

Astrology & The Astrologer



I have often said, “You can’t have astrology without the astrologer.” It’s true; there are universals in our practice. A trine is universally recognized as an easy aspect. Most astrologers would agree that trines are good. But taking the leap from recognizing a symbol and then interpreting that symbol creates a space, between which the entirety of the astrologer’s personal beliefs fall. An astrologer’s personal values, religious and political beliefs, their experience, and indeed their entire philosophical orientation will determine how that specific aspect is interpreted and made relevant to the client’s life.

Astrology is, at heart, a practice of allegory. It involves looking at the sky with a poetic mind. Within that, there is a lot of room. Just as the same revelatory text can be read and affirm all the love and compassion one holds, it can also be used to provide a powerful language for fear and cruelty. Reading the planets is similar. You bring who you are to the

reading, and who you at the moment of the reading will determine what you see.

There is no consensus of values among astrologers. We run the gamut of political beliefs, religious affiliations, and worldview. The practice of astrology essentially makes us rebels to the mass consensus and puts us on the fringes. Regardless of the system we use, our status as eccentrics unites us. However, we range in age and experiences, and the prejudices we hold influence our interpretations. If we are lucky, we are aware of it.

I have heard and read some pretty far out interpretations. Far out for me, because when I see the same symbol, my worldview leads me to very different conclusions. In a workshop, I once heard a person talk about Barack Obama's Kenyan Birth Chart. Thankfully, it was one lone intonation. The overwhelming consensus in the room assured reality prevailed. What is interesting is that being a Tea Partier does not disqualify a person from an interest in astrology. I also read in *The Mountain Astrologer*, by most accounts the bible of the astrological world, an interpretation of the planets that justified racism and scapegoating, despite repeated and widely held statistical data that contradicted the astrologer's assertions. My interpretation of the exact symbol led to very different conclusions.

Here is a functional example. From 2008 to this summer of 2010, we were witness to the rare opposition of Saturn and Uranus. The first exact opposition took place on the USA election date. Now, before we reached the first exact aspect, and as astrologers saw it coming for years, what predictions did you make? I have heard and read a wide range of judgments. There were astrologers who, utilizing this aspect, were predicting the victory of an African-American or a woman. There were those who said the election would be long contested, others who said it would be quickly decided, some who called it for a long-established

politician, and still others who believed the election would lead to an immediate and massive revolt. Now, as we stand back and all exact aspects of these planets are done for the generation, we can consider how the aspect actually played out. How did you call it? Your answer to that question will depend on your experience, not only as an astrologer but also in your entire life.

The judgment you made when interpreting this symbol, before events occurred, speaks volumes about your personal worldview. Is your worldview more Saturnian or more Uranian? If you are more inclined towards one, chances are you favored that planet as the dominant symbol during their standoff. I can see how that would be an uncomfortable notion to those of us who like to see our practice as an impartial science. The truth is, even in science the role of the observer is understandably called into question. Whether you understand what we do as a science or a practice in divination, as Carl Jung's experiments proved long ago, the role of the observer is paramount to judgment.

Because we, as astrologers, are strolling the halls of the poetic, we make room for various perceptions regardless of their tangibility. Like the creationist who refuses to acknowledge the overwhelming evidence of evolution, to be an astrologer involves giving yourself permission to move beyond the concrete and into the allegorical, and bringing it down to earth and making it real. Just as the creationist does not have to compete with evolution, we as astrologers don't have to justify our practice as a science. We are subjective in our practice, even if the objective remains.

I am aware as I reveal my perception of these experiences, I am also revealing much about my worldview and how I interpret the planets. The key question involves self-awareness and purpose. Why do we practice astrology? Our answers as astrologers will vary. A glimpse into secrets, a belief in fate, an aid in self-determination, a desire to know the future, a

new-age assertion of inner authority, a practice of one's spirituality or intuition, the assertion of a loving world, the assertion of a cruel world; these are all varied, complex, yet valid motivations that bring us to the practice. What do we get out of it? Again, reflection will lead to as varied answers as there are practitioners; comfort, security, spiritual connection, assuredness, even the self-importance that comes from thinking you know something that others don't, and a million other reasons are why a person would be drawn to astrology. But the thing is, our motivation will determine our interpretations. That's where we are encouraged to develop a mirror into ourselves and become more self-aware. I do believe it is the single greatest thing we can do to help our practice, on a personal level grow stronger and collectively help each other to bring our practice out of the dark, mysterious corners of flea markets and into an area of intelligent consideration and philosophical conversation.

For me, it is the glimpse into the mystery that leads me to have more compassion and appreciate our commonality of experience that guides my practice. Astrology somehow makes me feel closer to my highest ideals. Even if I can't live up to them all the time, as I am fallibly human, there is some enchantment that happens when I look at a chart. It returns me to the love I know we all are capable of. I also adore that, when I practice astrology, I am participating in a unifying activity and celebrate my values of inclusively. Each culture and religion on the planet has contributed to the development of astrology in some way. When I practice astrology, I am connected to all of them and celebrate our inherent cohesion. These reasons reflect my upbringing, as a child of Toronto, one of the most diverse places on the planet. I assert the best of my Canadian heritage, as I have come to know it, when I look at the sky. But that's just me, it's who I am, and my astrology reflects who I am as a person and astrologer. My values involve diversity, and as such, allowing others the same latitude. Even when I don't like the conclusions

they have drawn, they are allowed to make the leaps they have.
Ultimately, we as astrologers have created a safe space where we can show people who we truly are, through the light of the way we interpret the sky.

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