



avantgarde

Elementary star signs

This text about the star signs is something very special. . .

. . . at first apparently quite novel and some things might appear a bit strange at first, but in the end it is still something already very familiar, just described a bit differently, in which everybody can mirror her- of himself and also loved or otherwise close people.

I describe the 12 star signs of the (Western) zodiac—Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces—in a novel, very elementary way, which is, yet, very rich and familiar in the end, and hopefully also conveys a lot of sympathy for and understanding of the star signs and what moves them in their innermost cores.

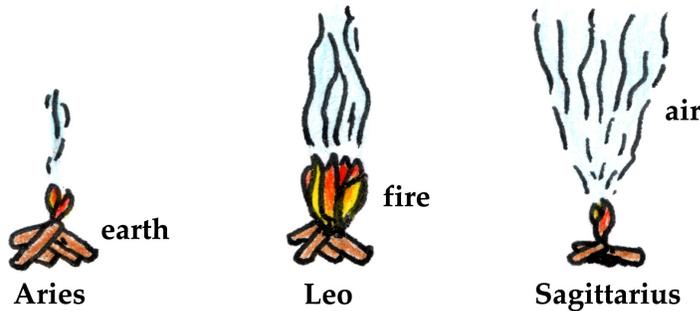
The whole idea can hardly be skated around in advance in a generally accessible way, so let me simply first give a concrete example (Aries) and then expose my model for all star signs, with some applications and comparisons with what other astrologers already wrote about star signs, in order to connect the idea to more familiar things. At the end follows a review with an attempt to carve out the overall structure of the model as simply and clearly as possible.

Please take some time to let yourself immerse into this.

Example (Aries)

I am starting with Aries, the first star sign of the zodiac:

In my model, **Aries** is the first stage or phase of a transformation from **Earth via Fire to Air**.



I am sure this must now sound abstract and arbitrary, but this is much, much less the case than it appears, which I can only explain gradually, step-by-step.

Let me start with a real fire.

A fire needs two things to burn: Some fuel like wood or coal, hence something that often reminds of the element Earth, as well as the oxygen from the air, hence roughly the element Air. In addition, when a fire burns, most of the fuel disappears practically invisibly into the air, as gas and smoke, and in terms of solid matter only a small heap of ashes remains.

Thus 'Earth' is transformed by Fire into 'Air'. And why Aries as the first stage of this transition? Well, Aries is the first of the three Fire signs Aries-Leo-Sagittarius in the zodiac. Aries is still very much rooted in immediate reality, close to the ground of reality, but already filled with lots of fire and aspirations to higher things, like more reason, knowledge, justice, which would astrologically all be Air themes. Sagittarius, as the third and last Fire sign, is already like Zeus/Jupiter, who rules the sign, high up in the air and considers the world from above, only from time to time he lets fire speak, when he throws a thunderbolt or seduces a maiden. Leo, as the second Fire sign, is in the middle, where the fire burns with most intensity, is most focussed.

But maybe first a quote from well-known astrologer Liz Greene about Aries, to make the matter a bit more vivid:

The Ram was known to the Egyptians as the primeval god Ammon, or Amun, whose name means 'the hidden one'. This antique ram-headed deity was said to be the force behind the invisible wind. He was also called 'he who abides in all things', and was imagined as the soul of all earthly phenomena.

— Liz Greene, *The Astrology of Fate* (Weiser 1984), in the chapter about Aries

Liz Greene instinctively used the right words: 'earthly' comes from 'Earth', hence the element Earth, and 'Wind' is moving air, hence the element Air. Also the word 'soul' fits in very well, as follows.

The human physical body (Earth) is mortal, ephemeral, but the mind (Air) can create ideas and theories, which can be communicated and written down, hence can become sort of immortal. That is where the transformation of the Fire signs lies, it is about the aspiration to something higher, about transforming the mortal human body (Earth) with help of Fire, with imagination and energy etc., into something immortal.

And the soul is considered immortal—but the soul is not really (only) like the element Air, it resonates also a lot with feeling and fate, hence with the element Water. And Water is exactly the one element of the four Greek elements that lacks in the transformation of all Fire signs, they actually often lack compassion and comprehension for their fellow human beings, also Aries, despite his noble goals for all people.

Liz Greene often emphasizes this theme in *The Astrology of Fate* for the Fire signs, like for Aries, where Jason cheats on Medea, or for Leo, where Parsifal has at first no comprehension of the purpose of the Grail, but learns is later, or finally for Sagittarius, where the centaur Cheiron finally sacrifices his immortality for someone else, thus in a way fulfilling the "task of the Fire signs" of learning to feel and show compassion.

Another, much older source, where the elementary transformation of the fire signs (and also of the other star signs) is visible, is in the four tasks of Psyche from *The Golden Ass* by Lucius Apuleius from the second century CE. In the

story, Lucius is transformed into an ass and experiences lots of adventures. As a story within the story, the *Fairy Tale of Cupid and Psyche* is told, where the god Cupid, son of the love goddess Venus, falls in love with Psyche, the most beautiful woman of the world. And, as another story within the story, the story of the four tasks of Psyche is told, which Venus, jealous of the already pregnant Psyche, poses to her, in the ostensible intent of having her fail. The four tasks correspond to the four elements, as I hope to show, and as others already tried to assign them, although, in my view, often the wrong way round. But more about that later, here the task which I relate to the element Fire, the third task.

This task consisted of bringing back, before nightfall, a goblet filled with water from the river Styx, which flows eternally in a circle. But the river is surrounded by steep, sharp rocks, guarded by monsters and in addition its water is poisonous. So, no getting through for an Aries who likes to fight on the ground of facts, sort of with his horned head through the wall; a solution can be only be found with oversight from high up in the air, in Apuleius' story when Jupiter sends Psyche an eagle, who flies from high in the air to the middle of the river and fills the goblet with water.

Here all four elements come together: The Earth, where there is no getting through; the Fire, which makes it possible by its visual, imaginative power to get an overview of the situation (in order to see something visually, light, Fire, is required); the Air that had risen from the power of Fire, which can then easily find a solution from above; and finally the goal, Water, the immortal soul, which circles in everything, like the eternal Styx, to put it a bit poetically. . .

So much for this example, now first to the elements all to themselves and then to step-by-step descriptions of all 12 star signs.

(An overview of the structure of the model follows later, but if you are too curious, maybe take a peek already earlier further back in this text and then come back and read on? The theme of the Fire signs, and also the themes of the other star signs, as will become visible later, are mirrored here: Without having "lived", so to speak, through all transformations of the star signs, it is difficult to convey an overall view in a really accessible way.)

The elements

Astrologers are usually well aware of the four elements, in most textbooks about astrology they are presented with at least a few keywords. Hence only a relatively short description here, although here and there substantiated in a maybe a bit unexpectedly specific way.

Fire and Air are described as male, active, warm, light elements, Water and Earth as female, passive, cold, heavy elements. According to Aristotle, in addition Fire and Earth are dry, Air and Water wet, which includes also more bendability, malleability and flexibility—this will be important later on regarding the structures in the model of the star signs, but now briefly to the individual elements.

Fire has certainly immediately to do with sources of light and heat, like with the sun, a fire, a light bulb or a thunderbolt, etc. In order to see something with the eyes, a source of light, hence 'Fire', is necessary; thus also figuratively visual imagination is associated with fire, simply because also in the head sort of a form of Fire is required to make an inner image visible. Thus any kind of visual imagination belongs to Fire, as well as a bit more negatively projections.

Of course such assignments are never really absolute and also not always in accordance with findings in natural sciences, but the things I described above are still very strong and often the dominating associations that Fire—of the four elements—clearly fits best.

Air also has a lot to do with thinking, but rather abstract thinking, not in images, because air is invisible. Air can also be very changeful, like the wind, or sort of unreachable, because it can neither be seen nor grasped, which can appear arrogant as well as fleeting, depending on circumstances. The association with language and communication comes about as follows: A word like “dog” is an abstraction from the corresponding living animal, in such terms it is then possible to think purely abstractly, logically, even without necessarily having to imagine a dog, and there are words which were abstract from the beginning, like justice, or think of mathematics, etc.

Water can flow or move in waves, which is associated with feelings. The flowing of rivers into each other can be associated directly with an increase of “influence”, hence with an increase of power, and for a river flowing downstream is unavoidable, also since Water is a heavy element, which both brings Water symbolically close to the forces of fate (due to ‘influence/heavy/unavoidable’). The flowing and moving of waves is certainly also close to music and dance and song, and love, as well as maybe also close to a belief in something, because, shared with others, like music, it creates a shared feeling of security within a community.

Every year afresh, **Earth** recreates new plants and trees, which also transform during the seasons. There is a certain stubbornness and hardness in this, a certain inability to gain knowledge, but I am getting ahead of myself, especially with realistic Earth it is maybe better to get to this with concrete examples.

But now for the star signs in detail. Und just to avoid too high expectations: The star signs are age-old and have already been lived through by so many people that I can by no means provide a complete and balanced description here. But what I can hopefully do, is convey that these transformations of the elements are actually present in the star signs, sort of as an inner *skeleton*, as the innermost structure of the star signs, but around that there is still a lot of flesh and spirit and soul and simply many ways in which to live with it and how to live it out. The discussion about the star signs does not end here, quite to the contrary.

The Fire signs

What is common to all Fire signs in the model, is that they consist foremost of Fire, empowered or sometimes maybe even possessed by lots of imagination. The energy behind that is strongest in youth, hence in Aries, because he still has the biggest supply of Earth fuel, of physical power to waste. In Leo the energy is already a bit more tamed, but still wild, and Sagittarius has to use his energy often selectively demonstratively, like Zeus his thunderbolts.

The burning of Fire can also be seen as the Fire signs learning the path to abstract insights and thoughts and theories, sort of experimentally from reality, by at first failing repeatedly at reality, like the proverbial Aries, who runs so often headfirst into any obstacles that one might suspect purpose.

The Fire signs – Aries

Aristotle also arranged the elements in a circle—Earth to Fire to Air to Water and then again to Earth—and in this circle, among the Fire signs, Aries is still the farthest ways from the element Water, in the direction of his life, thus for him learning compassion (i.e. Water) with his fellow human beings is at first hardly a theme for him, but it is still expected of him to learn this a little bit in his life. From Leo, this is already quite a bit more is expected, also coming from the image of a good king for his people, and definitely from Sagittarius.

On the other hand, seen the other way round, Aries is still very close to Water, it is simply “behind” him. That would for example fit Jason in mythology, who the magician Medea helped a lot in the beginning, and he married her and had children with her, until he forgot about all of that and cheated on her.

Or where young Jason carried an old woman across a river and lost a sandal. The old woman was the goddess Hera in disguise and the river symbolizes Water, of the elements, of course, the element he thus symbolically left behind. But the river is symbolically also where the dead were carried across, hence a symbolic rebirth, which one could well also see as the transition from Pisces to Aries, hence to the new astrological year.

In order to get a young fire like Aries burning, it takes at first a lot of care, you have to protect it from wind and, yet, provide air, so that it can catch on. The finesse of Pisces and the wisdom of the whole zodiac contained within them would fit this very well. And, last but not least, in my model Pisces would be composed mainly of Air, similar to Sagittarius, as I will expose later on.

Returning to the myth of Jason and Medea, she fits symbolically quite well with Pisces, not least in her sort of boundless revenge on Jason, where she did not even spare her own children.

In *The Astrology of Fate*, Liz Greene writes a lot more about Jason, and also about more Aries themes. For example, she strongly emphasizes the theme of a fight against the father for Aries. I am not sure whether she maybe exaggerates a little bit there, but the statement that in heaven there is only room for one god (Zeus/Jupiter/(Jahwe) would fit to some degree; in order to get up to heaven, you would have to chase others from there. Then again, such a hard exclusion fits rather with the element Earth than with the element Air.

The Fire signs – Leo

But the lion is a stage in a process, as Jung suggests; and it is this process or pattern which brings us into the sphere of the ‘fate’ of Leo. It would seem [...] that there is an alchemical work to be performed. The Lion is not permitted to remain in its bestial form, but must give way to something other.

— Liz Greene, *The Astrology of Fate* (Weiser 1984), in the chapter about Leo

This fits, of course, very well with the model, it describes again a transformation. The body of a human being is rather the animal side, its spirit rather the human or even divine side, since thoughts can be passed on and thus have a certain immortality and immortality is also an essential property of gods.

Connected to that is also the theme of the *wound*, which Liz Greene emphasizes especially for Leo and Sagittarius in *The Astrology of Fate*. In the legend

of the Holy Grail, the Grail king is wounded at the lower part of his body and thus no longer potent, which fits, of course, again into the picture; with growing age the body is no longer able to produce offspring. Just read up what on Liz Greene writes about that theme for more details and insights.

Leo at heart is a religious sign, using the word here as it was originally meant: to reconnect. It is the secret of his intensive need to create something which mirrors his own essential substance – be it a company, a book, a painting, a political movement, an airline, a scientific achievement, an empire, a photograph.

— Liz Greene, *Star Signs for Lovers* (Stein and Day 1984), in the chapter about Leo

Incidentally, she relativizes this statement in *The Astrology of Fate*, I presume rightly, as follows, arguing from the elementary transformation.

A book, for example, is a mix of Earth (you can touch it) and Air (the textual content); hence even if a book mirrors maybe Leo in the middle of the transformation, it does not really live up to his goals, because in the end these are rather more immaterial than a book or a painting or a company. Also reconnecting, via belief and more, has is a relation to Water; Leo wants and must in the end feel something when he does something, it must be in relation to something that others wish for, which they dream of, sometimes including of the lion himself.

The Fire signs – Sagittarius

The centaur Cheiron, one of the centaurs that had been lifted into the sky as the constellation Sagittarius in mythology was immortal, but once while hunting, he was accidentally wounded at the hip by a poisoned arrow shot by his good friend Herakles. Since Cheiron was immortal, he could not die of the wound, but, from then on, suffered permanently deadly pain.

Cheiron has a lower part of the body that is animal, of a horse, so it is symbolically again very fitting with the model that he was wounded there ('Earth') by an arrow and not, say, in the head ('Air', because one thinks with the head). His wound made it possible for him to learn compassion, no longer so much distracted by his animal instincts.

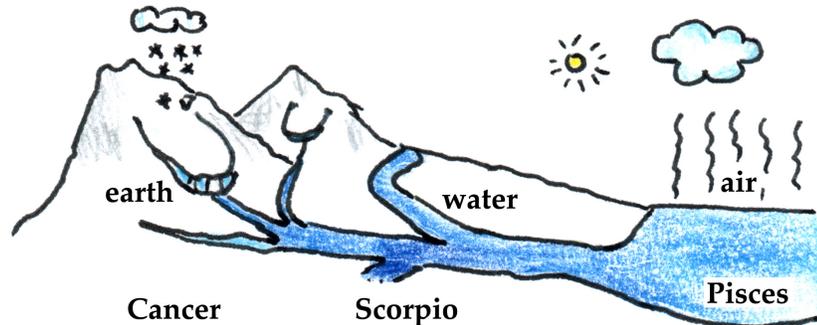
In the end he sacrificed himself, so that Prometheus, who had stolen Fire from the gods, could become immortal. Hence again the same theme: People down on earth get Fire and through that knowledge (Air)—the cycle of the transformation of the Fire signs—and in the end it is completed to immortality, just like at Apuleius with the goblet of water from the eternally circling river Styx, by Cheiron who sacrifices himself in his wisdom.

The Water signs

The transformation of the Water signs is similar to the one of the Fire signs, it starts again with Earth and ends with Air, only this time Water transforms these two elements and this time the missing element is, conversely, Fire.

There are maybe two descriptive images for this. The most elementary one is water in its three aggregate states ice, water and gas/steam. Hence a block of

ice that melts and finally evaporates. Another image is the life of a river, from a source in the mountains, maybe out of glacier ice, to a river that flows down and grows until it finally flows into the sea and there evaporates again, with the power of the sun (Fire), in order to start the cycle again, when it returns as rain or snow to the mountain.



Cancer is the first Water sign, with its hard earthy shell (Earth), Scorpio as the second Water sign is already more flexible—'liquid' like Water—but still able to isolate herself from case to case, and Pisces as the third Water sign are then already hard to catch, the borders have blurred to gas (Air).

Or if you consider a river: A source has not yet mixed with other rivers, its water seems uniform to it, later when rivers flow together (Scorpio), symbolically different influences come together and must be processed in some way, until everything comes together in the sea and is relativized (Pisces).

That way again knowledge (Air) is created: From the experience of all that mixing with the other rivers, the river learns that there are different ways of seeing the world, as well as the realization that size is relative, because even if a river wins against all other rivers by being the larger one and thus defending the name of the river, compared to the sea, it is finally just small in any case.

In the end only an escape into imagination (Fire) helps here, resp. it is probably not fair to speak of escape, because, for one, it is a cycle, and on the other hand Pisces are the last star sign, the body sort of symbolically already close to death, imagination is the only thing that remains there, and that can certainly move even mountains and with gentle blows of Air maybe gently direct an Aries-style hero like Jason?

The Water signs – Cancer

In Apuleius' story, the second task of Psyche consisted of getting some fleece from wild rams. These rams with poisonous teeth were grazing near a river, hence quite a similar situation as with the river Styx in the third task. Only this time, the solution was not visual imagination, but rather of a female nature, as to be expected for a female element like Water, it was rather experience and adaptation to natural cycles, or, put differently, getting a feeling of the situation to the degree of becoming one with it. Instead of trying anything when the rams were wild and awake, Psyche simply waited until the rams were asleep and also only took fleece which the rams had stripped off by their own fiery power on thorny bushes.

Similar to Aries, learning this is not so important, yet, for Cancer, he moves rather still in his very own cycles and thus interacts often also not so harmonically with his environment, rather still has some rough edges.

In *The Astrology of Fate*, Liz Greene associates one of the most famous heroes, Heracles, with Cancer, because the story how the crab came up to the sky is connected with one of the tasks of Heracles, namely the one where a crab pinched Heracles into the foot while he was fighting the Hydra in the swamps and Heracles stomped the crab, but Hera thankfully lifted the crab into the sky as the constellation Cancer.

This shows an important theme related to Cancer: The water of a source is the same as the water in the sea, Cancer itself already contains many different streams of water, which he does not understand and can hardly tame. In this sense, the crab, Heracles, Hera, the Hydra and the swamps are all aspects of one and the same Cancer, which partially fight or reward each other. The result of this often seems pointless at first, on the other hand, Cancer learns through this and gains experience and a story like the one of Heracles is also full of imagination (Fire), otherwise such an old story would be told anymore today.

It is just more difficult with Water to put these transformations rationally into words than with Fire. Take the USA (Cancer sun) for example. There it is often very difficult to predict who the next president will be, and, yet, the result of all these complex, and often also quite strange forces in the USA is creative and often has a positive image. (Of course, the USA cannot be reduced to Cancer alone, a lot more plays into it, and, yet, what I just wrote describes something essential already very beautifully—what comes out of the USA into the world is often quite special things that definitely remind of Fire.)

The Water signs – Scorpio

The time of the autumn floods had come and hundreds of wild streams were pouring into the great Yellow River. Its waters were swelling and swelling, so that from one bank to the other you could no longer tell an ox from a horse. The god of the Yellow River rejoiced; he had the proud feeling that there was nothing in the world that was not at his command. He let himself drift downstream on the glorious floods and thus arrived at the open sea. There he turned left and looked into the distance. But as far as his eye could reach, he could not see an end to the water.

— *Zhuangzi*, from the chapter *The Floods of Autumn* (English translation of Richard Wilhelm's translation to German)

The above had been written by taoist philosopher Zhuangzi about 300 BCE in China, but it fits well here, also because in the Western zodiac Scorpio is in the middle of autumn.

In the following, the river talks with the god of the sea and learns from him about relativity. During his entire journey downwards, he had been solely busy with growing and seeing his apparent power grow and missed the opportunity to reflect on what he experienced, to learn and imagine things, like that there might be things that are still much larger than him and that his strife was maybe not be so important and ultimately necessary at all. As a smaller river, he would still have ended up in the very same sea.

Just as with Cancer, in *The Astrology of Fate*, Liz Greene writes also for Scorpio about a fight with the mother. The flowing into the sea can in that sense maybe also be seen as a liberation from the mother; resp. symbolically

that happens maybe rather through gaining knowledge and a perspective of what is and what else could be and what is really important in life.

But the other way round, of course, such insights can also serve to expand one's own power. Especially with the Water signs, this shows that a simple model like this one based on elements does not destroy the complexity of the star signs at all, in the end the same questions, themes and complexes remain, even if now some things are more structured, more made of a single gush, even if this gush can again bring forth many different gushes, thus in the end rather increasing the overall richness of the star signs than reducing it.

The Water signs – Pisces

If I understood Pisces. But still a little bit of something.

One of the first computer programs written under the title *Artificial Intelligence* was called ELIZA and it was as a very simple program which just mirrored its human counterpart. If someone told it (typed into a keyboard) something about his or her mother, ELIZA asked then to tell it more about one's mother or more generally one's family. ELIZA simply deduced a question from what was said, and this was often perceived as very compassionate on the other side.

But, what does this have to do with the elements? Well, at first it is a purely abstract airy mirroring of received sentences. The imagination (Fire) was here rather on the other side, who imagined some things and afterwards maybe wrote even more interesting things than might have been the case without a question back. Thus ELIZA created something related to Fire without having to create much of an imaginary power of its own.

Maybe that is generally the case; the manipulation that Scorpio is blamed for, in order to get others to do something for it; maybe this ends with Pisces with bringing others to imagining a lot about Pisces; hence by creating a secret around themselves, Pisces bring others to imagining lots of things, of which Pisces, in turn, live within their souls?

Interesting; when I started to write this section about Pisces, I did not know this, yet, the elementary model has now even proven itself in a way that it "ran" ahead of me and created something, which I myself was not expecting, and thus also proves that the model is very rich, despite its simple structure.

So, once more, maybe put somewhat differently: Pisces like to create a secret around themselves because they like to sunbathe in all the imaginations (Fire) of the others; they create in this way, quite abstractly like ELIZA (Air), the fourth element Fire, which they would otherwise lack, like all Water signs.

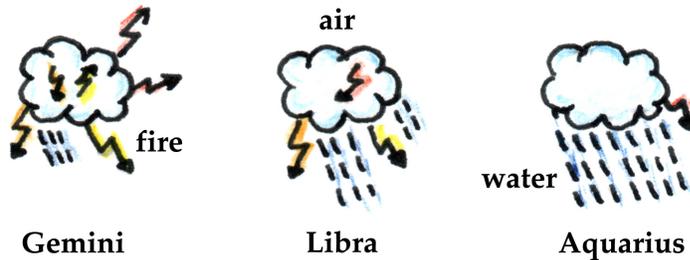
And with Cancer it is probably similar to Aries, inside Cancer there is probably already quite a lot of Fire, which maybe explains all those impulsive and often also contradictory currents even better.

The Air signs

For the Air signs (and afterwards also for the Earth signs), the transformation is shaped a bit differently.

Here, the transformation starts with Fire and ends with Water. In youth, there is sort of a lot of hot wildness (Fire), which, through thinking and learning, ends up in old age as a pleasant ripple (Water).

A good image is a thunderstorm or a cloud. A thunderstorm at first begins with lots of thunder and lightning, which can be heard from far away, and some rain, then follows often an intensive phase with lots of rain and lots of thunder and lightning, until the thunderstorm usually ends with almost only rain.



A bit more abstractly formulated, the focus of the Air signs is at first on something visual (Fire), on looking at the world from all possible angles, from which inside, by comparing and abstracting, a model of the world emerges, like, for example, the 6 faces of a die that are fused in the head to an object called “die”. Hence from 6 or more images (Fire) of a cube seen from different angles, emerges by thinking (Air) an abstract model of a cube with properties like 6 faces, 8 corners, several symmetry axes and other abstract properties.

The same happens in principle also with all other visual phenomena (Fire) of the world, even those becomes in principle—somewhat sloppily formulated—in the head a “cube” with thousands and thousands of faces.

And the Air signs then often fall in love with these abstract symmetries, lead by the middle Air sign, Libra, which is ruled by Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. Thus emerges love, hence the element Water, from reason (Air).

And something else, also something abstract, emerges at the same time: *transparency*. The 6 or more views of a cube seen from the outside are intransparent, you only see one image, then again another, but never the connections. But with a model of the cube in the head, it becomes sort of transparent, like the element Water; it becomes possible to perceive the cube’s structure.

I hope this was not too much abstract stuff at once, even if it concerns Air signs here, which are often exactly at home there.

The Air signs – Gemini

The flames of a fire are quite unpredictable, sometimes they snake here, then they meander there. In the same way, also light and the eye of an observer (Fire) look sometimes here, then there. Gemini, as the first Air sign, have a lot of this, always ready to move, hard to predict, very interested in learning something, very curious and also flexible.

But why then also the theme of dark and bright, of good and evil twin, like in Liz Greene’s *The Astrology of Fate*; can that also be seen somehow in the elementary model?

In order to fuse things, you must be able to unify apparent contradictions like bright/dark, good/evil or true/false in an abstract way. Quite generally, logic is based on true/false or in a computer on zero/one.

For Gemini, as the first Air sign, these opposites often remain just side-by-side; in one moment, like when looking at one face of a coin or the other, only

one side is seen and in the next moment maybe the other.

For Libra, opposites are already quite well balanced and finally for Aquarius, they are often already mostly unified, which, however, often is not possible without suppressing certain things, but more about that later when writing about Aquarius.

The Air signs – Libra

In *The Astrology of Fate*, Liz Greene associates the verdict of Paris with Libra, where three goddesses, Hera, Athene and Aphrodite (Venus), ask a human, Paris, to judge who of them is the most beautiful goddess. And Paris in the end chooses love resp. beauty, Aphrodite's offer, to get Helena, the most beautiful woman of the world, as his wife, which then also causes the Trojan War.

This shows, of course, again love, the element Water, which grows from abstract considerations of the world, mirrored in Paris' mind as well as in the fact, that the goddesses consider his judgement as a human being so important. And, yet, Paris fails first at reality (Earth), the element missing in the transformation of the Air signs, which did not want to adapt to his abstract ideals (Air).

And, yet, the realization (Earth) of an Utopia, an idea for the future, is in the end what Air signs desire and want to implement, at least the two later Air signs, Libra and Aquarius.

The fourth task of Psyche in Apuleius' story was the most complex one: Get some of the beauty ointment from the underworld goddess Proserpina down in Hades. Psyche only succeeds at this by not showing any compassion with individuals she meets in the underworld. For example, she is not allowed to give a beggar a piece of bread, because she needs both pieces, in order to divert the dog Cerberus both on the way down and up.

This shows probably that Libra's love to human beings is already very abstract, it is less concerned with individual fates than with the whole, with realizing (Earth) a plan.

But how exactly is the fourth task of Psyche connected with the elements? Well, for the plan at first a precise knowledge of the world was necessary, including circumstances in the underworld, hence the element Fire, also coming from Gemini, which are ruled by Hermes/Mercury, the messenger of the gods, who also comes to the underworld when carrying messages and who saw and remembered everything then. And then it required a mental effort in order to plan ahead how much of what would be needed and what one was allowed to do and what not, hence the element Air. And, almost last, but not least, a universal love in order to be able to withstand individual temptations (Water); Water signs can be very cold if it has to be, Water is a cold element. Finally, the prize, an ointment, was in the end something material (Earth), and also connected to Venus, because it was an ointment for beauty.

The Air signs – Aquarius

In Aquarius, the third Air sign, opposites are already quite a bit fused together, which is actually not possible from a purely logical point of view, except if certain inconsistencies are suppressed into the unconscious, just as Uranus, the ruler of Aquarius, did in mythology with some titans he did not like, by banning them to the Tartaros.

A tiny example how logic always contains contradictions, at least as soon as you break up the separation of subject and object: The sentence “this sentence has 5 words” and the sentence “this sentence has not 5 words” are both true and, yet, are the logical opposites of each other. So, if the first sentence is true, normally its opposite would have to be false, but here it is not, hence there is a logical paradox.

On the other hand, it is exactly this consequence of unification, despite a certain suppression, which only makes some kinds of progress possible; some things should be realized in the end, if the advantages clearly outweigh. Also there is a clear transition from learning to teaching from Gemini via Libra to Aquarius, to sharing what has been learnt, which usually makes sense.

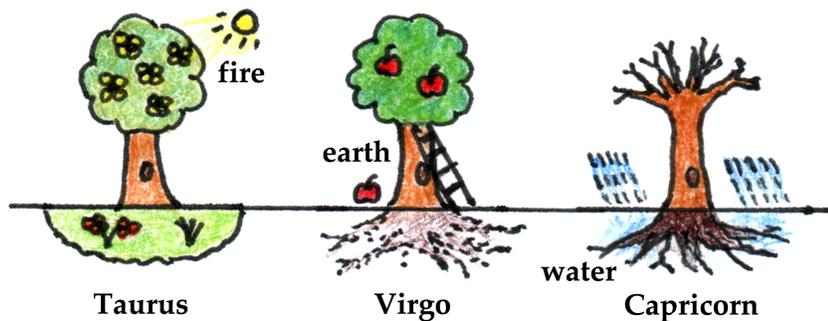
In *The Astrology of Fate*, Liz Greene also mentions Prometheus in the context of Aquarius. Now, Prometheus means roughly “forethought” and his brother Epimetheus “afterthought”, hence Prometheus thinks first and acts afterwards, Epimetheus does the opposite. That mirrors the dilemma of Air signs, because they usually think first, which often keeps them from realizing something, because there are always arguments that speak against.

But in the myth it is exactly Epimetheus who, via Pandora who he took as his wife, gets things rolling. There Pandora as lover (Water) probably played the mediating role, which lead from Air via Water to Earth, hence to realization.

The only thing which remained in Pandora’s box after it had been opened was hope, as is generally known. Where exactly I would put that now, I won’t tell here; I don’t have to sort in everything, a little bit of hope has to remain there...

The Earth signs

For the Earth signs, the transition is also from Fire to Water, this time via Earth, and the missing element is, conversely, Air.



The simplest image here is likely a tree.

It needs two things to grow: Light (Fire) and water, plus nutrients from earth, diluted in water. (Note that this is not complete, although I am not sure if people knew anything about it in antiquity, because a tree also takes in carbon dioxide via its leaves, hence a tree would also require the element Air to live, but I will ignore this in the following.)

The first task of Psyche in Apuleius’ story was to sort out a heap of different seeds before the evening, which Venus had just mixed together. At first Psyche despaired at the task, as she always did, but then ants came to her help and carried the seeds one-by-one to separate heaps.

The result of that work was order (Air), an abstract structure, which emerged from the transformation, the missing element in the transformation of the Earth signs. A former school colleague, who is a Capricorn, once told me of a theory he had thought up, according to which consciousness (hence roughly 'Air') would simply be the result of structure (order), that, for example, if you moved chairs around, that could already create consciousness. I am not sure if that is true, also in light of quantum mechanics, but it would definitely fit with Earth signs and maybe it is really so.

The Earth signs – Taurus

As the first Earth sign, Fire is still more important than Water to Taurus, and also the distance to order is still far ahead, resp. again rather unconsciously behind him. But first it is more about the beauty of things at hand, like a tree or generally nature in spring, when everything blossoms and grows and one can enjoy it and often also should just do so.

King Minos got a holy bull from Poseidon, the god of the sea, which allowed him to prevail against his brothers for the throne of Crete, but later, when he had become king, he betrayed the god by sacrificing another bull instead of the holy bull. Poseidon took revenge by arousing sexual lust for a bull in Minos' wife Pasiphaë. Daedalus built her a wooden cow in which she could hide and so she became the mother of Minotaurus, the monster with a bull's head and a human body, which hid in the labyrinth and devoured human sacrifices.

For one, Minos failed because he wanted to use outer appearances (light, Fire) to trick the god of the sea (Water), for the other, it was simply the animal in the bull (Taurus), the sexual lust, which can be connected both to Fire and Water, resp. the impulse to it rather to Fire; the consequence, children, rather to Water, because the latter is more fated. The Minotaurus came somehow out the wrong way round, he did not create order (Air) but remained in the labyrinth, trapped in disorder, and especially his head, which would foremost stand for reason (Air) had remained the one of an animal.

Similar to Heracles in the fight with Hydra, Hera, crab and swamps, it is here also again the whole myth that mirrors Taurus, hence here also Theseus, the hero who defeated the Minotaurus, is part of it. And definitely also Ariadne, who taught Theseus the trick with the thread and gave it to him, so that Theseus could bring a bit of order (Air) into the labyrinth and she probably did this also out of love (Water).

Earth signs often take liberties with the truth, Taurus also out of a need for harmony, in order not to make others jealous of its properties (Earth).

The Earth signs – Virgo

Towards the end of summer, where Virgo, the second Earth sign, is, many fruits and other things are ripe to pick. As with Psyche in her task, then often things are just "thrown" at your feet to pick or collect and then sort in; this can hardly be controlled; if something is ripe, it must simply be harvested then, not earlier or later.

This is fate then, the element Water, where Virgo more and more develops to. But in between there are also always phases where there is nothing to do, where you can still laze around and enjoy the beauty of things (Fire). Also there

are some fruits of nature which then cannot be preserved immediately, those are better given to others or you invite guests and enjoy things together.

But again something from mythology, about Persephone. As a young woman she walked around and when she looked curiously down to certain flowers, the earth opened up, the underworld god Hades came up with his chariot and abducted her to the underworld, where he made her his wife and the queen of the underworld, Proserpina.

The virgin, simply because she was curious as part of the transformation of elements Fire-Earth-Water-Air, wanted more than just see the beautiful appearance of nature, but as she looked down, hence away from the sun (Fire) in the sky, down to earth (where also water flows to), in order to understand how and why the flowers grow and what kind of flowers there are, she became fatedly trapped, fell in love, similar to the Air signs, with something that at first also appeared terrible to her, like maybe sexuality to a virgin, with all the fascination that also lies within.

The Earth signs – Capricorn

And in the end, as underworld queen Proserpina, she did of course also structure many things. This mirrors already a tree in winter, the third Earth sign, Capricorn, a tree that stands with meager, empty branches, only still supplied via its roots (hidden from view) with water and nutrients, hence containing a lot more Water than Fire. Also generally a lot in nature disappears under the ground in winter, also animals that hibernate or do something similar.

The abduction of Persephone can also be seen that way, because in the myth she was finally allowed to spend a third or half of the year again on the surface, also in accord with the model, where Virgo contains Fire and Water still in similar amounts, even though the path clearly leads to more Water and towards Air.

The roots and meager branches of a tree in winter mirror Capricorn; there order comes without any ornamentation before beauty. And, yet, this is again also a source of lust for Capricorn, out of reversal of sexual drive, *Triebumkehr*, as Freud called it, thus drawing sexual lust out of not doing things one would like to do, especially for the oldest Earth sign also out of restrictions that emerge due to old age, when the own body at some point becomes some kind of cage, which keeps trapped.

In *The Astrology of Fate*, Liz Greene describes a dream of a Capricorn, where he was prisoner with his wife in a house, but with open doors and windows, and they still stayed there. This reminds me again very much of the idea of moving chairs around, the house with open doors and windows symbolizes again an order, created from Earth, but very abstract, hence Air.

I will leave it at that with examples for the star signs. As announced earlier, this was now of course not complete at all, the whole topic is simply too rich; I could write a few sentences to almost every sentence of Liz Greene and many other authors about the star signs. And I am sure, about all I said above, many readers will have a slightly or strongly different opinion, and even myself in a few days; I only hope that the other opinions would often still rather confirm than refute my elementary model as the inner *skeleton* of the star signs?

In any case, I hope that I could convey my idea simply and evidently enough, so that now many readers can apply it when desired or needed, to themselves,

lovers and friends, mundane themes, etc.

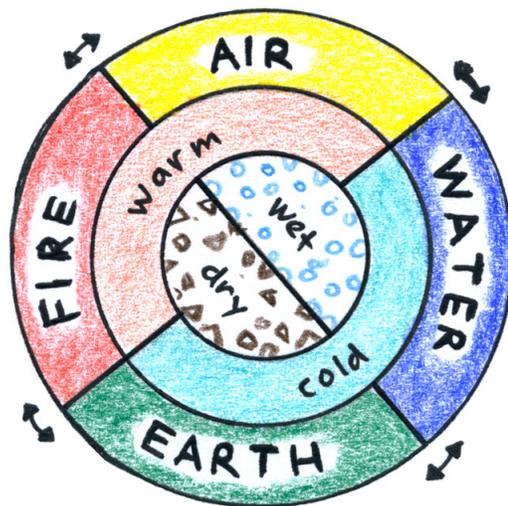
It would be a pity if this idea was lost to the world again.

Review and structures in the model

First a bit about the overall structure of the model in review.

For Fire and Water signs, the transformation started with Earth and ended with Air, for Air and Earth signs, it began with Fire and ended with Water. Hence, the start, Earth/Fire, was always with a dry element, the end, Air/Water, always with a wet element, according to Aristotle. This would fit a general development in life, where in youth a lot would still be appear as given and clear, as fixed, hard, immutable, but with growing age it would turn out that many things are more flexible, can be bent, flow.

The circle of transformation of the elements in the model was always the same one; Earth, for example, always only transformed to Fire or Water, never directly to Air. This also fits with the philosophical view of Aristotle, because he saw the circle such that in a transformation between elements rather just one of the properties would change at a time, so Earth, which is dry and cold, would transform to wet and cold, to Water, or to dry and warm, to Fire, but only more slowly directly to wet and warm, to Air, and the same way with the other three elements.



Thus my elementary model of the transformations of the star signs is strongly rooted in well-known philosophical traditions. At the moment there are, however, no indications known to me that my *model* of the star signs was ever conscious to people in the past, which would, for one, be astonishing, for the other it could in the end give astrologers a stronger stand against science. Accusing of charlatantry or illusion would finally hardly be justifiable any more.

By the way, I often wrote “my model” here, which it naturally was, coming from its discovery, but it can only grow if it belongs to all, and if many think and feel into it, imagine things about it and realize them, only then can it maybe approach something like a balanced view of all attributes of the star signs with time.

Appendix – A more formal approach

I would like to append something more abstract, for completeness, even though this might get too abstract for many readers.

On my web site I postulate the elements more abstractly as composed of in/out and rest/move. Earth rests outside, Fire moves outside, Air rests inside, Water moves inside. Thus the transition for all four elements in the zodiac is always from the outside, from Earth or Fire, to the inside, to Air or Water.

For example, Teiresias, who Liz Greene, in *The Astrology of Fate*, associates with Libra, was struck with blindness by Hera, out of anger about his statement, regarding who of men or women have more fun during sex. But Zeus gave him in exchange the gift of “inner vision”. This means, Libra changes its perspective from looking from outside, where the light, the Fire, is, towards looking from inside (Air and Water), where it could then find more abstract insights (Air), also about love and sex (Water), which in the end could again change a state outside (Earth) for good.

I hope this was now at least as comprehensible that it has become visible that maybe one day this could be applied mathematically in a formal way, partially beyond human interpretation, but at the moment this is still very much Zukunftsmusik (something worthwhile to realize, but far away, yet) . . .

Sources

I often mentioned *The Astrology of Fate* by Liz Greene, Weiser 1984, as well as, also by her, *Star Signs for Lovers*, Stein and Day 1980, later retitled to *Astrology for Lovers*. After that she unfortunately hardly ever wrote anything about the star signs again, except indirectly via planets, which, in my view, does not capture all of the richness of the star signs, especially not all of the richness that lies in the transformations of the star signs and their relations.

I recommend to read Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* in the translation by Robert Graves, or in the latin original (which I unfortunately cannot read).

And, of course, just pick out something on your own, which appears to be typical for a star sign, from your favorite books and experiences, and then mirror it in the elementary model of the transformation of the star signs. . .

I wish you a lot of fun doing that and it would make me very, very happy if this thing would simply evolve beautifully on its own!