



OBSESSIVE PERSONALITY. ASTROLOGICAL CLUES OF INTERPRETATION

May De Chiara and Eliane Btेश

In this article we will describe, from a psychological point of view, features of obsessive personalities and we will link those features to symbolisms of the natal chart that could be in connection with this kind of personality.

1) Presentation

Psychology describes personality as a whole of qualities that distinguishes a subject, his way of being, of thinking himself, of thinking the world and his connection with it. The development of personality is due to many causes, including:

- genetics
- the organic
- the family entourage
- the cultural environment
- the times

From the point of view of psychology, personality encompasses emotional features, mental features, and behaviors.

A healthy personality is flexible, practical, with a clear capacity to adapt, creative and spontaneous. The individual uses most of his/her potential, displays his/her basic qualities and establishes healthy ties with others and with the world around.

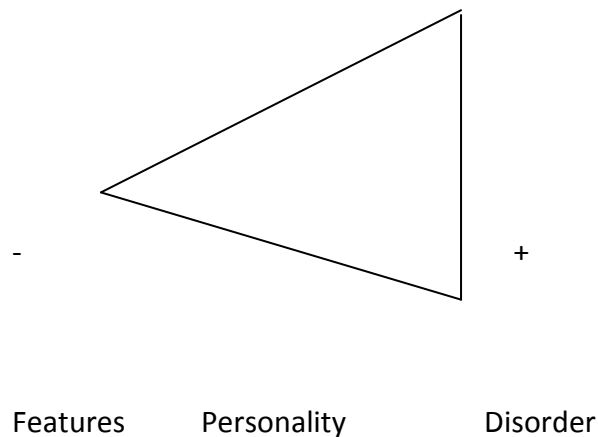
Such individual presents a variety of features and multiple adaptive mechanisms. The subject functions within a dynamic balance within all areas. He is able to live his emotions without letting them interfere with his capacity to think and act.

He/she is able to tolerate frustration.

He/she can internally distinguish feelings from thoughts without contaminations.

He/she establishes a relationship with the world where he/she can clearly differentiate what is external from what is internal.

2) Obsessive behaviors: Feature – Personality – Disorder



An obsessive feature would be, for example, being meticulous with neatness and order.

- tidyness
- extreme thoroughness

- perfectionism
- strictness
- inflexibility
- difficulty to show affection
- recurrence of ideas
- stereotyped conducts or actions

• **Obsessive Disorder:** It shows exaggerated features or behaviors. These features are strict, inappropriate for the circumstances and they cause discomfort in the individual's life. It is a pathological extreme. It is the so-called Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

A typical case to illustrate this disorder is the main character from the movie "As Good as it Gets" played by Jack Nicholson. He is a writer. When he walks in the street he cannot touch the joints of the tiled floor and he walks skipping them. When he arrives home, he must turn the lights on and off a certain number of times. He firmly keeps up several routines, like always going to the same restaurant for lunch, sitting at the same table and ordering from the same waiter. He uses gloves in order to avoid dirtying his hands, he runs from contact with people, even when walking in the street.

3) Obsessive Personality

According to psychoanalysis, an obsessive personality has a fixation point at what Freud calls the Anal Stage of Psychosexual Development. At this stage, by the age of two, the child acquires his first cultural learning that is sphincters control, this learning distinguishes human beings from animals and it symbolizes a restraint of the instinct. The child learns when and how, and besides that, if he controls sphincters, he is compensated by his parents.

<p>Wait, control and retain are key words of this stage.</p>

For psychoanalysis, obsessive behaviors are connected to unconscious childhood experiences related to this Anal Stage. Control and inhibition of urges, typical of obsessive personality, from psychoanalytical theory, would be due to how a child lived this stage.

Freud states that experiences may have been so from excess as from lack, in example, the kid may have been demanded to have sphincters control too soon.

In adults, obsessive personality showcases a general concern about tidiness, cleanliness, perfectionism; control of emotions; control of situations; recurrence of ideas, difficulty at making decisions, delegating tasks and approaching new situations. It is a personality that evidences patterns of emotional inhibition, not much expressivity, self control, excessively analysis of actions and situations. Such an individual is scrupulous with moral, ethics, and values, and has a restricted and controlled attitude regarding money matters.

Physically, he/she may have slow, stiff movements, and be not so graceful. His/her language may be restrained, careful, and not very spontaneous.

Thought and mental action prevail over emotions and movements. A central element is the presence of obsessive ideas. These are recurrent ideas that come to mind, in a repeated and persistent way, generally producing distress. The individual acknowledges these ideas as irrational and excessive, but cannot ignore them. There are some typical themes that appear such as:

- Obsession with contamination, pollution: concerns about dirtiness, germs, ideas of infection or becoming infected
- Obsession with aggressive content: thoughts about having made a mistake, about being responsible for failure, for hurting or damaging others, or fears that something bad can happen.
- Obsession with tidiness and symmetry
- Somatic obsession: tendency to hypochondria
- Obsessions with sexual content
- Words, numbers or absurd images that appear in conscience

In obsessive personalities, there is a permanent need for keeping an acceptable order for the individual between the internal and the external. This order is fixed and immovable, and changing it is almost impossible.

In these personalities, in the presence of possible change, of an unexpected event or situation that is out of one's control, there is distress, fear and a feeling of losing control that could lead to an overwhelming situation.

		<u>Obsessive Personality</u>
• <u>Emotional Area:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional Inhibition - Not so much expressivity - Distress, fear and guilt 	
• <u>Corporal Area:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restricted and controlled movements 	
• <u>Mental Area:</u>	<div> <div><u>Control</u></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recurrent ideas and doubts - Fixed and not flexible ideas - Strict thought - Magical thought </div>	
• <u>Behavior:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obsessive actions - Routines 	

This type of personality appears more frequently in men than in women, becoming apparent sometimes through an excessive concern with and dedication to work, productivity and efficiency, leaving pleasure and personal satisfaction with other areas of life aside, in pursuit of work achievements.

These personalities also evidence compulsions or obsessive actions. These are acts that the person feels forced to do, and feels he/she is not able to "not do"; he/she feels that there is a force that requires it. The mere thought of "not doing" these actions brings

him/her to a distressing emotional state. These compulsions have a magical connotation, a kind of spell, through which the person tries to avoid the appearance of the obsessive idea. These obsessive acts are also called rituals.

For example: if I don't step on any line on the tiled floor on my way to work, I won't be fired.

These rituals are an attempt at control, if the individual does it successfully he/she may avoid the distress that the obsessive idea generates. Of course, this action is a vain attempt because it becomes a vicious circle that returns again and again.

Obsessive acts appear in the individual as an attempt to gain control over obsessive ideas that generate distress and a feeling of lack of control

Some typical compulsions may be:

- Mental arithmetic compulsions: an urgent need to count certain elements from reality (cars passing by, raindrops falling), or to count up to certain number, to add numbers seen in the street.
- Verification compulsions: urgent need to make sure the doors are always locked, light switches or gas valves are turned off, etc
- Repetition compulsions: walking into and out of a room a certain number of times, arranging and untiding the pillow, climbing up and down a certain number of stair steps, washing one's hands several times.
- Tidying and arranging compulsions: arranging the wardrobe and drawers over and over again, sorting clothes by colors or sizes. The minimal change produces anxiety.
- Collecting and accumulation: collecting old objects, magazines, papers, used wrappers or useless objects
- Doubt compulsions: repetitive and recurrent doubts about the same issues

It is important to note that these compulsions produce discomfort for the individual, they interfere in his everyday life and they are usually a waste of time. These behaviors are clearly excessive or are not connected in a rational way with the ideas they must neutralize or prevent.

4) Astrological articulation

From the description of the behavior of obsessive personalities, we have found some significant recurrent themes in the interpretation of natal charts, regarding:

\hbar
Elements
Axis III-IX ♀ -♂
Transpersonal Planets ♀ ♂ ♀

- 1) \hbar has an outstanding position in the natal chart.

It has been observed in charts with aspects of $\hbar \odot$ and $\hbar \succ$. The subject may have a psychological experience of \hbar as a limit, an obstacle, an inhibition of his emotions and self expression. The identification of conscience of this aspect with the saturnine pole may be shown as a closed, inhibited and controlled quality of one's personality that one relates to some features described as part of obsessive personalities. This may also appear in the inhibition of the emotional world, there is not much connection with the own affective needs. The person doesn't have a record of this emotional need and it appears in a minimized way.

It may also be observed in the outstanding position of \hbar in the angular houses I, IV, VII, X and in the house XII.

The common point is that the \hbar energy is lived by the individual as an inhibition, a demand, and this causes the feeling of guilt and the need for control. This would be related to the super-ego structure, with a feeling of repression and desires that the subject considers inadequate or reprehensible.

- 1) **Presence of the Element Earth:** attention to detail, order, routine, perfectionism, neatness.
- 2) **Presence of the Element Fire:** ideological and mental predominance, subjectivity, with certainty and belief.
- 3) **Mental Axis III IX, ♀ – ♄ emphasized.** There is a strong presence of thought, of the word, of communication, and of the function of synthesis. The area of thought and ideas is empowered by the presence of strict beliefs, recurrent ideas and conviction about them. This is connected with the importance of the obsessive ideas in obsessive personalities, emphasizing the mental axis as exceptional. This axis will be important for the control of emotions and life, since all behaviors will be justified from a mental structure of thoughts.

4) Transpersonal planets:

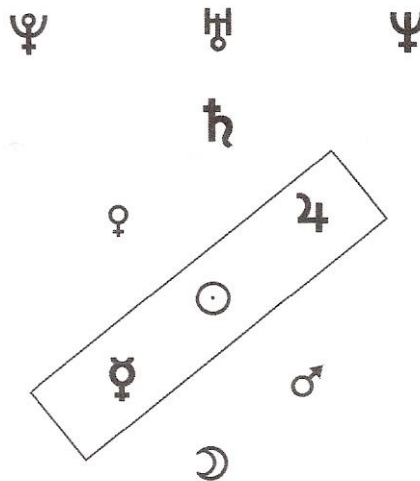
♅ stays polarized in the mental axis ♀ – ♄ (ideas and thought). Neptunian energy is lived as chaos, confusion, undifferentiation and overwhelming. In view of this, the individual orders and controls it from his mind, with ideas, thoughts, and recurrent actions, which are mechanical and stereotyped.

♅ stays polarized in ♄ as control that excludes what is unpredictable. Uranus energy is lived as unexpected, as an irruption and as dangerous since it brings “disorder”, breaking and removing structure from the everyday life of the individual.

♅ May be seen in connection with ♂: in compulsive behaviors and actions, that the individual can't help doing.

Personal Planets Mandala

This mandala symbolizes the layout of personal planets by axis of complementary opposites ($\sigma - \varnothing$, $\text{♂} - \text{♀}$, $\text{☾} - \text{☿}$), and the \odot in the center as a coordinator.



☿ , ♀ and ♂ control and inhibit to ☾ (emotion), σ (action – desire) and \varnothing (receptivity).

The psyche as a whole creates a barrier against transpersonal energies and the individual feels them as overwhelming, destructive, chaotic and confusing.

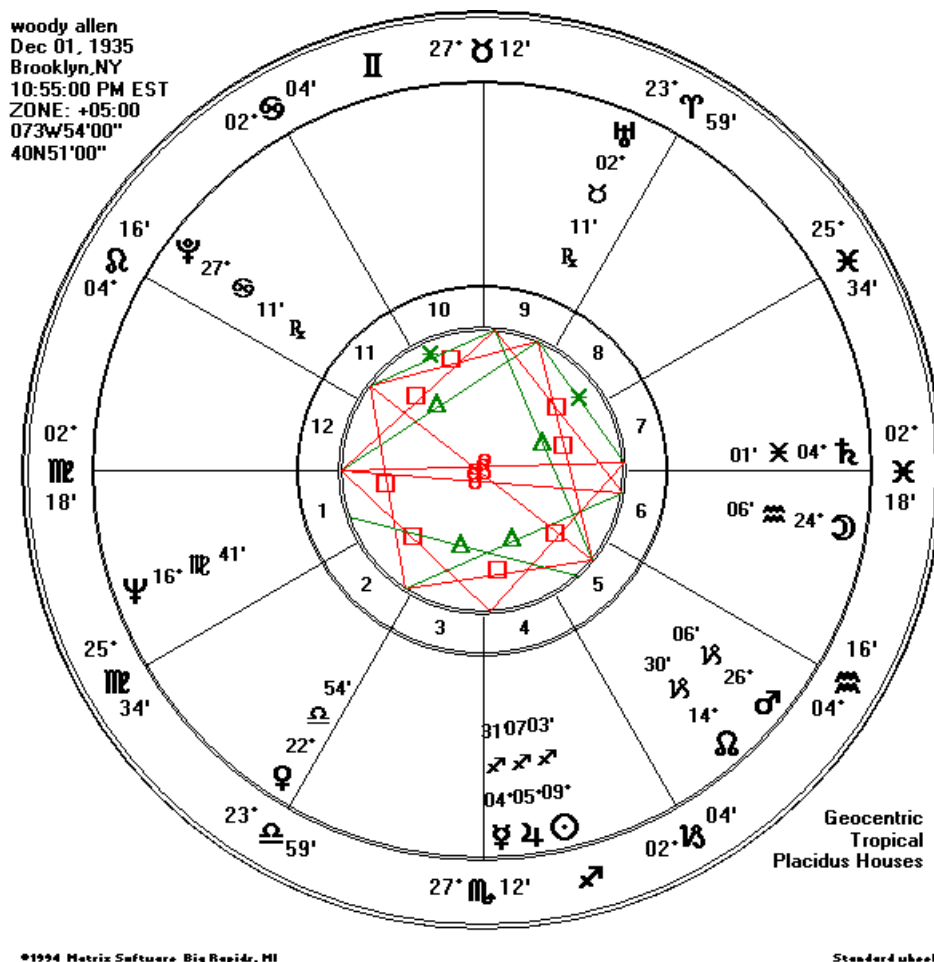
To illustrate this with an example, we chose the natal chart of Woody Allen, who, from our point of view, has an obsessive personality, regardless of his unquestionable talent and creativity.

The character of Woody Allen, archetypical of the regular American citizen, is an intellectual Jewish, shy and neurotic, obsessed with sex and psychoanalysis, and demonstrating difficulty in relationships with women. In his case, his character and his person become, apparently, one individual. Woody wears the same clothing, on and off stage, and always presents the same appearance, his particular glasses, etc. We can think that his character, a stubbornly judicious man that perseveres in spite of fears and neurosis,

is a creation that turns out to be funny, based on the exaggeration of some of his own features of obsessive personality.

Self referential in his play, in *Deconstructing Harry* (1997), he plays a writer, who is honored by the university from which he had been expelled in the past. Allen tried, at first, to subtitle the movie as *The Worst Man in the World*, since, as he used to say “Harry is a disgusting guy, empty, shallow, and sexually obsessed”. In spite of this, he recognized that the character of Harry expresses his philosophical ideas and his thoughts about human relationships, as well as his reflections regarding religion.

Throughout his cinematography, the recurrent topics that appear and the characteristics that determine his style are: main characters obsessed with death, Bergman’s movies, sex, love triangles, couples, mothers, religion, Jewish people, psychoanalysis, supernatural topics. In many occasions, he has played the role of movie cinematographic directors, writers or journalists.



ELEMENTAL BALANCE		POLARITY
FIRE	☉ ♃ ♀	♂
AIR	♀ ☽	
EARTH	Asc ♂	
WATER	♋	

We take the following elements of analysis into account:

♋ in an outstanding position	♋ ♂ ☽ ♋ ☐ ☉ ♋ VII
oustanding Earth Element	Asc ♎ ♂ ♊

outstanding Fire Element	☉ ♂ ♃ ♂ ♀ ♂
oustanding Axis III IX ♀-♂	♀ ♃ ♂ ☉ in I ♂ ♀ in III ☐ ♀ ♋ IX ☐ ♀ II ♂ intercepted
Transpersonal Planets	Polarity ♀: ♀ Asc ♎ ♀ ♂ ♂

5) Conclusion

These are only some hypothesis to be observed when working with natal charts. Psychology gives us descriptions of behaviors such as, in this case, of obsessive personality that can be taken into account at the time of analyzing and interpreting a natal chart.

Our attitude is that of research without suggesting any definitive conclusion. Psychology and Astrology both, are spaces permanently open to observation and investigation.

About the Authors:

May De Chiara: Psychopedagogue. Former professor at Universidad de Buenos Aires, Universidad del Salvador and Universidad Católica de Salta. Former academic secretary at Universidad del Salvador Psychology College. Children, adolescent, adult and group therapist. Graduated from Centro de Estudios Gestálticos y Tec. Psicoterapéuticos. Headmistress: Mabel Allerand. Astrologer. Former professor at Casa XI. Astropsique Director www.astropsique.com.ar

Eliane Btesh: Psychologist. Former Professor at Universidad de Buenos Aires Psychology College. Astrologer. Coordinator at Astropsique. Former Program Coordinator at Fundación Desde América.

info@astropsique.com.ar www.astropsique.com.ar