

Planetary qualities in child development: Mars

This essay is part of an independent research study which makes a detailed exploration of the planetary qualities as they manifest in the six stages identified by the Gesell Institute research.

Summary of the general introduction to these essays¹:

Over the course of one hundred years, initially in association with Yale University, Arnold Gesell and the associates who followed him (in what became the Gesell Institute of Child Development²) carried out detailed observations of children from Birth to the age of Sixteen. From these they developed profiles of typical development of children at each age. Well into this research, they noticed that children went through different stages with predictable changes in mood and behaviour in each. Behaviour in these stages seem to alternate between being in equilibrium and in dis-equilibrium. Some stages were more expansive, some more inward, some more amenable, some outright challenging! They eventually identified six stages within a cycle which was repeated throughout childhood, increasing in length incrementally until age seven, when the stages became one year in length.

In my work with children, parents and teachers over 25 years, I found the Gesell profiles very useful in understanding children and pondered what could underlie this six-fold pattern in children's behaviour. My thesis is that these stages reflect archetypal qualities associated in tradition with the planets: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, in that order. These essays explore this thesis, comparing planetary qualities and the associated personality with the behaviours described in the six Gesell Stages in childhood. This essay describes Mars qualities in relation to Gesell Stage 4.

Mars influences in child development. Gesell Stage 4

Introduction

Our aim in this essay is to build a picture of the archetypal qualities associated with Mars, and then to closely examine the behaviour of children in Gesell Stage 4, highlighting any similarities to these Mars qualities. Through this we can identify the gift of these qualities, which each child is offered again and again in the progression of the stages through childhood. Finally, we consider the potential strengths and weaknesses of this stage in light of what can be done to help children maximise the opportunities for growth it offers. Reference is also made to the children who show Mars qualities as their natural disposition through childhood.

The archetypal influences and characteristics associated with the planets and described in traditional and contemporary astrology can be seen in a number of areas – in the nature of

¹ Full introduction to this idea is a separate essay, *Planetary Qualities in Child Development as seen in the Six Gesell Stages*

² The Gesell Institute was also called the Gesell Institute of Human Development at one stage, and I have used these two names interchangeably. The present Institute uses the name the Gesell Institute of Child Development and can be found on the internet under that name at www.gesellinstitute.org

the physical planet and its orbit, in its associated metal and its role in plant growth; in the structure of the human body, organ function and life processes; and in personality and character, in thinking, feeling and willing and the development of the self. These personality or character descriptions are sometimes called the 'soul types' or 'planetary types'. Much of the information in these observations about planets comes from researchers and writers who work with the insights of Rudolf Steiner. Their work enriches more traditional astrological sources of information on the planets.³

Each planet has a special relationship with the planet which has the opposite qualities, Moon with Saturn, Mercury with Jupiter, and Venus with Mars. In this way, each sheds light on the qualities of the other. Knowledge of these relationships is used as a diagnostic tool in anthroposophical medicine and in the therapeutic use of the metals associated with each planet.⁴ Mars has an association with masculinity whereas Venus, its opposite is associated with femininity.

The planetary qualities of Mars appear in children in the fourth of the six stages in child development which the Gesell Institute of Child Development observed, what we are calling Gesell Stage 4⁵. The planet Mars is also the fourth in 'temporal' order from the earth, in the sequence Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.⁶ The Gesell Stage 4 occurs at 20 to 24 weeks, 15 to 18 months, 3 ½ to 4 years, 7 years and 13 years. Extrapolated from these, and to complete the first 21 years of growth, (which contains six cycles of the Gesell stages,) the sixth Gesell Stage 4 would be 19 years. In life span development the period 42 to 49 years reflects Mars qualities.

The key words the Gesell researchers used to describe Stage 4 were *in disequilibrium* and *inwardized* but their descriptions of the children's behaviour show much more than this. They reveal many of the strengths of the 'Mars type' adult which are based on their giving priority to *power*, action based on feelings and the assimilation of experiences. While Mars has been traditionally considered a malefic planet and has most often been associated with outward action, aggression and force, it actually has an outer and an inner aspect, both of which can be found in the 'Mars type' adult and Gesell Stage 4 children, for they show vigorous outward action as well as a need for earnest, intense digestion of experiences. This

³ Rudolf Steiner's insights and observations have been worked with further by many in Biodynamic agriculture, Steiner/Waldorf education, Anthroposophical medicine and social development initiatives. Two sources I especially wish to acknowledge are: first, conversations with Lisa Romero and unpublished lecture notes from her Anthroposophical Health and Healing Course held in 2007 in Byron Bay; second, the website on 'Planetary Qualities. An Anthroposophical View' by Bibi van Bussel, 1999, at busbi.home.xs4all.nl

⁴ When it is observed that the qualities associated with one planet have become too weak or too strong, and are thus out of balance with the opposite planetary qualities, then the metals associated with one of the two planets can be used therapeutically to bring back a balance.

⁵ Gesell Stage 3, and the other five stages which Gesell and his co-workers observed in child development, are described in the works of the Gesell Institute of Human Development, especially in: Gesell, Arnold, Ilg, Frances L., Bates Ames, Louise *The Child from Five to Ten* Harper & Row, New York 1977 p. 47

⁶ More on this order of the planets can be found in the section on Mercury. These archetypal forces behind the six planets are each strengthened and integrated by the forces of the Sun, the seventh force in this pattern.

polarity in Mars will be explored in more detail below because it is generally less understood.

It is in more clearly identifying the characteristics of each Gesell stage and their associated planetary qualities, and the differences between the stages, that we begin to see the true gift that these stages offer the developing child for eventual well-rounded development, through repeated experience of each stage through childhood. For each stage gives the child a different way of experiencing the world, with different underlying motivations for behaviour; each stage offers very particular opportunities to children in their relationships to other people and in the development of their own individuality. For example Mars gives the child the opportunity to learn to serve others with courage and energy and learn the value of inner digestion of experience. In their intense commitment to and organization of the task at hand, relationships with others sometimes seem to take second place.

Sometimes the planetary qualities in the stages are quite obvious, at other times they may be seen in mere nuances in behaviour which might hardly be considered anything significant, certainly not a 'proof' of planetary influence. Yet it helps to observe these more subtle changes in behaviour from stage to stage to build a picture of the rich sources of experience the stages offer children in their development.

So we begin an exploration of the nature of Mars and then see where it is found in Gesell Stage 4.

Understanding Mars qualities, influences and the 'Mars type'

Mars type qualities: a quick reference

Mars types are seen to be enthusiastic, passionate, positive people, who actively take the initiative and assert their strong will to act and get things moving. Their inner motivation is power, which they use to lead, organize, serve and protect others. They are practical thinkers who work in the present in a task-oriented, rather than a people-oriented, way. They work out of their feelings and need to feel a personal connection with what they do. Their earnest, intense drive is also used inwardly in digesting experiences. They have a choleric melancholic temperament.

The following descriptions of planetary influences are rather unconventional but provide a basis for a deeper understanding of the influences and associations with Mars. For a simple psychological understanding of the Mars type, some may prefer to go straight to 'Mars in human behaviour' section.

Mars: the planet, the mineral and plant world

The planet Mars itself is the second smallest planet of our series, and fourth from the sun. The planet itself, like Earth, is solid. The bright rust coloured dust and rock, which covers its surface and gives it its name as 'the red planet', contains iron-rich minerals. It has a cold thin atmosphere of 95% carbon dioxide which does not allow liquid water to form. Its seasons are more extreme than Earth's, with temperatures on the surface varying from -125C at the poles in winter to 20C at the equator at midday. These temperatures, however, are not so extreme as to prevent us sending space craft to explore its surface, which was done as early

as the 1960s and 70s, at the time when Mars was the closest to the earth that it had been for 60,000 years. In other ways the planet has opposite extremes, just like the nature of the Mars type. The planet Mars is home to the highest mountain on a planet and the deepest, longest valley, the highest volcanoes and the flattest smoothest plains in the solar system. Dust storms are the largest in the solar system and can nearly cover the planet and last for months. It has no global magnetic field but it has regions of magnetic field 10 times stronger than any found on earth.

The Martian year is 687 Earth days, with a day similar to Earth's. The synodical cycle is 2 years and 50 days. The planet Mars lies between the Earth (with its Moon and the inner planets of Mercury and Venus) and the outer planets of which here we are only considering Jupiter and Saturn, those still visible with just the naked eye. It has an eccentric orbit, in which one can also see the inner/outer, fast/slow, 'opposites' nature of Mars reflected. Mars' orbit takes it out towards the outer planets and then in towards inner planets, moving between the two; for some time Mars appears to be in the same area of the sky, then it suddenly in a short time appears to rush through all 12 signs of the zodiac, making a fast transit, before again appearing to move slowly or disappearing altogether. Some astrologers point out that this movement and placement of the planet Mars in the solar system to some extent define its influences.

The planet Mars was named after the Ares, the Greek god of war, whose sons' names were used for its very small, irregular moons, Deimos (rout) and Phobos (fear). The Romans later called the planet Mars, after their Roman god of war. This association with war and aggression defines only one side of its influence.

The metal associated with Mars is iron, that metal which is so plentiful on Mars. On the earth too, while iron is very rarely found in its pure form (in Greenland and in meteoric iron), it is found very plentifully around the earth in combination with many other elements in ores. It is an essential element for the life of plants, animals and for humans and is essential for both chlorophyll and haemoglobin. Perhaps this is an indicator of the ways the Mars type works broadly in the service of others!

In nature Mars' potent force is to be clearly seen (and felt) in the vigorous, purposeful, concentrated focus in the growing shoot, which in some cases may rise rapidly like a spear from the ground (for example, like the bamboo shoot or the iris flower before it opens.) This force is centrifugal, flowing outwards, compared to the Venus force which was the opposite and centripetal, flowing inwards. The Mars forces are also associated with the formation of the sexual part of the plant and reproduction.

One tree which responds to the influence and movement of Mars is the oak⁷— which sends its roots deep into the earth and then thrusts its great trunk strongly out of the earth and has leaves and acorns so solidly formed; yet looking into its branches one can sometimes observe a somewhat erratic movement, with some branches seeming to almost bend back on themselves, without any of the consistent regularity of, for example, a field maple (influenced by Jupiter) or an ash (influenced by the Sun.) It is as if, here too, we have a

⁷ Biodynamic agriculture research has revealed many such relationships between the planets and certain species. A report on the meticulous work of Lawrence Edwards on bud formation in relation to the moon and planets can be found on www.astro-calendar.com

picture of Mars moving out in one direction and then suddenly changing direction. The oak is known as a protector, a role also given to Mars. It has sufficient quantities of iron in it to make it one of the trees more often hit by lightning. Medicinally parts of the oak have traditionally been used to treat the gall bladder, the organ associated with Mars influences.

Mars in the human body, organs and life processes

In the human body, one action of Mars is seen in the life process of digestion, a powerful but hidden process. Here something is taken in from the outer world; this could be a physical substance like food, but also involves all that comes in through the senses. Everything taken in must be processed, broken down completely and what is useful taken from it and individualized by us, the rest discarded. In the digestion of food, this process begins with the more outward preparatory biting and chewing (Mars also rules the teeth) before being continued by more inward digestive processes. The gall bladder, the organ associated with Mars, releases the bile from the liver into the digestive tract, to help in the dissolving of fats. So the powerful Mars forces first break down and destroy and then lead to transformation and nourishment through the building up and creating of individualized substance. Mars destroys and makes creation possible.

The work of Mars with iron in the human body, especially in the blood in haemoglobin, is essential for our being able to experience our own individuality more strongly and act consciously as an independent individual (or in Gesell's term 'individuate').⁸ In the word 'red-blooded' in our English language, we have this association between iron-rich haemoglobin of the blood and a strong, virile individual which is also a picture of the Mars type. In the immature individual this quality may manifest as egotism but in a mature individual it reveals itself in personal integrity and consciousness. In the child, in a Mars stage, one sees a particular emphasis on the need for independence and individual recognition; in the later Mars stages in childhood this aspect of Mars seems to manifest strongly in the child needing to make their experiences and thinking their own through working things through inwardly.

Mars is also associated with the throat and larynx. Here a second Mars process can be seen when this powerful Mars force is transformed, or held back. One can see this visibly in the formation of speech,⁹ where the breath stream is partially 'blocked' or transformed by the tongue, teeth or lips in different ways to produce the different sounds making up speech.

⁸ Rudolf Steiner, using his clairvoyant abilities, brought more esoteric observations of the way Mars influences work in the body and support this strong individualizing. He observed that the point of entry into the body of the Mars force is between the shoulder blades. Mars strengthens and harmonizes the iron process which supports incarnation and the strength of the ego, that part of us which carries our individuality and intention. According to Steiner's observations the Mars force manifests most weakly and terminates in the gall bladder, an organ associated with digestion, and the excretion of the waste products which have been separated from the blood in the liver. More on this Mars process can be found in Bernard Lievegoed's *Man on the Threshold. The challenge of inner development* (Hawthorn Press, Stroud, 1985) p 109-112

⁹ Esoterically, the Mars force also flows up through the larynx and is involved in speech; when the exhaled breath stream (Mars) is shaped by the mouth, lips, tongue and teeth, sound results and speech can be formed. Mars is related to the chemical and sound ether. For more see Lievegoed, op.cit. p 109-112

Human beings can also wield their power through the use of words and use speech as an ordering force in the social sphere! When the flow of speech is blocked too much, we see stuttering, which sometimes appears to increase in the Mars stages in childhood, particularly at Three and a half to Four. One also sees this blocked Mars in the formation of bile in the liver, where the iron in the blood is held back.¹⁰

Thus the organs involved particularly with Mars forces are the gall bladder, the thyroid, the larynx and the throat. Imbalance in the Mars forces can lead to health problems in these areas.

There is also a relationship between Mars, iron and masculinity. The association between iron levels in the blood serum and levels of testosterone, in both men and women, reflect the link between Mars and the masculine side of ourselves. As we have seen in the essay on Venus, Mars is associated with the masculine, just as its opposite planet, Venus, is associated with the feminine on the masculine-feminine continuum. Iron, Mars' metal and the copper, the metal of Venus, have a clear association in the human body, for example, where women have higher levels of copper in their blood serum in relation to iron, than men do.¹¹ Women with higher testosterone levels also show more male characteristics, heavier bones and muscle structure etc. There is also a masculine tendency in Saturn and Jupiter, but Mars is the traditional carrier of maleness or masculinity.

Male and femaleness is a continuum, even physiologically, with possible sexual ambiguity for some who lie in the centre of this continuum (in genetic makeup, genitals, reproductive organs and brain structures). We can also learn to access masculine and feminine qualities in ourselves regardless of gender, with varying ease and success. Nevertheless we can also observe something of the nature of both Mars and Venus in the predominant behavioural tendencies of men and women. For example, while women are known for their gift of multi-tasking, men's gift is their capacity to stay on task without being distracted, to be focussed on the one task well—the pursuing hunter (rather than the widely searching gatherer)—and in this we see the Mars gesture—direct, focussed, purposeful movement, outward or inward. In terms of understanding masculinity and men (and how they reflect the Mars forces,) it is acknowledged that men need inner *and* outer space, where they can work uninterrupted, both in their need to be allowed to be in their inward 'cave' or emotional space or having their own physical space, like 'the shed', in recent Australian men's tradition.¹²

¹⁰ The iron-free green-yellow bile includes bilirubin, a by-product of the red blood cells recycled by the liver. Bilirubin is the same as iron-free haemoglobin, where the iron is held back.

¹¹ More about this relationship is explored in the essay on Venus.

¹²This picture of the need for an inward 'cave' may have originated with John Gray in his *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (Thorsons, London 1993) where he spoke of how 'men go to their caves and women talk' p.29-42. In Australia 'the shed' has become an acknowledged 'need' for men, a place of their own to withdraw to and to work in, to be a 'bloke' in, alone or with other blokes! Men's space. Research shows that the behaviour of men (reflecting the Mars influence) in indigenous societies also follows this pattern. They are active for some part of the day but spend the rest of the day sitting around the camp fire for example. This was in stark contrast to the behaviour of the women (reflecting Venus forces) who worked continually all through the day and part of the night. This is not perhaps so different from Australian mothers, who may do paid work during the day but

More information on the tendencies towards the masculine or the feminine in the planets, particularly the relationship between Mars and Venus, and also the possible link between the order in the planetary influences and the faster maturation of girls (Moon, Mercury and Venus on the femininity side) compared to boys (Mars, Jupiter and Saturn on the masculinity side) can be found in the essay on Venus.

Mars in human behaviour

The Mars type: general characteristics

Thus Mars is the carrier of creative but purposeful movement, focussed on a goal; it is the thrust by which inner activity is carried out into the world and, at times, by which the outer world is inwardly processed or digested. The holding back of this force physiologically or psychologically manifests further characteristics of Mars. We shall see that Mars energy blocked from the outside creates challenges for the Mars type and in a mature Mars may have the effect of making them more awake and conscious.

A picture of the polarity of this outer and inner Mars is to be found in Rudolf Steiner's archetypal gesture for Mars for eurhythm, the movement art he initiated. The gesture for Mars contains a juxtaposition of "movement' with 'stillness',¹³ which is unique amongst the gestures he gave for the planets. His other planetary gestures involve either constant movement or an intense stillness. Only Mars has movement and stillness. In child development in Gesell Stage 4 it appears we also have both, the vigorous action outwardly in the world, and the apparent stillness, manifesting as intense 'inwardizing' and withdrawal.

The outward aspects of the Mars type is described very precisely, if in rather technical language, by astrologer Jeff Mayo¹⁴: He says Mars involves 'energetic and active self-projection, as a means of objectively influencing or mastering the environment or for defence of the organism.' It is associated with 'a tendency to be masterful in any situation, whether involving other people or not.' This self-projection (reminiscent of the powerful growing shoot?) involves a 'need to be self-assertive, to take the initiative, to be enterprising, objective and to pioneer new ventures' and 'a need for aggressive action; to influence the environment, direct the course of one's life, to attack problems, master a subject of interest, to survive by attack or defence.' Personal *power* is clearly a strong motivator for Mars.

Mayo also says Mars' actions also involve 'personal involvement' and 'emotion' and the 'need to encounter life outside oneself,' while at the same time as 'maintain[ing] one's independence.' So Mars represents the active force of the individual ego working in the world with feeling. The Mars type takes the initiative, organizes, acts with feeling on what

still do more than their share of housework and child care after work compared to fathers; a study of Australian youth also showed girls do more work in the home than the boys. Is it patriarchal tradition or something in the nature of gender which results in such differences?

¹³ This gesture begins with the arms, with hands cupped forward, held together above the head at first in stillness; then the arms are brought down forward and together to the legs and up again in a vigorous movement. Then the arms are held again for a time in stillness.

¹⁴ Mayo, Jeff, *The Planets and Human Behaviour* (L.N. Fowler & Co Ltd, London, 1972) p. 87-8

they believe in or feel personal connection with. They will defend themselves and others, as a protector, willing to do what needs to be done.

A broader picture of the role of the Mars force, predominantly the outer Mars, is also to be found in the description given by astrologer Melanie Reinhart¹⁵ :

Mars is meant to help us flourish and use our vitality in order to grow and participate in life, engage our creativity, and deal effectively with opposition and obstacles, conflicts and difficulties... Mars is also about the will, the application and use of intention and energy.

In all these descriptions one can find motif of personal *power*, (a motivating factor for the Mars type,) and the directed outward flow of energy.

So what do we find of the more inner manifestation of Mars? Can we also find 'the will', 'the application and use of intention and energy' and the need for personal *power* in 'inner work' as well as 'outer work?' There is a gesture of movement in much of the Mars as we usually know it.¹⁶ Yet the opposite and essential aspect of movement is stillness, and this too can be seen in Mars. We can see several manifestations of Mars brought to stillness. Firstly the flow of movement of Mars can turn inward to work in more hidden ways with equal intensity; we see this latter in the digestion process (the life process driven by Mars forces). In childhood in the Mars ages at Gesell Stage 4 this 'digestion' can be seen in the cogitation of Seven and the thoughtful withdrawal of Thirteen year olds for the assimilation of experience.

Secondly Mars may also come to stillness from exhaustion from overexertion. We see this in the Mars stages in childhood where the children may exert themselves so vigorously they become exhausted! The Gesell researchers describe how seven-year-olds who are in a Mars stage, for example, are 'given to a somewhat reckless expenditure of energy until they suddenly drop with fatigue.' It is interesting that Mars rules the thyroid, that gland which controls, amongst other things, the way we use energy. The thyroid can reach exhaustion point in later life after years of demanding living.

Thirdly, the blocking of Mars energy and intention is very difficult for the Mars type. This is not helped by the fact that a Mars type can be powerful, and opposition against them may need to be forceful for it to be taken notice of. But whether this blocking is when someone strongly resists an action or idea a Mars type is passionately or idealistically advocating or just resisting the will of the Mars type, it is like stopping an arrow in full flight on a shield and can have characteristic consequences. It can be quite difficult for a Mars type or child in a Mars stage to deal with. A characteristic Mars response can be that they may voluntarily withdraw into themselves; they 'quit' to avoid an intolerable situation. Blocked Mars can also manifest in physical symptoms and illness. In the mature Mars this blocking or confrontation can bring an awakening of consciousness.

¹⁵ Bell, Lynn, Costello, Darby, Greene, Liz and Reinhart, Melanie *The Mars Quartet. Four Seminars on the astrology of the Red Planet* by (Centre for Psychological Astrology Press London 2001) p.260

¹⁶ Esoterically Mars has been associated with the spiritual hierarchy, the Spirits of Movement, the Dynamis.

On the other hand, blocked Mars can also result in an explosion outwards in violent, hot tempered anger and the fieriest, physically aggressive, destructive manifestations of the Mars force, which caused it to be called malefic in past astrology. Modern psychological astrologers¹⁷ sometimes describe the unresolved blocking of the Mars force as 'castrated Mars'. If immature Mars' actions are crushed or castrated, behaviour can become pathological and have ugly consequences. It has been suggested that the contemporary 'road rage' response or out of control football crowd anger may be examples of such 'blocked' immature Mars forces. Such aggressive responses are not acceptable in 21st century civilized industrialized culture.

However we should not mistake the positive passionate expression of Mars energy for aggression. It may be some of us are not entirely comfortable with forceful emotional expression if we were brought up to value disciplined emotional behaviour. Northern European and Victorian traditions that have dominated Western culture, and many Asian traditions as well, have emphasized such self-control. For some people even outwardly expressed righteous anger and legitimate healthy debate and disagreement is too much to cope with. Southern Europeans and people of other more outwardly expressive cultures have had a lot to teach us in this. Yet if we want the Mars type, especially in children, to have legitimate expression of their emotional energy, we too need to find acceptable ways for it to be shown in everyday life—ways that include respect and love, but allow passionate energetic expression of it as well. More is said of all this later.

So the Mars influence is a complex one that involves vigorous action as well as a time of gathering together, digestion and rest. The vigorous force of Mars' will can be used for making peace as well as war, for mastering a problem or subject. In the context of astrology, a Mars with 'fire' influences behaves more like the driving aggressive Mars, but Mars moderated by 'earth', 'air' or 'water' influences presents very differently, for example with more refinement or self restraint. These many sides of Mars need to be understood to find how Mars works in child development. While the outer movement of Mars can be found in the Mars stages in childhood (Gesell's Stage 4), more characteristically we see a more inward Mars: children who are 'inwardized', who withdraw at home, relative to the years before and after, and who quit in the face of fierce opposition. This is the Mars of inner work and the digestion of experience, as well as sometimes an exhausted or 'blocked' Mars.

The movement and placement of the planet Mars in the solar system also reveals something about the nature of the Mars forces. As we saw earlier, the planet Mars lies between the Earth-Moon (and the inner planets of Mercury and Venus) and the outer planets. Mars orbit takes it out towards the outer planets and then in towards inner planets, moving between the two.

Psychological astrologer Liz Greene says¹⁸:

Mars lies 'between the Earth-Moon system and Jupiter, and therefore also [is] poised between two dimensions of life—the inwardly personal, intimate physical world, and the wider concerns of the social, ideological, and ethical world of beliefs, religion and the urge to expand.

¹⁷ Bell et al op.cit.

¹⁸ Bell op.cit. p 254

She says these are given form through the intention and action of Mars forces. As we characterize Mars it will be seen these forces can be acting on the side of instinctual earthly living and the ideologies of the higher order thinking of Jupiter and Saturn. The territorial and the ideological, the two motivations of Mars.¹⁹

As we saw also, the physical nature of the planet Mars reveals one more thing: Mars has two small moons (Deimos, panic and Phobos, fear) which are the darkest objects in the solar system. These also find their place in the character of the Mars type, in their effect on other people and in their own inner struggles.²⁰ Adult Mars' intense penetrating look may cause others to feel fear and panic; their 'ready to fight' intensity may suggest a threat (or feeling of being judged) though this might be completely unintentional.

Mars has usually been associated with the choleric temperament. In childhood, a Mars type child, whose force of will and action are fiery and strong, would also be consistent with this description. This is certainly possible at times in the younger Gesell Stage 4 children (15 months and Three-and-a-half years). But with Seven and Thirteen, the children are also at times more melancholic in temperament in their sensitivity and inwardness. Mars in its inward moments, or particularly when it is blocked, is indeed more melancholic, suffering inwardly but in private; the Mars type does not show this face to the world, except perhaps in complaining when things go wrong. We also know that Mars is driven by feeling. Mars is the great Protector, and in this role as protector does a lot of worrying (characteristic traits of Seven and Thirteen) and can be more sensitive than commonly assumed. Mars more accurately perhaps has a choleric/ melancholic temperament! This is what an examination of the Mars stage child reveals.

So the different aspects of Mars are complex but need to be understood if we are to understand the nature of the Mars type individual and how Mars manifests in the Mars stages in childhood. It has a two sidedness— the earnest directed outer action and equally earnest inner digestion. One can feel the personal power within all these activities. The task takes priority. In life span development Mars is said to rule the years 42 to 49; this is a time in which, having found new goals in life, there is much energy to achieve them, if one gets through the mid-life crisis before this.

We can now look in even more detail at different aspects of the way Mars influences manifest in the Mars type.

¹⁹Melanie Reinhart op.cit. p. 257-8 elaborates further on these motivations of Mars: 'Perhaps that is the true function of Mars. To choose to tread the heroic line between the personal and the ideological— Earth and Jupiter— is also the battle. Ideological or territorial issues— Jupiter and the Earth...' 'The metaconflict implied with Mars is between these two forces: 1) the pull of instinct, habit, and the inertia of what has already been established (Earth- Moon) and 2) the potential for expansion or taking a kind of quantum leap for the sake of one's own development in the area of aspiration, ideologies, ethics, or personal potential (Jupiter). Or even more simply, the primary conflicts of Mars can be seen in this way, between Earth and sky, territory or ideology.... The question is what motivates us...' Whom does Mars serve? The 'raw vitality, energy and intention of Mars is meant to serve the solar purpose of the individual. In other words it helps us align with that mysterious inner light which connect us with the sacred dimension of all life.'

²⁰ Liz Greene, elaborates: "Courage includes fear... Mars courage is the capacity to assert, go forward, honour the best that you can be, having included what lies behind that ring of fear." Ibid p.279

The Mars type: Sense of self

The Mars type appears to have a strong sense of self and their individuality and a strong need to be treated as an individual. They are self-reliant, individualistic and independent. They express themselves in direct, decisive, straight forward ways and prefer others to do the same.

The Mars type is drawn into the outer world to solve problems in the present. They are the protectors and the fighters on behalf of humanity. They are not afraid to act. They wish to serve and protect their world in speech and deed. They bring together their strong ideals and passions with action. The driving fiery force of Mars is to be clearly seen in the descriptions of a Mars personality: enthusiastic, passionate, positive, active, initiating, assertive, born to lead, accomplishing, confident, courageous, outgoing. In addition they show: venturesomeness, pioneering, ambition, enterprise, competitiveness, persuasiveness, spontaneity.²¹ What a character these words build of outward Mars!

Their challenges come when they are not sufficiently self-aware to observe themselves and what they do, and the effect it has on others. They may collide with the world and people in their wish to serve, especially if they throw themselves into helping or problem solving without sufficient thought as to the consequences of their deeds. Resistance in others to what they are doing can be all the more challenging for their sense of self because, in their enthusiasm, they do not always see this coming. When the opposition to their energy is unbearable, their defence then may be to withdraw to regather their sense of self. They quit for self-protection. It is not surprising that a Mars person in some way blocked from serving in the world can become depressed. The inner active Mars, the worrying, preparing, planning Mars, is not so easily seen.

Holding themselves back is their challenge. The Mars type can find themselves in continuous state of activity directed outwards, without consciousness, and which cannot be maintained, without becoming exhausted. Without self-awareness, their weaknesses appear – they may be impulsive, impatient, lacking foresight, tactless, unreceptive, headstrong, uncooperative, competitive, aggressive, argumentative. They may be so used to taking action, overcoming obstacles, they may feel driven to it when there is not enough action. On the other hand, they can step back, when action is already being taken. They may not understand that others do not, can not, work like them and may push them relentlessly, insensitively, although those being pushed may end up achieving much more than they ever thought they could.

It is also important for Mars to have a personal relationship with, or value for, what they do. Whether this is driven by territorial survival instincts or by higher ideological motivations, they must have a personal connection to it. They may use their vitality and energy to serve the higher purpose of the individual.²²

²¹ From Mayo op.cit. p.88

²² Liz Greene op cit p 177 'We cannot get Mars moving by invoking ideological principles. If we fight on behalf of a group, there must be some personal link, some personal investment which is emotional and instinctual in nature and which serves the individual.'

The Mars type: Relationship to Thinking

In their thinking Mars type individuals are generally very practical, rather than philosophical. For this reason their thinking tends to be in the present or near future, problem solving what arises now. They are not so much long term thinkers. They act quickly as they see the need, indeed may jump to conclusions and then act. Privately, afterwards, the melancholic part of their soul may then re-examine what they did and sometimes wish they had waited! They know this is their challenge.

The Mars type: Relationship to Feeling

The Mars type individuals have a powerful relationship to feeling. They have a passion for life and love it when others do also. Whatever the Mars type is working with, the feeling life goes into it. Their actions come out of their feelings and they need to feel a personal connection to what they do. In their strong feelings, enthusiasm and assertiveness they may over-ride the feelings of others. They are straight forward, with a tendency to impulsiveness. They may be quick to quarrel but also quick to forget afterwards. The outside world sees their fiery, choleric nature but less of their more melancholic inward worrying and pondering.

The Mars type: Relationship to people

In relationship to people, the Mars type may run into trouble because they are so focussed on getting the tasks done that sometimes concern for or even awareness of the feelings of other people may come second. Some would say that the immature Mars uses people like instruments to get their work done. They are direct in their communications and get to the point quickly with a few well chosen words, but may be so task oriented that they forget to say 'good morning', 'please' or 'thank you'. In wanting to get a task done well, they may also be impatient of other people's ways of doing things, their lack of seriousness, their slowness etc. Taken to the extreme this lack of consideration of other people's feelings can become very unpleasant. An immature Mars type may mock, scoff or be insulting in a subtle way which is vengeful or diminishing of the other person; they can be hostile and combative. At their worst or most pathological they have been described as a brute, as savage, as an aggressor, a persecutor or a tyrant.

Mars has a relationship to speech. The Mars type use speech to their advantage. They are persuasive talkers and can become quite garrulous! They may quarrel more easily than some other planetary types for they are natural debaters, but do not mean offence. They do not see their debating or self-assertion as quarrelling.

The Mars type faces some conflicts in expressing themselves, even legitimately, for society today is wary of anger (a Victorian legacy) and strong self-assertiveness, which makes the Mars type's natural tendencies unacceptable. Even when the Mars type express Mars tendencies in positive and life affirming ways, they will sometimes alienate others. This is unavoidable if others want to be politely pampered, persuaded, or cajoled, never honestly confronted or gainsaid — this is not Mars' way. Expressing legitimate anger and being able to say 'no' are the legitimate gifts of Mars for all healthy individuals (Mars types or not) yet are not always acceptable nor make us 'likeable'. Nevertheless, as Liz Greene puts it: 'In order

to live with others, Mars must be disciplined and channelled constructively. But each person also needs to affirm an individual will and individual goals and desires.²³

In relation to children with some of the outward Mars tendencies, (anger, assertiveness, wilfulness, passionate expression etc) this 'unacceptability' of some Mars characteristics creates a problem. Liz Greene gives some helpful advice on this: ²⁴The Mars in children needs honour and respect, and the training of children in the healthy expression of assertiveness and righteous anger needs to be done with love, patience, repetitive discipline and firmness. They need to develop trust in their capacity to contain anger. 'A baby Mars needs a big Mars to look up to'. 'A child needs to see anger expressed in a clean honest way'. They need to see 'love and respect beneath the storms [in volatile arguments]'. Mars needs clarity and boundaries.

In dealing with Mars qualities, in children especially, it is important to understand the effect of denying/ not allowing/ blocking Mars behaviours. Green explains:²⁵ 'When we are unable to express Mars, we may feel impotent. And impotence tends to generate rage, whether or not we are conscious of it. When we are powerless we feel angry. When we are humiliated, we feel vengeful.' 'It will either explode or implode'. She also points out that more covert psychological interference with Mars expression 'castrates' Mars too. She says Mars types do not cope well with emotional manipulation.²⁶ All of these things need to be remembered in caring for children in the Mars stage or of a Mars disposition or temperament (choleric in particular). When a young child rages it is helpful to look to see whether something we did brought this on and ask ourselves if we could have done it differently. In relation to teenagers especially it is important to note that she associates blocked Mars (in any individual) with alcohol and drug use and depression.

It is also important to remember that this blocking of Mars does not only occur when outward Mars behaviours manifest. Mars' earnest, intense drive in digesting experience, as we see at Thirteen, when they withdraw to their rooms, may also be blocked. Even though Thirteens may appear unconscious of others, rude or uncooperative, they want understanding and acceptance of their need for withdrawal. Parents may damage their relationship with their young teen by unhelpful reactions to this need. Resentment or anger towards their withdrawal blocks this Mars energy.

The Mars type: Relationship to Will power

The Mars type has a very strong will. They can be powerful, but have to learn to use their power wisely, not in a tyrannical way. Their will is their strength and their weakness. They have great energy for action, for carrying through their intentions, for creative self-expression. They see what must be done immediately and do it. They can deal effectively with opposition and obstacles, conflicts and difficulties. They make great pioneers and adventurers, taking up the challenge and asserting themselves, despite risk, to achieve an end.

²³ Liz Greene in the Mars Quartet op cit p. 173

²⁴ Greene, Liz op.cit. p184-5

²⁵ Ibid p.203-4

²⁶ Ibid p.186

In terms of moving between the practical tasks of Earth and the ideals of Jupiter, they can use their *power* to organize action and carry it through. They are the great protectors and defenders, but also the warriors with a reputation for stirring up conflict; they tread the heroic line in the battlefield.

They can also use their *power* to advocate, to argue and negotiate for what they believe in. They can put their effort and courage into conflict resolution and making peace as well as war.

Other associations with Mars:

Day of week- Tuesday (dies Martis- Latin *day of Mars*; martedì – Italian); musical note- C; colour- red; grain- barley; tree- oak; sound for Mars - e as in 'egg'.

Summary of some qualities associated with Mars to be considered in relation to child development.

- The Mars assertiveness and strong will and their need for independence needs honour and respect.
- The fiery Mars type needs to develop trust in their capacity to contain their anger and that anger in itself is a message to be listened to.
- Mars type appreciates open, direct and honest communication.
- Mars type needs and appreciates clear boundaries.
- Strongly individual. Need recognition of this.
- Tendency to criticism. Need to develop acceptance and appreciation of others.
- Tendency to centre on the task not relationships. Need to learn 'deliberate diplomacy'.
- Tendency to withdraw ('quit') and process things inwardly. This needs acceptance and respect as a healthy tactic sometimes.
- Mars energy can be easily blocked. Anger, depression, quitting can be a sign in children that help or changes are needed.

A closer look at child development: Gesell Stage 4 and Mars

Firstly we must emphasize that there are many things that effect development in childhood and these rhythmical changes in gesture or mood identified in the Gesell Stages are only one part of this picture. It must also be emphasized that Gesell researchers always stressed that these stages were not rigid in their timing and could be different for different children. However, in relation to the planetary influences which affect the 'gesture' of the different

stages, this may be an *archetypal* pattern which is not in fact so greatly affected by genetic and environmental factors in development.²⁷

So now we can look to see whether we can find more Mars characteristics in children in Gesell Stage 4, the stage we have identified with a Mars stage. Stage 4 ages are 20 weeks, 15 months 3½ years, 7 years, 13 years, and, extrapolated from these, 19 years.²⁸

Gesell researchers associate Stage 4 with being *in disequilibrium* and having an *inwardizing* tendency overall, which is what we would expect more from the inward moving nature of Mars rather than the outward moving Mars. Nevertheless, in examining Gesell's broader observations, we can find both inner and outer Mars in their profiles.

We will quote as much as possible directly from the Gesell works to illustrate the possible connections between the stages and the characteristics of the Mars type. Direct quotations in 'single quote marks' or indented are from the Gesell research unless indicated otherwise.

20 to 24 weeks: the first Gesell Stage 4

In *The Child from Five to Ten*,²⁹ Gesell, Ilg and Ames list the sequence of what we are calling the 'Gesell Stages' and what they identified to be the associated ages. It seems that the allocation of stages for children under two years by Gesell is still tentative but, working from the stages given in that 1977 publication, it does put 20 weeks at Stage 4 which is associated with Mars qualities. Again we are assuming that Gesell found 20 to 24 weeks most characteristic of this Stage 4, but if the stages are increasing incrementally this stage would possibly be longer than this, perhaps taking it to 26 weeks, where the revised Gesell schedule starts the next stage.

²⁷ Some children may have their teeth come loose later than sooner, or reach menarche or spermarche at differing times, and certainly some children 'wake up' sooner than others. Indeed we know that many boys need more time than girls, even up to a year, to develop before they start school learning. But despite all this, it is possible that there are some more archetypal patterns in childhood that are more predictable. My own conversations with teachers and parents suggest these planetary gestures may be so but more work needs to be done on this. Another archetypal pattern of growth in the development of children was described by Rudolf Steiner as occurring in seven year stages, where the direction of physical growth moved from the head and the sense-nerve system down into the chest and rhythmic system and then down into the metabolic system and limbs in each seven year stage. This pattern has been observed in children to be consistent as a basic blueprint for growth in normal children.

²⁸ In 2011, after our own research was well underway, the Gesell Institute of Human Development presenter in a web seminar gave a slightly different version of the stages in the first year of life. They gave the following (I have added the Stage number and planet for clarification.) Birth - Expansion /5 (*Jupiter*); 2 weeks - Neurotic /6 (*Saturn*); 1 month - Smooth /1 (*Moon*); 2-3 months- Breaking Up /2 (*Mercury*); 4 months - Sorting Out /3 (*Venus*); 5 months - Inwardizing /4 (*Mars*); 6 months - Expansion /5 (*Jupiter*); 7 and 8 months - Neurotic /6 (*Saturn*); 9 and 10 months - Smooth /1 (*Moon*); 11months(?) - 1 year- Breaking Up /2 (*Mercury*); 1 year 1 month Sorting Out /3 (*Venus*); 1 year 3 months - Inwardizing /4 (*Mars*). We have kept to the original versions of the stages in the first year, which are at any rate very approximate.

²⁹ Gesell, Arnold, Ilg, Frances L., Bates Ames, Louise *The Child from Five to Ten* op. cit. p.47

Gesell has given us relatively little information on the specific ages in infancy, especially 20 weeks, regarding the emotional behaviour, or 'mood' of very young children. We can find a few clues elsewhere however. The Princeton Center for Infancy and Early Childhood in the book *The First Twelve Months of Life*, edited by Frank Caplan,³⁰ offers a few insights in their chapter on the infant on the fifth month which includes much of the 20 to 24 week period of Gesell. They begin in the chapter on the Fifth Month which is called, interestingly, '*Reaching Out*':

Brace yourself, the fifth month is the first phase of a fantastic speed up of activity that will leave you breathless by the end of his first year. The quiet of the first four months is over.

How appropriate if it was to be Mars driving growth at this point!

The child's vision and ability to reach and grasp has matured to the point when the baby is no longer content to just watch. Caplan describes this: 'Shortly before five months (20 weeks?) the baby can bring his hand rapidly from outside his field of vision to an object he is looking at and grasp it smoothly.' 'This exciting growth in eye, hand and body control, as Dr Piaget says, is the first major thrust of infancy.' Thrust. There is a Mars word again. The baby now will want to 'feel, hold, turn, shake and taste' and may 'howl with frustration' when he cannot reach an object to examine it fully. With reach and grab capability he has more sense of the world apart from himself, of 'before' and 'after'. With all this the baby becomes an early riser, keen to practice his new skills and eventually demanding adult help to explore further. He 'actively responds to its excitements and frustrations.'

Caplan observes: 'For most babies, these antic urges spurt and ebb. But a quiet baby handles his developmental awareness more subtly. ...Many more active infants are only happy when they are in continuous motion—performing on their own or handled vigorously.' 'At night, a really active baby may wake several times because of the added excitement of this developmental surge. During the semiconscious phase of his sleep cycle he can wake up fully and try to comfort himself with activity because it is a characteristic activity for him.' Activity at night is not a solution but they do suggest that a 'late night play period will release some of his energy more profitably', as might some 'daytime exercise sessions.'

This is interesting that they suggest extra physical activity for this possible Mars stage. This may be a useful remedy for an overactive Mars in childhood—opportunities for more vigorous physical movement. (All the more reason that small children and infants particularly should not be kept 'entertained' with screen time for this 'freezes' movement.) Indeed, vigorous activity may also relieve anger, worrying and depression, all also associated with the Mars type, the latter two hopefully not of concern in early infancy.

Caplan also describes how the children of this age show new independence or a preference for the 'task' at hand. 'About the fifth or sixth month, many mothers say they feel left out. As their babies become more competent physically, they see the end of their child's need for mother despite the reality that his need will continue for many years.' Interest in breast feeding lags (first of three lags), because the visual distractions are now available.' Is it possible that this is a 'task and outer world orientation' driven by Mars? We see it again at

³⁰ Caplan, Frank (Gen ed) *The First Twelve Months of Life* (Grosset & Dunlap New York, 1973) p 112-127

Fifteen months. It also continues into the Jupiter stage of Eighteen months and to some extent in the Saturn stage at twenty one months. This compares with the 'people' orientation of the Moon, Mercury and Venus stages. It is reminiscent of a study of the differences found between boys and girls even just after the birth: that the girls (representing the femininity side of the planets—Moon, Mercury and Venus) will give preference to pictures of faces rather than objects, where the boys (representing the masculinity side of the planets— Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) give no preference to either faces or objects. At the toddler stages of Mars and Jupiter it is observed that the children can treat people like objects.

Caplan also describes one other association with Mars— speech: 'This is the month your baby obviously starts serious "language study." Following months of preparation, the 'baby will deliberately use his newly found vocal skill to intrude upon your attention to other things so you will focus them where he thinks they should be— on him.'

So here, even in the infant, we find some possible signs of Mars behaviour: increased activity, increased speech, increased independence, possible 'task orientation', activity as a comforter.

More observation at 20 weeks is needed, keeping the behaviours associated with Mars influence in mind.

15 months: the second Gesell Stage 4

We have more from Gesell on the stages in the second year. What we see of the mood or gesture of planetary influenced behaviours in this year may still be difficult to separate from other development. Children of this age still have limited language and social skills. However we can ask some questions about what we can observe that might be planetary influenced.

In their initial writing in 1977³¹ on the stages in the second year, the Gesell researchers described four stages of three months duration: 12 months being Gesell Stage 3 (Venus in our hypothesis), 15 months being Gesell Stage 4 (Mars in our hypothesis), 18 months being Gesell Stage 5 (Jupiter) and 21 months being Gesell Stage 6 (Saturn). In later writings they concentrated on descriptions mainly of 18 months, which they felt was the peak of the egocentric and demanding behaviour that seemed to build up in that year. Nevertheless we can still get a glimpse of the four stages originally named. For example, it is clear that the emphasis on relationship expected in a Venus stage is to be found in the 12 month old—they say: 'Your typical Twelve month old tends to be an extremely loveable little person— friendly, sociable, amenable...[who] adapt rather easily to whatever it is the adult caretaker has in mind.'³² There are also small glimpses of Saturn in 21 months in their sensitivity. The two stages between, influenced by Mars and Jupiter, show behaviours which become more difficult to handle, and also reflect some of the planetary gestures.

In general, the information on Fifteen Months is still scant, but still reflects a little of the sort of possible Mars behaviour seen at 20 weeks, increasing independence, more interest in the

³¹ Gesell, A, et al *The Child from Five to Ten* op.cit. p.46 Figure 4

³² Bates Ames, Louise, Ilg, Frances L, Chase Haber, Carol, *Your One Year Old. Fun-loving and Fussy* (Dell Trade Paperback, New York 1982) p.1

task at hand than being sociable, but a particular interest in movement of himself and of objects!!

Quoting direct from the Gesell research in *Your One Year Old. Fun-loving and Fussy*:³³ 'The fifteen-month-old boy or girl often seems very busy just becoming.' 'The child of this age is beginning to want to do things himself, often things he really can not quite manage. He is also very demanding...[he] may insist on having his dish on his tray, even though he may keep throwing it to the floor. But he is as demanding of himself as of others, so it may be fairer to call him assertive rather than demanding. He is asserting his budding independence.' 'He is not particularly cooperative.'

'Your typical Fifteen month-old is not primarily a people person. Except that they take care of his many needs—especially as they push him in his carriage—he could do pretty well without them.' This is somewhat reminiscent of the accusation about the immature Mars type that they use people merely as instruments to achieve their tasks. Gesell researchers continue: 'He does as a rule accept his mother's help in daily routines—eating, dressing, bathing— though even here he tends either to take help for granted or to resist bitterly.' 'On his favourite carriage ride he pays virtually no attention to the person pushing him, beyond expressing displeasure if the ride should come to a halt for even a minute. With other children, he for the most part pays very little attention to those about him, except he may grab for whatever they may be playing with.' 'Some Fifteen months-old are so asocial that they will not even accept something, say, a cracker, directly from the hand of an adult. They would much prefer to take it from a dish.'

Gesell researchers continue: 'For the most part the boy or girl of this age tends to be independent, undemonstrative, concerned more with his or her own needs and wishes than those of some other person either adult or child.' 'Though many at this age treat their carers more or less as part of the furniture, they are not without personal charm...' 'In the context of a Mars stage, all this behaviour may be driven more by wanting to initiate the action, being focussed on the task and being independent than an actual rejection of people. The Mars type does care about people but their energy is very narrowly directed onto their task to serve others, so that people outside that focus are often ignored.'

We also see Mars at Fifteen Months in the uninhibited directed driving force that shows itself in their tendency to grab and throw everything that comes their way in their explorations! 'With his characteristic lack of inhibition, the Fifteen-month-old may be lost in the confusion of the living room since he tends to grab anything in sight.... Motor drive, need to grab, and a lack of inhibition makes the child of this age at least a modest menace unless he is...restrained.' 'Fifteen months is in many the high point for throwing behaviour. The baby just naturally throws anything he can get his hands on...what he really likes is to throw things then have you get them and give them back to him.'

Are we here seeing a manifestation of the centrifugal outward thrust of Mars? Or is it just the joy in the directed force of throwing, or the power of direct movement, which gives them the impulse to throw every object out of their cots while they wait for you to come to them? On love of movement, active or passive, Gesell says: 'Much as they like to walk, many still very much like to be carried and will ask to be so, arms stretched up. They also love the

³³ ibid all content

passive movement of being taken for a walk in a stroller.’ In regard to helpful tactics to deal with Fifteen months olds behaviour, Gesell researchers advise: ‘Gross motor activity may be his best outlet. Fortunately many children do not have to be actually moving themselves. They may be content with long car or carriage rides. A child who can be extremely difficult at home will often sit for a good hour or more while being wheeled in his stroller. So take full advantage of the child’s love of motion.’

Because the children of this age are so in need of movement and action, the Gesell researchers also give advice on what amounts to using rhythmical movement as a way of giving comfort:

Personal-social relations may not be too useful at this time in making or keeping boy or girl happy. Whereas earlier this child may have been passively content to cuddle or be rocked or sung to, now he is too active to accept what may seem to him like restraint. So a toddler gym, or doorway swing or any object which permit almost constant motion, with, it is hoped, little danger to himself or others, can be a very, very useful thing. Children of this age love to swing or bounce up and down.’

Maybe a chair swing or hammock that can contain adult and child is a lovely way to combine human comforting with movement needs.

Much more has been said about Fifteen months, but these are the characteristics which most reflect an outward Mars energy, especially in comparison with what came before in Twelve months with Venus qualities: Now we see the Mars need for directed movement and action, a focus on the ‘doing’ not on people and independence.

Three and a half years: the third Gesell Stage 4.

This age once again follows a Stage 3, age Three, Venus, which was characterized by ‘a high degree of smoothness, integration, self control’, ‘cooperativeness’ and ‘wanting to please’. Three and a half, on the other hand, Stage 4, with Mars qualities, has more challenging characteristics.

Three-and-a-half is right in the centre of the time where the physical growth emphasis is in the chest and rhythmic system, which brings a natural interest in all things to do with the heart and feelings –social interests, imagination, creativity, which have all begun to blossom at Three and continue on at Three-and-a-half.³⁴

Gesell researchers Louise Bates Ames and Frances L. Ilg describe the whole of the year Three in *Your Three Year Old. Friend or Enemy*.³⁵ ‘Friend or enemy.’ This certainly seems an apt

³⁴ Rudolf Steiner described how children grow ‘downwards’ physically, in seven year stages, with the emphasis in physical growth first being centred in the head and nerve-sense system, gradually moving down towards the chest and rhythmic system with its heart, lungs and breathing, and finally down into the lower abdomen with all the organs of the metabolic system and into the limbs. This growth is paralleled by a psychological growth involving the thinking, the feelings and willing. Thus in the three and a half year old the physical growth has reached a point half way through the first seven years—involving the chest and rhythmic system and all that is associated with the feelings and the social world.

³⁵ Bates Ames, Louise, and Ilg, Frances L. *Your Three Year Old. Friend or Enemy* (A Dell Paperback, New York, 1985)

description for a child in a Mars stage at Three-and-a-half years and the challenges they present to adults. Three-and-a-half is characterized by strength of will and independence, new physical and verbal growth consistent with what one might expect in a Mars stage. However there are also emotional insecurities and behaviours which make this age a more disturbing time and at first appear inconsistent with the vigorous thrust of Mars, unless they are manifestations of a Mars force which is being 'blocked' or interfered with in some way. Considering the complexity of this, information from Gesell researchers is quoted more extensively to make clear the nature of the child at this age.

To quote Bates Ames and Ilg directly from their description of the characteristics of age Three-and-a-half³⁶:

During the smoother parts of the day—between routines—he may be loving and amusing, his most delightful self. Warm, friendly, appealing, affectionate and confiding, creative and delightful he can be at such times... he can show imagination, inventiveness and a real capacity for play. He can be aware of the other person's feelings and can be extremely endearing as he expresses his own affections.

If the Three-year-old can sometimes be thought of as a watcher and waiter, the Three-and-a-half year old, for all his anxiety and difficulty, is much more an actor and a doer. There is a suddenness and vigour about his behaviour that is rather striking, though not always comfortable. He may suddenly wet his pants, surprising even himself; or he may suddenly burst out crying when things do not go his way.

There is also a 'marked developmental spurt that occurs now' including in their speech. All these things, the actor and the doer, the vigorous action and development, especially in speech, are consistent with a Mars stage, as is also Three-and-a-halfs' characteristic that they are 'above all determined and self-willed.'

It seems Three-and-a-halfs' strong will and independent spirit creates problems for themselves and others. According to Gesell they are in an 'age of *disequilibrium*':

Refusing to obey is perhaps the key aspect of this turbulent, troubled period... It sometimes seems to his mother that his main concern is to strengthen his will, and he strengthens this will by going against whatever is demanded of him by that still most important person in his life, his mother. Many a mother discovers that even the simplest event or occasion can elicit total rebellion. Dressing, eating, going to the bathroom, getting up, going to bed— whatever the routine it can be the scene and setting for an all-out, no-holds-barred fight.

They continue: 'Routines seem to give him the most trouble. Mealtime and dressing may be two of the most difficult routines. Each bite, each garment, may provoke a full-fledged battle.' 'Sometimes it almost seems that nothing pleases.' He is telling us what he wants and needs in that he 'attempts to control his environment in ways that will, perhaps make him feel more secure, more sure of himself.' "'Don't look," "Don't laugh", "Don't talk," he commands those around him. But in his immaturity, he is often inconsistent. "Don't look" he may order one minute, and at the next may become very angry if not given full attention. He may then insist that *all* attention be focused on himself and may feel left out if it is not.

³⁶ Ibid p.1-5

He may refuse to let Father read his paper, or Mother chat on the phone, or let two adults talk to each other.' One can see a number of Mars conflicts in all this. The Mars types want control and power, but also to be recognised as individuals; they want to be treated seriously, as they take their tasks seriously. It may be, if later stages are indications of what a Mars influence reveals, that Older Threes also need digestion times to deal with what comes at them from the world but they don't yet know how to ask for it or find it for themselves. So they can be overwhelmed by attention, looks, laughing, talking, but also need to be recognised.

Gesell continues: 'One might assume that his strong-willed self-assertiveness, which is so conspicuously evident, might be rooted in a strong personal security. Not so! In fact the very opposite seems to be the case.' They say he is also characteristically 'inwardized, insecure' and 'anxious' — not what we would normally associate with outward Mars but possibly reflecting an inward Mars, for Mars is a worrier.

Then come descriptions which maybe describing the Mars force when it is blocked. 'The Three-and-a-half year old child seems emotionally insecure from the word go. This insecurity is even shown in physical ways. He stutters. He stumbles. He trembles. A child who six months earlier may have walked a proud one-foot-to-a-step up the stairs may now go back to a more babyish two-feet-to-a-step. Quite steady at Three he may express a fear of falling.' 'Handedness may shift at this age, and it may seem as if the child actually does not know which hand to use.'

It is interesting that in this time of overall growth there should be what would seem to be backwards development physically and one wonders whether this could be Mars forces being blocked in some way. Emotionally one can see the child seems to be driven by his force of the will, wanting to use it to be in control of the situation, to conquer new skills but sometimes finds that he cannot be in charge because the will of others intervenes, especially the force of his major carers who care enough to really exert their will against his. Gesell also suggests that perhaps the child this age just tries too hard. Could it be that the child cannot quite manage the extra 'propulsion' that the Mars force might give and he overdoes it, goes too fast, trips himself up in some way? Physically some of his developmental behaviours could be blocked Mars appearing somatically. Stuttering — blocked speech (Mars). Stumbling and trembling, regression in skills like walking, handedness shift and confusion — blocked movement, intention and will (Mars).

Gesell continues: 'He is developing a deepening sense of himself in relation to, but also as apart from, others and thus is not as interested in the concept of "we" as he was just earlier.' Here again we see the slight step back from people that we sometimes see in Mars and also stronger individuation, also Mars. This new sense of themselves and being easily overwhelmed 'may be at least in part what leads to those bossy demands of "Don't laugh" or "Don't" look. He seems to feel invaded even by people's glances.' Here, do they have difficulty in 'digesting' the sensory input of people's glances so that it can be all too much, where their bossy demands are a desperate way of defending themselves? Is it their immaturity and sensitivity that get them into so much trouble?

The Gesell observations continue:

The child of this age makes his parent walk a real tightrope. This is done to the extent that some mothers, even those quite skilled in their parenting, find their greatest success by turning over their child over to a baby sitter. It can be rather frustrating to an experienced and normally effective mother to see a young babysitter or day care worker doing better with her child than she. But the fact seems to be that Three-and-a-half is amazingly sensitive to the reactions of others. He *knows* that the sitter really doesn't *care* whether he eats or goes hungry, gets rest or becomes exhausted. With exquisite sensitiveness he deals out the grief to the person who *does* care, his mother...

Inconsistency is also expressed in the emotional extremes of this interesting age. The child may seem to be extremely shy at one minute and overbold the next. Inconsistent, and determined to control the adult, he can make things difficult since he must—but definitely must—have his own way about everything. He is surprisingly firm in enforcing his own demands. If, while out for a walk, he decides that he will not go any farther, he will stand stock still. If you walk away, assuming your departure will motivate him to follow, you can continue on until he is but a speck in the distance. He will not budge.'

Could this also be more than just stubborn willfulness, perhaps more of an inner conflict in his will that freezes his movement and intention—like a blocked Mars? Also when 'he will set up a "nothing-pleases-me" situation in which, as when taken shopping, he does not want to go into the store, but at the same time refuses to stay in the car, and will howl bloody murder whichever alternative you choose.' Is this in some way frozen will?

As with a Mars type adult, one needs to be very strong and clear with boundaries with a Mars stage child, but full on confrontation does not work. It is better to try to work with the Mars energy from the sides, but with equally determined inner will. Gesell researchers' advice to parents is to avoid conflict situations (especially in public) as well as working with the other strengths of this age—imagination.

They point out that: 'This is the age above all others when many children enjoy the company of imaginary people or animals,' 'or pretend that they are someone other than themselves.' 'Some companions are weak and easily bossed around by the child. Others are bossy and extremely demanding.' This interest in bossiness perhaps reflects their interest in being in control, using their personal power, which can also be used in creatively getting them to do what really needs to be done, for they may love to be boss of parts of themselves too.

Three-and-a-half's sense of humour, which he shares even more with other children than adults now, often involves 'wild silly, gross motor activity. A child may laugh and run wildly, may jump wildly, throw things around wildly, crash a truck down an incline.' It may also express itself with 'aggressivity. A child knocks down another's house, pushes another child down, kicks another child's train.' This is all much more active will-filled humour (Mars?) than at more gentle Three.

It is good to remember that, as well as the child's being so 'determined to dominate', he also 'has great difficulty in managing his turbulent emotions'. It is possible that this Mars times make the feelings stronger than ever. 'Three-and-a-half can be a time of great stress and strain.' 'For all of this, the child's frequent "me too" suggests that he thinks he is, or at least

wants to be, as big and capable as anybody else, and wants to do what others are doing.’ They want to feel their power. In postulating that a Mars influence could be part of Three-and-a-half’s challenges, we need to know when the ‘blocked’ behaviours most occur — only when he is under stress, or being challenged? Frequent experience of these struggles could well undermine his confidence and make him as insecure and anxious as Gesell found him at times. More needs to be observed of the child at this age.

It seems important with children in very wilful independent stages (Mars, looking for self-empowerment or Mercury looking for freedom, with both seeking independence) that we try to find ways to bring our intentions into line with theirs. How do we creatively redirect their Mars energy in the direction we/they need it to go for healthy development without sabotaging their independence or need for self-empowerment? The techniques the Gesell book authors suggest for working with children of this age move in this direction.

This stage of Three-and-a-half is complex, with the manifestation of many Mars energies and qualities. Again we see independence, strong will and self-assertiveness, a particular vigour in action and doing, more aggression and a lesser priority for pleasing others. Yet they may also be inwardised, insecure and anxious, more easily overwhelmed, with many awkward behaviours that may reflect blocked Mars action, stuttering, stumbling, trembling, blocked will. We see here the outer and the inner Mars qualities. These merge into a new powerful energy at Four, with Jupiter energy (we hypothesize) bringing an even more egotistical and expansive time — Gesell’s Stage 5.

Seven years: the fourth Gesell Stage 4

The Seven years stage is a good example of how there are many factors in children’s development which affect behaviour apart from the influence of a particular stage or planet. At Seven the emphasis in physical growth returns to the head and nerve sense system, after having moved rhythmically downwards in the previous seven years. With this new emphasis we see new sensitivities in the nerve sense system so that for some months, maybe for much of the year, the children complain that some sensory input is too much for them — they put their hands over their ears, for example and complain that the other children or teacher are too loud.

At the same time, brain growth which began an active development at six, now allows the child to think in significant new ways, to really ‘cogitate’, as Seven loves to do. It is not pure intellectual thinking but it is certainly more intellectual than before. Gesell calls it ‘feeling thinking’. It allows the child to self-reflect. Sevens become more realistic in their self-assessment and appear to be more self-critical so that parents sometimes worry about Seven’s self-esteem. They can seem more reflective, even melancholic at times, complaining frequently, and they seem to experience what Gesell calls ‘Life in a Minor key’. It is this quality of Seven that the Gesell stage characterizes. This combination of the physical growth returning to the nerve-sense system with the inward Mars tendency makes Seven an even more sensitive age. However in Seven years, we also again see the this inward Mars and forces of ‘digestion’ and the outward Mars.

Louise Bates Ames and Carol Chase Haber in *Your Seven Year Old Life in a Minor Key*³⁷ and the Gesell researchers writing in *The Child from Five to Ten*³⁸ describe Seven and will be directly quoted, sometimes more extensively, below.

They say: Seven is 'a unique and highly distinctive age.' He 'has his moments of exuberance, security and happiness.' 'Energy at this age may be highly fluctuating.' Sevens are 'given to a somewhat reckless expenditure of energy until they suddenly drop with fatigue.' 'In outdoor play, Seven exhibits extremes': 'he has sudden spurts of very active behaviour.' 'Sometimes he is tearing around, tossing a handmade paper airplane; at other times he is content to hang around, talking, swapping cards, or playing house.' At school, 'Seven makes a characteristically explosive transition from school room to playground at recess time.' This pattern of great activity and then a period of rest (or collapse!) is characteristic also of Mars energy.

At the same time, even though Sevens show 'new independence' they are not 'especially adventurous, preferring to hang on to the old than aggressively attacking' and embarking on 'as many new and different ventures as they will at Eight. But most are good at planning what they are going to do.' Physically Seven is 'healthier' and 'much better coordinated' than at Six but is now 'more self contained, more restrained, more cautious, and less interested in sheer physical activity for its own sake.' 'The child of this age is precise, compact, direct, pulled rather neatly together.' 'Posture is more tense and unilateral.' Despite the new caution and restraint, perhaps originating in his extra sensitivity, there is something of the Mars directed force in the 'precise, compact and direct'!

Gesell often observed a correlation between vision development and the psychology of the age and Seven is an example of this. Here we see Seven' vision being more focal, and weaker peripherally, as we would expect in a Mars type psychologically. When also having long range vision (which Seven still has difficulty with) this is somewhat more like the concentrated narrower focus of male vision, suited to the traditional hunter, (versus the female vision—suited to the gatherer—with better peripheral vision,) which connects with Mars being associated astrologically with maleness and masculinity. Ilg and Ames observe this: 'Visually, Seven is more focal and pulled in than at Six. The child tends to draw near to things he can't see well. He may pull things up close to him or may lean over close to the thing he is viewing. He also tends to restrict himself visually, choosing a smaller unit than formerly in order to comprehend it. He almost seems to absorb into his very self the things he looks at.' 'Seven is much less distracted by peripheral movement than at Six.' They warn that this can put him at greater risk of accidents. Seven's also sometimes appear to be deaf, which again may reflect their focussed attention on the task at hand, rather being aware of peripheral sound (like a request from a parent or teacher!) This happens again at Thirteen, the next Mars age.

The Seven Gesell describes is predominantly the inward Mars, drawing in to rest or to work inwardly on his development tasks. 'This is in general an age of withdrawal, of pulling in, of calming down.' But this too reflects the concentrated thrust of Mars— 'But once the child

³⁷ Bates Ames, Louise, & Chase Haber, Carol *Your Seven Year Old Life in a Minor Key* (A Dell Trade Paperback New York 1985)

³⁸ Op.cit. p. 126-8

of seven starts to withdraw, it is almost as though he doesn't know where or when to stop. He goes on and on with his withdrawal until he almost seems that he might be more comfortable and contented if there were actually no other people in the world.'

'Intellectually one of Sevens' most conspicuous characteristics is a tendency towards perseveration, a tendency to go on and on with a task or situation until it is completed to satisfaction or until somebody stops him.' For example, 'he may 'bounce a ball against the side of the house interminably, or read or watch TV for hours.' Sevens also 'are inclined to be obsessive in their play interest. Many are said to have a "mania" for, or a "run" on guns, comic books, colouring.' Gesell researchers explain this: 'Seven often demands too much of himself and, with his characteristic inability to bring things to termination, often goes on with an activity too long. Then he suddenly collapses. He needs to be helped to define stopping points.' This inability to stop an activity at this age seems different from the persistence that a Saturn type shows.

They also suggest that: 'their tendency to persevere and perfect may work against any large measure of creativity.' 'Seven is not a particularly creative age.' Sevens may, if given the opportunity, draw the same picture again and again. Teachers and schools sometimes get blamed for this more controlled creativity, which may be merely a characteristic of development.

Like Mars, Seven is sometimes described as 'self-willed' and indeed may particularly get into a real battle of wills with his mother. 'Certainly one must notice and admire the child's increasing control—control of body, control of thoughts, control of temper, control of striking out, control of voice. It is small wonder that with all the concentration this control requires, Sevens fatigue easily and must often be protected from their own demands on themselves.' '[Seven's] conflict is now more within himself, over accomplishments, ability, performance, living up to his own standards.' So, they observe, Sevens' 'calmness and withdrawal and the minor strain that characterizes it have their positive as well as their negative sides.' Nevertheless they comment that Seven is also 'a procrastinator with a very short memory and a tendency to get distracted.' 'Seven needs to be reminded and warned a head of time and does best with rather specific instructions.'

Digestion, the life process which Mars forces support in the functioning of the human body, also seems to have a place in the nature of Seven. Gesell researchers say: 'Seven is an assimilating age.' It is 'a time of self-absorption, during which he works his impressions over and over, oblivious to the outer world.' 'To some extent Seven lives in a world of thought and loves to think things through. Just as his hands are busy touching, exploring, feeling everything with which he comes in contact, so his mind is busy observing, reflecting. He takes in infinitely more than he gives out, and his thoughts processes are probably much more intense than they appear to be on the surface.'

It is as if he is digesting his world. As in nutrition, where we take the outer world into ourselves and build our individual body out of this, Seven is building his sense of his own individuality out of all that comes to him through his senses. 'By absorbing impressions of things seen and heard and read, and by working things over in his mind, Seven seems to be strengthening and building up a sense of self for the time when he will burst out into the world at eight. The Eight year-old will take his equipment (his self) out into the world to see what he can do with it. At Seven he is busy improving, strengthening, discovering his *self*.'

'Seven is 'more aware of himself as a person. He is less selfish than at Six but extremely *self absorbed*'.

The value for their own individuality shown at Seven has a Mars quality too. In relationships with adults, Seven needs 'a good responsive relationship', one where he is met as a person, as an individual. The importance to them of being treated as an individual becomes clear when we look at what Seven wants from his teacher. Gesell researchers note: 'Children at this age are very personal. There is more of an individual relationship between each child and the teacher than earlier...each child wants a special separate relationship with her.' They may even fall in love with her! They like the teacher 'to come into personal touch with and talk individually to her children.' A wise teacher of Sevens knows 'that they need speech to make social contacts and to clarify their thoughts. She uses this individualized conversation as a technique to maintain rapport, to set up challenges and to foster self reliance.'

So the movement force and will of Mars is there in Seven, but it is an inwardly turned 'willing', doing the tasks that serve their own growth rather than that of others. Even in his speech (another characteristic of Mars) Seven is actually less exuberant, more quiet' — initially not what we would expect from a Mars type who can characteristically be quite loquacious! Seven keeps his talk for the thoughtful exploration of ideas and questions, as suggested above, rather than pure uncontrolled volubility and sociability as he did at Six. 'Seven may be much more silent and less giving in company.' Yet he uses speech for his own growth purposes, nevertheless — he 'likes to talk things over and work things out for himself.' 'He may talk to himself, even talk to himself in front of the mirror'. He uses self-talk to help his self-control. For example, one child, given a task with a strict time limit, said repeatedly to himself through the task, "must be quick, must be quick, must be quick, must be quick" to keep himself on task.³⁹ Seven's tensional outlets and concentration aids also show in his organs of speech! 'There may be a certain amount of muttering and mumbling, loud breathing, and little throaty sounds.' 'Many children [of this age] whistle or make other noises as they work.' When very tense they may again stutter.

Seven's somewhat melancholic mood fits well with what is also a Mars characteristic — quitting when his energy is blocked or thwarted in some way. 'When things go wrong in their dealings with others, instead of staying and fighting it out as they may have done earlier, Seven-year-olds may merely withdraw from the scene, muttering "Not fair" or "a gyp." Sensitive Seven is 'easily disappointed.' 'Things so often do not turn out as expected. If things go wrong at play, he is likely to leave the group mumbling to himself, "I'm quittin'." At home a Seven-year-old boy rushes to his room and slams the door; he may even threaten to run away from home. ... it is a desire to get away from what he may consider an intolerable situation.' 'With siblings they are more likely to withdraw from fighting' or 'as likely to restrain themselves to muttering and mumbling as to hit and kick.' At times like this, 'Seven likes to have a room of his own to which he can retreat and where he can protect his things.' 'Time alone with special pursuits is treasured.' They also worry more, about others and themselves. Quitting and worrying are very typical of Mars.

³⁹ Seen in Episode 1 of *Life at Seven* ABCTV

At home, although things with his mother are more relaxed and less intense, 'Seven also needs her to argue with: "But, Mommy why do I have to?" Generally in disagreements with her he is again more likely to walk away with a rude remark than fight. Often the boy or girl merely stays on the spot and looks very very sad. In fact there is now and then something almost un-childlike in the force of feelings expressed, not just about tasks to be carried out, but about purely theoretical topics.' This force of feeling is also very characteristic of the Mars type. Is this 'very very sad' the gesture of stymied will, a thwarted Mars which in adulthood can manifest as depression?

'Seven is not an age known for humour', like Mars who takes himself quite seriously.

Overall then in Seven where is the driving Mars energy? While the typical gesture Gesell describes is one which is inward and very unlike what one would expect from a simplified outward moving Mars, nevertheless, there is an intensity of focus on the task for Seven, a narrowly directed energy and awareness. His focus also may be more on his interest or task rather than on people at times. His fluctuating physical activity between spurts of active behaviour and collapse, has something reminiscent of Mars in it, as does his tendency to go on and on if not stopped. His characteristic digestion of experiences to make these his own also has something of the inward Mars gesture, as does his use of talking and vocalizations to control his own behaviour. His strong need for recognition as an individual also reflects a Mars quality. He also 'quits' and worries, both Mars characteristics. These things are all somewhat unlooked for in traditional Mars qualities, and perhaps are less obvious than some of the qualities found in other Gesell stages in relation to the planets. Has the tender somewhat vulnerable quality of Seven, with new growth in the nerve-sense system, ameliorated the more assertive outward nature of Mars and increased the tendency towards the expression of inward Mars? Thirteen also sometimes shows these more subtle Mars qualities not just the outward thrusts one might expect from Mars; but Thirteen is an age where the emphasis in the growth is in the limbs and metabolic system and the associated will. The question is how this changes the nature of Mars?

Thirteen years: the fifth Gesell Stage 4

The next Mars stage is Thirteen. Here we quote directly from *Youth The Years from Ten to Sixteen*, by Gesell, Ilg and Bates Ames⁴⁰. Although this is now quite old research (before 1956), it still illustrates the basic nature of Thirteen year olds today, though their environment is very different, especially with more media and technologies available.⁴¹ Sexual development, occurring slightly earlier today, though in no way uniform between individuals or genders, is becoming established at this time and the sex hormones affect behaviour as well. The emphasis in their physical growth is now well established in their metabolic system and limbs, and manifests in more interest in and control of their will power.

⁴⁰ Gesell, Arnold, Ilg, Frances L. & Bates Ames, Louise, *Youth The Years from Ten to Sixteen* (Hamish Hamilton, London 1956)p. 139-174

⁴¹ Our confidence in relying on these old studies as still being relevant has been reinforced with the most recent research completed by the Gesell Institute for Human Development in 2010 which found young children's neurological development pattern has not changed in the last 100 years, though their environments have.

Once again we find evidence of an active outward Mars who also withdraws to digest experiences, especially at home, where we see more of the inward focussed Mars, not always open and communicative, sometimes silent, musing. This 'inward and outward' manifestation of Mars forces we saw at Seven is even more clearly present at Thirteen. It becomes clearer that the 'still' phase in the Mars archetype modelled in Steiner's eurythmy gesture for Mars is not really quiet but has a potent inward purpose and energy. Julian Sleigh in his book *Thirteen to Nineteen*⁴² explores the changes in Thirteen also described by the Gesell researchers:

... the young person begins to turn inward and enter for certain times into a secluded world of his own. At other times he balances this turning-inward by applying himself with intense interest to his surroundings, showing a voracious appetite for knowledge and an amazing energy for becoming engrossed in assignments that appeal to him. And there grows in him an interplay between the outer and the inner, as if all that is outer derives its meaning from the way it feeds and expands the inner. The person leaving childhood becomes reflective. Actions become more conscious. The longing for independence and solitude emerges.

Gesell researchers expand on this: 'The change which takes place between twelve and thirteen can be very profound.' 'Though Thirteen appears more quiet and withdrawn than earlier, he can be very active in his thoughts, storing up ideas and energy to be expended at a later date.' 'There seems to come an inner mobilization and organization of forces. The tendency is to pull things together, to inwardize, to think about things. This narrowing down and compressing produces a great deal of energy, but how this energy is expended depends upon the success of the organization. Thirteen almost seems to know that he needs to be more selective than he has been, that he needs to concentrate and discard in order to achieve further growth.'

The interaction of an inwardizing and externalizing awareness 'constitutes the major key to the psychology of the 13 year-old.'

Gesell describes him thus:⁴³

A 13-year-old boy joins the family group to enjoy an evening TV program. He is interested, but in the middle of the program his face suddenly assumes a detached and serious expression. He rises unceremoniously and without a word he goes to his room – to cogitate, to ruminate. We cannot penetrate his reveries, but they are not interminable, and on his own initiative and responsibility he presently makes a concentrated assault upon his homework. In a sense he is concerned both with inner and outer affairs.

They continue: 'He mulls over his outer experiences' in 'brief intervals of self-absorption and rumination during which he releases and reviews with variations his inner feelings, tensions and attitudes.' This is 'a positive constructive function.' 'He probes more deeply into reality by turning things over in his mind.' 'He clarifies and organizes his experiences by inward

⁴² Sleigh, Julian *Thirteen to Nineteen Discovering the Light* (Floris Books, 1989, Edinburgh) p.34

⁴³ Gesell, *Youth* op cit p. 140

rehearsals and self-examination.' He sometimes, like Seven, may appear to be deaf, he is so inwardly focussed. He has 'a recurring tendency to withdraw from the family circle.'

The more withdrawn side of Thirteen was also more in evidence in the Gesell interviews with Thirteen-year-olds. 'He is usually friendly but is not spontaneous and communicative. He sits quietly with little movement. His voice is often low and difficult to hear, and he speaks more slowly than he did. He may answer with a shrug of the shoulders...Everything about him is pulling in in his attempt to choose, to discriminate, and to define.' Once again in this we can see a picture of digestion, a process of breaking down and discriminating what can be used for nutrition and what must be eliminated—the Mars function in the life processes.

Gesell describes the vigorous inner and outer action: 'Voracious reading is one way of satisfying this inner urge. Constant expenditure of this new found energy on private enterprises is another.' 'Thirteen's life is a very full one...' 'This busyness of Thirteen can be so extreme that it may be hard for him to find time to "squeeze" in even things he wants to do, let alone household chores. But his energy can be bountiful...But when Thirteen is both mobilizing and expending his efforts in an organized fashion, especially on something that has aroused his feeling, it is amazing to watch him in action.' There is a picture of Mars. Action based on feelings. 'He handles time quite well, but often arrives at that last-minute rush, the need to accomplish something in those last "decisive five minutes."'

Like the Mars type, 'he wants to live *now*.' 'Thirteens live in the present and in the near future.'

'He is adaptable and dependable. He has a sense of duty. At times he seems overconscientious. He indulges in many private worries' and 'is a great worrier. He says himself that "he worries about most everything" or he worries that he is going to worry.' This worrying which we saw also at Seven, is also characteristic of Mars which as we saw, as the great Protector, needed to worry to do his task well. Mars has a strong sense of duty.

'He is becoming aware of his reasoning powers as operations of the mind at his command. He is beginning to apply these emerging powers to his emotional life through self appraisal and appraisal of his associates, young and old.' 'A new kind of precision has come into the personal appearance of many Thirteens... They are said to be "very particular"...' Thirteen is also 'is a precisionist—a critic of his own performance as well as that of others.' 'He makes detailed criticism of his parents.' This precision and criticism may also be characteristic of Mars. 'Thirteen is very sensitive to criticism and keenly perceptive of the emotional states of others.' Their feelings are more in control. He 'has a sensitive core' and 'is easily hurt.' Is this vulnerability, also seen in Seven, a more hidden Mars quality, a melancholic sensitivity which exists along with the choleric, the fiery nature?

Thirteen 'is aware of his changing moods and tries to bring thoughts to bear on them.' He is 'reflective.' 'His musings are many-sided. They involve choices, wishes, ideas, ambitions. They may lead to provisional and potential decisions in the realm of moral conduct. Such musings are far from idle, for they signify the effort of the adolescent to achieve a more mature self. Through voluntary reflective effort he finds he is not completely at the mercy of instinctual emotion. His inwardizing leads to genuine thinking, and this in turn creates a sense of what he aptly calls will power.' It is a characteristic of a 13 year old to be conscious

of his increasing “will power” and a strong will is a characteristic trait of Mars and of children where the growth emphasis is in the metabolic system and limbs, as it is for Thirteen.

His concentrated will, improvement in organization, sense of responsibility, and desire for independence and individuation is evident. At school ‘The rapid almost pell-mell enthusiasm of Twelve is now withheld and concentrated in more organized and sustained eagerness to learn...’ ‘He may not chase as he once did but he jostles any near-by companion and is notorious for his inability to stand in line. He stills snatches from classmates, but selectively.’ ‘Time is better organized. Concentration is more sustained, self control is more evident. Thirteen has a better sense of responsibility. He is more dependable.’ ‘He is galled when he meets the cloak of authority. He wishes to feel independent as well as be independent... He wants the freedom of decision.’ ‘Individual differences now declare themselves strongly.’

Socially, Thirteen is again slightly more restrained. He ‘tends to be more discriminating than he was at twelve in his estimation and acceptance of companions. He has fewer friends.’ ‘Expressions of affection do not come easily... He is more standoffish. He... is more inclined to think and resolve feelings within himself.’ He is more socially independent—true to Mars. “He definitely has a life of his own”, “he lives by himself.” ‘They are more independent of the family group.’ He wants to exist more fully.’ Nevertheless Thirteen has ‘feeling for others in trouble, especially physical trouble.’ Here we see a certain social detachment we have seen in the Mars stages before, and also Mars the Protector.

‘Thirteens are above all interested in trying new things. ‘He’s also shifting his interest in the macrocosm to an interest in the microcosm.’.. He wants to get in and demonstrate a thing for himself...’ Once settled, ‘he is good for a twenty – to thirty- minute period of intense concentration. He wants to finish his work... he doesn’t want any work hanging fire...if he does have homework regularly, he is usually conscientious and on his own, whereas he needed help at twelve. ‘Thirteens’ ‘Humour is crisp and sardonic.’ There is a concentrated directed Mars wilful energy and independence in all this.

In health Thirteen ‘is in general continuing to improve.’ Interestingly, Gesell also comments “The presence of a fever as high as 103-4 [F] which may occur without any evidence of a cold or other illness can usually be related to an unusual intensity of mental activity.’ Some Mars fire in the blood to do with mental stress?⁴⁴ In vision, ‘Thirteen, in his inwardizing process, is reducing his functional far sightedness (or hyperopia). This trend, if continued, would result in a measurable near-sightedness, but fortunately Fourteen reverses the trend and farsightedness is increased slightly.’

Here we see many characteristics of Mars and its concentrated focussed force in Thirteen: often it is an inward movement, including the strongly directed will focussed on the task at hand, vigorous action based on feelings, strong independence and individualizing, the withdrawal from intense outer activity to digest experience and thoughts, more restraint

⁴⁴ Mayo, Jeff, op.cit. p. 124 says: ‘The principle of Mars within the physical body is one of the most important factors of attack and resistance against foreign bodies and disease. We see this in the natural processes of inflammations and fever. But it is particularly evident in the action of the adrenals which have been called the “fight and flight” glands of the endocrine system.

socially, with friendships tending to be fewer and so on; we also see the sense of responsibility, duty and conscientiousness, along with worrying of Mars. The teenager has developed enough awareness to be able to meet these Mars needs, where the very young children in Mars stages could not and as a result showed conflicted behaviours which confounded adults. It is true that Thirteens' withdrawal at home sometimes still worries parents, but Thirteens themselves are more comfortable with it.

Nineteen years: the sixth Gesell Stage 4 extrapolated

Gesell's studies ended at Sixteen years so we have no help there to explore the nature of Nineteen and whether it shows characteristics of Mars. Julian Sleigh⁴⁵ gives us somewhere to start:

At nineteen the person needs to prove his freedom. Not just a freedom of choice or a freedom from outer restraint, but a freedom to create and to shape his or her life. This freedom implies the achievement of practical skills and life skills. He must be capable of work, but also of responding to all the needs and demands that come towards him.

It is an opportunity to put the strong Mars will to work constructively into their study and work and into the world they are entering.

Research has shown that the capacities for impulse control and risk assessment do not fully mature until well into the twenties, which means teenagers generally are more likely to make impulsive emotional decisions without really thinking through and accurately assessing the consequences. If Mars at Nineteen manifests in the more inward relatively responsible ways of Thirteen this may not be a problem. However if Mars at Nineteen starts to manifest the more adventurous nature (driven by feeling) of an outward Mars, or manifests the characteristics of an immature Mars listed earlier – impulsive, impatient, lacking foresight, headstrong, competitive, aggressive, argumentative – the combination may be a potent mix at Nineteen, especially in combination with drugs like alcohol. It would make Nineteen the centre of a time of even greater risk, especially for young men who are also challenged with managing high levels of testosterone, which further drives impulsive, competitive and risk taking behaviours.

Conclusion:

The aim of this essay was to examine whether the archetypal influences and qualities associated with Mars could be found to any significant degree in the behaviour of children in Gesell Stage 4. There is considerable evidence of 'Mars influences' in the children's behaviour: in their sense of self, in their thinking, feeling, relationships and in their will, and in their giving priority to their need for *power for action and digestion*. The inward and outward nature of Mars manifest differently in the children as they grow and are able to use their new powers of thinking and willing more consciously and in a more balanced way. The powerful concentrated growth thrusts of Mars drive new growth, and the strong will of Mars is evident in their more intense need for independence and to be treated individually. In the Mars stages, the children's action is driven more strongly when feelings are involved.

⁴⁵ Sleigh, op. cit. p.55

In Stage 4, from babyhood on, there is a strong drive to concentrate on the doing of the tasks at hand, with less priority for people and relationship; this is not through lack of care for people, for as they grow older they reveal a strong sense of service and duty to others; this reveals itself in their ability to concentrate their energies on the organization and carrying through of a task, as Mars would, rather than the thoughtful care of others' feelings, as Venus would do. The need for activity and movement, as well as the use of speech, also reflect Mars influences. The phenomena of the powerful Mars force being blocked is also evident in the insecurities of the younger children and the tendency to quit when their intentions are blocked, at the older ages, especially at Seven.

From the first Mars Stage 4 at 20 to 24 weeks, the child shows a new independence along with increased activity. This is all the more evident because it is following a quieter Venus Stage. This independence shows itself again at Fifteen Months and even more strongly at Three and a half, by which time new experiences of the self reveal much stronger individuation in the children, with less interest in "we". By Seven, the children's need to be treated as separate individuals becomes even stronger. By Thirteen, they have learnt to take their independence into their own hands by withdrawing into their own world when they need to.

In their thinking, the clearest evidence of Mars influence is in their criticism and their speech. Where their critical nature shows more at the older ages, perhaps in Seven's complaining-ness, and Thirteens' active criticism of parents, the prominence of speech in growth reveals itself already at 20 weeks when 'serious language study' begins (Caplan) and children start to use it to get our attention, to communicate. Three and a half also shows a marked development of speech and by Seven, Gesell notes that the child uses speech as a way of working things out and for self-control. From Seven on, one also sees these Mars stages as opportunities for assimilating their experiences and thoughts through inward pondering. Thirteen uses the inwardness of the stage for more penetrating digestion of experience and thought, a reflection of the Mars function.

Feelings at these Mars stages are strong drivers to action, as they are for a Mars type. At Three and a half the children seem to struggle in their feelings, and they appear insecure, especially if their energy is blocked, as in a 'blocked Mars'. So the child may stutter (blocked speech), tremble or be unable to move (blocked intention) or stumble (blocked movement.) By Seven, though they may still stutter occasionally, they have learnt to protect themselves better, using their increasing awareness and thinking capacities, by quitting when a situation becomes too difficult for them. By Thirteen they give themselves inner time and space in ways that sometime disturb their parents but meet their own emotional needs.

This ability to work with strong intention and organizational skill outwardly but also make an inner space for rest and digestion is the way Mars works. It is also a wise strategy in childhood in the Mars Stage, though it is not so well understood by the adult world. This Stage's relationship to people causes some angst because it puts priority on an activity or task before relationship, before looking after other people's feelings, as the Moon and Venus stages did before it. So at 20 to 24 weeks, babies can show more interest in activity than in their mothers, even mother's breast; this can be a shock for a first time mother. Fifteen months may treat people rather like useful objects at times. Older Threes also take a slight step back from people. Sevens show deeper interest in the task and Thirteens are also more

discriminating in their social interactions, with fewer friends than the year before. On the other hand, one does see glimpses of Mars as the Great Protector in their becoming more dependable, with a stronger sense of duty and a wish to do things well, which all means they worry more, like Mars.

Finally we see Mars in the strong will of this Gesell Stage 4. Mars drives directed growth, and spurts of growth are certainly seen at this Stage. Caplan describes 20 to 24 weeks as the first major thrust in motor activity, where opportunities for extra physical activity can be of comfort to children. Fifteen months is a high point for grabbing and throwing, and a time when opportunities for constant motion can be helpful. Three and a half also brings another marked spurt in development, including in speech, and a time characterized by strength of will, revealing determined self-willed actors and doers in the children. Gesell describes a striking, sudden vigour in their behaviour reminiscent of the outward Mars force. Their humour also reveals this energetic behaviour in wild, silly, gross motor behaviours.

At Seven too, while we see a good planner, and other descriptions reminiscent of Mars, like their being 'precise, compact and direct', they also show vigorous outward thrusts in behaviour that leave them in a state of collapse, needing quiet inward recovery times. Their inward behaviour also reveals self-willed, narrowly directed energy and intensity of focus in keeping with Mars, though they have great difficulty bringing it to a stop. By Thirteen they also show increase in control of will and concentrated directed energy, both in outer activities in the world and in their inner activity. They have more self-control and the ability to organize themselves and get things done as well as ponder and digest experience.

All this reveals a great deal of Mars and does not just reflect simple development, for much will change in the following stage as the influences of Jupiter begin their work. However the opportunity that the Mars stage offers in experiencing a different way of being in the world—for children to use their will in a focussed way both inwardly in their thinking, in digesting their experience and making it their own, as well as focussing their intentions outwardly in the world, bringing energy, serious commitment and organization to the tasks to be done—this is a great gift to childhood and ourselves.

An understanding of these planetary influences and qualities offers another way of understanding children, their motivations and needs in each Gesell stage, in this case a Mars stage. This allows us to support children better, acknowledging this aspect of developmental factors. In education, this makes possible a more refined way of meeting children's needs, both individually and in the classroom. For those who are involved in healing and are familiar with the planetary influences in speech, eurythmy gesture and metal therapies, this knowledge offers an opportunity to observe each age group more carefully and to use the therapies in even more precise ways. Knowing these developmental tendencies helps us to separate these factors from the individual and environmental factors. Further understanding of children and the planetary influences in the broader context of development can be found in the child development profiles at www.creativelivingwithchildren.com.

What helps the Mars type and children in Gesell Stage 4

From all this we can identify many things which might help support children who are by nature a Mars type or who are in a Mars stage. We can help them by being aware of their needs and meeting these better. Of course when children have a strong inherent temperament which is different from the influences of the planetary stage they are in, the manifestation of these needs may not be so strong. Awareness of these needs may also help our relationships with Mars type adults!

Some qualities and needs associated with the Mars type to be considered in relation to child development and how we can support children:

- The Mars assertiveness and strong will and their need for independence needs honour and respect. They need us to show love, patience, repetitive discipline and firmness. The Victorian belief in the need to 'break the child's will' in order to make them 'good' is completely misleading. They will need their strong will to lead conscious and ethical lives but they need us to show them how to take responsibility for their actions, to put their strong will to good work. We need to work *with* their will, not *against* it. Mars is about *power*—at this stage they need to feel powerful, and we need to empower them in healthy ways. This means finding ways to help them to succeed at doing the things they feel driven to do, even when they don't always have the skills.

We need to find ways to not block the will and their need for personal power, but to guide it subtly instead. With young children this can often be done by working from an embracing "we" consciousness (versus "I" opposite "I"), from the environment around children, with imaginative pictures to guide them in the direction we want them to go. This most certainly means avoiding direct confrontation if possible, for this mostly results in them digging their heels in. (If all else fails in matters of safety, of course our own strong will will have to suffice). Most of all, if possible, we need to provide a situation where the children or adolescents do not feel trapped but have the space and opportunity to step forward in freedom, with their own will, in their own time, to do what needs to be done. This means our developing the ability to 'draw out the good' in children, rather than getting trapped by confrontation, which usually ends in a fight in which no one really can win. This is not about 'weak will' and 'giving in' in the adult but about putting the adult will to work with wisdom and respect to find a way which can 'gather' children into it successfully.

On the other hand, children, who are so wilful that they become stubborn and inflexible in ways that are not healthy, may need help to notice when they do that and how it did not help them; it may not be good timing to make them conscious of this when in the middle of it, but it can help to gently reflect with them afterwards and talk about what would help them next time. Being boss of themselves is sometimes a good way to approach this. We also need to watch for our own power plays and stubbornness! Those adults who like to be 'in control' need to watch that this tendency does not dominate their interactions. A Mars response to feeling controlled would be bound to be rebelliousness and trouble!

- The fiery Mars type child needs to develop trust in their capacity to contain their anger. They need to see assertiveness and righteous anger expressed (modelled) in a clean, healthy, honest way where love and respect can still be held sacred within that expression, even when it is possibly a bit noisy and explosive. They need to see us take personal responsibility rather than blame and accusations dominating. They need to see acceptance and healing clearly demonstrated, in gentle care with each other after the outburst or argument, and they need to hear apologies offered, if truly called for.
- They need us to be open, direct and honest, true to the noble nature of Mars; covert interference, emotional manipulation and misleading untruths may make them reluctant or angry, quite rightfully.
- They need clarity in the boundaries we give them. With young children it helps to do this in a way which makes them part of a bigger reality/ authority; “In our house, we do it this way”. Increasingly as they get older the boundaries can be negotiated so they have some responsibility for the rules and guidelines themselves, they ‘own’ them too, so to speak, which increases cooperation and willingness to work within the boundaries. The rules and boundaries must be fair and sensible to be taken seriously as a mutual responsibility, which is why involving teenagers in their making can be so successful because there is an opportunity to work through perceived unfairness or unworkability. In work with boys (with Mars tendencies) particularly, it becomes clear that the re-statement of rules and boundaries is crucial, and our firmness of sticking with them is necessary when they are tested, sometimes over and over. This does reflect the need of a Mars type child.
- They need recognition of their individuality, not just be treated as a group. All children need such recognition but it is even more important to some planetary types and stages, and Mars is one of them.
- Given their tendency to criticize themselves and others, it is helpful to encourage them to appreciate people’s gifts, show tolerance for their inadequacies and acceptance that others are different from themselves. The best way to start to teach this is of course to model it in our own behaviour.
- They need to learn to be more consciously diplomatic. Given that the Mars type can be so centred on getting the task done that they sometimes ignore or hurt other people’s feelings, it is helpful to teach the Mars type child to stop and think before they act, to be more deliberately diplomatic, polite, careful, considerate before they jump into action. To say hello and please before they ask for something. To request, leaving the other person more free, rather than be demanding or bossy. To say thank you afterwards. To show appreciation. They need to learn that this is in their own interests to do these things as much as the interests of others because it facilitates getting the tasks done and avoids resentment and anger in others. This way they are learning to be a gracious leader! They need to learn to use their personal power wisely and compassionately, otherwise it becomes tyrannical. We need to teach them about legitimate power and illegitimate power and to discriminate between the two

clearly. Otherwise they can become bullies and may even be unaware of it. We need to teach them to see the other's point of view.

- They need to feel that their need to withdraw and process things inwardly is accepted and respected as a healthy thing to do sometimes. We need to not follow them into their space or demand that they come out (just as the advice to women is not to follow men into their 'caves' and demand that they come out.) We need to be mature enough not to be hurt when our children withdraw a little or don't want to tell us everything as they might have before in another stage. When we respect their choice, we teach them about being able to meet their needs for privacy, for 'inner time' as a healthy thing to do when it is needed. Resentment about this can lead to destroying what is essentially a good relationship, as sometimes happens at Thirteen. We need to trust they will come out again in their own good time, inner tasks done. The blessing of knowing the characteristics of each age is that we can know when such withdrawal is part of the developmental cycle, and not due to some other cause. Similarly, Mars propensity to 'quit' when the situation becomes unbearable should not be criticized but supported as a possible sensible thing to do to protect themselves.
- Given that Mars energy can be so easily blocked, it is good to watch for this in children to see if you are the aggravating factor. If they quit from your presence, or show blocked movement in response to something, perhaps you need to examine how something could be done differently. Keep in mind blocked Mars can be expressed by anger, but also by depression.
- In the writing on infancy we noted that activity helped to relieve what may have been a Mars need to move. Healthy physical activity can release feelings of anger, relieve depression and probably release the stuck-ness in worrying and 'stewing on feelings' when Mars has been blocked. That is, physical activity may bring back the movement to a blocked Mars. This is useful to remember for the Mars type and Mars stages in childhood. All the more reason that children should not be kept 'entertained' with screen time, for these 'freeze' movement at the time of watching but make the need for movement more compulsive (hyperactive) after the watching has finished.

Working with these needs will maximise the wonderful gifts of each planetary influence in children's development.