Ideally, the overall outcome of these changes hints at the evolution of groups of self-aware individuals acting as integrated personalities (i.e. people whose ideas, motives and actions work together), with a desire to interact with their environment from an active, rather than reactive, position—a shift mirrored in esoteric astrology in the reframing of the role of the *ascendant*.

Supported by the relative luxuries of contemporary civilisation, many individuals (at least those not seeking more luxury, fame, money, etc.) have an opportunity to begin this complex and often challenging growth process. It starts by internalising psychological projections such as blame, taking back responsibility for motives, thoughts and actions (often at some personal cost) and moving towards actively directing life from a point of knowing co-ordination. But this opportunity is much more accessible to those no longer at survival level or at the mercy of a society, a political, or a commercial agenda beyond their control. This returns us to the issue of emotional infancy, because humanity can only really change en-masse when major issues like poverty, exploitation, equality of opportunity and environmental impact are truly addressed in a spirit of collective responsibility, both global and local. However, the circle becomes complete through the realisation that this can only arise from an accumulating critical mass of self-responsible *individuals* who actively demonstrate their emotional maturity.

In becoming active to circumstance, we acknowledge two sides of the same issue: that we can both passively respond to, and also actively direct, external reality. We only gain this choice by taking responsibility for our actions and ceasing to blame externals for our life circumstances. The process of development takes place in three interwoven arenas of experience, some more prominent than others at any given time, which are roughly mirrored in esoteric astrology by the three crosses or modes: **mutable**, **fixed** and **cardinal**. In sequential linear form (often framed too rigidly in esoteric models as ‘grades of progress’) we are moving:

1. from being instinctively bound to the environment and reacting to circumstance, seeing the causes of life experience as originating externally, facing the same issues time and again until we learn that their causes are bound up with our own actions. This is the slow learning process of unconscious evolution;
2. through the realisation that separating ourselves from these external events denies us the power to change them, and that this illusory separation only allows the payoff of blaming others, circumstances ‘beyond our control’, or denying any connection with the consequences of our own actions. Yet crucially, realising that this must change;
3. towards recognising that our impact upon the world and other people causes events to have a rebound effect on us, in that our behaviour is thereby modified by realising that our inner experience is interminably connected with the external world, and bound up with the process of learning the art of awareness in action.

In more social terms the above processes might appear like this:

1. from being instinctively united with others and responding unconsciously to them en-masse with the rest of the group, maybe in social circles based on a shared cultural identity, perhaps in a close friendship group or extended family unit, or perhaps as part of a body of unquestioning belief (as distinct from faith);
2. we realise through the impact of our individuality upon others—our identity—that we have separated and become detached from our effect upon them, and experience the transitional conflict of blaming them for our own hindrances, problems and reactions (or vice-versa) while unconsciously recognising that we are ‘part of the problem’. This initiation of the inner growth process is an area to which we will often unconsciously return for evaluation;
3. we then begin to understand how this impact upon others causes a reactive effect on us, and begin to modify our behaviour accordingly; at the same time as forming new, intuitively-sensed interdependencies as self-aware and self-determining individuals, often with different groups of people from those with whom we initially identified. We can be said at this point to have ‘found ourselves’ and be seeking to express that self within a collective context for group benefit, having exhausted the possibilities of satisfaction gained from purely personal goals.

The process is not really linear, but far more complex and interwoven (as in the diagram below)—we meander from one state to another, gradually learning on the way. It can also be seen as a spectrum with instinctive behaviour at one end and intuitive response at the other, or as three overlapping areas that interact continually. Instinctive responses to life and subsistence-based existence comprise one area, individual consciousness with its pleasures, realisations, angst, co-dependency and isolation another, and group consciousness with its intuitive grasp of connection, inner networks and psychological peer interaction the third. There are several 3-fold or triple models that follow similar patterns, so it may be that we are tapping into an archetype. In modern esoteric astrology, the process can be remapped from the Theosophically-based linear model into three primary areas of development:

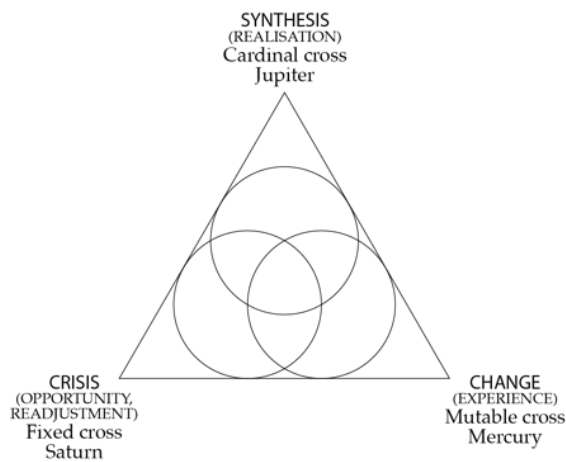


Figure 1.1: Three areas of human development

Astrology—being a human creation—has followed the same path of development. Detailed observations as early as the Neolithic laid the foundations for communities to locate their place on the earth within natural cycles, both within and beyond individual human scale. This need and desire drove long periods of meticulous observation, until we became able to predict astronomical cycles in detail and map the rhythm of our lives to them through symbolic systems of cultural association. The first known personal horoscopes appeared in Greece much later than this initial period. Today, we study various cycles with empirical observation once more, this time from both a global and individual perspective. None is more ‘advanced’ than the other; all have their place, just as automatic responses and instinctual reactions are as much a part of our makeup as are our cognitive abilities. Intelligently-informed action and the resulting empirical experience,

sensitive response, and strategic overview gained from the wider world of ideas, make for a rounded human life—a lack in any area means a deficiency in the whole. None is elevated over any other, all are best working in balance. Notwithstanding an overall sense of inevitable progress, growth and change are more organic and complex than they are linear and sequential.



# Three areas of development, three Astrological Crosses

The terms used in Alice Bailey's language reflect her former Christian background, which influenced some of the terminology used in her Theosophical writings. The term "initiation" itself (literally "a beginning") as used in Theosophy has its origins in the traditional methods of progression within occult societies (with echoes in masonic orders) where a "rod of initiation" at each "level" would be applied to the "aspirant" or "candidate" by those empowered to do so.

Today, this archaic terminology fails to capture the broad accessibility of this process to all, and most of the related terms can be reframed in contemporary language. In fact, the process of spiritual evolution as delineated by Theosophical and related philosophies requires some reframing in general, in order to de-emphasise the overly linear model of "progress through the levels" and dependence on a hierarchy of "masters", and to bring it up-to-date with advances in contemporary culture, the wiser branches of psychology, and more inclusive social attitudes.

In Alice Bailey's writings and other works derived from similar sources, human evolution is seen as an inner, psychological process (now often referred to as "spiritual development") and a linear progression outlined in three key phases; whereas in practice these three are actually experienced as overlapping areas or "zones of development", although there is no sense of going backwards.

Listed below are these three zones, together with the labels given in Alice Bailey's work and related writings.

## 2.1 The Zone of Experience

- The "Probationary Path"
- The "First Initiation"

This covers the process of learning through experience; the gradual dawning of an aware-

ness of the consequences of our actions, ideals and ideas, and the realisation that we are responsible for their effects on ourselves, on others and on the world in general, locally as well as globally. This process leads to the *First Initiation*, that point where the initial dawning of awareness becomes a permanent fixture in our being.

There are often peak experiences at this time, and some naïvely imagine that they have “become enlightened”, often to the point of setting up groups or teachings with themselves as dispensers of their recently-found wisdom. Most of us simply start behaving more mindfully and thoughtfully in our general lives, and begin questioning or challenging ourselves to improve our lives. This can take many different forms (the “seven rays” offer a framework for the various paths we may take) from meditation, to involvement in social, caring, environmental or political movements, or through the adoption of ideals and concepts that help us see ourselves and our place in the world in ways that more closely reflect our inner self. While some display an intense amount of public zeal, others may quietly pursue their own path with little reference to external influences.

Overall, the result is a refinement of everyday material activities: mainly actions but also thoughts and feelings that better reflect the person we would like to become or—more accurately—the person we know, deep down, that we are but may have struggled to express for various reasons. There can also be a refinement of the body itself, so that health and a certain sense of bodily care become important to our well-being.

## 2.2 The Zone of Intensity

- The “Path of Discipleship”
- The “Second Initiation”

This is best expressed in more psychological terms, as it covers an area of development where emotional intensity is the overarching experience. This period often begins at a challenging time where intense emotions become the main focus of life experience, whether from relationships with others, or from struggles and conflicts within our own psyche.

Some people—sensing the challenge ahead—attempt to postpone it in a round of “spiritual practices”, as tourists moving on to the next new thing as soon as they feel the looming instability of inner conflict and tension. This can only delay progress, and the pull of the “Zone of Intensity” will eventually become too insistent to resist, however long it takes.

This element of psychological development is most widespread among those who are consciously aiming to develop their self-awareness and emotional life. It is an inevitable process during which we disentangle psychological “projections” and learn that blaming others, the world, society etc. for our own issues can only ever be a temporary attitude. Inequalities and injustices must be challenged if society and humanity is to progress, but our own inner responsibilities are a personal matter so, despite our own life circumstances, we can choose to bemoan our “misfortune” and stagnate or try to change these circumstances while also working on our own attitude. This process is particularly poignant if we have exacerbated a situation by devolving responsibility; objectifying a “them” who conveniently become the target of our struggle and the imagined cause of our woes.

Once we face our own demons and inner conflicts the process of intensification will seek out even the most buried issues and pull them into consciousness. Everyone’s experience is personal and varied, so it may seem as if there are few guidelines. However, certain themes predominate.

The ups and downs of emotional life are crucial to this zone of development, and extremes can be part of the experience. We gradually learn to see these in perspective—what appears insurmountable now may become less of an issue at another time. Counselling and some form of psychological therapy can enhance our development, as may adhering to some kind of discipline or practice enabling us to “smooth the waters” of emotional response without chopping off the peaks or dulling the troughs. If it becomes too much to handle, we may need a break or spend time consolidating in the “Zone of Experience”, or perhaps even seek respite by dampening the extremes with medication.

Overall, the purpose of this area of development is a kind of emotional maturity that is able to live with the many changes of feeling we experience, without resorting to avoidance, blame, infatuation or the many other states of emotional imbalance. In turn, our feeling life gradually comes to reflect more consistently the inner self we know, deep down, that we are.

### **2.3 The Zone of Synthesis**

- The “Path of Initiation”
- The “Third Initiation”

The focus of this area of development is on overall life concepts and ideas, and our

own thought-life, but is also about integrating the whole personality so that our body, emotions and mind are working harmoniously and in balance, without issues in one facet overwhelming the others. We may think of our personality as ourselves, but it might be more accurate to see it as a dynamic balance between body-actions, feeling-emotions and mind-thought, that together produce an overall sense of a self that somehow also transcends them.

Whereas a “persona” is a self or selves we may present to the world, and our “personality” is the sum total of these three facets, our inner self seeks expression through what we become as a whole person. Just as turbulent waters can’t provide a clear reflection, a troubled personality obscures the inner self with distorted reflections. The purpose of this area of development is to adjust the balance of the three areas so that mind, emotion and action are synthesised, united and work as one, and nothing—no excess, deficiency or other imbalance—impedes the full expression of the inner self. In her writings about this, Alice Bailey uses the term “soul” for the inner self—the real individual expressing their essence through an integrated personality.

This integration of the personality has been given several other terms in psychology (e.g. self-actualisation, congruence...) but the overall meaning is similar: a self, functioning through a personality that is able to express the inner individual faithfully.

Overall, life after the Third Initiation has been called “relatively simple” or uncomplicated, free from the worst mental extremes, inner conflicts, damaging lifestyles, habits and other attention-sapping imbalances. Although there are still challenges we are able to act as a whole, keep things in perspective, and maintain a long-term overview. The *third initiation* is therefore a summation and synthesis of all three areas of individual development.

## 2.4 This is not a linear path

While presented as a time-related sequence of initiations or “beginnings”, actual lived experience suggests that most of us work on all three areas at various times until the whole is synthesised into an integrated “instrument of expression”, responsive to our inner self, calmly sensitive to our surroundings and others around us, strangers or intimates. Once in stable balance, we may be prepared to begin a major “Path of Initiation”; the literature covers two further stages or areas that follow the three, which most of us have yet to experience.

The addition of a “fifth kingdom” to the mineral, vegetable, animal and human is a

concept that also exists in Alice Bailey's writing. The idea is to distinguish between those who are working (at any level) towards an integrated personality, and those who have integrated and—having worked through their own personal issues to a sufficient degree—are beginning to contribute much more actively to the overall evolution of humanity, whether consciously or not.

## **2.5 How these three areas relate to esoteric astrology**

The three crosses: *Mutable*, *Fixed*, *Cardinal*, are mapped in turn to each of the areas of *Experience*, *Intensity* and *Synthesis*: the first three initiations. In the horoscope, each of us has an individual balance between these three and, with the help of the three related planets: *Mercury*, *Saturn* and *Jupiter* (as well as other indicators) we can discover where our life emphasis lies, either overall in the birth chart, or at any temporary point by transit (where the planets actually are in the sky at any point) or more long-term period of astrological progression (usually calculated a day for each year of life from the date of birth). The process of esoteric astrology rests at its most fundamental level on the wide span of the three areas covered in this overview.

Created: 24th June 2021

Revised: 1st August 2021

# Bibliography

- Abraham, Kurt (2009). *Astrology as Path to Higher Consciousness*. Oregon: Lampus Press.
- Addey, John M. (1976). *Harmonics In Astrology. An Introductory Text-Book To The New Understanding Of An Old Science*. Lightning Source UK Ltd.
- Bailey, Alice (1951). *Esoteric Astrology*. London: Lucis Press.
- Barton, Tamsyn (1994). *Ancient Astrology*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Blavatsky, H. P. (1888/1984). *The secret doctrine: The synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy (volumes 1 and 2)*. Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press. ISBN: 9781557000019.
- Campion, Nicholas (1994). *The Great Year: astrology, millenarianism, and history in the Western tradition*. London: Penguin.
- (June 13, 2003). “Introduction: Cultural Astronomy”. In: *Astrology and the Academy*. Ed. by Nicholas Campion, Patrick Curry, and Michael York. Vol. Papers from the inaugural conference of the Sophia Centre, Bath Spa University College, 13-14 June, pp. xv-xxx. Bristol: Cinnabar Books 2004. URL: <http://www.nickcampion.com/Portals/3/Nicholas%20Campion,%20Cultural%20Astronomy.pdf>.
- Celenza, Christopher S. (2015). *Marsilio Ficino*. Ed. by Edward N. Zalta. URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/ficino/>.
- Clarke, Arthur C. and Gentry Lee (1996). *Rama Revealed*. London: Orbit.
- Dean, G. and A. Mather (1977). *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology - A Critical Review 1900-1976*. For responses to this publication, see link. Analogic. URL: <http://www.astrology-and-science.com/h-orig1.htm>.
- Defouw, Hart and Robert Svoboda (1996). *Light on Life, an introduction to the astrology of India*. London: Arkana.
- Eysenck, H. (May 1983). *Methodological Errors by Critics of Astrological Claims*. Opening lecture at 3rd Institute of Psychiatry Conference.
- Ficino, Marsilio, Carol V Kaske, and John R Clark (1989). *Marsilio Ficino, Three books on life: A critical edition and translation with introduction and notes*. 2nd ed. United States: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies in conjunction with the Renaissance Society of America. ISBN: 9780866980418.
- Gauquelin, Michel (1969). *The Scientific Basis of Astrology*. New York: Stein and Day.

- Gauquelin, Michel (1991). *Neo-astrology: A Copernican revolution*. London: Penguin (Non-Classics). ISBN: 9780140193183.
- Greene, Liz and Howard Sasportas (1987). *The Development of the Personality*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser. ISBN: 0877286736.
- Heindel, Max (1919/1984). *Simplified scientific astrology: How to chart your horoscope*. United States: Rosicrucian Fellowship, U.S. ISBN: 9780911274011.
- Heindel, Max and Augusta F Heindel (1918/1989). *Astrology: The message of the stars: An esoteric exposition of natal & medical astrology*. Ed. by Rosicrucian Fellowship. United States: Rosicrucian Fellowship. ISBN: 9780911274189.
- HHteam (2011). *Esoteric astrology through the lens of Anthroposophy*. Humanity Healing Network. URL: <http://humanityhealing.net/2011/03/esoteric-astrology-through-the-lens-of-anthroposophy/> (visited on 12/26/2015).
- Joneson, Marina (Aug. 10, 2014). *The Dark Constellations of the Incas*. URL: <http://www.fromquarkstoquasars.com/the-dark-constellations-of-the-incas/> (visited on 08/30/2015).
- Jung, Carl G. (1921/1971). *Psychological Types*. London: Routledge. ISBN: 9780415045599.
- Kazlev, M. Alan and Arvan Harvat (Sept. 30, 2007). *H. P. Blavatsky*. URL: <http://www.kheper.net/topics/Theosophy/Blavatsky.htm> (visited on 12/22/2015).
- Leo, Alan (1913). *Esoteric Astrology*. For more on Alan Leo, see link. Destiny Books (republished 1978). URL: <http://www.astrology-and-science.com/h-orig1.htm>.
- Mierswa, Ruth and Richard Mierswa (1987). *Ray-Centered Astrology*. San Diego, California: Libra Publishers.
- O' Hara, Maureen (1963). *What is humanistic psychology?* URL: <https://www.ahpweb.org/about/new-vision/item/8-humanistic-psychology-overview.html> (visited on 11/22/2015).
- Oken, Alan (1990). *Soul-centered astrology*. New York: Bantam. ISBN: 9780553348330.
- Pacheco, Elluz, Soraya Flores, and Erwin Salazar (2009). "Some notes on the Inka constellations". In: *The Role of Astronomy in Society and Culture*. Ed. by Valls-Gabaud & A. Boksenberg. Vol. Proceedings IAU Symposium No.260, 2009D. URL: [http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FIAU%2FIAU5\\_S260%2FS1743921311002183a.pdf](http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FIAU%2FIAU5_S260%2FS1743921311002183a.pdf).
- Rawlings, Roger (2013). *Astrology - Waldorf watch*. URL: <https://sites.google.com/site/waldorfwatch/astrology> (visited on 12/26/2015).
- Rudhyar, Dane (1971). *The Lunation Cycle*. Berkeley and London: Shambhala.
- (1987). *Astrology of personality*. Santa Fe: Aurora Press. ISBN: 9780943358253.
- Rupert, Alexander (1978). *Cycles of Becoming*. California: CRCS Publications.

Smit, Rudolf et al. (2000). *Astrology and Science*. URL: <http://www.astrology-and-science.com> (visited on 08/30/2015).