

An Astrological Portrait of Dion Fortune

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Dion Fortune was an extraordinary esoteric teacher, occultist and novelist who evolved a system for connecting to other planes of existence through her study of human consciousness. She began as a pioneer in the field of psychoanalysis, and later delved into the mysteries of the human mind through occultism. She created rituals and trained initiates in Western esoteric methods, which she traced to her previous incarnations in Atlantis and Egypt and Greece. Her books continue to fascinate and draw students into the Western Mystery Tradition and the meditation systems she studied and developed. The teaching order which she founded, The Society of Light still exists. She died in 1946, yet her influence continues to evolve over time.

I hope this article will introduce new readers to this fascinating woman, and will encourage those already familiar with her to learn from her in greater depth.

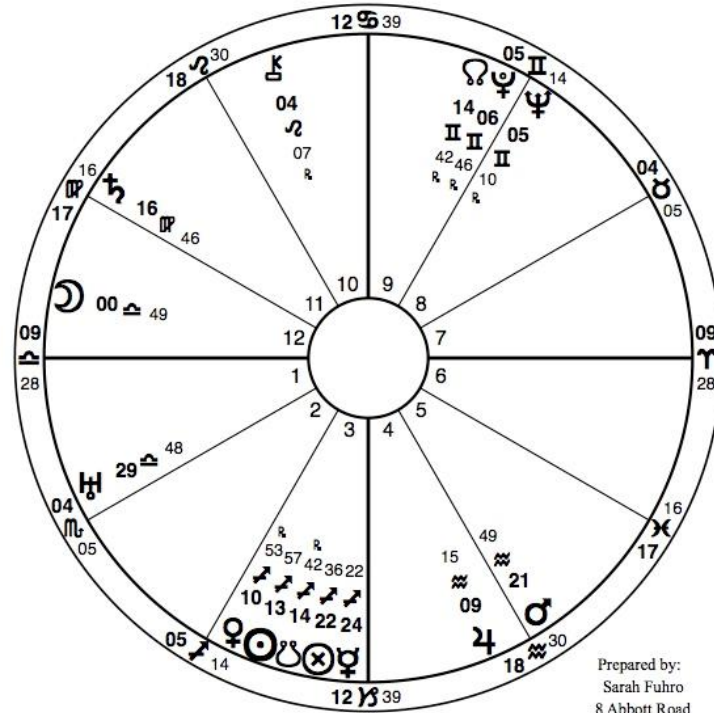
Dion Fortune was the craft and pen name of Violet Firth. The name was chosen from her family motto, *Deo non Fortuna*, (God, not luck). Since it is traditional in some esoteric societies to refer to members by the initials of their craft name, I shall do the same in this article.

Taverner looked up at the stars that were just beginning to show in the darkening sky.

*'Ask Them,' he said 'The ancients knew what they were about when they cast horoscopes'*¹

Violet Firth was born December 6, 1890 in Llandudno, Wales. Her time of birth, according to her mother, Sarah Firth was 'in the early hours.' of the morning. Yet how to define her birth becomes controversial if the story told by her mother to a close friend is accurate. The baby was declared dead, yet Sarah would not part with her body. The child lay lifeless on her mother's lap until dawn when she opened her eyes. Dion Fortune used this story to describe the birth of her heroine in *The Sea Priestess* and *Moon Magic*. I have chosen to use the time of her physical entry into the world, for her birth chart. This gives us a window of birth time between midnight and 8:06, when the sun rose. Since it seems unlikely she was born closer than two hours before sunrise, if she sat with her mother before the dawn, I chose 6 am as the cut off time. After dowsing for the correct Ascendant sign and degree, I arrived at 2:11 am as birth time, which would give her 9° Libra as Ascendant, and 12° Cancer as MC. Let's hold this as a possibility and see if it works with important events in her life and the shape of her beliefs.

Dion Fortune
 Natal Chart
 December 6, 1890
 2:11:00 AM GMT
 Llandudno, Wales
 53N19 / 3W49
 Tropical Placidus True Node



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A Libran Theme

DF wrote extensively on marriage and the alchemical relationship between men and women, ‘We shall bring back into modern life something that has been lost and forgotten and that is badly needed....a subtle, magical relationship that is very rare.’ She wrote books on the subject: *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage* and most of her occult fiction. Much of her basic thesis had to do with polarity and the balance between positive and negative forces within each person and between people. She was deeply sensitive to the need for balance in this polarity in ritual work as well as personal relationships. ‘Polarity is the key to all magical work...Polarity means the function of flow and return of force. It is not fixed. It is an alternating current and therefore constantly changing. A leader of an occult ritual or trance medium must be ‘negative’ in order to receive the teachings of the spirit world.’ⁱⁱ The strong emphasis on polarity seems

especially appropriate to a person whose Ascendant is Libra, a sign of balance between dark and light.

The Sabian Symbol for the Ascendant, 9° Libra is: ‘A CANOE LEAVING NARROW RAPIDS REACHES CALM WATERS.’ DF came of age in dangerous times. The old hierarchical societies of Europe were challenged from every direction, even as they extended their grasp upon huge colonial territories, which required great sacrifice by those who must be in charge of a far flung empire. And just as the conquered chafed under the iron heel of colonialism, there was a similar revolt among many who were forced into the role of colonial master. By the time she was an adult a terrible war was fought for the few remaining unclaimed portions of the earth. The misery and slaughter of the First World War was quickly followed by the flu epidemic which took its greatest toll among young people.

A whole generation of young men died on the battlefields and trenches of Europe. As a result, many young women left behind learned skills and gained independence, forbidden to upper class women in previous generations. Her Saturn return occurred in 1917-18 at a time when DF and her generation had been tested by fire. Having maneuvered through the narrow power and turmoil of rapids they found themselves in open waters with a wide horizon of new possibilities. Much of the social restraint from the previous generation was destroyed by the chaos of the War, and new ideas had a chance to take root in a generation who could see the old ideas had failed.

Among these remarkable pioneers were Elsie Wheeler, Mark Edmond Jones, and Dane Rudhyar, who received and transmitted to us the Sabian symbols. Astrologer Mark Edmond Jones transcribed the 360 verbal images, one for each of the degrees of the horoscope received by trance medium and psychic Elsie Wheeler. Dane Rudhyar further elaborated upon them. These symbols connect to this chart in a particularly powerful way. On the website (www.sabian.org) of the Sabian Society, founded by Marc Edmund Jones in 1923 there is an oracle which allows one to ask a question and receive an answer from the symbols. I asked: ‘have I chosen the correct Ascendant sign and degree for DF?’ The answer came back, Cancer 13°, ‘A HAND WITH PROMINENT THUMB IS HELD OUT RECEPTIVELY.’ This is the degree and Sabian Symbol for the MC of DF’s chart using the 9° of Libra Ascendant! It is also close to the degree

of the brightest star in the sky, Sirius, which would have been directly overhead at the time of her birth. Sirius was extremely important to the Egyptians, who were a source for DF's inspiration and has been connected to both success and 'burning.'

There is also a Yod in this chart, which culminates at the MC and further emphasizes the power and energy available in the chart at that degree. A sextile, between Venus –the chart ruler and Jupiter the ruler of her Sagittarian stellium culminates at the MC.

'The hand plays an important part in occult work, and the person who cannot express his will and imagination through the fine muscles of the hands will seldom be able to perform the practical operations.' ⁱⁱⁱ

The Sabian Symbol of an open hand seems in harmony with the way in which DF showed herself to the world (10th House). Her receptivity and dexterity in sculpting the material she received from life experience is well expressed in this simple image.

A Moon Priestess

'Now I cannot tell what I said to the Moon, or what the Moon said to me, but all the same, I got to know her very well. And this was the impression I got of her-that she ruled over a kingdom that was neither material nor spiritual, but a strange moon-kingdom of her own. In it moved tides-ebbing, flowing, slack water, high water, never ceasing, always on the move,,and these tides affected our lives. They affected birth and death and all the processes of the body. They affected the mating of animals, and the growth of vegetation, and the insidious workings of disease. They also affected the reaction of drugs, and there is a lore of herbs belonging to them.' The Sea Priestess

The Moon in Libra is newly risen in celebration of the birth of a Moon Priestess, a woman instrumental in reawakening Goddess consciousness in the 20th century. The Moon is expressive of our emotional tenor, our source of security and anxiety, our Mother. Libra is an airy,

masculine (positive), intellectual sign, combined with the feeling nature of its ruler Venus, and deep concern for balance and harmony. The sign has as its symbol, the scales, and 0° of Libra marks the moment of the Autumn Equinox, when light and dark of day are equal. The sign's balance between intellect and the Venusian insistence upon life experience speaks through this quote by DF about her written work:

'It is because my novels are packed with such things as these (symbolism directed to the subconscious) that I want my students to take them seriously. The 'Mystical Qabalah' gives the theory, but the novels give the practice. Those who read the novels without having studied the 'Qabalah' will get hints and stimulus to their subconscious. Those who study the Qabalah without reading the novels will get an interesting intellectual jigsaw puzzle to play with; but those who study the 'Mystical Qabalah' with the help of the novels get the keys to the Temple put into their hands.'^{iv}

The Sabian Symbol for her Moon at 0° of Libra is: PIERCED BY A DART OF LIGHT, A BUTTERFLY IS 'MADE PERFECT.' The butterfly is a symbol of transformation. Perhaps because of this, it is also a symbol of the soul, a combination of delicacy and endurance. The butterfly is a joyful expression of the soul's journey through many stages of growth and evolution. DF thought this lifetime might be her last in body.



Butterfly is also a symbol of Gemini, and there is a strong Gemini flavor to DF's chart and life. In The Lovers Tarot card, which corresponds with Gemini in the Golden Dawn system, we can see the triangle of perception central to DF's teaching. Fortune was a member of the Golden Dawn for several years when the order was in its last stages, and she was at the beginning of her exploration of esotericism. In this card, a naked man and woman are shown with the angel Raphael, the healer, above them. The man looks at the woman to represent the intellect or consciousness looking to the realm of the unconscious: intuition, dreams, vision, inspiration. The woman gazes up at the Angel who is the transpersonal source of communication. Only when the intellect looks to non-rational sources can it receive messages, which are not of its own creation. 'If what is to be communicated comes from a plane beyond human consciousness, words cannot be used as a means of communication, a symbol appears, and if we meditate upon it, realization gradually dawns.....' The symbols then become a telephone number which can connect the meditator to the transpersonal forces. ' p.22

Much of the material, which might be called Libran in DF's work, is symbolized in this card. She was involved in the energetic relationship between the sexes, attempting a balance which would result in universal harmony.

'People think that sex is physical and that love is emotional and they don't realize that there is something else between a man and a woman which is magnetic in just the same way the compass turns to the pole; and it isn't in them any more than it is in the compass, but is something that passes through them and uses them, and it belongs to Nature.'

The Sea Priestess

Libra Moon in the twelfth House seems quite an apt sign and position for DF who struggled to understand emotions, her own and those of people around her. DF had no planets in the water element in her chart. Water represents feeling, and often the lack of that element is an indicator that the expression of feeling was not permitted or perhaps not understood in the home where she grew up. She said, 'my relations with my parents ..have never been very helpful or sympathetic.'^v Yet both her parents participated in her meditation circles, and they seemed to share an interest in esoteric subjects with their daughter. At the time she was born they operated an alternative health center in Wales, and her mother was a Christian Science practitioner. From DF's statement and her chart we might conclude that there was an intellectual rather than emotional connection between them. Or, perhaps it was the lack of water in her chart, which gave her this perception of unsympathetic parents.

Because her Moon is 'hidden' from her, immersed in the unconscious bath of the 12th House, Moon becomes more mysterious in her demands. *'All these things I got by communing with Moon, and I felt certain that if I could only learn her rhythms and periodicity of her tides, I should know a very great deal. But I did not learn for she could only teach me abstract things and the details I was unable to receive from her because they eluded my mind.'* This quote from The Sea Priestess is a perfect description of DF's Moon sign and position. It is through her initiation and education as therapist, priestess and teacher that DF made a connection to the whole range of human emotions, and thus, Moon lore. DF was puzzled enough by emotion to become a scientist of this realm of human experience. The three Houses of work (6th), career

(10th) and vocation (2nd)^{vi} are all in Water. Through the connection to her work, she explored the Water element.

Mind and Consciousness

DF came of age when emotional consciousness was newly perceived through a revolutionary lens called psychotherapy. The whole concept of the unconscious and its role in our emotions has a 12th house flavor. And so, we can see how the 12th House and its traditional association with what is hidden from our view is a natural repository for the emotions we have assigned to oblivion, to the unconscious. Emotions were redefined for DF and her generation through the work of Freud, Jung, and the other psychoanalytic pioneers. Even before she left her successful practice as a psychoanalyst, she had come to the conclusion that there was more mystery to the mind than the new science of psychology acknowledged. After her experience of psychic attack and control which occurred when she was a student, DF realized the boundaries between one mind and another can be broken down, that the mind can be used as a weapon, as a tool, or as means of creating psychic communion between people

Some of this transition from her psychology training to her deeper understanding of the connection between soul and mind can be found in her stories in *The Secrets of Dr Taverner* who ran a residential clinic for patients who needed exorcism as much as clinical attention. Dr Taverner was an initiated adept, a trained Western magician who saw patients possessed by alien spirits, or cut off from the demands of their soul. In two of the stories, he returns patients to the god Pan. He battled black magicians in the ancient tradition of esoteric orders, ruthless in his determination to eliminate all attempts by energy vampires, alive or dead to cannibalize his patents. The narrator (Dr. Rhodes) is a medically trained psychologist who is helpless to understand or heal the strange cases under Dr Taverner's care. Dr. Taverner, and young Dr. Rhodes are men of power and authority in their respective fields. Dr. Taverner may be partially based upon Dr. Moriarity with whom DF worked in a clinic at one point, but my sense is that the two main characters are a vision of where DF was going with her exploration of the human unconscious and its connection to the esoteric tradition. The book provides an exciting

description of what DF was grappling with in her own career as she attempted to find healing for patients who were beyond the ken of traditional psychology.

When psychologists were required to become medical doctors, DF went on to explore the relationship between the new psychology of Freud and the old psychology of the Western Mystery Tradition. And, although she studied the Eastern mystics, so in vogue during that period, who provided another vision of the human mind and heart, it was Western occultism which became her specialty.

The Intellectual and the Mystic

'If you 'have ever seen the sudden flashing on of the light as the current comes through the wires, (you) would know what is to be expected of occultism and be satisfied with nothing less. The state of the personality, charged full of power and an exceedingly potent form of vitality, is the evidence of the reality of initiation...If we elect deliberately to put ourselves in the track of these cosmic currents and invoke them to use us as their channels we must be prepared to become ourselves links in this circuit from spirit to matter and back again.'

Within the chart there is a grand trine in Air made with the Libra Ascendant, Pluto, Neptune and the North Node in Gemini, and Jupiter in Aquarius. This whirling Air trine is symbolic of the intellectual energy and imagination, which characterizes DF, her writing and her unique approach to occultism. The grand trine in the Air element enjoys intellectual exploration for its own sake. In her case, it was the mind itself which became a field of study. It was her belief that an intellectual with a mystical bent turns naturally to occultism.

DF was always a skeptic about her connection to the Masters who were her teachers from other realms. Like a true scientist, she suspended judgement: *'let it be regarded at least as an experiment in practical psychology. If, in the last analysis it should be that the source is subconscious mind, or the Higher Self of the medium, or the real identity claimed or some other teaching intelligence using it as a convenient mouthpiece, then so be it. Let the experiment run its course and see what value comes out of it.'*^{vii}

The Seer of Glastonbury

DF was given land and buildings in Glastonbury near the Chalice Well. This location where she is still remembered and studied, has been called ‘the holiest erthe in England.’ Located in an area filled with ancient monuments, Glastonbury Tor winds up to the sky and, overlooks the valley below which was once an inlet from the sea. It was here in Somerset that many believe Camelot was located. By tradition, British Christianity began on this spot where Joseph of Arimathea, the uncle of Jesus planted his hawthorn staff and founded a church, which later became Glastonbury Cathedral. Dion Fortune brought the history of Glastonbury back many more millennia to the time of Atlantean colonization. *The Sea Priestess* recreates the landscape of Somerset to this period.

Perhaps it is here that a revival of spirituality specific to the present time and Western culture can now be acknowledged and offered to the world in general. DF was very aware of the precession of the equinoxes and the coming Age of Aquarius, when the old gods may return in a new form. She makes reference to the Somerset Zodiac, which Katherine Maltwood researched and recorded in her *Guide to Glastonbury’s Circle of the Stars*. Maltwood attributed this zodiac carved into the landscape around Glastonbury to Sumerians (hence the name Somerset), who some theorize colonized Western Britain in 2800 BC. Glastonbury is associated in the Somerset Zodiac to the constellation of Aquarius, and thus to much of the esoteric movements with New Age connections. It is said that Glastonbury has never lacked a seer, and Dion Fortune filled that position with a flourish.

Priestess of Atlantis

‘There is unquestionably an unbroken tradition of initiation in Europe, which has been handed down from adept to neophyte right from the ancient Mysteries.’^{viii}

Dion Fortune’s Sun at 13 °of Sagittarius is associated with the Sabian Symbol SPHINX AND PYRAMIDS STAND, REMAINS OF A GLORIOUS PAST. How apt this symbol seems for a woman who could trace her soul lineage to Atlantis and saw her life’s work as the

communication and interpretation of the eternal truths she had absorbed during lifetimes in past civilizations.

DF's South Lunar Node is in close conjunction to her Sun and so there was a direct connection to the experiences of past lives. She counted innumerable lives as priestess, but also recalled a life as a pirate who was hung in Bristol. While many have an inkling of past lives, few have been able to retrieve their training and experience to share with others.

DF wrote about what it means to be priestess and was a channel for the revival of potent feminine energy. In a time when it would be considered laughable for a woman to consider herself as intermediary with the spiritual world, DF was ready to take on that role. Certainly women in the Golden Dawn, the theosophists, Besant and Blavatsky and other female spiritualists had opened the door, but DF created rituals, and recalled ancient orders and traditions which sparked the imagination of a whole generation of occultists and those who came after. She was a priestess of Atlantis and Avalon, and reminded those who were entranced with the wisdom of the East, there is also wisdom and a way to self-knowledge in the Western tradition. In so many ways she was fearless about walking a knife's edge between different traditions; Arthurian, Christian, Kabalistic, Eastern, occult, scientific and psychic. She did not blend these, rather she called upon them as separate tools within her toolbox.

DF's Sun and Lunar Nodes are tempered by a square to Saturn. She had to prove her sources to a new generation of skeptics immersed in a culture which rejected the concept of reincarnation on the basis of religious doctrine and scientific materialism.

A Voice from the Earth

The Sabian Symbol of that Saturn at 16° of Virgo, her only planet in an earth sign, suggests tremendous power to be tapped from the earth: 'VOLCANIC ERUPTION RELEASES POWERFUL TERLLURIC ENERGIES.' DF was very aware of the connection between earth energy and the repressed energy of sexuality and the feminine. She was also aware of how the Nazis used repressed earth energy for perverse purposes. In her wartime meditations, she traveled to the roots of the British soul in a legendary cavern beneath Glastonbury Tor to contact

the national and planetary guardians who could turn back and transform the distorted and twisted use to which these powers had been put by Hitler and his henchmen. There is an esoteric notion that beneath the earth dwell the great sages (like the druid Merlin) who continue to act as guides and guardians of their people, and that there is a connection between the stones under the earth's surface and the stars in the sky. This Virgo Saturn is a perfect symbol for how the earth mystery was embedded in this otherwise airy and fiery woman.

Sun squared by Saturn can be an indication of the repressive power of authority and a need to rebel against structures and traditions of the past (Saturn) in order for the Sun to be able to shine. It might also suggest an authority figure who attempts to thwart or control the basic existence of the self. In her most famous anecdote from *Psychic Self Defense*, DF recounts how she was attacked by a teacher or headmistress of a school she attended. The woman who attempted to break her will had learned special techniques in India which she applied in a day long siege, which left DF in a state of complete mental exhaustion. Out of this came her interest in the powers of the mind and a determination never to bully or use occult powers against her own students.

Saturn becomes the teacher once he is seen as opportunity instead of an agent of frustration. Saturn is also the planet of time and through her ability to move between the planes, she was able to work without the strictures of linear time. In *The Sea Goddess* Vivien LeFay is ageless because she can connect herself to universal life energy. This earthy Saturn may also be the key to her connection to the Faerie realm, once more explored, as we again experience Saturn in Virgo (September 2, 2007-October 29, 2009 and April 7, 2010-July 21, 2010).

Mercury the Messenger

Another Third House resident in the sign of Sagittarius is Mercury, two degrees from DF's Lot of Fortune. Since she was a prolific writer, a teacher, and a medium her Mercury (planet of thought, communication and magic) must feel quite at home in the house of communication. The third house is traditionally called the House of the Moon Goddess, which reverberates with her activity as Moon Priestess.

Mercury rules the 9th House of philosophy and the 12th House of the unconscious. These were the major themes of her books. Her well received occult novels were a Sagittarian method of teaching what she had to offer. It was DF's goal to make the material world magical and to make magic as available as electricity. Her novels do not make light of occult power, yet they make no attempt to be sensational. What struck me the most about these well written stories is their sense of humor. Those who knew her in life often mention her humor. Sagittarius is indeed renowned for joviality, optimism and a certainty about one's convictions.

DF did not allow glamour and secrecy to infect her teachings. She opened the door to all who might knock, teaching them at a level they could absorb, even though she knew not everyone was a candidate for esoteric knowledge. She said it takes three lifetimes of steadfast effort to find the Path to initiation. Those who may not shine in this lifetime are perhaps building a foundation which they will continue in another. *'Whosoever formulates, even sub-consciously, a wish to study the higher knowledge, will be given the opportunity to do so.'*^{ix} This did not mean that she did not take esoteric secrecy seriously. She was very careful in her books to reveal only what she believed was not in violation of her vows of secrecy, but this was a source of controversy between other magicians and herself.

Venus in the Lead

With a retrograde Venus conjunct, the Sun, DF utilized the power of attraction rather than pursuit of those who might be interested in what she had to offer. The Sabian Symbol provides an apt description of her influence: AN EVER BURNING LAMP THROWS LIGHT UPON AN ARCHAIC IDOL. Those who were drawn into her circle must have seen that light and hungered for the wisdom it shed upon the roots of the Western spiritual and mystical tradition. Her 'Rites of Isis' attempted to do exactly what is suggested in this Sabian Symbol. While remaining Christian, DF fostered a love of the ancient impulse to revere and measure the earth as womb, as mother, and a cradle of rebirth.

Venus, in her role as Morning Star is the chart ruler and the Planet of Oriental Appearance (rises just before the Sun) in her chart. As Morning Star she was too close to the rising Sun to be visible the morning DF and her mother watched the arrival of dawn, yet Venus has a powerful influence in this chart. When Venus is retrograde and in Libra, there may be a Saturnic quality, a sense of not enough love to go around, a resistance to taking chances with love. To compound this difficult combination of Venus factors there is an opposition from Pluto and Neptune. Venus is intense with no effort made to enter any relationship lightly. Venus opposite Neptune often signals the potential to idealize love partners and when that wears thin, to reject the relationship completely. Her 7th House of partners is in Aries, ruled by Mars in Aquarius, the sign of the scientist and humanitarian. At 36 (1926), DF married a Welsh doctor, Penry Evans. At the time of her wedding, she recently experienced a New Moon by progression, beginning a new cycle in her life. The New Moon took place in Capricorn in the fourth house (of the home). On the day of the wedding, Mercury, planet of magic, communication and the intellect had moved between the Sun and the Moon which had just entered Aquarius. Uranus was on her progressed Ascendant, and transiting Pluto was at her midheaven. Her husband was very much part of her rituals, playing the role of priest, her Merlin. At the time of the wedding, Venus was direct and exactly conjunct her retrograde natal Venus. In 1938 they separated and the marriage ended.

Aquarian Philosopher

DF's Mars (action) and Jupiter (expansion and sense of blessing) are in the sign of Aquarius, although not in close aspect. New structures and new ways of moving through the world are suggested here. Jupiter makes a partile conjunction to the Ascendant, giving DF the charisma to collect a circle of people around her. Some shared her home (Jupiter in the 4th house) as well as her spiritual convictions. The Sabian Symbol for DF's Jupiter (9° Aquarius) 'UNSPOILED BY POPULARITY NOW WANING, A MAN PLANS ANEW' is one of the goals of esoteric training. DF was focused on her work as she perceived it, and was not influenced by what others thought of her. Jupiter renews the spirit through optimism. He is her guide to the divine through the humanitarian, scientific, explorative sign of Aquarius. Aquarius has a deep well of knowledge of the past (ruled by

Saturn) yet is intrigued and attracted to what is new and revolutionary (co ruler Uranus). Aquarius often contains a link to other realms and planes, or to other solar systems. Jupiter flavors our search for spiritual truths and there is nothing traditional in the Aquarian search for religious expression.

Her mother's attraction to Christian Science may have been a source of DF's own metaphysical direction. Christian Science is a good analogy for Jupiter in Aquarius as it combines an exploration of the scientific principles (Aquarius) with a traditional religious expression (Jupiter). Einstein, who also had Jupiter in Aquarius was inspirational to those who took mystical delight in the new discoveries of physics. From the other side, DF's communications with her spirit sources in *The Cosmic Doctrine* attempts to express in physics and mathematical principles the answers to eternal philosophical issues, for example, the question of good and evil.

'When space moves two forces are at work:

- a) The force which causes it to move, being the desire of space for momentum.*
- b) The force which had hitherto caused it not to move, being the desire of space for inertia.'*

'There two factors are present in all motion, but the desire for movement, being the stronger, overcomes the desire for inertia, and the desire for inertia continues as a check upon the movement. Therefore the movement is pulled upon slightly. That is why there no such thing as a straight line in the Cosmos. All movement there has a slight curve in its projection, therefore eventually it returns to the spot whence it started, and forms a spinning ring.these two rings we will call Good and Evil; Life and Death; Light and Darkness; Spirit and Matter; Being and Non-Being; God and Devil; because each of these potencies has its root in its respective Ring. But let it be clearly conceived that the Ring 'Good' and the Ring 'Evil' are not good and evil as one might understand them, but merely spinning circles of force at right angles to each other and therefore in opposition.'^x

Even if we knew nothing else about the life of DF, Jupiter and his sign and placement give us a strong indication of a unique approach to religion and spiritual experience.

A Healer on the Zenith

Chiron is the only resident in the 10th house. The Sabian Symbol for Chiron: ‘SUGGESTING FIGURES, GRANITE MASSES OVERHANG A CANYON’ are an indication of the Masters to whom DF turned for her guidance in deep meditation. In the mythology of most cultures there is the concept of spirits who watch over and care for us. They may be called angels or ancestors or clan animals, but they are a resource we may forget. The great cathedrals in Europe were built to remind us of their presence, the ceilings rising up like great trees, once the sanctuary of druidic groves, their walls and floors and windows filled with images of angels, devils, animals, and plants.

Chiron, the healer lies opposite DF’s Jupiter, and is located in the tenth house of public activity to make a sextile to her Moon and another to the Pluto Neptune conjunction. When we look at the placement of Chiron in her chart, we have further evidence of her destiny as a healer of old wounds. As a symbol of the great healer, the centaur Chiron in DF’s chart, this image speaks of her ability to bring spiritual awe back into the consciousness of modern people. This was her place of shining in the world, her ‘career.’ She encouraged people to feel their royal heritage of spirit (Leo, the sign of her Chiron).

The healing quality of esotericism is to allow access to the expression of whatever is directly experienced in the realm of metaphysics. Chiron is the only resident in her tenth house. He was not discovered during her lifetime, and yet Chiron seems very close to her spirit of healing through return to Myth as a source of new human definition.

Pluto Neptune Conjunction

Neptune and Pluto come together every 500 years. Previous to the conjunction in the 19th century, the last conjunction was a marker for the beginning of the Renaissance. It took place at the end of the 14th century in the early degrees of Gemini. The next conjunction will take place in 2384, again in Gemini. Pluto and Neptune are the most distant of the outer planets. Pluto had not been discovered at the time of this last conjunction. Yet the power of Pluto’s deep intensity

and inexorability, and Neptune's refusal to be defined, and connection to spirituality seem to have spawned a large number of highly influential people. Both planets break down old forms so that new ones can emerge. During the period of this conjunction, many tribal and agricultural cultures were destroyed or deeply wounded by the colonial powers of Europe and North America. We now have to ask if we have made the earth uninhabitable for ourselves. Our choices seem immense, and the very cultures considered inferior and primitive may hold the answer to survival. A decision was made during DF's lifetime to exclude the Neptune aspect of inquiry which psychic research represented in scientific inquiry, and so we are left with Plutonic science. Yet both planets have something to teach us, and we owe DF a huge debt of gratitude for her ability to see both sides of the conjunction.

I believe the natal Neptune/Pluto conjunction in Gemini with its strong connection to DF's Jupiter and Sagittarian stellium gave her a fearless depth to her spiritual exploration. Gemini loves to learn and uses rational methods to explore what is non-rational. In opposition to her third house Sagittarian stellium, the Gemini stellium was able to communicate what she received through meditation and trance. Her view of woman (Venus) as priestess (Sagittarius) was not blocked by conventional attitudes towards spiritual authority for women of her time and society. The Moon showed her the way. She received her training directly from the Moon Goddess just emerging from the Dark Moon period of her cycle, which has lasted for 5,000 years (Demetra George, *The Dark Goddess*). Lunar consciousness was once again to be honored in *balance* with solar consciousness.

Robert Graves, another of the Pluto Neptune generation, honored the Moon Goddess. His book on myth and poetry, *The White Goddess* was central to the spiritual revolution for Western women, and for the neo pagan awakening began during the 1960's and 70's.

All this is born out by the trine, which Jupiter makes to the Neptune/Pluto conjunction. Neptune is a planet of direct connection to the divine, the ineffable. He is the planet of non-verbal experience, of mysticism and music, dreams and illusions, yet is in that most verbal and mental of all signs, Gemini. Like the Sabian Symbols, which attempt to present a concrete verbal description of each degree in the zodiac, there was a drive, which DF felt to describe in words

what is not possible to verbalize. The Sabian Symbol for the Neptune in DF's chart is: 'NIGHT WORKMEN DRILL FOR OIL, AMIDST NOISE AND CONFUSION.' This image brings to mind DF's amazing work during the war when she led spiritual meditations to unite the nation against German invasion. Much of this work took place during the bombardment of London where she chose to stay throughout the war so as to be more central to the action of the times. During the time Neptune was in Gemini, (1870-1914) there were two powerful impulses to explore and map the depth of the human mind and soul. Freud was attempting to make a science of the psyche, discovering the land of the unconscious, and mapping the irrational. Meanwhile spiritualists were tracing the journey of the soul between lives and testing methods of communicating with the dead, and with other non incarnate entities. This was a time of tremendous interest in 'spiritualism.' Spiritual temples sprang up all over England and New England. Only recently have I understood that this was also connected to the invention of the telephone. People could speak with someone not present in their environment, and the natural conclusion was communication was also possible with those who were no longer in physical form. It's a perfect expression of Neptune in Gemini.

This was also a time when connections were made between the cultures and spiritual traditions of the East and West. The Gemini aspect of polarity was well expressed during this period. Although spiritual exploration was never incorporated into the mainstream of scientific knowledge, attempts were made during this period to bridge this divide. When I worked at Harvard's Medical Library, I often browsed the bound journals of The American Society for Psychical Research during my lunch break, and wondered how they found their way into that very scientific institution. Founded in 1894, during the Neptune and Pluto conjunction in Gemini, the ASPR, in parallel with British organizations of the same type, supported the scientific investigation of extraordinary or as yet unexplained psychic and paranormal phenomena. Among the founders of the organizations was the renowned Harvard psychologist and professor of Philosophy, William James. He was an explorer who traveled between scientific and spiritualist experiments of psychology.

There were other less agile travelers between these worlds. Bligh Bond, an ecclesiastical architect and archaeologist used information he received through mediums from the spirits of

monks who had lived in the Abbey attached to the Glastonbury Cathedral. He was able to find an astounding amount of archaeological material with minimal digging. Bond and DF occasionally sat in meditation together. Bligh was appointed archaeologist for the cathedral in 1908 but lost his position in 1921 after he published his book, *Gates of Remembrance* revealing his spirit guides. No one could deny the amount of unexpected material he had uncovered. In this case, it was not the scientific world who disapproved of his methods but rather the Church of England who found his connection to the monk informants went against their religious doctrines and was a general embarrassment.

DF was very much part of this dual investigation. As both psychoanalyst and trance medium, she was fearless in her investigation of both roads.

In her chart, Pluto sits next to Neptune at 6° of Gemini. Both planets are retrograde. Pluto's Sabian Symbol is: 'AN OLD WELL, FILLED WITH PURE WATER, SHADED BY TREES.' How amazing that both the Neptune and Pluto's Sabian Symbols refer to liquids, i.e., oil and water, drawn from the earth. And they cross reference each others' basic symbolism! Neptune is very much associated with water, Pluto is in charge of oil wells. This combination of oil and water are subjects of crisis in the present time, and much of where we stand now was in the foundation process during the time of this conjunction. Oil and water, often used to describe two elements which do not mix, were, until recently, treated by the dominant culture as limitless. Now we seem ready to acknowledge how precious they both are, and the danger that oil poses to water.

Nodal Evolution

The third Gemini marker in her chart is the North Node. Gemini North Node suggests it is imperative to listen to new information and to be open to ideas not necessarily generated by what has worked in the past. When DF first attended lunchtime lectures at the Theosophical Society, she was disdainful of much of the material she heard there, until she attended a lecture on telepathic communication and found she could perceive the symbols the speaker used before he spoke them.

Despite her skepticism, she was open to a new way of thinking about the world, and once she had received physical proof, she wanted to explore this part of the human psyche. The sextile her Mercury makes to Uranus might be symbolized here. Uranus resides in DF's first house in the last degree and minutes of Libra. Uranus is sometimes described as the 'higher octave of Mercury.' Perhaps the Libra Uranus represents the balance of right and left brain central to DF's teaching and writing. She was always analytical and careful in her embrace of intuitive and non-rational methods and material. She was identified (First House) with this careful balance of intellect and magical methods. There is also the evolutionary direction of communicating what is heard, and since the North Node is near Pluto and Neptune, it would seem like a marker for someone who was a spokesperson for that important conjunction. DF was a thinker, a listener and a voice for the conjunction which took place at the time of her birth. These are generational events, yet they are sewed into her personal chart. And her personal life became a vehicle of this transpersonal conjunction.

The South Node in Sagittarius, only one degree removed from her Sun, suggests how strongly she was associated with past lives she recalled as priestess. Yet she moved in the direction of the North Node to teach (North Node Gemini), not by anointed privilege of the priest (Sagittarius South Node), but by the power of her ability to share what she had experienced. The grand trine in air which whirls through her chart, Ascendant and Moon in Libra, North Node, Pluto and Neptune in Gemini and Jupiter in Aquarius, powered her genius. Mars and Mercury are in sextile, thought and action move in harmony with each other.

War Time Activities

October 1, 1939, DF called together the members and friends of the Fraternity of Inner Light for the first meeting of a meditation circle which would continue weekly and, by letter, throughout Britain during the war. She chose this date *'for psychic reasons as being the one on which the forces with which we proposed to co-operate would commence to flow...the same day was subsequently selected by the religious denominations of this country as a national day of prayer and intercession.'* (Letter #2, October 15, 1939) Looking at the chart for this moment, the Sun is

at 7° Libra, conjunct DF's 9° Ascendant. 'A FIREPLACE BLAZES IN AN ABANDONED FARMHOUSE' is the Sabian Symbol. The commentary reads 'Constant presence of unseen, sustaining agencies in every worthwhile activity. Great depth of initial effort. Providence.'

degree, (29°Aries) earlier in the year. Pluto at 02° Leo with an opposition to Mars at 02°Aquarius was making a square to Saturn and the Nodes. The North Node was conjunct the Libra Uranus. Saturn is exactly conjunct the South Node in the tenth house. There was a solar eclipse at this degree (29°Aries) earlier in the year. Pluto at 02° Leo with an opposition to Mars at 02°Aquarius was making a square to Saturn and the Nodes. The North Node was conjunct the Libra Uranus.

This was indeed a time of powerful force in the world. Germany had just invaded Poland, and the war had begun. Since the South Node can represent the past, I wonder if the energy of the Arthurian tradition, which DF often referred to in her meditations, was called upon that day. The first step in the focus of her meditations was to arouse and alert the British people to the danger in which the country stood. She felt she needed to awaken the national soul, which had been lulled to sleep by the laziness and greed of the corrupt nobility and financial interests. Hitler had been seen as a bulwark against socialism, and had been ignored as an enemy of humanity. She called upon the national guardians in the angelic realm to awaken the sense of unity and determination, which she felt was under attack by Nazi occultists and fifth column agents. She put her emphasis on empowering each person to feel they were part of the war effort.

At the moment chosen to begin the meditations, Neptune was exactly conjunct the MC at 23° of Virgo. Spirit was at the highest point of the chart ready to be utilized. 'We have now made a start on the work we have set out to do-the opening of a channel whereby spiritual influences can contact the Group-mind of the race.' (Letter #2, October 15, 1939)

Perhaps most significant in this chart is the exact conjunction between Venus and Mercury in Libra (14°). This combination of the two planets closest to the Sun is positioned in DF's first house, adjacent to her Ascendant. The Sun had just risen above the horizon. Venus and Mercury make a sextile to her natal Venus, Sun and South Node. They make an exact square to her

progressed Mercury, which is conjunct her IC. Her deep love and her intellect were aligned for this task.

DF was aware that Germans occultists were using powerful methods to influence the outcome of the war, ‘...the manipulation of the racial subconscious mind is one of the strongest cards they play. ...Nazism has physical and astral and mental powers, but has no spiritual contact, hence its lack of all ethical standards and complete irresponsibility.’ (Magical Battle of Britain). p.23 She was leading her group in meditations using symbols and images which evolved over time, both Kabalistic and Arthurian. ..‘the nature of the spiritual force employed is such that it is capable of leavening the whole mass of racial subconsciousness and immunizing it from Nazi poison.’ p.28.

Her work was done with humility and without fanfare. She made it clear she was walking blindfolded in this process, using the meditation techniques she had learned and developed over her lifetime. ‘Esoteric tradition has always averred that certain work in connection with the spiritual advancement of mankind is carried out by a small groups of trained and dedicated persons,working unknown and in secret, and there is no intrinsic reason why we should not be one of them.’ p. 24 She was not trying to injure or destroy her enemies. ‘Our work is a work of healing, and no hate must come of it. We look to see a regenerated Germany rise up in strength and greatness as well as goodwill and peace...All the time that we are working for a successful issue of the war, we must look forward to a happy peace of constructive comradeship. Letter #5, November 5, 1939.

However, she also felt that this was a time when some ancient issues of German national culture must be transformed, and she led a meditation to this end. *‘Personally, I think it is a blind force, not an intelligent one, and it finds a channel through the personalities of unregenerate human beings who provide the intelligence it does not possess.’*

‘I conceive of this dark influence as the accumulation of evil thought-forms in the group mind of the race and place; an evil heritage that has come down undispersed from the dawn of German history and even earlier...There can be no reform of Germany until this dark psychic heritage that contaminates her is dispersed.’ p.48 And in her usual practical way sets out a plan to do this: *‘Let us visualize Germany as a vast marsh of human helplessness and ignorance covered*

by the thick black cloud of ancient evil.....then let us see the Angels... hovering over it and directing lightning flashes at it from the points of their swords. These flashes cause thunderstorms to break out in the cloud; rifts appear, the cloud begins to break up and Sunshine.... shines throughout the land beneath.’ p.48

Since these words were written, it seems possible that the whole human race would benefit from this clearing of dark clouds which keep out healing sunshine, as we watch ethnic cleansing and the use of technology to devastate civilian populations, and in America we are faced with the history of brutal racism, which continues in a thousand ways.

At the commencement of the letters, Mars was in Aquarius and conjunct DF’s progressed Sun, and natal Jupiter. She was definitely in warrior mode. Her progressed Moon was about to oppose the progressed Sun leading to the progressed Full Moon. The work she and her group developed during the war was a culmination of her work as esoteric teacher and adept. *‘Until we begin to use these methods under conditions of stress, we have no idea what can be done with them. We fear to be credulous...but faith is necessary for any form of work that depends on mind power. Let us act ‘as if’ what we want to believe is true, and we shall find that we have very likely brought it into manifestation. ‘ p.40*

In attempting to work with the ‘cosmic forces’ during this time of great national crisis, she rose to a challenge which required her balance between a natural desire for intervention and the knowledge that she could not use her powers to control outcomes. In October of 1940 her home, school and workplace at 3 Queensborough Terrace was bombed with no casualties, her work was carried on a few doors away.

Later as the war turned, and DF saw the danger of conquest was past she shifted her attention to the future of Europe, with a clear picture of a unified and peaceful Europe and the vision of a more democratic Britain. Some of her fellow meditators were outraged by what they perceived as a political turn to the letters she sent out weekly. But she continued unperturbed by their dislike of her vision of class and race equality. She pictured Britain as a place of egalitarianism and peaceful interaction with the world, including colonies. She championed the Atlantic Charter

and steered the direction of the meditations towards a remarkable description of what indeed took place in England and Europe after the war. The model of every person in Britain with the power to make a difference in the survival of all carried over into the future which included national health care, free public higher education in all universities, and a determination to have a planned economy

Her Work Finished

DF died of lymphoma when she was 56 years old. On the day of her death, January 6, 1946, Neptune was at 8 °of Libra, conjunct her natal Ascendant, close to her progressed Libra Moon (6°) and transiting Venus, her chart ruler. The Sabian Symbol for this degree is ‘AN ANGEL CARRYING A HARP COMES THROUGH A HEAVENLY LANE.’ The commentary reads: ‘*The basic harmony of fulfilled selfhood. Realizing harmony in everyday life through detached and lofty understanding.*’ This poetic image eloquently describes what Dion Fortune achieved in this lifetime.

Endnotes

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- ⁱ Fortune, Dion, *The Secrets of Dr. Taverner*, Ariel Press p.55
ⁱⁱ Knight, Gareth, *Dion Fortune and the Inner Light*, Thoth, p.259
ⁱⁱⁱ Knight, Ibid, p.275
^{iv} Fortune, Dion, *The Sea Priestess*, 1935, Weiser, Red Wheel, p. xii
^v Knight, Gareth, *Dion Fortune and the Inner Light* Thoth, 2000, p. 275
^{vi} Fuhro, Sarah, *Three Houses of Work*, Dell Horoscope October 2008
^{vii} Knight Ibid p. 83
^{viii} Fortune, Dion *The Training and Work of an Initiate*. Weiser, p. 123.
^{ix} Fortune, Dion, Ibid, p.53
^x Fortune, Dion, *The Cosmic Doctrine*, 2000 Weiser, Red Wheel pp 21-23

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Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Personality*, Doubleday, 1970