

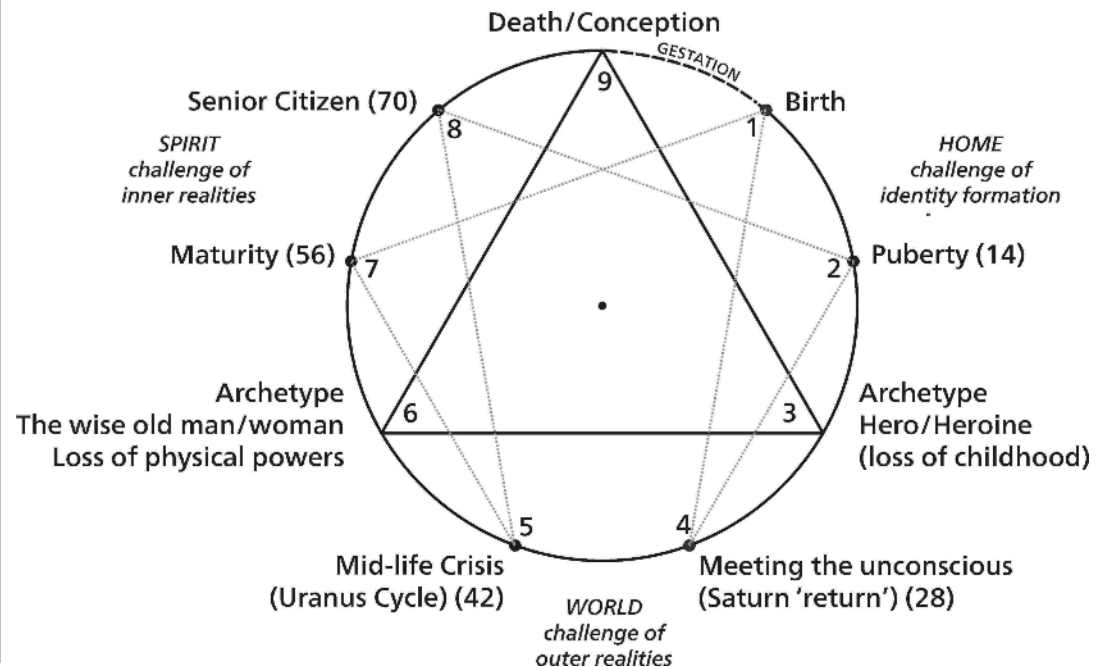
'Freedom of will is the ability to do gladly that which I must do'. CG Jung

There are challenges (some call them problems or conflicts) which are characteristic of each phase of life. When we have psychologically left a phase of life behind then the task fitting to that time becomes redundant: a two year old needs to be dependent on his mother, a 35 year old less so. The need to express heroic qualities may seem all important to a 20 year old but can be sacrificed quite easily in later life as inner realities assert themselves.

This is not, of course, immutable law. Sometimes the lessons undertaken in one phase of life e.g. a difficult childhood, are not completely integrated with the psyche, and then we may need to revisit earlier issues again later in life when we are faced with similar situations. In fact the course of our life throws up any number of opportunities to revisit earlier tasks. Astrology uses the progressions of the outer planets to plot on one's birth-chart when we should expect these recurrences. In rather the same way – and perhaps more familiar to us – the enneagram shows how certain points on the circumference of the circle have an inner, or invisible, connection with each other.

Life Clock of Psychological Development

When challenges are met positively they herald new growth for the expanding psyche. They take the form of initiations and change and always involve death (sacrifice) and rebirth.



We could put the archetypal initiation of being born on the circle at point 1. However comfortable we try to make it, the birth experience is inevitably something of a trauma for both mother and child, not to mention the siblings. Using our understanding of how the enneagram works we can expect something akin to this experience to recur at point 4 on the circle where (using 14 year intervals) the individual, having negotiated puberty and tried to integrate 'heroic' qualities, is now 28.

Astrologically this age coincides with the return of Saturn to the position he occupied at the individual's birth. Saturn tends to be unpopular because the gift he bestows on humanity is limitation. However without encountering and overcoming our stumbling blocks we never rise to our full potential. Saturn initiates dilemma and difficulty and hence growth. It is worthwhile to think about whom amongst your friends, enemies, relatives, colleagues, events, crises, has taught you the most. Dattatreya counted 40 personal 'teachers' in this way and one of them was a dog.

Saturn is connected with the 'inferior', un-lived and therefore unconscious side of human nature. In alchemy he represents the *'prima-materia'*, the base material upon which the Royal Art is performed to produce gold. In need of redemption, this base material yet contains all the potential seeds of the future.

In our late twenties the return of Saturn ensures that the unconscious side of our personality is reactivated and the effect can be painful. It's a time when feelings of depression and inadequacy have to be faced and parental ties questioned together with old values that have outlived their usefulness. It heralds the end of psychological childhood and represents an unconscious but positive thrust from deep in the psyche to liberate the personality from the regressive pull of the past. Marriages can endure storms during this period while the individual, not realizing it is his or her own unconscious compulsions creating the upset, lays the blame at the feet of the partner. In some sphere of life, his/her skin hitherto occupied with ease has now grown too tight. It must split to accommodate new elements and the pain of re-adjustment is usually blamed on the 'restrictive' mate.

Most of us have left this first Saturn 'return' far behind and feel we have more or less accepted what we are, warts and all. Looking back from wherever we find ourselves now on the circle, we may, with a slight shock, recall that it was indeed around 30 that we were particularly challenged by our environment and how, for a spell, it dented our self-image before we found enough momentum to move on again and even feel thankful for the lesson learnt. We may also have moved beyond the 'Uranus opposition' (40 – 42) but still be sufficiently close to recall it's particular flavour.

Uranus takes 84 years to circuit the sun and therefore forms an opposition to its natal place on the birth chart at 42. It coincides with the phase of psychic development often called the mid-life crisis. The synchronous changes in the individual's life wrought by this mid-life crisis are amongst the most important he/she will ever experience.

Uranus is connected with liberation, freedom to explore new spheres of expression. Break-down may even occur but always as a prelude to 'break-through'. In myth, Uranus has associations to thunder and 'breaking the veil'. We must expect a stormy time because this is when un-lived aspects of the psyche begin to knock loudly at the door of the ego and demand to be let in. Big, seemingly secure, structures in our lives may undergo transition. An intense restlessness may be felt. For a woman, childbearing years are drawing to a close. Children may be poised to leave home, an event which faces the parents for the first time in decades with, quite simply, each other. The mother must now think about the rest of her life — look, perhaps, for a new field of work or respond to the impulse to explore spiritual depths. The man may by now have exhausted the creative or financial potential of a career and may find himself looking for fresh meaning in another relationship. Or, he may discover his partner has done so instead, forcing him to look at his own difficulties with relating. All these situations are symbolic of the need to explore further the inner world of the psyche.

The Uranus cycle can release the most creative period of an individual's life and, taken together with Saturn, provides the impetus to explore those sides of us which are most unconscious but which offer new meaning to life.

M.R.

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QUESTIONS :

Who or what were/are your initiators?

How much choice did you have in the big decisions of your life?

Looking back can we scan our life as an actor does his lines?

Can we say with Prospero: 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep'