

Divination and the Ego

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Astrology is one of the divinatory arts, as such it contains some of the most powerful symbolism in the Western Tradition. Divination is the quest to glimpse the intentions of the Divine Will and a derivative of that quest is prediction.

Symbolism is meant to address the sub-conscious mind: that part of the mind that, although we might not be fully aware of it does, nonetheless, affect our actions. The action of symbolism is to stimulate that part of our mind often called the intuitive, psychic or clairvoyant faculty.

Astrological symbolism owns its power in its action on both the conscious and subconscious parts. Thus we can follow the objective clues found in the astrological chart, while allowing the subconscious part to follow unseen paths before helping us to our conclusions.

For this to be a reliable process, our intellects have first to be trained in the rigours of astrological technique. This objective learning process opens up the subjective parts to respond to the correct triggers. If it seems strange that I should use the term "correct" in this regard, I should need only to mention the great age of astrological symbolism to support my point. The Western Tradition is steeped in its symbolism and is still very much a part of Western culture.

Having made it sound like a very straightforward process, we need to address the problem lying within each of us. This problem places itself between the conscious and the unconscious. Astrological symbolism, after being registered in the conscious mind, has to negotiate this barrier before it can reach and affect the subconscious mind.

The barrier of which I speak, is the ego; that wall constructed from protective urges by which we attempt to defend ourselves from reality. None of us is free of ego.

When we immerse ourselves in divination, the symbolism we use has the capacity to make changes to our inner selves, or our subconscious. This process has to be achieved if we are to respond correctly to the stimulus of the symbolism we are learning.

With the secularisation of astrology, begun in the Enlightenment, astrological education has omitted all discussion of these effects. Consequently, few who study astrology are aware of the potential of astrological symbolism to make

these changes to its operators. Most students have experienced and noted these changes on the conscious level. For example, one might be aware of a change in one's view of life, or of one's philosophy. It is never explained that these conscious changes reflect those of a subconscious nature.

Few astrologers would consider their work to be magical. They would not recognise their work as a ceremony of great magical potency. And yet, they will discuss astrological symbolism as though the meaning of that symbolism remains in the symbols. It does not. The symbolism has impressed itself on the partly-aware mind.

This is the case when the ego does not intercede. If the astrologer's aim, for example, is to boost their status by impressing their friends or clients with cleverness, it is clear that the ego is interfering in the symbolic process of change. This will not stop the change process, but it will corrupt it. By exposing ourselves to astrological symbolism, the process is automatic. We cannot stop it. By concerning ourselves with protection, we deflect the symbolism and we encounter egos which become increasingly inflated; concerned only with matters pertaining to ego.

Ignorance belongs to the ego, but making allowances for one's ignorance indicates a softer ego. Never admitting mistakes belongs to the ego, but admitting them does not. Acknowledging ourselves as imperfect, helps us to progress. Similarly, recognition that our art is Divine introduces caution and will assist us when we "*talk with Angels*"¹

Ego is like a balloon; it can inflate only so much before it explodes. Because of the nature of ego, that explosion often takes place in public and to great effect. In the case of astrology, that effect will often take the form of serious astrological error. This can happen to the brightest and the best. The only protection is to keep one's ego under close observation and to cultivate humility.

Astrology is a sacred art; it assists us in glimpsing the workings of the Divine Mind. Humility and a malleable ego are essential qualities for the astrologer.

¹ William Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, "Letter to the Student". Regulus facsimile edition, 1985.