

Astrological Encyclopedia

Shakespearean Star Portraits

From the resources of his imagination and knowledge, the playwright chooses those elements of the spectrum of human personality and experience, which are appropriate to his concept of a theme, and he organizes those elements into a dramatic form which is to be interpreted by actors, actresses, and all others who function in the theater. All forms of art are distilled representations of human consciousness; works of art, like mirrors, reflect to humanity intensified representations of itself and its experiences. The playwright deals with human consciousness, emotion, and experience in terms of humanity's objective expressions; dramatic themes are presented and interpreted by humans in terms of objectively recognizable patterns of appearance, personality, activity, and relationship. Actors and actresses in performance are symbolic microcosms of humanity's own self—each role performed by an actor or actress is symbolic of a fragment of humanity's consciousness of identity and existence on this plane.

Therefore, in the creations of a true genius such as William Shakespeare was (or whoever it may have been who wrote under that name !) a protean quality of artistic skill and understanding made possible the dramatic characterizations which reflect the human archetype, localized by name, sex, period and nationality

but which really symbolize universal patterns of human nature and experience. Sooner or later, we all come face to face with the Hamlet, the Cordelia, the Othello, the Lady Macbeth, the Romeo, and the Juliet in ourselves. We weep or laugh by response to these—and other—characterizations because something in our deep subconscious knowledge of ourselves is stimulated when we see great acting which interprets the creative imaginings of a genius play-wright. Our own existence—past or present—is reviewed to a degree. Old, long-forgotten feeling-memories of suffering and joy are ignited. Our awareness (consciousness of individualized selfhood in many incarnations) is reawakened, and what we see on the stage is ourselves, condensed and focused by the dramatic requirements of the theme being interpreted. We are man-woman, all professions, all nationalities, all relationships, all strivings, all failures, all joys, and all sufferings. The playwright, through the esthetic principles inherent in creative dramatic art, and the players, through the esthetic principles inherent in interpretative drama the art recharge our consciousness of our total being, our total identity as individuals, and our total relationship to all other individuals.

Students of astrology: prepare a copy of the Great Astrological Mandala, a twelve-housed circle with Aries Ascendant, the other signs in sequence—thirty degrees to each house; Sun, Moon, and other planets in the signs and houses of their dignity. Meditate on this mandala a little as the symbolic composite portrait of humanity. It is from this design and symbol arrangement that all human horoscopes are derived and it represents the total of that which is interpreted, creatively or otherwise, in all of the fine arts. It is the picture of humanity's consciousness of its identities and experiences. Now, to specialize on dramatic art, "personalize" the Sun, Moon, and planets as characters in the Drama of Human Life;

let your mind range over the scope of these "personalities" by imagining each planet (vibratory focalizer) in each one of the zodiacal signs, each one of the environmental houses, each aspected (by conjunction, sextile, trine, square, and opposition) to every other one. Add the factors of both sexes, all ages, all nationalities, all historical periods and you will glimpse the tremendous spectrum of that which is "grist" for the playwright's mill. You and I are in this picture—as we are, as we have been, and as we will be as long as our identity is "human being." You are now playing the role that your consciousness of life has created. Humans, in their Earth-living, are both playwrights and performers—each uses his consciousness to interpret life.

The Art of Theater, more directly than does any other art-form, makes possible the stimulus in human hearts to tears and laughter. Weeping and laughing are two of the ways by which life makes it possible for us to decrystallize the solar plexal tensions and congestions. In response to the contrived agonies, sufferings, longings, and despairs in dramatic tragedy, we are moved to weep in memory of our own agonies and sufferings. In response to buffoon-ery, satire, and caricature, our intellects are "tickled" in such ways that we are moved to shake loose in laughter in witnessing the reflections of our absurdities, awkwardnesses and embarrassments. In witnessing romantic drama (of the happy ending kind) we thrill to intense emotions, deep love, aspirations, efforts, and the realization of ideals. The esoteric purpose of tragic drama is to induce the feelings of sympathy for other humans—not the intensification of self pity. That of comedy and satire is to decrystallize congestions on pomposity self-righteousness, hypocrisy, and over-seriousness—to "shake us down from our high horses." Romantic drama has its inner purpose in intensifying our awareness of the "tone, color, and design" of our living—to spark

awareness of greater capacities for love, devotion, effort, and aspiration. The "happy ending" of romantic plays is dramatized symbolism of the aspiration of all humans to realize ideals and evolve through regeneration and transmutation. The "happy ending" reminds us of the goodness of life.

The poetry and nobility of Shakespearean dramaturgy holds up an immense mirror in which humanity may see itself. Let us enjoy a consideration of some of the Shakespearean characterizations as they represent "focalized points" of human nature and human-experience patterns correlated with basic, simple astrological symbolism:

Romeo and Juliet: from a reincarnationists standpoint, this drama would have been much more truly tragic in tone and effect if the two "star-crossed lovers" had permitted crystallized adherence into family-prejudice to prevent or disintegrate their love-union. The "Romeo and Juliet" in each human is that which longs for the total polarization called the Hermetic Marriage; but this "inner union of the self with the Self" can be realized only by fulfillment of relationship unions and patterns through love: The "houses of Montague and Capulet" are the "graven images" of family prejudice and social position which are represented astrologically by the diameter Cancer-Capricorn and congested aspects to Moon and Saturn. We all derive our incarnation from a family pattern to which we are attracted by the laws of vibratory sympathy and karma. However, each must, in due time, decrystallize congestions of this pattern, from octave to octave, by more purely individualized love-expression. Romeo "o'er leapt the walls" to be with his Juliet; this "o'er leaping" is Uranus decrystallizing or transcending the boundaries set by Saturn, symbol of "congestion of forms." Personalizing a little—Romeo and Juliet were timed, evolutionarily speaking, to prove the power of their love for each

other; their challenge was through the enmity, rivalry, and prejudice of their family groups. Though they died, their tragedy was ameliorated by their devotion to each other—rather than, in fear, to the "family-image." We all, at one time or another, have an incarnation in which we have opportunity to prove the sincerity of our heart's highest aspirations and ideals. To do this, we have to use the powers represented abstractly by the diameter Leo-Aquarius to transcend the fixations on Cancer-Capricorn. To remain fixated on Cancer-Capricorn is to back-track on the evolutionary powers working for liberation and progress. The luminous poetry of the Balcony Scene represents the radiant purity of *resumption of true love*; Romeo and Juliet loved each other from a past incarnation just as we love our ideal self through all of our incarnations. The inspirational beauty of the play—as poetry—typifies the inner radiance that accompanies recognition of our ideals.

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King Lear: This drama is the tragedy of judgment corrupted by greed for approbation—doubly tragic because when the truth is perceived, the inner negatives are too deeply etched to be counteracted by constructive or regenerative effort. The realization of the hypocrisy and dishonor of the two oldest daughters, whom he had over-valuated, and the sincerity and fidelity of Cordelia, whom he had underestimated and spurned, caused Lear to react with such an excess of self-revulsion that madness ensued. Astrologically, it seemed that Lear is a portrait of "Jupiter afflicted." He based his favorable estimate of the oldest daughters on their protestations of devotion and affection—indicative that an insincerity in his own nature was counterparted by their falseness. Their greed for land and money and husbands of high position was counterparted by his greed for approbation. We can—we do—weep

in witnessing the heartbreaking tragedy of the demented lying in his excess of self-loathing because we, too, have been moved by desire and greed to claim the false and spurn the true. The realization of such misdirected evaluation causes one of the most terrific kinds of disillusionment, the kind that can disintegrate our self-control if we are unable to learn from the disillusioning experience. Lear worshiped the false image of himself, synchronized in degree with the falseness of his two daughters. Because we can be Lear, it behooves us to exercise counter-actives to negative Jupiter-patterns by discrimination, sincerity, and detachment from subconscious creed-symbols and compensations. Cordelia personifies sincerity of self-evaluation—the quite-knowing what is true and real. When we spurn Cordelia, we enslave ourselves to false, betraying images; when we love and value Cordelia, we refuse the false and cling to the pure and true.

Othello: This dramatic study of the destructiveness of jealousy warrants a little psychological consideration. We are never—in any true sense of the word—jealous of another person. Jealousy is self-hatred based on an actual or imagined inferiority which, in turn, is based on some phase of unfulfillment of a potential, or some discolored facet of self-evaluation. Othello, if we personalize him a little, may have felt inferiority because of his black skin, particularly in relationship to his white wife, Desdemona, who truly loved him. Iago symbolizes the craftiness and duplicity of self-justification—the disinclination to exercise self-honesty. Othello's murder of Desdemona symbolizes the "murder in consciousness" that we commit when, goaded by intense negative rationalizations and justifications, we "murder" true self-evaluation. By exercise of these negative rationalizations, we ascribe truth to an untruth, and our feet walk a tangling path until we fall. The qualities of nobility

that Desdemona loved in Othello represent those virtues in human beings which inspire love and honor; but Othello, blinded by the inner negative, could not realize and value the truth of himself. Iago, symbol of Othello's enmity within himself, emphasized the untruth—representing Desdemona as having been unfaithful. Othello, under pressure of the psychological negative, preferred to believe the lie. Goaded beyond endurance by the inner pressure, he murdered the thing he loved most—the truth of his marriage to Desdemona. Mars as co-ruler of Scorpio, is the destructive—killing action by which we express our releasements of intensely compressed Scorpionic negatives—the levels and areas of untransmuted desires and emotional powers. The salvation of Mars is transmutation by constructive, intelligent expression in action. Othello betrayed himself twice: by giving ear to Iago's suggestion, and then putting into action that which represented his desire to "kill out" what Iago influenced him to believe. A nobleman, worthy of love and honor, had thrown away all, by focus on his unreal self rather than on his Reality. We "kill" when we put into action our belief in an untruth about ourselves. A truly tragic theme.

Cleopatra: The death of Cleopatra by suicide does not in any way neutralize the power of the play *Antony and Cleopatra* as an example of high romantic drama. Cleopatra, as a, woman-character, symbolizes the combination of Sun and Venus elements in human nature. According to historical and Shakespearean representation, she was magnificently endowed with attributes of physical beauty and charm, intelligence, culture, and skill—a woman so conscious of inner powers that she lived always in terms of amplitude. She had enormous wealth—and used it without stint. She had great capacity for love—and gave herself to love royally and completely. Whatever her short-comings may have been, there was nothing in her nature that was mean, petty, sordid, or

vulgar. A great actress—such as Katherine Cornell—would project these qualities of character and personality in such a way that the audience would experience a recharging of its desire and aspiration to "live bigly"—in terms of power, wealth, beauty, culture, intelligence, and skill rather than continuing to live under the ignominy of capture and degradation, Cleopatra chose to end her life by her own hand; thus symbolizing **that** in human nature which wants to learn to live in terms of dignity and self-respect. Some of us crawl from time to time, through fear or feelings of inferiority; but we do not like ourselves for it and sooner or later we rebel against the inner negative. The "Cleopatra in us" symbolizes our disdain of the petty and mean; "she" is that in us which makes us long for vivid experience, met and fulfilled with courage and confidence in our abilities. We all have talents, ambitions, aspirations, and longings; the vibration of the Sun—as ruler of the royal sign Leo—is that which we use as the power of self-determination uncluttered by the down-draggings of "littleness feelings and thoughts."

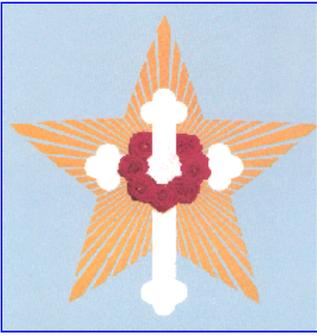
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Beatrice and Benedict: Much Ado About Nothing is one of the most delightful and delicious of comedies. It presents in a sprightly and sparkling way the "old story of the battle of the sexes"—source of much that has been presented throughout the ages in comic drama. The posturings, tricks, and devices which men and women display in relationship with each other are represented by the counter-clockwise turning of horizontal diameter—Aries-Libra of the Great Mandala. These two signs represent the polarization of the expressive individuality of humanity—as "male" and "female." Each of the two signs of this diameter symbolizes facets of personality which are peculiar to maleness and femaleness, but together they form one diameter; they appear to be "different" but

each counterparts the other. Cosmic drama, in relationship to this subject, makes it possible for us to come into a more healthy appreciation of our subjective polarity through laughter. Humans are innately bi-polar—we have all had much experience in the sex opposite to that in which we now express. When we recognize that "opposite sex" is simply our "subjective self " we can enjoy and appreciate our "hidden selves" as we are portrayed on the comic stage. In laughter we relax subconscious feelings of tension and when we guffaw, roar, and shriek at the antics of comedy actors and actresses who are interpreting the—sometimes—ridiculous interplay of men and women in relationship to each other, we refreshen our viewpoint toward human polarity. Beatrice and Benedict are the protagonists of Humanity destined to fall in love and have experience together—regardless of silly prejudices, false self-esteem, and "images of disinclination." Life works continually to incline us toward each other for our mutual development and fulfillment of potentials symbolized by Aries-Libra. Benedict is Mars who sees the charm and loveliness of Venus in Beatrice; Beatrice is Venus who needs the "kiss of Mars" to awaken her to a clear realization of her value as a woman. There is a little of Benedict and Beatrice in each one of us—we may spat and quarrel for a time but sooner or later Benedict-Mars and Beatrice-Venus bring the play—of our relationship experience—to a happy end by their union.

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