

The Prenatal Epoch—A Reply to E.J.

IT WAS WITH GREAT PLEASURE that I read E.J.'s article in the January-February 2002 issue of *Rays*. As one who has worked with the epoch for many years, I am in a possibly unique position to appreciate its importance. It certainly deserves to be better known, and the article is a significant step in the right direction. Some very good points were made, and all in all the article was interesting and well written.

I must, nevertheless, take issue with E.J. on certain points. First, to say that (for example) when the Sun is in Aries at birth it will be in Cancer at epoch—and similarly with the other sign permutations—is true only in a general sense. Exceptions are by no means uncommon, especially if in either case the Sun is near a cusp, as E.J. must surely know, both from the works cited and from practical experience. However, I do not criticize E.J. for not mentioning this. I fully understand the reasons for the omission. I just wish a qualifying phrase such as “in general”, “generally speaking”, or “typically” had been interpolated.

The second and third points are more serious as, in my opinion, based on both theory and practice, they concern actual errors. For a start, the rule is stated incorrectly: the operative word, is “place”, not “degree” (i.e., it is the places that interchange, not the degrees). That is not an arbitrary or meaningless distinction, for “place” implies the need to take the Moon's latitude into account in the calculation. Although this will not make much difference in the majority of cases, there are occasions when the variation is quite startling—notably in (relatively) high latitudes and when signs of short ascension are rising. In this connection I must refer E.J. to a passage quoted in Alan Leo's *Casting the Horoscope* (Ch. 8).

My third objection is to the scheme of male and female quadrants set out by Bailey and Sepharial,

which strikes me as arbitrary, and even illogical. To my mind an alternative scheme, which I encountered in an article, albeit not on the epoch, by H.S. Green (a collaborator of Alan Leo's on the latter's magazine *Modern Astrology*), not only makes much more sense but gives better results in practice. (I am also dubious about the sex allocation of some of the critical degrees, but the jury is still out on that one.)

The basis of Green's scheme is that the Ascendant and M.C. are the focal points of male influence and their opposites those of female influence. Thus houses 10-12 are wholly male and houses 4-6 wholly female. The dominant influence in houses 1 and 9 is male and in houses 3 and 7 female; houses 2 and 8 occupy an intermediate position.

This raises an interesting possibility: if the Moon at epoch is in a wholly (or perhaps even predominantly) male area but the native is nevertheless female, or vice versa, we may have here an astrological explanation of homosexual tendencies, whether latent or manifested. I have no evidence for this as I have not done any research on it, but it did occur to me as a plausible theory. If there is anything in this idea, it may tie in with E.J.'s reference to people exhibiting traits associated with the opposite sex, though that is not quite the same thing, as the mere existence of such traits need not of itself imply homosexuality.

Two final observations: Taking the Moon's latitude into account gets round the objection that the epoch does not always work in polar regions because some zodiacal degrees never rise or set in those latitudes. Also, the epoch cannot be calculated if there has been medical intervention (for whatever reason) since that interferes with the natural lunar cycle, so that the birth takes place at the “wrong” time. □

—Alexander Markin