

Briefing Document: Exploring Concepts of Self, Reality, and Astrological Symbolism

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Excerpts from "Myth and Modern Living: A Practical Campbell Compendium - Stephen Gerrer.pdf" Excerpts from "The Astrology of Personality: A Re-Formulation of Astrological Concepts and Ideals, in Terms of Contemporary Psychology and Philosophy.pdf" Excerpts from "Ticking IN Block Time.pdf" Executive Summary These sources delve into profound philosophical, psychological, and astrological concepts, offering diverse perspectives on the nature of reality, the human "self," and the role of symbolic systems in understanding existence. Key themes include the multi-layered nature of consciousness, the distinction between individual and collective realities, the interpretative function of symbolic systems like astrology, and the influence of subjective perception on experience. The texts emphasize a holistic approach to understanding the self, recognizing both its unique individuality and its connection to universal patterns and energies.

I. The Nature of Self and Consciousness The sources present a nuanced view of the "self," moving beyond a simple, singular ego to encompass multiple layers of consciousness and connection to a universal source.

Beyond Thought: The "Source Field" of Life Energies: The "Myth and Modern Living" compendium introduces a meditation that prompts one to seek the "source field out of which all your life energies are coming" by asking, "Where are you between two thoughts?" This suggests a dimension of self that transcends ordinary thought processes and ego identification, pointing towards an underlying, divine essence. The goal of life is "to be a vehicle for something higher. Keep your eyes up there between the world of opposites watching your 'play' in the world." The Immortal Nucleus and Divine Self: Humans are described as "mortal individuals bearing within ourselves an immortal, supra-individual nucleus." This "Divine Self" is likened to a "macrocosmic gander" that "manifests itself through a song." This "song" is the breath itself, audibly singing "Ham-sa, ham-sa" (or "sa- ham, sa- ham"), which translates to "This am I." This underscores the inherent divine nature of the individual, stating, "I am He who is free and divine." That is the lesson sung to every man by every movement of inhalation and exhalation, asserting the divine nature of Him in whom breath abides." Jung's Encounter with the Unspeakable: Carl Jung's adolescent memory illustrates a profound, almost primal encounter

with a concept of God that felt "terrible" and "not to think," suggesting a confrontation with a transcendent reality that defies conceptualization and carries a sense of profound, perhaps overwhelming, truth. This highlights the inherent human struggle with accepting realities that lie beyond conscious understanding.

The Ego as a Boundary and Differentiator: "The Astrology of Personality" defines the ego as the "principle of separateness," symbolized by Saturn, which asserts, "I am this particular unique entity and no other." It is the mechanism that differentiates the individual from the generic norm.

Individuation as a Two-Phase Process: The process of individuation involves: **Differentiation:** Emphasizing one's differences from the collective. **Assimilation:** Integrating "the contents of the collective unconscious," a process akin to the body assimilating food from the "collective" earth.

The "Genius of the Species" and the Planetary Being: When the personality is "duly 'individuated'," the "archetypal reality of MAN (what the Hindu calls the "Manu")" can become the center of the personality, transforming the individual into "the living Christ, the God-within." This allows a person to become a "planetary being—a microcosm," living "both above and below the horizon, objectively and subjectively."

II. Astrology as a Symbolic Language "The Astrology of Personality" reframes astrology not as an empirical science predicting concrete events, but as a symbolic "language" for understanding the "Form" of individuality and the quality of moments.

Astrology as an Archetypal Language: Astrology is presented as a "language" that "can reveal the archetype of what the total person (body, mind, feelings, etc.) essentially is—the 'Form' of his or her individuality." "Destiny" is reinterpreted as "simply the process of actualization of the potentialities abstractly formulated in the birth-chart."

Symbolic, Not Literal: Planets and their positions are not concrete forces, but symbols. "Jupiter and Mars do not mean anything concrete whatsoever. They mean no more, no less, than 3 and 4, or a spiral and a straight line, or m and p." Their meaning arises from their correlation with human nature or other phenomena. For example, "Jupiter will symbolize the power of expansion; Mars the power of out-going impulses; Venus the power of combining reactions to stimuli as conscious judgment and emotion, etc."

Birth Chart as a "Cosmic Measuring Rod": The birth chart is a "symbol of measurement" that requires prior knowledge of "human nature" to be useful. It doesn't tell what will happen, but "what significance there is in every moment or cycle lived or about to be lived." It reveals the "quality of particular moments and of the larger cycles rooted in those moments."

Horary vs. Natal Astrology: **Horary Astrology:** Addresses specific life problems by interpreting configurations at the moment the problem arises. It is highly individualistic and

relies on the astrologer's "personal equation." Natal Astrology: Focuses on individual birth moments and the archetypal structure of selfhood. It requires precise birth time to establish the "frame-work of the houses," which represents the "individual selfhood and unique destiny." It also presupposes knowledge of collective environment (species, race, class) to provide meaningful interpretations.

Planetary Symbolism and Functions: Saturn: The ego, "principle of separateness," builder of the ego-complex, differentiation, isolation, defense, crystallization. When retrograde, it directs this inward, creating resistance against unconscious suggestions. Jupiter: The "power in us of right action, the voice of our true Destiny." It represents the future, completing inadequacies, and achieving wholeness. It is "God's path toward men," religion, ceremonial, and the symbol of the wholeness of the state. Mars: Initiating impulses, outward expression of life, primordial Eros, libido, self-projection of energy. Venus: Consummating, concluding, fruit-bearing energy that closes cycles. Mercury: Intelligence, vehicle of the soul, nervous system, unifies bodily reactions, servant of Jupiter. It is restless and molds itself to sensations/thoughts. Moon: Feminine pole of Saturn, moods, constant changes. Uranus: Symbolizes the "fecundating power of the individual, how he acts upon society, constructively or destructively." Can indicate abnormal growth, genius, or freaks. Represents an advanced stage where a "super-physiological organism is forming." Neptune: Symbol of the sea, the undifferentiated, cosmic matter. Shows "how society acts upon the individual." Keynotes are "redemption, universalization, or un-focalization." Pluto: Planet of the "second birth," ruler of Mysteries, group assembly, parliamentary organization, ceremonial. Represents the "Law of the whole-Self in opposition to the law of the particular ego." Initiates the ego into the "Company of the Perfect," leading to "rebirth" and "concretization of the All into the universal One." Planetary Pairs and Opposites: Planets are often paired: Venus and Mars (inner/outer), Mercury and Jupiter (inner/outer), Sun and Saturn (inner/outer). Mars initiates, Venus consummates. Jupiter expands, Mercury consolidates. Saturn isolates and defines, while its polar opposite, the Sun's photosphere, provides light and illumination to the ego. The "Three Moons": The text suggests there are three "Moons" as linking agencies for basic life powers: being a self, maintaining oneself, and reproducing oneself. The physical Moon links Mars and Venus. Higher "Moons" like Lucifer (linking Jupiter and Mercury) and Kundalini Moon (linking Saturn and the solar photosphere) represent further spiritual development. Nodes: The Moon's Nodes axis is referred to as the "fate axis." North Node indicates positive, active operation and psychological dominance, relating life-energy to the planet's quality. South Node signifies receptivity, passivity, psychological escape, or evasion of the

issue the planet represents. III. Dynamics of Form, Pattern, and Significance The documents highlight how forms, patterns, and their interpretation are crucial to understanding reality and individual experience.

Form and Wholeness: "Being is potentially whole at every moment. The supreme Being is He Who is actually whole at every moment, knowing not the disintegration that is death." The concept of an "Eon" as a "divine Consciousness or cosmic Being—a cosmic Whole" emphasizes that wholeness is not dependent on size or number of parts, but on integrated selfhood. Ethical vs. Esthetical Judgments: Ethical judgments are seen as creating "evil" by condemning. Esthetical judgments, however, produce "stresses, emphases, relief, contrasts, light and shade... They balance opposites, and never condemn absolutely. They harmonize; never discard." They recognize that "no element in any relation can ever be cancelled. One can only transform it, by apparent cancellation, into an evil force." "Thus there is no evil, except ignorance." The Individual and the Collective: An "individual" is unique, occupying a definite place (like a brick in a wall), while "collective" refers to shared attributes or aggregates without unique spatiotemporal characteristics (like "blue eyes" vs. "Mr. X's eyes"). Planetary Patterns and Accents: Planets above/below horizon: Above indicates extraversion and objective focus; below indicates introversion and subjective focus. Planets East/West of meridian: East indicates self-initiated choice and creation ("free-will" via thinking); West indicates acceptance of choices presented ("feeling-emphasis" determined by external conditioning). Singleton: A single planet in a hemisphere opposing many others. This creates an "irrational" accent, dominating consciousness "like an aching tooth," dictating its will and destroying the sense of wholeness. Stellium: A multiple conjunction of four or more planets in a small area or single house/sign, leading to "confusion and personal involvement." The quality of the house or sign becomes more prominent than individual planetary activities. Fan-handle: A singleton opposing a stellium, where the singleton emphasizes the stellium, making it a "psychological or inner burden of manifestation." "Form" as the Beginning and Significance as the End: "In the beginning was the Word"—and the Word is the individual structure of Self. "In the beginning was Form. Astrology, as 'the science of all beginnings'... is therefore the one revealer of the 'form' of all things that are in process of becoming." Meaning is achieved through "integration," as "the process of individuation... ends in the realization of meaning. It starts with Form and ends in Significance." Transits and the Modification of Personality Content: Transits of planets symbolize "the power which every successive moment of the life-process after our birth has to modify the contents of our personality." This is not "fate" but

an ongoing influence on the personality's contents, much like food influences the body. A healthy "organism" (individual selfhood) can extract what it needs and adapt. Planetary Rulership and "Focal Determination": Planets "rule" certain zodiacal signs, creating "essential dignities" or "debilities" (e.g., "detriment" or "fall"). This allows for "quantitative valuations" of planets, showing their "relative importance and relative weight." A "focal determination" in a chart might be a significant grouping of planets (e.g., Mussolini's chart showing all planets within a trine of Uranus to Neptune, and most in the South-West quarter). IV. The Subjectivity of Perception and Interpretation The sources underscore the inherent subjectivity in how humans perceive, interpret, and communicate reality, influenced by personal "software" and semantic environments.

Semantic Noise and Subjective Filing: Communication is prone to "semantic noise," where listeners may hear words correctly but "neurosemantically file this in their brains under opposite categories" (e.g., "I love fish" meaning eating vs. keeping fish). This highlights how individual internal "maps" filter and interpret information. Maps and "Mental Furniture": All "maps or models" of reality inevitably reflect "the personality or 'mental furniture' of their creator, and, to a lesser extent, of the creator's society and linguistic system(s)—the semantic environment." A painter's lived experience influences their depiction of a ship. Changing Semantic Environments: What seemed "brutally realistic" in a novel 60 years ago might now seem "quaint and 'unreal'" because "we no longer live in the semantic environment of 60 years ago." This suggests that even "objective" descriptions are tied to cultural and historical contexts. "Model Agnosticism" in Physics: Post-Copenhagen physicists practice "model agnosticism," refusing to accept "any one model as equal to the whole universe." This echoes the idea that no single interpretative framework can fully capture reality. The Brain's "Software Programs" Perception: "Our brain software programs what we will see and will not see." This analogy suggests that individual perception is filtered and shaped by internal cognitive structures, similar to how computer software dictates what can be done with a digital document. The Danger of Literal Interpretation in Astrology: Interpreting astrological factors as "definite entities" (e.g., Mars literally compelling anger) can lead to fear and a sense of powerlessness, implying "no recourse against such an entity." The emphasis is on understanding astrological indications symbolically, not as deterministic commands.