

Right or Left?

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While observing this latest presidential contest I asked myself just how does one become a Democrat or Republican? The division between parties is deep. Most people will only read or watch political news from their perspective. The Democrats watch MSNBC while the Republicans watch FOX. It appears to me that people on each political side will invariably see what they want to see, or hear what they want to hear, when watching their party's candidates speaking or debating. Why is this so, and does astrology have anything to offer in understanding such fundamental orientations?

My analysis of this situation has led me to a view that is consistent with psychology, brain science, and astrology. It assumes a few basics, most importantly that people become who they are in large part due to brain circuit imprinting at very specific, astronomically timed stages in their development. In a book and several articles I've outlined this view in the form of a detailed model in which astronomical cycles of the Moon and planets act as triggers during childhood development.(1)

The fundamental concept here is that people go through specific stages in childhood and that what happens during those stages lays the foundations for their personality—and consequently, destiny. We actually become our imprints and these imprints get embedded in neural networks established in specific layers of the brain—reptilian, limbic and neocortex. In line with the findings of developmental psychology, people respond to the same timetable, but not all people have the same experiences at the same stage of development—and this accounts for differences. It is the cycles of the planets themselves, however, that actually time development and it appears to me that the first two stages, those ruled by the Moon and then Mars, determine our political orientation.

It appears that the Moon influences the first two years of our lives. Corresponding to Freud's oral stage and the Leary/Wilson biosurvival stage, it is symbolic of mother, family, and security.(2) It is probably the most powerful astrological force in life for the first two years, then abruptly wanes in influence until about age four when it turns off. During those first two years we learn how to feel at home with ourselves and others and we establish unconscious standards that we use for the rest of our lives in evaluating whether or not a situation is safe and protective. It is the way of evolution for us to have an automatic evaluative response to our environment and it is in our first two years that the templates for security and belonging are established. It may be that the primary location in the brain for this lunar imprint is in the limbic or paleomammalian layer of the brain, a part of the brain that also has a connection to tribal instincts.

At about age two, roughly coincident with the second solar return, Mars completes its first cycle since birth. Upon the Mars return the next stage of development, corresponding to Freud's anal stage and the Leary/Wilson emotional-territorial stage, commences. It runs for the next two years taking imprints and then diminishes in potential to record experiences. The Mars stage of development is concerned with autonomy, territory, and power. By age two we are walking and talking and beginning to explore our world. Around age two we learn to control our muscles in toilet training, stand on our own two feet and defiantly say *no* to others—these are the *Terrible Twos*. At this stage, evolution establishes a repertoire of responses to challenges, ones that often involve fighting. In stage two we learn how to take care of ourselves and stand up for ourselves without any outside assistance and we learn where we stand in

relation to others. This stage is essentially all about establishing rank in the pecking order. It is possible that the brain stem, what is sometimes called the *reptilian brain*, is the physical location for the Mars imprint. This part of the brain is extremely ancient and we share it with most other animals as it allows for survival in a competitive world.

People who take deep and stressful imprints on one or the other of these first two stages (see my book for information on the other stages) will have their personalities shaped accordingly. A deep imprint in the first, Moon-ruled, stage might occur due to the experience of a family divorce in the first year or two. At this age we are not very conscious of what is going on, but we instinctively measure the security of our social environment and these learned feelings then become the template for future evaluations of any social environment we may enter.

Another similar deep imprint may occur as a response to the absence of the mother or the experience of a family move during the first two years, which changes the visual, aural and olfactory environment of the initial nesting experience. All of the above can establish a feeling of abandonment and an acute sensitivity to anything having to do with security, home, family and mother. This heightened sensitivity, and the responses that accompany it, become hard-wired in a neural network, probably in the limbic paleomammalian brain, which then functions as a security evaluating template throughout the lifetime. During our first two years the foundations of our future sense of belonging and security become deeply embedded – they become a part of us. This is the lunar circuit.

In the second Mars-ruled stage of development, deep imprints likewise shape future personality, but in a completely different way. Experiences with autonomy are crucial during this stage and if efforts to be independent fail in some way, the feelings that accompany this crisis are imprinted. An example might be a two-year old who is particularly defiant but gets punished regularly by a parent who can't tolerate the constant rebellion. Another example would be a child whose parent expects too much of them in ways that have to do with physical performance, whether this be toilet training or simply walking or standing properly. If a child is not particularly athletically-inclined, a parent who is an athlete may consciously or unconsciously establish an imprint in the child of weakness and competitive failure. With failure comes an intensified feeling of where we stand relative to others, a sense of how we are ranked, and also an acute sensitivity to fear and the need to suppress it. This is the Mars circuit which fights to defend itself from the fear of defeat.

Not all species develop and imprint according to the schedule above, though probably many socially-oriented mammals such as wolves, whales and other primates do. These first two developmental imprint circuits are so strong that we could say they dominate the basic behaviors typical of humans and other social mammals. The lunar imprint accounts for the sense of belonging to a group, family or tribe. Tribalism lies behind all sorts of behaviors including affiliation with a group. Being a fan of a baseball team or a rock group, or belonging to a church, are expressions of this basic urge to belong. Lizards don't have it nor do eagles, but cows, Canada geese and primates do. While we all have this drive, some of us have it in spades, and this is probably because we took a deep imprint during the lunar circuit.

The other fundamental drive in humans, and most other animal species, has to do with ranking, territory and power—and this clearly comes out of the Mars-ruled second imprint circuit. The prime directive for life is to survive. Immortality is only for bacteria which divide to reproduce, but since the advent of sexual reproduction organisms have had to find ways to insure that a part of them would survive into the next generation. The control and direction of DNA is crucial in this process and this requires an organism to out-compete others in the sperm and egg race and in this way, the stronger or

more fit get their genes passed to the next generation. We see this primary drive working within and without us all the time. Television ads sell products that enhance our ability to attract a mate. Boys compete amongst themselves in sports and only some will get the girl. Women accessorize themselves so as to attract a mate that will provide them with the security that they need to produce offspring. Men compete amongst themselves in business to see who can own the most stuff and thereby supply a woman of great appeal the security she demands. Corporations establish pecking orders from CEO down to door opener, a reflection of worth and rank that sends out a signal of success to the world. While human males may not butt heads (football?), lock horns (jousting?), puff themselves up with a red throat (a red necktie?) or simply impregnate as many females as is possible (some basketball players?), they do strive to improve their status in ways that insure reproductive success. Human females do the same thing by choosing males of socio-economic rank and striving to look young and presumably more fertile, which they know males go for. Most of this ranking activity is unconscious and buried in culture, but it is there for anyone to see. It is this Mars stage that most programs of enlightenment and consciousness development strive to overcome, and some people are able to do this to some degree.

Democrat or Republican?

Now what makes a Democrat a Democrat and a Republican a Republican? I'm suggesting that it comes down to the depth of imprinting in either of the first two stages of development, lunar and Martian, which occur in the limbic and reptilian brains, respectively. Those who had a rough or disturbing series of experiences during their first two years become sensitive to the issues of belonging, nurturing, protection and security. Those who had problems during the second Mars cycle, from ages two to four, become sensitive to issues of competition, power, ranking and self-reliance. The first will lean toward the Democratic party, the second to the Republican party.

Democratic candidates are philosophically fixated around themes of belonging and protection of the tribe. For example, the democratic platform is very broad-based and includes a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. It tolerates gays, artists and even people who protest the government. From its point of view, we're all in this together as one big family no matter how rich or poor you are, and further, the more unfortunate members of the national family need protection. This calls for government programs like food stamps, education credits, Medicare etc. One weakness in this position is its idealism—that in tolerating everyone, the chances of tribal conflicts are much higher than would be in a narrower set of the population. To a large extent, you could say socialism is lunar.

In contrast, Republican candidates are philosophically fixated around themes of self-interest and self-reliance. For example, the Republican platform is always against taxes which they say discourages capitalism. Capitalism is the social program that sees competition as a benign force, an invisible hand that guides productivity among individuals and businesses. Competition is driven by self-interest – a winner wins because they want to be first. Competition also requires strength and the ability of one to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, i.e. self-reliance. The weakness of this view is in its harshness and failure to address the competitive failures in society and other issues of fairness. The Republican solution to most problems is lower taxes to stimulate self-interest and challenge those who haven't competed successfully in the market to solve problems themselves without government handouts. People strongly imprinted during this Mars circuit will tend to adopt belief systems that are based on fear, including those of fundamentalist religions. They will also feel strongly about defending their territory and those of the country and they tend to glorify the military.

I'm not saying one party is better than another, just that they sure seem to be reflecting these planetary

signatures. We know we all need both the Moon and Mars to function, but when one or the other of these astronomical bodies is heavily aspected, and usually afflicted, it becomes a driver of social orientation due to unconscious imprinting—and thus becomes a shaper of party affiliation. There's a lot to be said for family influences, of course, and many of us tend to follow the party of our parents, but one could say that in a very, very general sense people with stressed Moon placements in their natal charts lean democratic and people with stressed Mars placements lean Republican.

Some current examples shed more light on the situation. Consider Barack Obama. He clearly had a challenging childhood, or at least one without a father. He obviously came out of it fine, but he apparently felt strongly enough about it to write a book *Dreams From My Father* about finding his father. Presumably, Obama did better in his Mars stage and learned easily how to be independent and self-reliant. I believe Bill Clinton also had mother issues during his early childhood. Contrast this with George W. Bush who had a more protected childhood. He probably experienced competition with his brothers or father during his Mars stage, however, and consequently became more fixated on Mars issues. John McCain comes from a military family, where no doubt expectations on his performance during the Mars imprint period were high. He ended his nomination acceptance speech with a chant of *fight, fight, fight*. Mitt Romney is a pure capitalist, with apparently little awareness or concern for those who lose when he wins.

In my astrological model of human developmental stages I argue that each of the four primary stages has a higher octave signified by an outer planet. For the Moon this is Neptune and for Mars this is Pluto. In the case of the democratic mentality, Neptune signifies the tendency to fixate on the future. It is the Democrats who believe in the future. Obama's second book *The Audacity of Hope* could be Exhibit No. 1 for this suggestion. Alternative visions of the future are absolutely vital at some points in history, but at others they are simply unrealistic, a point that Republicans often attack.

The Republican mentality can be pragmatically Plutonian and concerned primarily with control of territory and rank. This mind does not see the future except in terms of the present or the past—it is not able to conceive of anything that will allow for a loss of power, and it likes concealed power. State power is important to the Republican mentality while cooperation with other nations is important to the democratic mentality. Reagan, a Republican who was once a democrat, scared the Russians with threats of space weapons, but ultimately made peace with them. Democrat Jimmy Carter is still concerned with global cooperation while Republican George W. Bush was a failure in this regard.

It is only in the context of history that left or right leaning political actions can be interpreted as having a positive or negative impact on all of us. Sometimes we need to fight, sometimes we need cooperation. And let us not forget that the most recently evolved brain layer, the neocortex, appears to be Mercurial and as such offers a rational way through the maze of these underlying, emotionally driven circuits.

References

1. Scofield, Bruce. *The Circuitry of the Self*. Amherst: One Reed Publications. 2000, and also the NCGR Journal 1987-88 for more details of the model used as the basis for this article.
2. See Leary, Timothy. *Info-Psychology*. Los Angeles: Falcon Press. 1987. Wilson, Robert Anton. *Prometheus Rising*. Phoenix, AZ: Falcon Press. 1983.

Bio

Bruce Scofield holds an M.A. in history and a Ph.D. in geosciences and has taught at the University of Massachusetts and online for Kepler College. He has professional astrological certification from NCGR and has maintained a private practice as an astrological consultant, writer and conference speaker for 45 years. He is the author of seven books and hundreds of articles on astrology. He has served on the education committee of the National Council for Geocosmic Research since 1979 as a member and for five years as director and is a strong advocate for astrological education and certification. Bruce Scofield and Barry Orr maintain a website www.onereed.com that contains a variety of astrology articles and an online calculation program on Mesoamerican (Maya and Aztec) astrology.

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