

Where Is the Person in the Chart?, or, The Mystery of the Many Selves
by Bruce Scofield

Exactly what personality is seems to be a question that psychologists have a difficult time answering. The mere definition of words such as personality, self, and identity varies from one psychological school of thought to another. I looked up these three terms in a general encyclopedia of psychology and found none of them listed, though there were some variants on personality, e.g. personality disorders, personality inventories, etc. Finally, under personality theories, I found a definition: "the pattern of characteristics and ways of behavior which accounts for an individual's unique adjustments to his total environment, it includes major traits, interests, values, attitudes, self-image, abilities, behavior patterns, and emotional patterns."¹ From this definition, it appears that personality is a descriptive term so general that it encompasses nearly everything that is human.

It is no wonder that the field of psychology has yet to produce a model of personality that is accepted by a majority in that profession. Personality is such a vast concept that only parts of it are glimpsed by each of the many psychological schools of thought that have arisen during this century. This is like the blind men and the elephant -- they each touch a part, but never see the whole, and therefore their ideas about truth appear to be in conflict. The Freudians see ego, superego and id. The Jungians see shadow, persona, anima and animus. Other schools of psychology and psychotherapy see critical fathers, introjected mothers, fixations, multiple personalities, and more. Partly out of frustration with locating quantifiable components of personality for scientific studies, most psychologists and psychotherapists have tended to concentrate on practice, not theory.

The one idea that most brands of psychology or psychotherapy seem to share in common, however, is the notion that there are different aspects of personality, or subpersonalities, within us.² Although it runs against the tendency in the Western World to believe that there is only one ultimate whatever (soul-mate, medical model, divinity, etc.), findings in the field of psychology seem to suggest that we are all really a composite of several different subpersonalities. The implication here is that "personality" is best described as a composite of several personalities, and that the interaction of these different subpersonalities might be called the "internal dialogue." It could be said that modern psychotherapy concerns itself with the healing of rifts that exist or arise within this internal dialogue. But isn't this exactly what the horoscope is -- a map of different planets, each symbolizing a different portion of who we are -- in other words, a road map of the personality?

For astrologers, the chart for the time of birth is indeed a map of the many points of the personality -- a map of the internal dialogue. Each planet symbolizes a voice, which speaks alone or in concert with other points. Configurations of planets symbolize personality complexes -- some positive and others stressful. Astrologers answer the question "who are we?" with a description of many individualized portions of ourselves. No astrologer can summarize a person in one or two sentences, because we are in reality a constantly shifting amalgamation of points.

Let's take a closer look at how this seems to work. The Sun and Mars in everyone's birth chart are masculine voices or subpersonalities. If they are in harmony with each other, a strong male subpersonality may arise manifesting as strength, competitiveness and assertiveness. The Moon and Venus are feminine voices, and when harmoniously combined they suggest being comfortable with passivity, receptivity and the world of feelings. If there are conflicts shown in the chart between these male and female voices, we would expect that two competing voices or

subpersonalities exist separately within the personality, each striving to meet its own needs. In most cases, such an internal conflict coincides with problems in relationships or marriage. In other words, the personality internally divided will somehow manage to re-create itself in the outside world. If we have difficulties blending our internal voices (and we all have them within us) then we will probably see this separateness manifest outwardly as well.

When psychotherapists talk about unresolved conflicts between parent and child, they are talking about the manifestation of a stressful configuration in the birth chart. For example, a person born with Saturn in square to Mars lives with two important internal voices that pull in different directions. Saturn is the voice of father, authority, responsibility, duty and self-control, and Mars is the voice of self-survival, self-interest, personal desire and urgency. With these two voices working against each other, any number of problems may manifest. If a person finds it impossible to reconcile his personal needs (Mars) with the obligations (Saturn) he feels from others, there is an internal split and the result is two completely different, and incompatible, subpersonalities. Each has power or comes to the fore in specific situations or encounters, yet not in others.

Sometimes, one voice (or subpersonality) speaks too loudly and disrupts the harmony of the internal dialogue. This can be a real problem if that voice is out of line with the rest of the personality.

But if there is one planet in a birth chart that should rule, it should probably be the Sun. The Sun definitely needs to be heard loud and clear because it is the one point in the chart that can hold it all together -- just as the Sun in the solar system prevents the planets from flying off into space. Therefore, we need to understand our Sun, its sign, aspects and house position first and foremost. Since the Sun is a male voice, many traditional women feel uncomfortable with it (because they were raised to be "ladies") and have allowed a man to live it for them. This is the projection of an internal voice onto someone else in the outside world. But today people are striving more than ever to be individuals and to cease projecting portions of themselves onto others. Many women who have centered their lives around a man, and are now seeking to find themselves through career success, are experiencing problems. Having control in the outside world themselves, and simultaneously expecting someone else do it for them are mutually exclusive things. They are part of a transition generation, and full ownership of their Sun comes only after a conscious rejection of the traditional ways. The Sun is power. To know your own power you must know and be your uniquely configured Sun.

The Moon is one of our female voices, and as many women have done with the Sun, most men have avoided internalizing this point, instead leaving it to the women in their lives. But everyone has a Moon, and to be complete persons, men must acknowledge and feel theirs. Today many men are beginning to do with their Moon what women have been doing with their Sun for two decades -- owning it. The beauty of astrology is that, because of the countless variations of the Moon by sign, aspect and house position, everyone's feelings and sensitivities can be recognized as unique. To understand what is right and normal for you on the feeling level is extremely important and comforting. Some feel more for those they know closely, yet others feel for more distant others, or even for other species. Whether the former or latter is normal for that person is shown by the Moon position, our lunar subpersonality.

The Moon is actually the focus of the need to biologically survive. It symbolizes the unconscious functions needed to nurture and protect new life. It is a point that is therefore essentially reactive, not analytical. If a person happens to have an afflicted Moon, then it is possible that they may form a strong, and very irrational, subpersonality around it. If they also have a strong Mercury,

then there may be a part of them that appears quite rational. If their Mercury and Moon are linked by aspect, then they may be able to rationalize what they unconsciously perceive to be survival needs and reactions. Others may see this as inconsistencies between what is done and what is said -- i.e. a split personality.

The Ascendant or Rising Sign is a powerful part of any birth chart, and it often denotes the most prominent and obvious features of the personality. The Ascendant is in many ways a symbol for the contact point between the person and the outside world, a contact point that stimulates the growth and evolution of personal identity. We grow into our Ascendants as we experience the world. Many astrologers have noticed that first-born children are frequently born with the Sun, or the sign Leo, rising. Because they get a lot of attention (being a novelty in their parents lives) they come to feel a sense of importance and personal power. They carry this style with them throughout their lives. If the Ascendant is afflicted, problems involving contact with the outside world (i.e., relationships and personal identity) exist and continually challenge the person to change and grow.

It appears then that the birth chart is actually a diagram of the various voices within us. While we are all composed of the same parts, the parts are arranged uniquely. In the ideal case, each of us would have a voice or subpersonality that corresponds to each planet, and each voice would reflect its planet's sign, house and aspects.

But what I think is more often the case, we group planets and signs together in various ways and build voices out of these groupings. A psychological complex is probably the manifestation of an astrological complex or grouping of symbolic points. For example, take a Moon-Saturn-Mars conjunction in a birth chart. The owner of this chart may develop a strong subpersonality that partakes of all three points, perhaps a voice that could be described as "the pushy, ambitious mother." A person with Sun square Neptune might have a subpersonality that could be called "the powerful dreamer." What others actually see and experience depends on whatever the situation is at the time. In other words, we put forward that part of us that we feel or believe (not always in our best interest) is needed to handle whatever is in front of us. We all behave a little differently around different people. It's not as simple as it sounds, but there does seem to be some truth to all this.

But back to psychology for a moment. An interesting model of the personality was developed some years ago by Leary and Wilson.³ This model consists of four main circuits operating on two levels. These circuits happen to correlate neatly with astrology, and so I'll outline them here. The first of the primary circuits they call the *Bio-survival circuit*, a Moon-like circuit that operates purely on instinct. Next is the *Emotional-territorial circuit* that correlates with Mars. The *Symbolic-mental-manipulative circuit* is that of Mercury, and the *Socio-sexual circuit* fits reasonably well with Venus. According to Leary and Wilson these four circuits comprise the basic foundation on which each of us builds who we are. From this perspective, personality is then the composite of four primary circuits, or subpersonalities, that are intrinsic in the human being. In this model, over- or under-developed circuits create problems leading to distortions and hence to efforts to rebalance the system.

A few comparisons can be drawn between Leary and Wilson's model and that of Freud. Freud's oral, anal and genital stages of human psychological development, stages around which subpersonalities may form, correlate nicely with the Bio-survival, Emotional-territorial and Socio-sexual circuits. The implication here is that we develop each circuit one at a time, and that our experiences concurrent with the opening of each stage or circuit leaves an imprint that

conditions our behaviors for life. One notable element of Leary and Wilson's model is that it views the growth of higher consciousness as parallel to the primary circuits. Although they don't specifically mention planets, it appears to me that Neptune would symbolize the higher extension of the Bio-survival circuit, Pluto the Emotional-territorial circuit, and Uranus the Symbolic-mental-manipulative circuit. Only the higher level of the Socio-sexual circuit remains unclear astrologically. Perhaps an undiscovered planet will fill in this blank.

Although Leary and Wilson's model of the self is interesting, has definite structures around which subpersonalities form, and is far more resonant with astrological symbolism than models coming from other psychological theorists, it still doesn't clearly account for the influences of Jupiter, Saturn or even the Sun.⁴ But aside from Western psychology, do other traditions have anything to say about who we are? One of the things I've noticed in my research on ancient Maya and Aztec astrology is the way the symbols in their system appear to summarize neatly the primary focus in a personality.⁵ Each of the 20 day-signs that form the core of this system appear to describe an archetypal personality complex or pattern. While this system also breaks down the personality into a number of sub-influences, the day-signs themselves do seem to identify the primary themes in one's life and possibly the dominant subpersonality. Perhaps they describe the voice within us that, because it resonates with an archetypal pattern stamped on us at birth, is truly the most important voice within our personality, the one that drives us.

So who are we? Are we the Sun in our charts? The Moon or the Ascendant? Our Mercury/Uranus square? We are all of them, and yet each one at a time. When we walk into a room and meet someone, we are our Ascendant. Our characteristic response to encounters with others is something that has been developing since birth. Suppose, on the other hand, that we are in a competition of some sort. Then it is our Mars that is showing. If we happen to have a strong and effective Mars, we may have, through a succession of personal choices, shaped our lives in such a way that this side of our personality becomes our most recognizable feature. The life of an athlete would be a good example. To give another example, a strong Saturn implies a subpersonality that requires distance and perspective, and negatively, is fearful and insecure. This is a voice that can cause all sorts of complex problems if it fails to blend with other voices, and if such problems manifest, you can bet that Saturn will be afflicted and out of synch with the rest of the chart. The other planets and planetary configurations in the birth chart map out other voices that make up who we are.

Because astrology starts from the assumption that we are a complex, not a single, simplistic self, it is an excellent path to self-knowledge. And that's really the point of it all. Psychologists and psychotherapists please take note.

Footnotes

1. Robert M. Goldenson, *The Encyclopedia of Human Behavior* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1970).
2. An excellent discussion of subpersonalities and how they are described in nearly all the major psychological schools of thought is John Rowan's book *Subpersonalities* (Routledge, 1990).
3. Timothy Leary, *Info-Psychology* (Los Angeles, Falcon Press, 1987), and Robert Anton Wilson, *Prometheus Rising* (Phoenix, AZ, Falcon Press, 1983).
4. An attempt to fill in these blanks was made by the author in another article. See "A Planetary Model of the Developing Self" in *NCGR Journal*, Winter 1987-1988, p.66.

5. Background and descriptions of the day-signs are found in the author's book *Day-Signs: Native American Astrology From Ancient Mexico* (One Reed Publications, PO Box 561, Amherst MA 01004) and in the computer program *Mayan Life Path Astrology*, published by Astrolabe.

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