

Progressions in Astrology by Dane Rudhyar

Part One **The Meaning and Use of Astrological Progressions**

One of the many astrological topics which needs clarification and a more revealing and significant approach is what is usually called "progressions" — or secondary progressions. According to textbooks being studied today, it is possible, by considering the positions of the planets each **day** after birth, to foretell at least some of the basic events that can be expected each corresponding **year** after birth. The basic principle is that there is some sort of correspondence between the daily cycle of the earth's rotation around its axis and the yearly cycle of our planet's revolution around the Sun.

The moment of the "first breath" of the human organism establishes, as it were, the person's permanent individual character underneath all subsequent changes; this is the birth-chart. But changes are incessant after birth. The earth rotates; the Sun, Moon, and planets move on in their orbits and the astrologer claims that what happens in the solar system during the 24 hours after birth **somehow** gives us basic clues to changes occurring in the human being during the whole first year of his life, each hour corresponding to a fortnight of actual existence.

Thus, if a person is born on January 1, 1965, at noon Greenwich Time, the positions of the planets at noon January 2 — called the "progressed planets" — will refer to the person's development and the basic events of his life on January 1, 1966, and so on. If one wants to know what the person will face around his 20th birthday (1985), one will write down the progressed positions of the Sun, the Moon, and the planets for January 21. On that day, some of the aspects between the planets are different from those on January 1; the new aspects will be re-referred to as "progressed-to-progressed" aspects. But the new positions of January 21 can also be related to the positions in the January 1 birth-chart — for instance, the "progressed Moon" during the morning of January 21 is at 23° 57' Virgo, making a conjunction with the position Mars had at birth on January 1, 1965. Such a conjunction will be called a "progressed-to-radical" (or natal) aspect.

My purpose in this article is not to state in greater detail the technique for the calculation of such progressions, but rather to try to understand **why** they should have any validity at all and to what area of predictability they more logically refer. Obviously, the positions of the Sun, the Moon, and the planets for January 21, 1965, do not refer to

celestial **facts** noticeable at the time of the 21st birthday (January 1, 1985) of the person born on January 1, 1965.

The factual positions of the planets on that January 1, 1985, when referred to the positions of the planets in the January 1, 1965, birthday constitute what are called "transits." Transiting positions are existential facts; progressed positions are not. If they are to be considered as facts, it can be so only if they are integrated into a picture of the entire life process which began even earlier than birth — that is, at the moment of impregnation of the female ovum by the male spermatozoon.

The Doctrine of Correspondences

To say that progressions have validity because somehow the day cycle "corresponds" to the year cycle can only mean that they constitute a purely **symbolic** factor. The "doctrine of correspondences," as it is called, has been made responsible for almost anything along so-called occult lines. On that basis of an assumed correspondence between celestial cycles, a system of "tertiary progressions" has been taught in which a cycle of the Moon after birth is made to correspond to a year of the life after birth; and any cycle could be made to correspond to any other.

We could just as well say that if you want to know how your child will be at the age of 30 days, you should look at the planets' positions 30 years after his birth. Who knows, this might "work" — but it involves practical difficulties until our electronic computers have been made to figure planetary positions for 10,000 years ahead as well as back. It is indeed rather fascinating to think that a baby might have died at the time of his first birthday in 1599 A.D. because there is this year a conjunction of Mars, Uranus, and Pluto in opposition to Saturn affecting what was his natal Sun. Why, theoretically, stop at the equivalence of year and day? One could use the same concept and relate a precessional cycle of around 26,000 years to a solar year or a day; a degree of precession (about 72 years) could be related to a whole precessional cycle, etc.

All such correspondences can be theoretically valid, just as it may be true to say that there is a structural correspondence between a man, as microcosm, and the universe, or macrocosm. Such concepts belong to the field of pure symbolism; and astrology as it is practiced today is in a sense a symbolic type of knowledge. Symbols are very powerful, and we deal with them constantly. Words are symbols, as are all slogans and catch phrases, all rituals. A national flag and anthem are symbols. The English Queen is a symbol; so is the White House.

The whole sky has been for man, struggling out of the chaos of the jungle (and there is a psychological jungle very much in evidence today), the great symbol of "order" — which means periodicity and predictability.

We must, of course, use symbols, but we should try to use them while realizing vividly **the kind of life processes** to which they refer. We should try to understand and to feel the concrete processes of which the abstract symbols reveal the essential structure.

Thus, if I say that a day after birth "corresponds" to a year of actual living for an individual human being, it should not be enough to take intellectual refuge in the concept of the symbolic equivalence of the earth's daily rotation and the earth's yearly revolution.

What we must try to realize is what it is that **actually** happens in a human being during the days after his birth — i.e., what **process** is at work within him. It must be a basic and far-reaching process if it is true that what occurs **in that process** ten days after birth actually has a direct repercussion upon the bio-psychic state of that person at the age of 10.

We should be able to know what the process is, for if we do not, we are likely to misunderstand the symbol — i.e., the character of the progressions, the field of experience to which they should be referred — and to use it wrongly or apply it to the wrong level of existence. We may believe, for instance, that the symbolical techniques which we call "progressions" refer to actual physical-plane events, while actually it may have meaning in terms of some psychological factor behind the events, a factor which **may or may not exteriorize itself as events**.

What then is happening within the total psychosomatic organism of the baby during the days following birth? Can we know? I believe that we can get an idea of the deeper process going on after birth if we think of the relation between conception and birth, also between the prenatal and the postnatal forms of existence, which I will discuss next.

The Prenatal and Postnatal Development of Human Person

It has been shown that in the earliest stages of development from the fecundated ovum, the human embryo repeats very briefly the successive stages of the evolution of life on earth. The very narrow band of space on either side of the planet's surface has been called the "biosphere." It is the realm of life on earth; it includes the seas and the surface of continents and the atmosphere up to a very few miles up. It is the planetary womb within which all earthly life is given **form and substance** and finds itself dominated by the power of gravitation.

When the embryo reaches a certain stage of development, it becomes entirely "human"; and sexual differentiation begins to take place. Then it begins to move and kick; finally, it is "delivered" into the realm of air. It gasps for air; and in that act, the pattern of blood circulation is changed, dividing itself into its arterial and venous circuits; the breathing rhythm is established. It would seem also that thereafter another kind of rhythm is built up which refers to the cerebrospinal nervous system and pulsations in the cerebrospinal fluid in which that system is bathed; unfortunately, modern biology does not seem to be as yet very aware of what takes place in this nervous system of the baby or has not yet interpreted what it knows within an overall concept of a well-defined process.

There are nine months of prenatal life. But the cycle of the year encompasses twelve months; and our zodiac — which is a symbolical expression of this yearly cycle and of the

earth's orbit — has twelve signs. If we really understand what a cycle means, we should ask ourselves the obvious question (but obvious questions are very often **not** asked): What happens during the three months **after** birth?

This is the key. Something happens during these 90 to 92 days which is so basic that it affects the entire life of the person — a life which may well last some 90 years. It is something as basic as the change which took place in the embryo during the three months before birth.

We can well say that after six months of growth, the embryo is sufficiently humanized to be born as a viable organism in the world of humanity. Before that, the embryo was not yet quite human; it belonged to the earth's biosphere together with all other living things. But at or near the beginning of the seventh month, it enters the magnetic field of the human kingdom; it belongs definitely to a certain race and ancestral lineage as an **actual** and viable organism; and it develops its human-ancestral potential during three months more in a particular mother's womb — or, in cases of premature birth, in an incubator and in a hospital which are the products of human civilization throughout the ages.

Then, normally, the baby is born. His tiny body will grow more or less rapidly, still so closely bound to his mother that he seems hardly separated from her. But he breathes; gradually, his eyes open, his senses become alert. A prodigious process is at work correlating and adjusting to the myriad of impacts upon the brain. It will take three more months for the Sun to return to the position it occupied at the moment of impregnation of the mother's ovum. What happens during these ninety days within the baby? Simply this: on the basis of his first act of independent existence (the first breath), the child is building the foundations for the gradual actualization of the essential characteristics of his human status — i.e., individual selfhood — through the development of **individualized potentialities of intelligence**. What do I mean by this word "intelligence"?

Intelligence, Power of the Spirit in the Human Person

Perhaps I can express this meaning quite clearly by using the Christian symbol of the Trinity and saying that God, the Father, refers to the basic genetic structure of the human organism; the Son, to the potentiality of individual selfhood represented by the birth-chart — i.e., to the fact that this particular human organism came out of the mother potentially able to fulfill his destiny as an individual person. The Holy Spirit represents that power which will enable this person **actually** to become an active, essentially free and responsible "individual" — and this power is what I mean by intelligence.

The birth-chart, as I see it, constitutes the formula of our true individual selfhood. It presents us with the picture of that particular being which the universe, or God, is creating at that particular time and place which sees the start of our independent existence. As we undergo birth, we have a past — which is our prenatal condition as an embryo, end of a long series of ancestors, human and pre-human. We are now our birth-chart, our "signature

of destiny," our essential individuality as a potential individual; but let us not fail to see that the birth-chart, at birth, is only the pattern of the **possibility** of becoming in actual fact an integrated and fulfilled person from whom the principle of divine Sonship (the Christ within) would radiate forth in love and creativity.

Why is that possibility not always realized? It is fundamentally because we have to actualize this possibility in the collective environment of a family, a culture, a society, a race, a planet — all of which exert upon the growing child and adolescent constant and powerful pressures, many of which tend to obscure, stifle, or distort and adulterate this individual birth potential (i.e., what Zen calls our "fundamental nature"). **Every** birth-chart could lead to the manifestation of "divine Sonship" in one form or another; but this process of actualization of our potential of individual selfhood (i.e., of the God within) requires the development of the conscious mind through a multitude of impacts and relationships, for it must be a **conscious** process.

Our family, our religion and culture, our society and all interpersonal relationships derived from its patterns of behavior provide us with raw materials for the growth of our conscious mind and the necessary development of an ego. But this very process produces all sorts of tensions, fears, withdrawals, unnatural desires, ambitions, etc., which nearly always tend to make us what we are not essentially — i.e., what our birth-chart should reveal we are, potentially.

Transits vs. Progressions

It is to all these impacts, pressures, and influences of the environment (psychic and mental as well as geographical, cultural, and social) that the **transits** refer in astrology. These transits constantly exert a pressure upon our permanent and essential identity, symbolized by our birth-chart. The pressures may cause pleasure, happiness, exaltation — or pain, misery, and depression. Some may strengthen basic factors in our nature; others may tend to disintegrate our personality. But, generally speaking, they are that which every day and year after year challenges us. What is it in us which will accept these challenges and make of them opportunities for becoming more and more that which we potentially are? This is our "intelligence."

The power of intelligence is, I repeat, the Holy Spirit within us. It alone can transmute all that we find in our outer and inner (i.e., psychic-mental) environment **into food for our growth as an individual person** conscious of being that which it was originally as a particular birth potential. The birth potential remains what it is; this the permanent factor in us, the seed form, the "fundamental tone" of our individual being and destiny; but nearly everything that surrounds us will tend to change its vibration, even with the very best intention, even through parental love and all kinds of love.

Thus, astrological transits forever tend to change the form of our essential birth potential; and it is in the progressions that we can witness the Holy Spirit — the power of intelligence — at work within us. It is during the days and weeks after birth that this power

of intelligence primarily develops, for it is then that, confronted with the family environment — and with all that is back of its ways of life, its biases, and its beliefs — the Holy Spirit continues the process of formation of the necessary means and capacities by using which the human being can handle intelligently the everyday challenges of the rest of his life and thereby follow the **path of personality integration**.

From conception to about the end of the sixth month of embryonic existence, earth materials are being structured by the planet's life to become organized into a human being. For three months afterward, this human being is developing the specific capacities that belong to his family, his race, his society so that he may be able to emerge out of the mother as a **potential** individual person. Three months remain in the year's Jupiter or Saturn and other planets. The Sun progresses only some 90 degrees; but its passage from one sign to the next usually marks a very noticeable modification in a person's basic responses to life. As Mercury and Venus remain always fairly close to the Sun, they cannot move by progression in a lifetime around the whole zodiac. Only the Moon can do so; and the progressed Moon returns to the Moon's natal place every 27 to 28 years, thus making usually at least two complete circuits around the birth-chart and, in the process, passing over all natal planets and house cusps.

As in astrology nothing is totally and individually significant which does not make a complete cycle of motion around the zodiac, the most significant factor in the progression technique is the Moon. More significant still, however, is the cyclic change in the soli-lunar relationship — that is, the lunation cycle of some 30 days. In terms of progressions, this means a 30-year cycle, the "progressed lunation cycle."

From the way I see and analyze it, this progressed lunation cycle (from one progressed New Moon to the next) provides us with an over-all moving picture within which all other progressions find their place and acquire a broader meaning in terms of the total development of the personality. Essentially, it is the progressed Sun which marks the successive steps in the actualization of this Spirit-imparted intelligence which enables a human being to become fulfilled as a conscious and creative individual person. Progressions depend primarily upon a solar cycle; it is the 12-month **solar** cycle of the year which controls the 9-month gestation period and the three-month postnatal process of building in the patterns of intelligent and effectual responses to life in the cerebrospinal nervous system — thus, the formation of a potentially complete human person.

For this reason, the progressed Sun's motion year after year is the basic factor; and the symbol of the degree on which the progressed Sun is located during each 12-month period is often quite revealing. (I use the Sabian Symbols which can be found in Marc Jones' book and in my "Astrology of Personality," now once more available, [and, later **An Astrological Mandala**.]) For instance, at the time of a highly Uranian progressed Full Moon in my life, the progressed Sun was on a degree symbolized by "a new continent rising out of the ocean." **Something** had to emerge within me — a new approach, a new mode of

intelligence. Yet there can be emergence, in such a case, at two or three levels — and it is the level which conditions **the actual events**, not vice versa.

If the progressed Sun symbolizes intelligence in action, the progressed Moon represents the energy being distributed to sustain the application of this intelligent power of integration — thus, also the focus of the individual person's attention upon one field of experience or another. The natal house through which the progressed Moon is passing at any time indicates what this field of experience is, and the passage of the progressed Moon over the four angles of the natal chart is particularly significant. The progressed Mercury has much to do with the character and effectiveness of the mental apparatus through which the person's attention is being focused; and the years of life which correspond to a change in the direction of Mercury's motion (from direct to retrograde, or vice versa) are seen to be in most cases periods of change in relation to the environment or to the collective mentality of one's community.

The progressed Venus should give indications concerning the sense of value and the feeling responses of the individual, as these are being modified by experience and age. The progressed Mars may move far enough from Mars' natal position to indicate changes in the relationship between the desires and the life ambition of a person and the external objects which draw him out and help him to mobilize his energies. In any case, it is the angular relationship (aspects) of the progressed planets to the Sun and the Moon (natal and progressed) which is the most basic factor in progressions, plus the entrance of these planets into new signs and houses.

Converse Progressions and the New Moon Before Birth

As I have shown in Part One, "The Meaning and Use of Astrological Progressions", the real and existential meaning of what astrologers call progressions (or, at times, secondary progressions) derives from the fact that the normal period of gestation of a human organism is nine months, while the cycle of the year lasts twelve months. The year in the ordinary type of geocentric astrology is a "solar" factor, and the Sun is the source of all the basic energies that circulate throughout the solar system and which make possible life on earth. A child is a living organism. This organism originates in the union of male and female genital cells within the mother's womb. The fecundated ovum multiplies itself through a process of successive division. Each resulting new cell — and there are many billions of them in the newborn child — carries at its core what has been called a "genetic code" which directs its particular function in the child's body.

Each human embryo as it develops within the womb is said to **recapitulate** very briefly the series of biological evolutionary developments of life forms in the "biosphere" — i.e., within the very narrow space extending above and below the planet's surface. Once the embryo has become truly "human," it can be assumed that in a less obvious and perhaps unrecognizable manner it passes through the stages which led human races to the level of a biological development characterizing present day humanity.

A human embryo is not "viable" until it reaches about the beginning of the seventh month of gestation. Then the embryo is completely "human," and there are many cases of premature births at such a time. If the prematurely born baby survives, it is thanks to extreme and in a sense artificial care — that is, he survives because human beings have developed **collectively** a culture and especially a science which enables them to complete what "life" (in the biological and planetary sense) has left incomplete and condemned to extinction.

If the embryo reaching its seventh month of gestation has become **potentially "human"**, it normally takes three months more for it to complete the expected stages of a development which will make him **potentially an "individual"** — that is, a human organism ready to perform its role in a human society as a would-be individual person endowed with intelligence and with the capacity to make at least relatively free choices in answer to the challenges of his environment.

This capacity to operate among his fellow men as an individual person is only potential at birth; and I have shown how the development of this power which I define as intelligence is, as it were, "programmed" (or set in its basic pattern of operation) during the three months **following** birth. Three months represent about 90 or 91 days; in the astrological technique of the "progressions," each of these days is made to correspond to one year of the actual life of the individual. Progressions, thus, refer to the development of this "intelligence" which I have defined as the power enabling a person to act as a free and

responsible individual as he faces the infinitely complex relationships, challenges, and opportunities of everyday life.

If this be true, what then could be said actually to happen to the human child-to-be during the three months **preceding** birth — the seventh, eighth, and ninth months of gestation? If we know the basic meaning of these three last months of intrauterine existence, can we deduce from this an applicable type of astrological knowledge?

Converse Progressions

The idea occurred to astrologers that one might find it significant to "progress backward" a birth-chart. Just as in the usual type of progressions one day **after** birth gives basic clues to the development of the individual person one year after his birth, so in "converse progressions," one day **before** birth is said to give valid indications to what will happen to the person also when one year old. The two procedures are symmetrical; and whether one moves ahead, let us say, ten days in the ephemeris or one moves backward ten days in the ephemeris, one obtains in both cases some basic information relating to the person's life when he is ten years old.

The people who use both methods unfortunately do not differentiate clearly — or at all — between the two types of information obtained, on the one hand, by direct progressions (based on the actual motions of the planets after birth) and, on the other, by "converse" progressions. Yet, obviously, if ordinary progressions are already symbolical in character, the converse progressions are even far more so. What could be **actual** in the correlation between the positions of planets ten days before you are born and what you will experience at the age of ten? If converse progressions "work" — and they often do — they work as symbols; but as symbols of what? If astrology has any logical foundation, these converse progressions obtained by reading the ephemeris backward from the birth moment cannot refer to the same type of conditions, experiences, or phases of personal development as the ordinary progressions based on the forward movement of the planets.

Many people have had the experience that what they were living through was actually, though in some undefinable manner, the consequence of antecedent causes — i.e., of events of long ago. One may interpret such a strange feeling by accepting the hypothesis of "reincarnation." This concept of reincarnation can be understood in several ways; but, in any case, we can well say that our present is at least partially conditioned by the past — by the past of our parents, by the ancestral traditions and prejudices which have been stamped upon our receptive mind in early childhood, and by the evolutionary past of mankind.

Most devout Christians believe that man is born with an innately perverted nature as a result of the "Original Sin" in Eden. Is not this an instance of the manner in which an immensely distant event can condition a man's psychic development? I have known personally several persons for whom the realization of the assumed fact that his or her nature had been inherently perverted by the sin of Adam and Eve brought out in adolescence or midlife a real psychological crisis — and, in one instance, a passionate

conversion to Catholicism of the most rigid type. Of course, the whole Christian culture — especially during the Middle Ages, but also later on in the case of great minds like the French scientist-philosopher Pascal — has been conditioned by this poignant belief in what they considered to have been a fact of past history.

I knew a wonderful female painter whose life had been tragically overshadowed by a scandal in the life of a revered and famous grandfather she had hardly ever met. We are indeed affected most directly and internally by basic occurrences antedating our birth as an individual person. Carl Jung refers to this when he speaks of the great power of "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious." The famous French philosopher of the early-19th century, Auguste Comte, made the statement that, "Humanity includes as effective presences many more of the dead than of the living."

The Weight of the Past

In the light of such observations, let us now consider what occurs during the last three months of the normal gestation period. The child-to-be prepares himself for a life as an individual person in direct relation — i.e., without a maternal intermediary — with other people and with the universe as a whole. This process has to operate, as it were, **through** the past of humanity, of his particular race, culture, and family. I might say that we reach a new condition of individual existence only by passing through and overcoming our ancestors — and especially our parents. Moreover, if we believe in the cyclic re-embodiment of a spiritual Principle (or "Soul"), then we will have to realize that we inherit the karma of those persons who were our predecessors, somewhat as a U.S. president inherits the consequences of the successes or failures of the preceding administrations.

If a man born in 1921 had to face a crisis in his life at the age of 20 after Pearl Harbor, was it not largely because a small group of senators defeated, even before he was born, Wilson's attempts at building a strong and effective League of Nations? So the young man engaged in the Pacific War and was maimed; his whole life was altered. Perhaps the event would show up astrologically as a "converse progression" for the 21st year of his life. There was nothing much he could do about it, most probably. It was truly "fate." He had to bear the **collective karma** of his nation — and possibly a more **individual karma** referring to the lives of past personalities of whom he was the spiritual heir. As I see it — and I cannot find any other logical and significant justification for "converse progressions" — going backward in the ephemeris from the day and hour of birth means to uncover ever deeper strata of the collective unconscious which has **preconditioned** our personality and its innate tendencies. It is like digging a deep well and bringing back to the light of consciousness the fossilized remains of a past antedating our birth. It reveals what we had to pierce through in our ascent toward a new potentiality of individual existence — i.e., toward the birth of our present personality. We had to do it within the dark unconsciousness of the prenatal state during the last 90 days (more or less) of the gestation process which ended with the **victory** of birth.

Freud and his disciples relished the idea of a "birth trauma"; but since the brilliant insights of the great pioneer, Dr. Moreno, founder of the Psychodrama techniques, repolarized the concept of birth some 30 years ago, we should realize that birth is a victory over the pressure of the ghosts of the human past. Our birth-chart reveals the pattern of this victory. But no victory is won only once and for all time. As we grow stronger, year after year, we also are faced by ever deeper layers of the past. Symbolically speaking, as the tree rises toward the sun, it also sends its tap root ever deeper down.

As we grow older, our "intelligence" (as I have defined the term) should develop and enable us to meet — or, shall I say, to "redeem" — ever deeper layers of our ancient ancestral past. The life movement of personal growth to which all progressions refer is, therefore, operating **at the same time in two opposite directions** — the direction represented by the actual motions of the planets during the days after our birth (the usual progressions) and the other complementary and regressive motion toward the past represented by the converse progressions.

I believe it is wise to consider only the most important of the converse progressions — particularly perhaps the times at which planets, especially Mercury, may change the direction of their motion (i.e., from direct to retrograde, or vice versa), the times at which New and Full Moons occurred during these three months preceding birth. The last New Moon preceding birth is particularly significant; but before I speak of it, let me state that, as with direct progressions, one can consider "progressed-to-progressed" aspects (the New Moon before birth is the most important of those) and also "progressed-to-natal" aspects. In the latter case, one relates the position of a planet some days before birth to the position of another planet in the birth-chart. If one looks for **events**, progressed-to-natal aspects are the more likely indications of actual occurrences; but, usually, they should be backed by other normal progressions and/or transits to refer to actual occurrences.

The main point, when dealing with converse progressions, is that events which they may indicate are far more "fated" than those which the ordinary forward-in-time type of progressions represent. Every astrological technique referring to a motion **backward** in the zodiac implies the element of fate; by "fate," I mean that power which compels us to deal with some "unfinished business," something done inadequately or wrongly, or something left undone — thus, what theologians call sins of omission as well as of commission.

This general principle applies even to the retrograde periods of planets, especially of the planets close to the earth — Mars, Venus, and Mercury. During such retrograde periods, we are, as it were, given the opportunity of reconsidering the value and meaning of what we have done, felt, and thought in the past; and this means, positively speaking, the opportunity of becoming stronger, more careful, and wiser as we meet our future challenges. Of course, very often we do not use such an opportunity constructively; and, when the planet "turns direct" at the end of its retrograde period, we precipitately return to our old habits, often with even worse results.

This is clearly seen where Mars is concerned. After this planet ends its retrograde period and turns direct once more, warlike or explosive actions very often occur. As I am writing these words — in late April, 1965 — Mars has just become direct and the war atmosphere in the world is getting stronger, even explosive in Vietnam and the Caribbean. Under a "fortunate" trine aspect of the Sun to Mars, a strong earthquake rocked Seattle — a release of telluric forces. The end of it is not in sight on this last day of April.

The New Moon before Birth

At New Moon, symbolically speaking, the power of the Sun fecundates the feminine and receptive Moon. The Moon is closely related to the biosphere of our planet — that is, to the surface of the earth where living entities are born, grow, and decay. It is the "Great Mother" of all that lives on our planet. Each New Moon represents a **new life impulse**; and this impulse or surge of life energies has a particular quality or rhythm somewhat different from other life impulses. Its character is symbolized by the degree and sign of the zodiac on which the New Moon occurs.

Unless a person is born precisely at the moment of a New Moon, he took his first breath a certain number of days after a New Moon — that is, he was born within a "lunation cycle," the duration of which is about 30 days. He may have been born while the Moon appeared in the sky as a thin crescent, near a Full Moon, or some time between the last Quarter and the next New Moon. The angular aspect between the Moon and the Sun in his birth-chart determines **the phase of the soli-lunar relationship** at which he was born — what I have called the **lunation birthday** — provided one differentiates waxing from waning aspects (for instance, a First Quarter from a Last Quarter aspect, both phases constituting square aspects of the Moon to the Sun).

The point with which we have to deal here is, however, simply that because a person is born inside of a lunation cycle and because the New Moon beginning this cycle stamped, as it were, the entire cycle with its astrological character, this New Moon before his birth is of great significance for the person; it indicates in some manner the particular nature and quality of the basic life force vitalizing his entire organism. Every human being could be said to drink of the stream of life of which the New Moon before his birth was the source. The quality of this "water" circulating through and sustaining his body (and, as well, his psyche) has much to do with the nature of this human being's growth, especially during the formative years of his life. It is, therefore, quite valuable indeed for anyone to study the pattern of the solar system at the time of his New Moon before birth and to relate it to the birth-chart. It is particularly important to see whether the New Moon before birth occurred in the same sign as your natal Sun or in the preceding one.

In the case of the famous astrologer **Evangeline Adams** (February 8, 1868), birth occurred just past Full Moon, with the Sun at 19°07' Aquarius. The New Moon before her birth took place on January 24 at 4°08' Aquarius, in conjunction with Mercury and in close sextile to Saturn in Sagittarius and in her natal ninth house. This New Moon before birth

refers to the background of this eminent woman and to the excellent mental capacities she inherited, either from her ancestors or from a "previous existence." It represents the **root forces** at work in her personality. The emphasis on Aquarius was very strong in her life and character. **Abraham Lincoln** also had his natal Sun in Aquarius, on the 24th degree; but as his natal Moon was close behind at 27° Capricorn — making of him what I called a "Balsamic Moon Type," his New Moon before birth occurred at 25°35' Capricorn, just past a conjunction with Mercury. This might suggest that in some past, "he" had already been concerned with political issues.

The well-known writer and indefatigable critic of social evils, **Upton Sinclair**, was born with the Sun at 27°27' Virgo and four more planets in Virgo. His natal Moon was in Cancer; but his New Moon before birth occurred at 4°47' Virgo, past a conjunction with Uranus and going toward a conjunction with Mars and Mercury. The natal Virgo emphasis was, thus, completely sustained by his past.

In my case, while my natal Sun is at 2° Aries and my natal Moon on the 25th degree of Aquarius, my New Moon before birth occurred at 5°51' Pisces, very close to a retrograde Mercury and in sextile to Saturn retrograde. It occurred, according to the converse progressions technique, when I was about 26, at a most important turning point in my life — among other things, just at the time I began to study astrology in Hollywood. The conjunction of converse Mercury and converse Sun had occurred a year or so before, when I reached California. Conjunctions of the progressed Mercury and Sun are always important (whether "direct" or "converse"), for at those times Mercury changes from being morning star to being evening star, or vice versa. My 26th and 27th years established the foundations for the development of my mature mind; until then, I had been only gradually emerging from the background of my European culture and my French ancestors.

As a lunation cycle lasts about 30 days, a "progressed lunation cycle" lasts 30 years. **Going backward** in the ephemeris, I find that the preceding New Moon occurred at 5°43' Aquarius, square an opposition of Saturn to Mars. This **second** New Moon before birth corresponded to age 56, another significant turning point in the midst of serious financial problems. It fell in the second house of my natal chart. The exact square of converse Sun to converse Saturn had occurred less than two years before and had begun the process which took a more decisive turn at the converse New Moon. Not too much occurred in terms of direct progressions at the time, but some transits were rather strenuous. As it turned out, the life process then had a strong **karmic** significance, in an at least a superficially negative sense.

On the other hand, the first New Moon before my birth occurred at a time when my normally progressed Sun was making the best possible aspects of my lifespan: a sextile to natal Venus, a trine to natal Jupiter, a trine to progressed Mars conjunct my natal Jupiter. The progressed Moon was vitalizing the entire configuration from Aquarius. **Karma** was then operating in the most positive sense of the term — as the fruition of "past" service and spiritual endeavors.

I need hardly add, in closing, that this converse progressions technique should be used with great care and with wise understanding. Its results have to be carefully balanced with the other type of progressions and with the transits. A man's individual existence is a very complex process. The achievements-yet-to-be attract, as well as the past pulls, us to what had been. The present is the ever-shifting balance sheet. The tree as it grows reaches both upward with its trunk and downward with its roots — a great symbol of the life of an individual in whom faith and aspiration ever blend with fearlessness and the quiet will to fulfill human destiny.