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# Wounding and the Will to Live

by Liz Greene

## "Apollon", August 1999

Since Chiron's discovery in 1977, astrologers have been experiencing and exploring his themes, listening to new tales that resound to his ancient myth, and coming to some understanding of his archetypal impact. Now, over twenty years later, Liz Greene sees Chiron as essential in deepening our understanding of solar consciousness; for in order to choose to live life to the full, we have to face that part in us that would rather seek death.

The will to live is a great mystery. Every medical practitioner, with any experience of life-threatening illness, knows that the will to live can affect physical as well as psychological well-being, and survival often depends upon the sick person's desire for life, rather than on the doctor's ministrations. Nor is the will to live necessarily what we claim we feel. We may cry out that we want life; but somewhere inside, we want to go home, and this longing for oblivion may be more powerful than any conscious declaration of intent to "get better". Some people react to conflict, pain and disappointment with a creative response that transforms their perspective and even their circumstances. Other people become bitter and hopeless and live in a grey twilight world, or entirely lose their will to live. There are not only active suicides amongst those who have inwardly given up, but also those self-architected "accidental" deaths which, although unconscious, are nevertheless fuelled by a powerful yearning to bring an end to suffering and unhappiness. Self-destructive behaviour does not always involve the obvious gesture of the bottle of pills or the knife slash to the wrist. There is no easy formula to determine why some individuals rise to life's challenges, despite severe misfortunes and handicaps, while others turn their backs on the future, even if fortune favours them. Moreover, loss of the will to live may not always result in self-destruction. It may be expressed as the urge to destroy others, as though, on some deep and inaccessible level, the projection of hopelessness and victimisation onto another gives the suffering individual the illusion that he or she is strong and in control of life. Thus the individual who has, secretly, lost the will to live may, in extremis, try to deprive others of joy - and perhaps even of life - by finding a scapegoat who can be burdened with all the despair that is felt within.

This mystery may have its origin, as so many mysteries do, in the enigma of inherent individual character, and the birth chart can provide us with many insights into the patterns which underpin that character. With any polarity in life, we, as astrologers, always need to look at a polarity of planets; and the polarity of hope versus despair, the will to live versus hopelessness, may be illuminated - at least in part - through the symbolism of the polarity of the Sun and Chiron.

I do not believe we can really understand either of these planets without considering the meaning of the other one. Although they are not in actual aspect in every individual's chart, nevertheless they are both present in every chart, and they form an energy dynamic within the personality. A direct aspect sharpens this dynamic and often becomes the focus of the individual's journey, but the polarity exists in each of us regardless. All the planets, up to and including Saturn, serve the development of the individual ego, best symbolised by the Sun itself; in fact, we might even say that the personal planets "serve" the Sun as the centre of individuality. But Chiron lies at the

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interface between Saturn and the outer planets, and therefore mediates collective issues which impinge on and wound the individual. By its nature, Chiron's collective implications signify something collectively "unhealable", because the wound exists in the collective and is ancestral. By its nature, the Sun reflects each individual's sense of purpose and meaning in life, and these are intimately bound up with the will to live and to become oneself. Each of these planets needs the other; but if the balance tips too far to one or the other, certain psychological difficulties may ensue.

Following are a list of "keywords" which may be helpful in understanding the relationship between the Sun and Chiron. I would like to explore these in more detail first, and then look at what can happen when the Sun works against Chiron, and what can happen when they work together. After this brief assessment of the two planets, an example chart may help to illustrate the mysterious dynamic between the Sun and Chiron.

## Key Themes

<p><b>The Sun</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual destiny</li> <li>Sense of meaning</li> <li>Hope for the future</li> <li>Self-confidence</li> <li>Generosity</li> <li>Individual identity apart from family and collective</li> <li>The power to create</li> <li>The ability to play</li> <li>The divine child</li> </ul>	<p><b>Chiron</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective failings and flaws</li> <li>Disillusionment</li> <li>Failed ideals</li> <li>Inescapable wounding</li> <li>Bitterness and cynicism</li> <li>Physical and psychological damage</li> <li>Acceptance of mortal limits</li> <li>Quest for understanding</li> <li>Compassion</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Sun working against Chiron</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depression</li> <li>Loss of confidence</li> <li>Sense of permanent damage</li> <li>Cynicism</li> <li>Expectation of failure</li> <li>Sense of victimisation or scapegoating</li> <li>Desire to victimise or scapegoat others</li> <li>Projection of inferiority on others</li> <li>Loss of the will to live</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Sun working with Chiron</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wisdom</li> <li>Patience in the face of that which cannot be changed</li> <li>Toughness and grit</li> <li>Understanding of deeper patterns</li> <li>Melancholy which leads to depth of thought and feeling</li> <li>Determination to make a contribution to the welfare of others</li> <li>Compassion</li> <li>Feelings of specialness tempered by an acceptance of human limits</li> <li>Activation of the will to live</li> </ul>

## The meaning of the Sun

I will not spend too much time on describing the meaning of the Sun, as I have done this elsewhere. In short, the Sun represents the essence of the living individual - godhead (or, if a less "spiritual" term is preferred, the life force) incarnated in human form for a particular lifespan, and expressing itself with a specific nature and purpose. Through the Sun we experience ourselves as unique, special, and born with something to contribute to life. To paraphrase a statement Charles Harvey once made in a conference lecture, the Sun within us makes us feel connected with the macrocosm, and we experience ourselves as part of something eternal. This inner experience conveys, not "happiness"

in the ordinary colloquial sense, but the profound serenity and hopefulness which arise from a feeling of living a useful and meaningful life. We could call this an experience of "individual destiny", because the Sun reflects that in us which knows we are here to live a specific purpose. Apollo was, in Greek myth, the deity who dispelled the darkness of the family curse, and freed the individual from the burden of ancestral "sin". A sense of individual meaning and purpose can indeed free us from the feeling of entrapment in the family past. The Sun also gives us a sense of an individual future, a faith in our purpose, and an inner conviction that we are "going somewhere". It is the Sun which allows us to fight free of feelings of futility and pointlessness, and which affirms our unique value even if our circumstances are painful.

The inner experience of individual destiny, meaning and hope, in turn, gives us confidence in ourselves and a belief in the essential goodness of life, and this can be a powerful healing force on both physical and psychological levels. If the expression of the Sun is blocked, stifled, or undeveloped for any reason - through childhood wounds, for example, or through internal conflicts reflected in the birth chart - the individual may find it more difficult to connect with this sense of having the right to be alive as oneself. Life's difficulties may then be amplified because there is no inner sense of specialness and hope on which to draw. The power to create depends on the Sun in the chart, because when we create anything we give ourselves over to something "other" inside us which we trust will bring forth fruit. Creativity requires an act of trust. So too does play, where we give ourselves over to a flow of imaginative power which makes us feel joyful. The most ancient symbol of this creative and playful solar power is the image of the divine child, which personifies something eternally youthful and indestructible within us.

### **The meaning of Chiron**

In Greco-Roman art, Chiron is almost always shown carrying a child on his back. But despite this emblem of hope, the figure of the King of the Centaurs is a tragic one. It is worth reiterating the myth, which is often distorted or wrongly told because it is such a painful one.

In myth, Chiron did not become a healer because he was wounded. That is an optimistic reinterpretation which attempts to make sense of life's pain by assigning it a specific purpose and meaning - to develop the compassion and wisdom to heal others because of one's own pain. This reinterpretation of the myth is valid as a way of working with one's own wounds. But Chiron's pain serves no such noble purpose in the story. He is already a teacher and a healer, before he is wounded. It could be assumed that he is already wounded because he suffers isolation; although he is a Centaur, and therefore one of a tribe of creatures who symbolise natural instinctual powers, he is himself civilised, and has thus separated himself from his tribe. Chiron in this context represents the wise animal, a natural power which of its own volition has chosen to serve human evolution and consciousness, rather than remain blindly subject to the instinctual compulsions of the animal kingdom. Like the "helpful animal" in fairy tales, Chiron turns his back on the savagery of his instinctual nature, in order to serve the evolutionary pattern which he deems to be the way forward for the whole of life.

But Chiron is in the wrong place at the wrong time. He is caught between Herakles, the solar hero who personifies the strength of the human ego, and the wild, untamed Centaurs whom Chiron himself has left behind. While the battle rages, Chiron takes no part; he has sympathy for both. Perhaps because of this mediating role, which deprives him of his natural aggression, he is accidentally wounded by a poisoned arrow aimed at another Centaur, and the wound does not heal, no matter what healing methods he applies to it. Ultimately he retires to his cave howling in anguish, begging for death. Zeus and Prometheus take pity on him, and grant him the boon of mortality, allowing him to die in peace like any mortal, although once he was a god.

This terrible story implies a state of unfairness in life which is hard for any individual, and perhaps even harder for the idealistic individual involved in studies such as astrology, to countenance. We want to believe that life is fair, and that goodness is rewarded and evil punished, at least in some other incarnation if not in this one. Here is a good creature

who suffers through no fault of his own, a victim of the inevitable battle between evolution and inertia, consciousness and blind instinctuality. Chiron is an image of that in us which has been wounded unfairly by life, and by inescapable conditions which reflect failings and flaws in a collective psyche which is unfailingly clumsy in its efforts to progress. Because human beings are both solar hero and wild animal, and because our efforts to civilise ourselves over history have so often produced disastrous results, we have a legacy of unfairly inflicted pain which produces repercussions through the generations. Physical and psychological damage whose causes lie, not in any individual or even parental failing, but in genetic inheritance, or collective disasters such as the Holocaust and the present nightmare in Kosovo, belong to the realm of Chiron. In these spheres our individual strivings, fired by the Sun, refined and focused by the inner planets, and given form and strength by Saturn, are thwarted or damaged by forces in life, in history, in society, and in the collective psyche over which we have no control and for which, as individuals, we cannot be blamed.

Such collisions with the inescapable flaws of the collective can leave us full of bitterness and cynicism. We may punish others because we feel maimed, wounded and irredeemable. Or we may punish ourselves. But if we can progress beyond this black bile of bitterness, and if we are persistent enough in our search for answers, we may indeed find an answer - even if the answer is that there is no answer, and that we must accept the limits of mortal existence. Acceptance is one of Chiron's gifts, and it is different from self-pitying resignation. Chiron's boon of death may be understood as a symbol of the acceptance of being mortal, and it constitutes a transformation which, even if it cannot heal the unhealable or alter the past, can radically change our perspective on life. Through it we learn compassion, albeit of a limited kind. Chiron's compassion is the compassion of one lame person for another. We may feel deep empathy for those who are wounded like ourselves. But without the Sun's warmth and light, we may not find the generosity to move beyond the narrow circle of those whose specific pain mirrors our own, and see that life hurts us all, in one way or another.

### **Chiron as scapegoater: the wounded becomes the wounder**

There are many stages in the process which Chiron represents, beginning with his wounding, and ending with his transformation into mortality and his release from suffering. These stages encompass rage, fury, the desire to injure others, bitter resignation, self-pity, feelings of victimisation, and, at last, the dawning of a wish to understand the universal patterns that lie beyond one's personal pain. At any of these stages, if we fail to face and comprehend what is happening to us, we may become stuck and act out some of Chiron's less attractive features. Chiron is, after all, wounded in his animal half, and animals are not known for their philosophical attitude when injured. Those which have the strength tend to bite back.

As it is so relevant to the present world situation, I have chosen to briefly review the relationship between the Sun and Chiron in the chart of Slobodan Milosevic, who, at the time of writing this article, bears the dubious honour of personifying all we find most abhorrent in human nature. Not long ago, Adolf Hitler had this honour; no doubt others, equally qualified, will follow in the future. Whether or not Milosevic is truly evil as some claim, or a human being damaged unbearably and thus transformed into a destructive force, is not a question I can answer. This question forms the subject of endless debate in the healing professions, and raises the impossible conundrum of whether the will to destroy is a matter of inherent character or a matter of childhood damage taken to appalling extremes. As with all such conundrums, the answer probably lies in a combination of both. But it seems to me, viewing this chart in the context of the present situation in Yugoslavia, that we can learn a great deal from it about what happens if the wounds of Chiron are not dealt with on an inner level. Milosevic has exhibited no obvious loss of the will to live. He is, apparently, quite the opposite: a tough survivor who will find any way to retain his position of power whatever the cost to others. It is others who, at his hands, have lost not only the will to live, but their actual lives. Yet the inner picture is rather different.

### Slobodan Milosevic

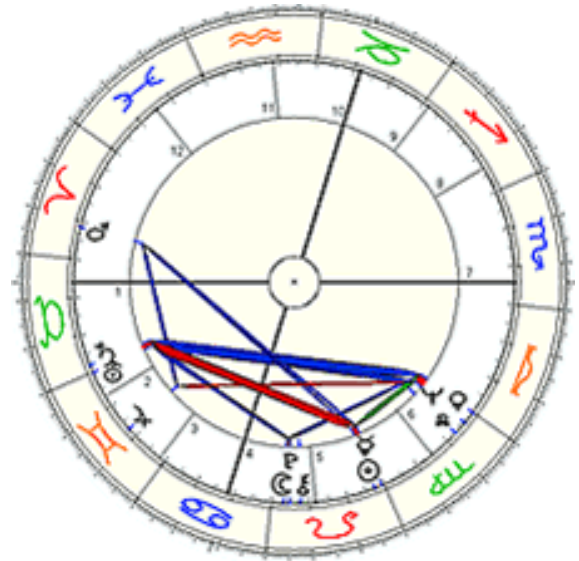
Aug 20 1941, 22.00 MET  
Pozarevac, Yugoslavia



Source: Hans Hinrich Taeger, Internationales Horoscope Lexikon, Band 4, Verlag Hermann Bauer, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1998.

Taeger classes this chart as Group 2P, meaning it is fairly reliable and derived from autobiographical statements.

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In this chart Chiron is not aspecting the Sun. It is, however, powerful through its conjunctions with the Moon and Pluto in Leo; all these planets are placed in the 4th house and square the Taurus Ascendant. The Sun is in the 5th house, in its own sign of Leo, and is therefore the dispositor of Chiron. The dynamic relationship between the Sun and Chiron in this birth chart is not through direct aspect, but through the polarisation of the self-expressive, self-mythologising 5th house Sun in Leo and the shadowed, injured Moon in the 4th, with its inheritance not only of death and destruction in the immediate family, but also of the ancient memory of grievances in the collective psyche into which Milosevic was born. Many Serbs nurse a centuries-old anger toward the Muslim world because of the occupation of their land by the Ottoman Turks in the 13th century. The Muslim Albanian community is perceived as merely a continuation of this ancient outrage. 4th house Moons feel such things personally, as though they have ingested these archaic memories through their mothers' milk.

The oppression of Tito's communist regime is also relevant here, with its repudiation of Leonine individuality. Milosevic himself is, of course, a communist, and the only outlet for a double Leo with such a political agenda is power. But although power might satisfy the Sun's drive to create, it cannot heal the hurt of the Moon in Leo, longing to be special and loved. This individual, with no water in the birth chart and the harsh internal discipline of a Saturn-Uranus conjunction square the Sun and Mercury, is not likely to recognise or acknowledge the source of his suffering, because any emotions, especially those of the vulnerable victim, are frightening. One does not survive if one feels. One survives if one fights; the Sun is trine a dignified Mars in Aries in the 12th, itself a channel for a dream of collective ancestral heroism. The Pluto-Chiron power which injures the Moon is perceived outside, in a vulnerable people who are seen as a powerful enemy. As always when one projects bits of oneself outside, Milosevic lives in a hall of mirrors.

Analysing the motives of an individual like Milosevic can teach us a great deal about ourselves. It is, of course, easy, with hindsight, to say, "Ah, naturally he behaved like this, because his whatnot is in thingey aspecting ding-ding." This is a game all astrologers play, especially when it allows us to feel superior. However, the conjunction in Milosevic's 4th house speaks not of inevitable behaviour, but of a deep ancestral wound, transmitted and enacted through the immediate family. Milosevic's parents both committed suicide, a fact which has no doubt exacerbated, or played into, the dark flavour of this conjunction. This man confronted death and total abandonment in very early life, and survival cannot therefore ever be taken for granted. Chiron-Pluto is also a

generation marker, as is the Saturn-Uranus conjunction, and both occurred during, and reflected, the chaos and horror of the Second World War.

Those children born with this pair of conjunctions know well, in their blood and bones, that life is not safe, and that innocence and goodness are no guarantee for survival. This applies even if one has been born in a relatively "safe" environment, outside the arena of war. Beyond the Saturnian skin of individuality, the collective psyche ensures that all of us participate in and embody, on some level - dark or light - the times into which we are born. That Milosevic is a deeply, savagely, perhaps irrevocably wounded man is beyond doubt. That he has always had a choice in how to deal with that wound is also beyond doubt; and we all know how he chose to express it. The savagery of the inner wound is proportionate to the wound he has inflicted on hundreds of thousands of innocent people. Chiron, its pain inflamed by Pluto's savage fight for survival, here suggests a profound conviction that only through the deaths of those perceived as destroyers can the individual's own survival be ensured. Hopefully the readers of this article are not inclined to take Milosevic's path. He is easy to despise and even hate. Yet we may be more like him than we think - in little ways which we deem unimportant yet which reveal the painful struggle we experience in facing our own wounds honestly, and bearing them, rather than finding someone else to whom we can feel superior and in whose suffering we can secretly take delight.

### **Struggle and synthesis**

The psychoanalyst Michael Balint<sup>3</sup> wrote that, at the core of every illness, physical as well as psychological, there is a fundamental wound - a struggle or inner conflict which seems insurmountable and which can generate bitterness and rage, and the loss of the will to live. While there is no implication in this statement of any individual culpability, there is a suggestion that, if the conflict could be brought into consciousness, there is a good chance that the course of many physical and psychological illnesses could be altered, or faced in a different and more positive spirit.

If Chiron works against and overwhelms the Sun, the result can be depression, loss of confidence, and a sense of permanent damage or wounding. One becomes cynical - as Goethe's Mephistopheles says, "I am the spirit of negation." One expects failure, and because one expects it, one may very likely find it. A sense of being victimised or scapegoated can be very intense; or one may project one's woundedness on others and victimise or scapegoat them. If we fail to acknowledge this inner sense of bitterness and wounding, we may become arrogant and bask in our greater spiritual achievement, looking down on those whom we deem to be less evolved than ourselves. We may also become intolerant, and even cruel, toward those who inadvertently remind us that we are hurting. And so the wound festers in the darkness.

Yet the Greco-Roman image of Chiron bearing the divine child on his back also tells us that these two antithetical symbols can work together. Chiron is the child's teacher in myth - the one to whom is given the care and education of the prince who will become king. This is a rich and hopeful image of the role our unhealable hurts can play in the education of the individual we are in process of becoming. We may find a quality of serenity and wisdom, which emerge from patience in the face of that which cannot be changed. We may also develop toughness and grit, and lose the sentimentality that makes so many idealists so utterly ineffectual in realising their dreams. We may also get a glimpse of bigger, deeper patterns - the slow, painful evolution of the collective, of which we are a part, and with which we have to share responsibility. Collective disasters and mistakes are not "their" fault - human messes belong to us all. We may revile Milosevic, and rightly so, yet each time we sneer with contempt at any racial, religious, or social minority group, or slyly try to make life more difficult for those individuals who remind us of our own imperfections, we are displaying a little bit of him ourselves. I have known some very vociferously politically correct people who, when they retire behind the closed doors of their own abodes, transform into little Adolfs and Slobos toward their partners and children. And it may be wise to remember that collectives choose their leaders, and when these little bits of the maimed scapegoater in each of us aggregate

together, then we are inclined to put into power an individual who will do the will of the wounded and wounder in all of us. Before we allocate the source of all present evil to figures like Milosevic, we would do well to look in the mirror.

The melancholy which Chiron can generate, warmed by the light of the Sun, may also lead us to have depth of thought and feeling, and stir in us a determination to make a contribution to the welfare of others. We may find a different kind of compassion - not just for those who have been hurt in the same way as ourselves, but for people whose experiences do not necessarily match our own, yet who merit compassion merely because we are all human. If one has lost an eye, it is easy to feel sympathy for those half-blind like ourselves, and to hate those who are fortunate enough to enjoy complete sight. The Sun working with Chiron can generate enough generosity of spirit to recognise that all human beings suffer merely because they are alone and mortal, and that one specific kind of wound is not more "special" or deserving of compassion than another. Those who are loudest in their declarations of compassion toward the Kosovo Albanians may also be those who have little compassion for their black or gay or Jewish or Pakistani neighbour, or who are prepared to kick the dog merely to alleviate stress. The Sun working with Chiron cuts through such hypocrisy to the shared essence of the human heart hidden within. Most importantly, the Sun working with Chiron can activate the will to live - not merely on a blind organic or egotistical level, but because one's sense of individual purpose has combined with a feeling of empathy for the slow and painful struggle toward the light which exists in every living thing.

### **The Sun and Chiron in direct aspect**

Those with the Sun in direct aspect to Chiron may know on a profound level how the unfairness of life can damage the spirit; and if they are able to take on the challenge of this combination of planets, they may also dedicate their considerable energy and strength toward leaving the world a much better place than it was when they entered it. There are many examples of "famous" people with Sun-Chiron aspects who illustrate this point; any compendium of birth charts, such as Taeger's Internationales Horoskope Lexikon, is worth perusing to this end. But rather than dwelling on the famous, I would like to briefly mention two people personally known to me, both chart clients, and both with the Sun conjunct Chiron, who exemplify the very particular kind of pain Sun-Chiron may suffer. One of these also exemplifies the kind of creative resolution which is possible.

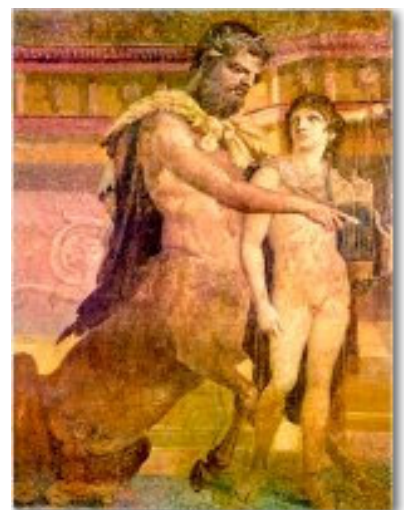
The first, a woman with the Sun conjunct Chiron in Capricorn in the 9th house, experienced Chiron's wounding first in the religious sphere (as might be expected with this 9th house placement), by being born into an orthodox Jewish family many of whose members had died in the Holocaust. She had inherited a profound bitterness and distrust of people and life, based only partly on her own experience, but also on an inherited perception of being a scapegoat in a hostile world. This wound also encompassed a prevalent orthodox Jewish attitude about the inferiority of women, exhibited in certain taboos about the body. An amalgamation of experiences highlighting life's unfairness had created in this woman a deep poison and cynicism, and an apparently immovable conviction that she was worth nothing. As a result, she victimised herself, through compulsive eating and a chain of destructive relationships. Identification with the scapegoat, the oppression of a ferocious inner persecutor, and the sense of a flawed and inferior body, were the chief areas in which she worked in psychotherapy over several years, occasionally "reporting back" to me for a chart update. It took a very long time before she could fight her way out from under Chiron's injury, and experience the self-respect and self-love of the Sun. Yet, clinging to the experience of victimisation can sometimes be a way of feeling special. It is the mute language of a secret, unacknowledged, unconscious Sun - which, if expressed in more honest ways, can not only provide healing for one's own wounds, but can also generate a deep recognition of the blindness and pain of a collective which turns on another collective to alleviate its own sense of woundedness. This lady has travelled a long road, and her innate grit, toughness, and lack of sentimentality about life have turned out to be not only

among her greatest resources, but also one of the great strengths she has begun to offer others suffering from eating disorders, similar to that she herself once suffered from. The second example is a failed writer, a man who has all his life dreamed of publishing novels yet who invariably "shoots himself in the foot" by producing unpublishable work. He has the Sun conjunct Chiron in Leo in the 5th house. His writing style is very fine, and he has no discernible block in expressing his gift; but everything he produces is always too long, too short, too dense, or too incomprehensible, or the themes he chooses to write about are in some way politically incorrect and offensive to some specific group the publisher has reason to fear. Behind these failures in the outer world lies self-sabotage, and behind the self-sabotage lies a deep conviction that he is worth nothing, that he is stupid and inarticulate, and that if ever he does get a work into print it will be mocked, criticised, and dismissed as worthless. To date, he has not been able to utilise the insights a chart can offer, and has not fully recognised the real nature of his wound. The divine child within him was wounded by an early social and educational environment that perceived his vivid imagination as threatening and his intense self-preoccupation and self-expressiveness as selfish. His parents, so far as I can see, cannot not be held particularly culpable; all parents blunder in one way or another, and these were no worse than most and better than many. But the educational system in which he was raised did its best to turn the divine child into a socially acceptable automaton. Many people experience such pressures and frustrations. But those with Sun-Chiron in Leo may be particularly attuned to, and more readily injured by, the narrowness and fear of originality so often found in collective educational institutions, which may unwittingly destroy the very creative spirit they profess to encourage. Life, as Chiron knows well, can be very unfair.

Aspects between the Sun and Chiron are not guaranteed to offer a solution on a plate. Many individuals do not find their way through. Yet, although profoundly challenging, these contacts may also convey a special sense of how to bring wounds into consciousness, and how to teach this consciousness to others. Hard aspects between the two no doubt helped to drive Jung (Sun in Leo out-of-sign square Chiron in Aries) into formulating a psychology of the collective, and perhaps also helped to drive Dane Rudhyar (Sun in Aries opposition Chiron in Libra) into making astrology human-centred, and a tool for insight and enlightenment, rather than mere prognostication. No doubt both these men suffered, and both, on occasion, exhibited the less attractive sides of the wounded Centaur; I would not have liked to have been married to either of them. But they turned their wounds into creative power, and partook of the mythic Centaur's gift for teaching and healing. How did they get there? How do we avoid becoming a mini-Milosevic, and choose instead the path which favours the will to live?

### **How do we get there?**

The house and sign in which Chiron is placed tell us a great deal about where, and how, life has wounded us. This is the place where, no matter how hard we seek to find a specific object for our blame, we eventually discover that the blame lies in the gap between ideal and reality, and in the inevitable flawedness of human nature. We may need to rail against life, but if we are not to sink into a corrosive bitterness which can ultimately make us distorted and ill, we need to move beyond this phase of Chiron's rage into the quest for understanding which takes us beyond identifying with the scapegoat and the victim, and beyond the attendant inclination to play the scapegoater ourselves. This understanding may require us to dispense with previous spiritual and moral convictions, and find a broader base from which to view life. We may need to give up the idea





that the good guys always ride white horses and the bad guys black ones, and we may also have to accept the fact that sometimes very good, decent people suffer unfairly, and very unpleasant, nasty ones manage very nicely and die in their beds rich, comfortable, and well pleased with themselves. Chiron and Walt Disney do not make good bedfellows.

The Centaur Chiron instructing the young Achilles. Wall painting from the basilica of Herculaneum  
Larousse

How do we find this kind of understanding? How do we learn to genuinely forgive and tolerate, without that vastly superior turn-the-other-cheek smugness which masks deep unconscious resentment and rage? Chiron needs the Sun for this task. The Sun has the power to affirm the individual's specialness and lovability, and this alone can counteract the poison of self-pity. The house and sign in which the Sun is placed at birth reflect what we need to become, if we wish to feel truly alive. If the Sun is in Aries in the 5th, and we are busy being self-sacrificing and devoting our lives to others, then somewhere, something is not working, and a deep disloyalty to self may encourage Chiron's bitterness, rather than his understanding. If the Sun is in Sagittarius in the 1st, and we are busy pretending we don't wish to be noticed by anyone, then somewhere, something is not working. If the Sun is in the 10th in Taurus, and we claim we are uninterested in material security and collective recognition of our talents, then somewhere, something is not working. If the Sun is in the 12th in Cancer and we are busy pretending we do not believe in any mystical or invisible dimension of life, psychological or spiritual, then somewhere, something is not working. I believe we need to ask ourselves: Is the Sun shining in my life? Am I myself? Or is a fear of loneliness or not belonging making me pretend to be what I am not?

Equally, we may also need to face Chiron, and ask ourselves: What is the nature of my wound? How has life hurt me, and whom do I secretly blame? What might I be doing to compensate, deny, indulge in, or project that wound? Can I feel compassion for myself, or only rage and self-pity? Where do I feel scapegoated, and where do I try to heal, or destroy, others in order to convince myself that I am not wounded? Where do I sabotage or even destroy myself because of bitterness? In order for the Sun and Chiron to work together, we need to be conscious of both. There is a profound and mysterious chemistry between these planets which, if it is working for us rather than against us, seems to mobilise the life-force, not only for our own expression, but also for the collective of which we are a part. Chiron's alienation and damage keep the Sun from becoming arrogant and insensitive; the Sun's warmth and joy keep Chiron from despair. As with all chart factors, the degree to which these dimensions of our own souls give of their best depends on how aware we are of their reality inside us. This is not a cure for life. Life will still hurt us from time to time, in one way or another, and Chiron's wounds, although we may make peace with them, inevitably rob us of our innocence. The will to live is not mobilised by a belief that life is all roses, that all we need is love, and that some kind father-mother-god will reward us if we are good. It is constellated by tougher stuff, and needs realism as well as faith and vision, if we are to exit feeling we have done our best with the gift of life, however transient, which we have been given.

