

Astrological View of the Ego from Standing in your Way +

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1. Mental and Spiritual evolution of the Ego:

How can a person fully express himself unless he fully develops himself? The spiritual evolution which requires him to abandon the ego runs parallel to the mental evolution which requires him to perfect it. (v6, 8:1.158)

“...Now the rational soul is always going around that (the natal) and it's trying to make necessary additions, subtractions--whatever's necessary to perfect the ego. That's a part of the mental perfection that PB's speaking about. . . . So it would be the rational soul that would be [building up] the mental, trying to correct the categories of the imagination. The development and refinement of the ego is taking place because you're constantly having [Chaldean] transits going on. . . . Whereas the spiritual evolution would be implemented through the outer three planets [Uranus, Neptune and Pluto]--which require abandoning the ego--the rational souls from Saturn inward are demanding that the ego get fulfilled.

“... try to make a dossier or brief portrait of the natal chart, a thumbnail picture in your mind of the way this ego is organized and the way it functions because of the basic organization that it's operating with. Once we get that, then we could see how the transits are affecting it. So when we were studying Emerson, for example, and we were putting together some of the ego structure of that person, we began to see that there's something really worthwhile built into the structure of the ego-- if we know what to do, instead of deriding it, kicking it out, saying it doesn't exist, it's illusory.”

But the other thing we're talking about is that when the higher knowing comes into the person there's an appropriation of that higher knowing by the ego. The reason I'm emphasizing this is to show how the ego can take over the higher knowledge and insist that it is its knowledge, and it is its being, that it is spiritual. That's the whole point. (Standing in Your Own Way, pp. 173, 176]

Transiting vs. Natal chaldeans; CONTINUATION 4/18/83

"Read the natal planets from the transiting, not the other way around. ... We as individual are the transiting Chaldeans. That's what we really are. That is your undivided, spontaneously active mind. Identify yourself with the transiting Chaldeans; that gives you the opportunity to identify with the illuminating idea which is coming in.

to identify with the transiting Chaldeans means that you live totally in the present, not dependent on the past. Every moment would be novel, a constant influx of knowledge...

when I have aspects from the transiting Chaldeans to my natal, I should put myself in a silence so I can see what is to be done. If I have a concept I know I am coming from down below. If I have no concept, then an activity will take place that will be appropriate for the circumstances that are presented. .

I'm almost positive that if you operate without conceptually trying to grasp but you flow with the idea produced by the undivided mind, you'll have the experience of flowing with the Tao. There will be no need for any kind of thinking, yet you will be doing everything with perfect correctness." 4/18/83

[[On the other hand, Anthony says: "the rational soul is not free from its presuppositions." [Astronoesis Jung essay]--since the rational soul functions through the organism indicated by the natal chart. When Emerson, for example, gives his farewell sermon, he has transiting Jupiter square Mercury. While the transiting Jupiter is part of the cosmic activity, it is also "his" transiting cosmic activity. Thus, we have to read also the natal Jupiter of Emerson at 26 Virgo into the event as well--it is a presupposition underlying or "coloring" the transit, and also forms the experience and understanding of the transit. [In addition, transiting Jupiter is very close to opposite the natal Jupiter.]

REAL DOER: From LW:

Ordinarily the ego is the agent of action. This is apparent. But if an enquiry is set going and its source and nature penetrated successfully, a surprising discovery about the "I" will be made. Its true energy is derived from non-I, pure being. (v6, 8:1.41)

Anthony: Let's try this. Read the first sentence.

Ordinarily the ego is the agent of action.

Anthony: That seems to mean that I will always refer to myself as the agent. I'm the doer.

kd: Right, I'm the doer, the natal chart, the personality.

. . . This is apparent. But if an enquiry is set going and its source and nature penetrated successfully, a surprising discovery about the "I" will be made.

. . . Its true energy is derived from non-I, pure being.

kd: Maybe the real doer isn't who I think it is.

Anthony: So, for example, we can say that the real doer is the transiting planets. That's the real doer. The other one claims it's a doer. That might be a way of looking at it. If you set an inquiry into the nature of what this ego is, you realize that it's a puppet, it's more or less manipulated by these forces which are part of the universe, the movement of the universe. This ego goes around saying, "I'm doing this and I'm doing that, I got a great idea," and the person has eighteen conjunctions going on. So the energy doesn't belong to the ego. It belongs to the universe or what we call the undivided mind.

2. UNIQUENESS

Each human being has a specific work to do--to express the uniqueness that is himself. It can be delegated to no one else. In doing it, if he uses the opportunity aright, he may be led to the great Uniqueness which is superpersonal, beyond his ego and behind all egos. (v2, 1:5.19)

ANTHONY: Uniqueness here doesn't refer to the fact that you have to be a certain kind of tradesman or merchant. It refers to something that has to be worked out in you. We try to understand that in terms of the chart, the particular ideas that you're working out. That's your special uniqueness. You must express it and that means working in the world, and doing whatever it is you have to do. And generally you'll have to do it.

That's the little uniqueness. The great Uniqueness is the intelligible world in each and every soul. There is special uniqueness that an individual lives, and the closer it conforms to the World-Idea, the closer it conforms to the great Uniqueness. Your ego is part of the World-Idea. As it evolves it will conform more and not less to the World-Idea. Eventually you'll be pushed right into the World-Idea and be like part and parcel of the World-Idea. Then you are the great Uniqueness. When you stop seeing yourself as a personality, distinct and separate from everyone else, and you can see that also from within the realm of the whole of the impersonal, then you are at the level of the great Uniqueness.

S: The chart provides a selection of the total possibilities available to a person. Can there be growth to a point where there is a freedom from those particulars, a freedom from the ego? Can you speak about an ability to use all those possibilities? Would all 360 degrees be available to a sage?

ANTHONY: Yes, the sage is much more sensitive to all the ideas than an individual who is compelled and organized by a structure of particular ideas.

AD: The ego or natal chart is the karmic continuum: it represents traces of yourself that you are leaving behind. In a sense I can't distinguish your undivided mind from someone else, but I can distinguish your individuality that is a result of the functioning of the undivided mind from the functioning of his. The ego is an expression of the undivided mind's continuity, but in terms of tendencies and probabilities--and the world-idea is modifying itself, so are all the egos being modified, each according to their peculiarity.

The ego is the mirror we use to try to grasp something of the higher individuality. Michaelangelo, for example, is said to have worked with a "tragic" attitude. This was something build into his soul, not the result of the experience of this life. You can easily distinguish him from Da Vinci, and these distinctions are significant. The reflection we see is only a little section of the vastness of the archetypal individual soul. If you look at a series of lives you begin to get an idea of that archetypal individual. (4/18/83)

The uniqueness of each person, his difference from every other person, may be metaphysically explained as due to the effort of Infinite Mind to express itself infinitely within the finite limitation of time and space, form and appearance. (v16, 25:1.157)

ANTHONY: Every type and variety of person that could be expressed by the planetary functioning will so be expressed. Each one would be unique. If you think of every person ever born, look at the peculiarity and uniqueness of his or her natal chart: This infinite variety expresses the World-Mind. You could put it that way. Every possible type is going to be expressed.

The knowledge that no two human beings are alike refers to their bodies and minds. But this leaves out the part of their nature which is spiritual, which is found and experienced in deep meditation. In that, the deepest part of their conscious being, the personal self vanishes; only consciousness-in-itself, thought-free, world-free, remains. This is the source of the “I” feeling, and it is exactly alike in the experience of all other human beings. This is the part which never dies, “where God and man may mingle.” (v14, 22:3.380)

ANTHONY: Please read it again, one part at a time.

The knowledge that no two human beings are alike refers to their bodies and minds. . . .

ANTHONY: How about that? Would the natal chart prove that?

T.S.: Yes. The basic meaning of the natal chart is that it is the mind-body complex or the ideas, the reason principles, which constitute the mind and the body.

AS: When you're using the word "mind" here, what do you mean?

L.R.: Psyche?

V.M.: How about if you use mind as the collection and functioning and relationship of all those reason principles which are delineated in the astrological chart?

ANTHONY: Good. That would be good. That would be what we refer to as the "psyche."

3. INNER CONNECTION TO THE WORLD-MIND

Let them not waste so many words about or against this little ego of ours, decrying its character or denying its existence, but try to understand what is really happening in its short life. Let them find out what is actually being wrought out within and around it. Let them recognize that the Governor of the World is related to it and that we are steeped in the Divinity whether we are aware of it or not. (v6, 8:1.130)

ANTHONY: That's what we try to see in astrology. If we say that the Governor of the World, the Lord of the World, has organized the World-Image and all the creatures within it, then of course there's a very intimate association between the Lord of the World, the structure of your ego, and what the Lord of the World is trying to accomplish. By combining certain ideas, the Lord of the World is trying to show you something about yourself. You're supposed to try to understand what is going on within you and around you. So if you look at an aspect, you can see something about the way this idea is manifesting you. Otherwise, how could you cooperate with the World-Idea, without a knowledge of these things?

Maybe you could also see that insofar as the Lord of the World--or let's say the lords of karma--brings about this fabrication, your ego, for whatever number of years, it must love that very much. In other words, the Governor of the World, who creates what we look upon as the natal chart, must love that very much. It loves it completely, but the ego mistakenly understands that as love for itself.

The ego is a part of the divine order of existence. It must emerge, grow, enslave, and finally be enslaved. (v6, 8:1.165)

H.S.: How do you understand that? The ego is part of the divine order of existence.

ANTHONY: Well, it's part of the World-Idea, part of the divine order of things--the Divine Idea of the World. It's going to have to grow, it's going to have to develop, refine itself, dominate the soul, and then in turn be dominated by the soul.

The World-Idea is constantly being evolved until it approaches the goal that the Idea's trying to achieve. And since the ego is an idea or part of the Idea, the Universal Idea, the World-Idea, it too has to go through that improvement and evolution. As the world, so to speak, evolves closer and closer to the paradigms that have been set for it, so the egos within that world have to evolve.

This offers a much more complete and wholesome notion of what the ego is, rather than the limited perspectives that say either it doesn't exist or it's not real or it's this, that, or the other. PB is building up a tremendous, holistic view of what the ego is, what its role is, what it's like, what's supposed to happen. When he gets finished with all the remarks he makes on the ego, you come away with a balanced idea of what it's all about, instead of these naive notions--it doesn't exist, it does exist, this that and the other thing--which are really cliches and propaganda that have nothing to do with the issue.

The ego to which he is so attached turns out on enquiry to be none other than the presence of World-Mind within his own heart. If identification is then shifted by constant practice from one to the other, he has achieved the purpose of life. 8.1.127

Maybe it would be a good idea if we could try to make clearer what we mean when we say "ego," "world," and "consciousness."

Is the ego the body? The body is part of the world, is part of the World-Idea, part of the imaged world. And it's distinct from that world, or distinguished from that world. So we could separate these two in our minds. And then when PB says that resident in the body, or presiding in the body, is this power to think, to be aware, these things would belong to the Soul. So we have three factors we're separating in our experience: a world, the ego, and awareness. Now, they're evidently mixed up, so we have to try to unscramble: What is the ego, What is the world image or the world, and What is the Overself?

Now it's true, if we took away the consciousness from the body, we wouldn't be able to say that that ego is aware of a world or that it could think or move--it wouldn't be able to do that. So we'd have the problem of saying, if we took this awareness and distinguished it from the body or the ego, then what would be the ego? If we took away the consciousness, distinguished it from the body, would that be the ego? Or would that body become the ego if the light or consciousness penetrated into it?

You have to understand what the nature of this individual existence is, because it is the cause of all our misery, and yet strangely enough, it is dearer to us than anything we can think of. So, evidently, there must be a lot of value in our suffering.

We said that this infinite light or this mind is boundless--we can't speak about it, except in this sense of being authentic being. And only when this is associated with, or permeates a cluster of thought, can you speak about an individual existent. And then I went further and gave the example: Now I examine into my behavior, into my thinking, and every time I have a thought, I can see that that thought is a manifestation of the degrees I'm working with.

For instance, I keep pounding a thought, I get a solution to something, I'm not satisfied. I keep trying to understand it more deeply and I keep doing that. You can see that that's one of the tendencies in my chart, right? You look at my Mercury degree and you say, "He's got to get to the bottom of something." You see that's a tendency. Well, is that tendency the core, the reality of my being? No. My being permeates all that, or let's say, has wrapped itself around that. But it takes these two mixed together, my being and the degrees/planets, to produce the entity you know as Anthony.

4. (SELF-) ACCEPTANCE: IMPERSONALITY

It is easy to recognize some of the attachments from which he must loose himself--the greeds, the lusts, and the gluttonies--but it is not so easy to recognize the subtler ones. These start with attachment to his own ideas, his own beliefs; they end with attachment to his own ego. (v6, 8:4.380)

ANTHONY: One of the reasons I spent a lot of time on astrology is: the only way you're going to see what your attachments and your beliefs are is when you get to know your degrees. When you isolate these things you can take, let's say, the functioning of a planet in your chart, on a certain degree, and see that this is the way you are. I don't care what you tell me. *This is the way you are. This is the way you're going to be.* This is the way you're going to act.

PB's not saying (of the ego) "Get rid of it." You can't. Because as long as you have to express yourself in the world--and there's nothing wrong with expressing yourself in the world--this is the way you're going to express yourself. The stupidity is not to understand that this idea that you're working through to express yourself is an idea. It's not you. Don't get attached to it. Look at it impersonally.

Try to understand the way you operate--functionally, impersonally. And after a while you'll see this is that next step--until you understand this, to talk about renouncing the ego is absurd. Because you're going to see the way these things work in you, the way they're going to trick you and say, "Oh, sure, now we'll move on and renounce the ego. [laughter] You see? They're very quick.

You really can make a marvelous use of astrology and especially the degree symbolism to understand the particular beliefs and ideas that you are attached to. Lets not use the word "attached," I'd say you are "mis-identified with." If you take one of those ways of working that you identify with, one of those degrees, and you understand the meaning so that it is open and available to you, then you can objectively see that this is the way you operate. You can learn to be impersonal about your ego and to watch that happen. So it's really worthwhile.

It is less easy to see and even more necessary to understand that this ego, this subject, is itself an object to a higher part of the mind. (v6, 8:2.67)

AD: In order to take this point of view, we have to shift our identification from the natal to the natal plus transiting dynamic. More and more we can see the apparent subject is really a content of consciousness. Just like the dream subject is really a thought form like the dream objects, when known to the witness.

5. WAVE: EGO AND EGOISM

The personal ego of man forms itself out of the impersonal life of the universe like a wave forming itself out of the ocean. It constricts, confines, restricts, and limits that infinite life to a small finite area. The wave does just the same to the water of the ocean. The ego shuts out so much of the power and intelligence contained in the universal being that it seems to belong to an entirely different and utterly inferior order of existence. The wave, too, since it forms itself only on the surface of the water gives no indication in its tiny stature of the tremendous depth and breadth and volume of water beneath it. Consider that no wave exists by itself or for itself, that all waves are inescapably parts of the visible ocean. In the same way, no individual life can separate itself from the All-Life but is always a part of it in some way or other.

Yet the idea of separateness is held by millions. This idea is an illusion. From it springs their direst troubles. The work of the quest is simply this: to free the ego from its self-imposed limitations, to let the wave of conscious being subside and straighten itself out into the waters whence it came. The little wave is thus reconverted into the infinite Overself. (v6, 8:1.102)

ANTHONY: Try to imagine the earth rotating around the sun. And surrounding the earth there's what we refer to as the belt, the dragonic belt, that life which is around the earth, and which we call the soul of the earth, all right? Now let's re-read this quote a little at a time.

The personal ego of man forms itself out of the impersonal life of the universe . . .

ANTHONY: The personal life of the man, like my ego, is formed out of this universal life, which is this life which is all around the earth, the soul of the earth, which the Greeks have a name for.

How do I separate myself out from that universal life? At a certain moment, let's say, I incarnate. At that moment there are certain aspects, and so on. This structure is what I refer to as the ego. This is what has separated itself out from all of that life and isolated itself, or let's say, has carved out an existence for itself within that total life. If I could be allowed to look at it that way.

The first thing we have to recognize is that there is a kind of universal life surrounding the world--we call it the dragon--and that your life is a particle from that universal life. At the moment of birth, there's a fixed relationship among the planets which reveals something about that ego. But when the series of thoughts or the ego says, "This is my life," it has appropriated, separated itself from that. Now it is the fixed ego structure, fixed in the sense that the possibilities are fixed. That is, you're not going to think about just anything but you're going to think along certain lines. The natal aspects show the way that's going to manifest.

This is very important. There's a universal life system that pervades the earth, and at the moment of birth you are, so to speak, separated out. We should really say we're distinguished, not separate, from that universal life; but the ego says, "No, I'm different from everyone else." That's the separation. So everything that takes place within the functioning of the natal planets and the aspects they have, is within the ego.

...The important thing in the discussion here is to recognize that the subconscious is all these degrees, and the functioning of these degrees produces individual animal bodies, and these animal bodies are a storehouse. The degrees represent or symbolize all these Ideas inherent in the body of a person, and a tremendous wisdom-knowledge goes into making the body of a person.

6. TRACKING DOWN THE EGO

The ego is always in hiding and often in disguise. It is a cunning creature, never showing its own face, so that even the man who wants to destroy its rule is easily tricked into attacking everything else but the ego! Therefore, the first (as well as the final) essential piece of knowledge needed to track it down to its secret lair is how to recognize and identify it. (v6, 8:4.391)

ANTHONY: Listen to that. You've first got to know what the ego is, and what you're looking for. That's why this knowledge is so important. Once you're seriously on the quest, that's going to be your preoccupation. Long or short path or combination, it doesn't matter. You've got to know what it is you're dealing with. So this knowledge is absolutely vital. Anybody who talks about the non-existence of the ego, or glorifies it, or says it's illusory, all that is beside the point.