

# Planetary qualities in child development: Venus

*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 essays<sup>1</sup>:**

*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 Development<sup>2</sup>) 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 Venus qualities in relation to Gesell Stage 3.*

## Venus influences in child development. Gesell Stage 3

### Introduction

Our aim in this essay is to build a picture of the archetypal qualities associated with Venus, and then to closely examine the behaviour of children in Gesell Stage 3, highlighting any similarities to these Venus 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 Venus 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 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

---

<sup>1</sup> A full introduction to this idea can be found in the essay *Planetary Qualities in Child Development as seen in the Six Gesell Stages*.

<sup>2</sup> 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](http://www.gesellinstitute.org)

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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> Venus has an association with femininity whereas Mars, its opposite is associated with masculinity.

The planetary qualities of Venus appear in children in the third of the six stages in child development which the Gesell Institute of Child Development observed, what we are calling Gesell Stage 3<sup>5</sup>. The planet Venus is also the third in 'temporal' order from the earth, in the sequence Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.<sup>6</sup> The Gesell Stage 3 occurs at 16 to 20 weeks, 52- 56 weeks to 15 months, 3 to 3 ½ years, 6 ½ to 7 years and 12 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 3 would be 18 years. It is also worth noting that in life span development, the whole of adolescence (14 to 21 years) reflects Venus qualities.

The key words the Gesell researchers used to describe Stage 3 were *in equilibrium*, *rounded* and *well balanced* but their descriptions of the children's behaviour give us much more than this. They reveal many of the strengths of the 'Venus type' adult which are based on their giving priority to *love and relationships*, on valuing beauty, and being able to use their feelings as information about the world in order to respond with more understanding and compassion.

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

---

<sup>3</sup> 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](http://busbi.home.xs4all.nl)

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>6</sup> 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.

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 the Venus experience gives children the opportunity to live through their feelings and emotional life, to make relationships and love priorities in their living, to experience empathy and compassion, and to experience more acutely beauty in all its forms.

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 Venus and then see where it is found in Gesell Stage 3.

## Understanding Venus qualities, influences and the Venus type

### *Venus type qualities: a quick reference*

*Venus is traditionally associated with love, beauty, harmony and the feminine. These and the value the Venus types put on good personal relationships are reflected in their personal qualities: cooperation, sympathy, compromise, as well as cheerfulness, amicableness, kindness, compassion and sociability. Venus types live through their feelings, in both sympathy and antipathy. They can be warm, gentle and tactful but they can also be so placid and amenable that they can lose their sense of themselves and of their own needs. Their thinking is also feeling imbued, but is practical and in the present. Their will is flexible with others but persevering on the tasks that need doing. They have a deep need for beauty in all its manifestations: artistic, in nature, in sensual experiences, in the human and built environment.*

The following descriptions of planetary influences are rather unconventional but provide a basis for a deeper understanding of the influences and associations with Venus. Some readers may prefer to go straight to the 'Venus in human behaviour' section which describes the psychological understanding of the Venus type.

### **Venus: The planet and the mineral and plant world**

The planet Venus is known as the sister planet to earth, being of a similar size, mass, density, composition and gravity to earth. However because Venus turns so slowly on its axis (it takes 243 days to rotate once) it has a magnetic field that it is so weak (0.000015 times that of the earth's field) it has little protection from solar geomagnetic storms. It is the hottest planet, despite Mercury being closer than Venus to the sun. The clouds around Venus not only reflect more light but are said to create a green-house effect which has added to the temperatures on the surface—these are up to 465°C— more than enough heat to melt lead. Its clouds, oddly, swirl 60 times faster than the rotation of the planet itself and its heavier

atmosphere creates a pressure 90 times greater than that on earth. Like the Moon and Mercury it has phases where part of its surface is in shadow and therefore hidden from view here on Earth. It takes 225 days to orbit the Sun. To us it is brighter than any other planet due to its reflectivity and closeness.

What qualities can be found here in the planet itself that reflect the Venus type? Light, warmth, a weaker boundary, an unprotected quality, moving very slowly within itself.

Rudolf Steiner said: 'Venus provides the basic qualities of heart and temperament',<sup>7</sup> the element of 'cosmic love'. Venus is the only planet to be named after a female goddess, the ancient Roman goddess of love and beauty. The myths about Venus concern youthful figures of cheerfulness, beauty and love, such as the Germanic Freya and Aphrodite of the Greeks. The sphere of mythic Venus is dawn, colourful spring, happiness, wakefulness in the feeling. On a more earthy level this Venus in myth and astrology was related to love, romance, marriage, and sexual interactions, especially in relation to Mars. We will see that glimpses of all these Venus qualities, even this sensuality and sexuality, can be seen in the development of children in the Gesell Stage 3.

The youthfulness of Venus and the interconnectedness of Venus and Mars from the feminine/ masculine perspective seen in myth, is also seen in relation to their associated metals. The metal associated with Venus, copper, is a metal which is lustrous and warm coloured.<sup>8</sup> In fact copper and its numerous ores are extraordinarily colourful from red to yellow to blue, green and violet. It is often found in its pure form, sometimes in lumps and sometimes in dainty fern like forms. It has an inner plasticity and the fluid ductility of the precious metals, yet is closer to iron in hardness. It is the best metallic conductor next to silver and is a 'euphonious' metal with a good relationship to the element of sound.

In the archetypal development of the plant, which begins with Moon influences in the roots and proceeds to Mercury influences in the leaves, growth comes under the influence of Venus in the blossom, the place of greatest beauty and colour in the plant. It leads the way, together with Mars, which influences the stamens and pollination, to the possibility of reproduction for the plant.<sup>9</sup>

In the trees influenced particularly by Venus—the birch and the poplar— we see the youthful, light filled nature of Venus, in the leaves that move and whisper with the breezes, lightness or white in the bark, and silvery backs to the leaves in the case of the white poplar. The birch is a tree that grows first after a forest has been cleared; its wood is less dense and its trunk and branches are slender; the trees are not deep rooted, nor long lived—it is a 'young' tree, like Venus. The leaves of the birch have a diuretic effect and are used in the treatment of infection in kidney and bladder, the Venus organs. Compare this with an

---

<sup>7</sup> Steiner, Rudolf, *The Spiritual Individualities of the Planets* a lecture given in Dornach Switzerland on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1923 (GA228)

<sup>8</sup> Wilhelm Pelikan in *The Secrets of Metals* ( Anthroposophic Press, New York, 1973 p.104-118) describes beautifully the nature of copper.

<sup>9</sup> This complex growth process of the plant, involving both the Sun and the planets, is an intriguing study. For more detailed information on this see Ernst Michael Kranich's *Planetary Influences upon Plants A Cosmological Botany* (BioDynamic Literature, Rhode Island, 1984)

opposite picture of the massive, deeper rooted, long lived oak, influenced by Mars and traditionally used as a remedy for, amongst other things, the gall bladder, the Mars organ.

## **Venus in the human body, organs and life processes**

In the human body, Venus is associated with the life process of 'maintaining', that is regulating, moderating, repairing, replacing and protecting the integrity of the body; Venus is also associated with kidney function which also helps to do this through sorting, separating, recycling, maintaining.<sup>10</sup> This process of sorting all that has gone through the body can also be seen as a reflection of a mature Venus process, where more discrimination is required to separate the 'useful to self' from the 'not useful to self', rather than unquestioned, passive acceptance of all that comes into oneself. This, as we will see, is the challenging task for the maturing Venus planetary type.

In the human body, the Venus metal copper is strongly associated with youthful processes and the growth of the embryo— copper levels are higher in the embryo and increase in the mother's blood in pregnancy. Copper is also involved in the metabolic processes, protein formation (with iron) and the deepest levels of cell nutrition. Copper has a symbiotic relationship with iron (Mars) in the human body. In women, the balance between copper and iron in blood serum tends towards copper (Venus) but in men it tends towards iron (Mars).<sup>11</sup> Venus and copper are closely associated with the development of reproductive process in women and with menstruation—for example copper levels in women's blood serum has a monthly cycle in tune with the menstrual cycle.<sup>12</sup>

The connection between Venus and Mars can also be seen in a broader way, where Mars is connected to the larynx and human speech and Venus is connected with the ears and listening, between them creating conversation.

---

<sup>10</sup> For a more esoteric perspective on this kidney process see Bernard Lievegoed in *Man on the Threshold The challenge of inner development* (Hawthorn Press, Stoud, 1985)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p112 Pelikan also speaks of this: 'The serum iron level in the male amounts to 118 gamma %, while in the female it is only 88 gamma %. The serum copper level on the other hand amounts to 106 gamma % in the male and, at 107 gamma %, is practically the same in the female. The balance between copper and iron thus tends, in the woman, in the direction of copper. The male is, in this connection richer in iron. Copper is only loosely bound up with the proteins, but the level of serum copper is tenaciously maintained in hunger, fever, poisoning etc. During pregnancy it rises to 280 gamma %. In infections the interplay between copper and iron is shifted, the iron level sinking and the copper level rising. When healing takes place, the levels approach each other again. The more active the metabolism becomes, the higher the copper levels seem to rise.'

<sup>12</sup> 'Copper in women's blood serum has a monthly cycle in tune with their menstrual period, peaking a week or so before the period arrives. This is because their serum copper exists chiefly as the protein, 'ceruloplasmin', whose metabolism is closely linked to the female sex hormone oestrogen... Evidence suggests that copper has a dynamic role in the reproductive process, rather than just being a by-product of the raised oestrogen.' <http://roxcell.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/eliminating-copper-toxicity-often-results-in-an-increase-in-awareness/>. The female hormone oestrogen promotes the retention of copper (an excess of oestrogen can create an excess of copper to the point of copper toxicity.)

One further odd link with copper is that freckles appear particularly at both 6 years and 12 years, both Venus stages. Freckles are associated with the formation of melanin in the skin, and melanin is associated with the copper containing enzyme Tyrosinase.<sup>13</sup>

## Planetary influences in gender differences

Characteristics of maleness and femaleness in the physical body lie on a continuum and even the physical determination of male and female can have ambiguity, in genetic profile, genitalia, reproductive organs and brain structure for example.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, each human being has within them both masculine and feminine qualities but in varying amounts depending on the individual.

In the embryo, development begins in both genders with female characteristics. At about 8 weeks the genetic programming of the Y chromosome in the male foetus activates the production of testosterone and the female characteristics begin to metamorphose into male characteristics in both the sexual organs and brain and elsewhere. This process of differentiation continues through the gestation period. Steve Biddulph describes how at birth a male child 'will have the same level of testosterone as a 12 year old boy' and 'may even have little erections from time to time as a newborn.'<sup>15</sup> According to Gesell's stages described in 1975, the time of birth would be Stage 6, or Saturn (more masculine) in our hypothesis. Moon follows at about 4 weeks, then Mercury, (both more feminine). 'A few months after birth, the testosterone level will drop to about a fifth of pre birth levels.'

Thus, feminine characteristics appear to come first in development from the very beginning of life. The girls' strengths appear earlier, the boys' strengths slightly later possibly up to a year later by the time they are ready for school.<sup>16</sup> Boys development is later in the embryo, later in speech, toilet training readiness, physical growth, school readiness, emotional maturity and finally sexual maturity. Steve Biddulph describes this<sup>17</sup>: 'From very early on, gender differences are evident in the unborn baby's brain. One difference is that a baby

---

<sup>13</sup> Pelikan also points out that: 'In the brain the richest part [for copper] is the *substantia nigra*, which has melanin-containing nerve cells. (The formation of melanin appears to be promoted by a protein-copper combination.) Here we meet the copper process again as it presses to the periphery [the skin], in connection with pigment formations.' (Pelikan, op.cit p 112) An unsubstantiated but interesting observation by a woman in her thirties was that her friends seemed to again develop freckles, or pigmentation in the skin in spots, around thirty, which, if the planetary rhythm continues into adulthood (as Gesell researchers suggested their Stages might), would again be a Venus age.

<sup>14</sup> It may be that increasing presence of sex hormones in the environment are increasing the occurrence of such ambiguity, especially the presence of 'xenoestrogens', compounds released from certain plastics, which act like estrogen on the body and are affecting animals from the polar regions to the tropics. The use of hormones to promote growth in animals for food has also had its effects.

<sup>15</sup> Quotes from Steve Biddulph are found in his descriptions of these changes as a result of testosterone in *Raising Boys Why boys are different and how to help them become happy and well balanced men* (Finch Publishing, Sydney 1997) He refers to information given by Donovan, B.T. *Hormones and Human Behaviour: The scientific basis of psychiatry* (CUP, Cambridge, 1985 and also Fausto-Sterling A., *Myths of Gender* (Basic Books, New York 1985 p.35-6

<sup>16</sup> Steve Biddulph suggests that at school entry age many boys would benefit from being held back a year because of slower maturation. *ibid* p.128

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid* p.52

boy's brain develops more slowly than a baby girl's.' Sexual maturity, as can be seen in the development of Twelve described below, also occurs a year or so later in boys than girls. In cognitive development, the deepest, most analytical, abstract mature thinking (associated with Saturn and more typically 'male thinking') comes last in development in all children, in adolescence.

Why should there be this pattern of female characteristics and development before male characteristics and development?

Within this planetary cycle we have identified in child development, first three planets, the inner planets in the solar system in relation to Earth— Moon, Mercury and Venus— tend towards the feminine side of the feminine- masculine continuum; Moon is strongly associated with the feminine; Mercury, while not usually considered masculine or feminine, has a communicative social nature which is more associated with feminine social behaviour; Venus is clearly linked to the feminine side both physiologically, in the reproduction organs and menstruation, and in behaviour.

On the other hand, the outer planets, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn are all associated more with the sort of actions, feelings and thinking tendencies considered more masculine on the continuum, as well as Mars being associated strongly with masculinity. Mars, through iron, and Jupiter, through the liver, may both effect testosterone levels in the body.<sup>18</sup>

The question arises then of whether this predominance of the feminine influences acting on growth before the masculine influences in the sequence could have a differential effect on the development of girls and boys that could result in boy's development being slower?

Is it just coincidental then that the planets on the feminine end of the spectrum, especially Venus, come in the observed stages of Gesell before Mars and the other planets on the masculine end of the continuum? This potential differential effect of the planetary influences is obviously not simple and needs a lot more research, but we can at least start with examining some phenomena, which seem otherwise remarkable— like the sudden doubling of testosterone levels in boys at Four. Could this be stimulated by the influence on the masculine qualities in the Mars stage at Three and a half, consolidated by the Jupiter and Saturn stages at Four? Such a possibility is not without foundation. As mentioned already, there is a link between testosterone levels in the blood and iron levels (Mars) and testosterone levels and the liver (Jupiter). These testosterone levels in boys halve again just as suddenly when the influences on the feminine qualities come in at Five and Six (Moon,

---

<sup>18</sup> There is a link between iron (Mars) and testosterone levels. There is some research to suggest that low levels of testosterone are interrelated with low iron levels in men and women. See [http://www.charlespoliquin.com/ArticlesMultimedia/Articles/Article/689/The Meat and Testosterone Connection.aspx](http://www.charlespoliquin.com/ArticlesMultimedia/Articles/Article/689/The_Meat_and_Testosterone_Connection.aspx) and lower testosterone levels and the risk of anaemia in older men and women. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2645631/> In the case of the condition in men called hereditary hemochromatosis it is an excess of iron which is associated with low testosterone readings. The excess iron interferes with the ability of testosterone to bind to a carrier protein known as sex hormone binding globulin, and testosterone does not travel from the testes to the penis. While testosterone itself is not made in the liver (associated with Jupiter), Hormone Binding Globulin (SHBG) is produced in the liver and this special 'carrier' compound plays a special role in regulating the amount of "free" testosterone circulating in the body at any one time (in an inverse proportion of SHBG to testosterone).

Mercury and Venus). Fourteen years (a Jupiter stage), another stage following after a Mars stage at Thirteen, also shows a peak in testosterone in boys.

Girls too have testosterone but the levels are significantly lower. However, if, in fact the Mars forces stimulate the iron levels in the blood, which are related to testosterone levels, one might expect that testosterone levels (and related behaviours) in girls might be relatively higher at these times too, just as testosterone levels in older women are affected by lower blood serum iron levels. These are all questions to consider in the future.

## Venus in human behaviour

### The Venus type: Introduction

The opposing qualities of Venus and Mars, can be seen again in the way the two planetary types work in the world. Both these types work in practical ways, in service to others. But while Mars works actively, obviously, out in the world, Venus works in ways which are sometimes less visible, with quiet warmth, doing important work in preparing the ground, creating the space for other things to manifest and supporting from behind.<sup>19</sup> Like the Moon type, the priority for the Venus type is *love and relationship* and a feeling relationship to the world.

From astrological descriptions, in particular those of Jeff Mayo in *The Planets and Human Behaviour*<sup>20</sup> we can begin to understand better the driving forces behind the service to others in the Venus type. His language is sometimes technical but is included because through it he is able to describe the functions of each planet quite precisely. Mayo describes this Venus influence as one which strives towards developing '*interdependent relationships* with other personas and environmental factors, based on evaluation through the feelings as opposed to rational judgement by the mental faculties.'

This use of the feelings as a major source of perception and of information, rather than just using the intellect, gives the Venus type an insight into others and also a more refined aesthetic sensibility, which is different from information from a purely intellectually experienced source.

Mayo describes Venus influences as a '*centripetal* process, an essentially inner and subjective experience. The urge and power to attract. A need to realize the very quintessence of an experience and to transmute this into feeling evaluation.'<sup>21</sup> The Venus type is 'concerned

---

<sup>19</sup> We see this contrasting quality in the eurythmy gestures given by Rudolf Steiner for the two planets. Eurythmy is an art form which makes speech and musical tones visible through physical gestures. Rudolf Steiner also gave gestures for other archetypal qualities, like the planets, the zodiac and particular 'soul gestures'. While the Mars eurythmy gesture contains a fast movement into the immediate forward space, the Venus gesture reflects quiet inner activity where the left hand circles slowly behind the body while the right hand, palm up, is held forward, quite still, in a giving gesture.

<sup>20</sup> Mayo, Jeff, *The Planets and Human Behaviour* (L.N. Fowler & Co Ltd, London, 1972) p. 82-4

<sup>21</sup> This description of the Venus process being *centripetal*, a picture of forces flowing inwards to the centre is an interesting one. The archetypal sound for Venus is "Aaah" that open, somewhat dreamy, reverent sound we make as we open ourselves with wonder to something and we receive into ourselves all that flows towards us from it. This is the gesture of a young Venus. When we awaken our consciousness with more discrimination about what comes towards us, the mature Venus



with the feelings or virtual lack of feeling'. They experience the 'need to develop sociability, the tendency to behave socially, to seek company, and to participate eagerly in group activities.'

Mayo continues: Venus 'represents the *feminine impulse* in both sexes. It is more than the physical aspect of a sexual relationship: it is the desire to unite opposites, the power behind loving and the need for affection.' It also creates a 'need to appreciate and to be appreciated; a need to cherish a thing or person; the desire to reduce friction and disharmony between oneself and the environment to a minimum; a need for aesthetic enjoyment of beauty in nature and art, and for aesthetic preferences for symmetry, proportion and balance.' 'It is the feeling within the creative impulse: the essence of creativity.' Thus Venus is associated with the function that 'needs to give a distinct value to a thing, person or a situation, through the feelings.' So they want to 'relate but also evaluate.'

All this results in the desire in the Venus type for, Mayo suggests: 'Cooperation, harmony, sympathy, compromise, creativeness, artistry, idealism, aestheticism'. This produces welcome constructive qualities including the above, as well as 'cheerfulness, kindness, humaneness, compassion, affectionateness, sociability, amorousness, refinement, idealism, chasteness, gentleness, amicableness, placidness, tactfulness, passiveness and empathy.'

While such qualities are not without their complications when taken to the extreme, (too much passiveness for example) it is little wonder that in childhood the Venus stages are welcomed with a sigh of relief by many a parent!

But the Venus type is not quite so straight forward as all this might suggest— their evaluation means they may seek discord, as well as harmony. Mayo notes they are driven by 'a need to unite or resolve opposites.' They seek to 'harmonize, balance, unify, smooth out the rough and the discordant, and create cohesion, rhythm and equilibrium' but in doing this they may also 'be compelled or attracted to encounter apparent disharmonious personal contacts.' In the Venus type, with their tendency to be immersed in their feelings, both their sympathy *and* their antipathy can be strong; they love well but also hate strongly. This too we can also observe in the Venus stages in childhood.

In the larger biographical rhythms in life, Venus is associated with the years 14 to 21.

We can now look in more detail at different aspects of the way Venus forces might manifest in the Venus type.

### **The Venus type: Sense of self**

The immature Venus type may have a less distinct, more diffused sense of self. Because they live in such a connected way with the world through their feelings, it takes much more

---

process, when an idea has finally penetrated deeply enough into us for us to grasp it with *understanding*, our sound also transforms into a more abbreviated stronger form of this, into "Ah!" or punctuated, into "A-hah!" Out of the cosmos flows into us something special, centripetally! This inward flow of forces into the centre point found in Venus can also be seen in another way: Rudolf Steiner said 'If we wish to comprehend ourselves as human beings with our individuality and dignity, then we should grasp that it is as if the Gods had concentrated all their strength and caused it to flow into us from the periphery of the cosmos.' (26<sup>th</sup> June 1924).

consciousness to withdraw into themselves to find their centre and their separateness. They find it more difficult to create a personal boundary between themselves and the world in the way a Saturn type does so naturally. It is not surprising then that the Venus type may be over-dependent on others for their sense of self, for appreciation, for their sense of their own 'worth' or 'lack of worth'. They can be too affected by the approval or disapproval of others. They can also too easily absorb into themselves feelings that are not their own.

They can be so concerned with keeping the peace and meeting the needs of others that they may put themselves second even when it would be wiser to put themselves first. It has been said that to be entirely Venus would mean loss of selfhood, such is the potential to entirely serve others. If they are unable to discriminate between what is appropriate giving and what is not, if they are compulsive in their helpfulness and do not feel free to stand back and NOT help, then one sees their weaknesses: being too 'other' centred (appears dependent), too compromising, pacifying, compliant, indecisive, over-sensitive, fluctuating.

When they become too sympathetic, passive and unable to create and hold strong personal boundaries, they may be used by others as 'doormats' (especially if those they serve have no respect for the integrity of the Venus type) and they become open to abuse. In this way they become the victims of their own lack of inner strength.

The mature Venus type learns to bring consciousness, discrimination and judgement to what they experience through their feeling and to this natural sense of service. They sort out what comes to them before they respond! It is interesting that Gesell uses these very words *sorting out* to characterize this Gesell Stage 3, influenced by Venus. The Venus type learns to discriminate, (as the kidney does in cleansing the blood,) what is self, and what is other, what is useful and what is not.

The Venus type particularly needs to learn to be able to respond to their feelings as 'a source of information' rather than allowing their feelings 'to drive instinctive, impulsive reactions'. They need to develop true inner equanimity in feeling, to learn to silence or stand back from feelings of sympathy and antipathy, which lead to such instinctive and emotional reactions. They need to avoid being instantly judgemental or passionate in their love or hate, acceptance and rejection. There needs to be the space created for the freedom to choose to respond in other ways, for the true self to truly be in control.

Then they may be free with praise and sympathy when they feel in harmony with the world or they may choose whether or not to express their disquiet with the world (their antipathy) when the world is not what they think it should be—loving, good, beautiful and true! When a Venus type uses their deep sensitivity to another's situation while still holding their own objectivity and sense of self in place in this way, they are truly in a position to serve their own sense of self *and* humankind well.

### **The Venus type: Relationship to Thinking**

The Venus type's thinking is generally practical first, rather than logical, because it tends to be driven by feeling responses. They are not so interested in cold objectivity, abstract theories or technical questions. Their thinking is more 'feeling thinking', that is, thinking dominated by reactions of sympathy or antipathy to people or the environment, rather than logical thinking. 'Feeling thinking' is also the term Gesell used to describe the thinking of the

young primary school child. This Venus thinking is one that weaves soulful colourful images, analogies, metaphors, poetry, truths in an artistic or ritual form that warm the heart and awaken sympathy. All this is, of course, a gift to the world, like the work of the Romantics, with whom Venus has much in common. However if the Venus type can also develop the capacity to distance themselves from their feelings about the experience, this can help them to also use more objective thinking while still recognising the valuable messages that the feelings bring.

They relate more strongly to time as the present, short time spans, of what needs to be done now.

### **The Venus type: Relationship to Feeling**

As already described, Venus has a deeply feeling, compassionate nature and experiences the world through this. The Saturn type is also deeply feeling, perhaps more so than Venus, but Saturn types find it harder to reach and recognise their feelings, where, for Venus, their feelings are easily accessible and able to be used more freely. They can use their feelings like a sense organ for information about what is going on around them. This is their strength and their vulnerability. They feel the way through the day and experiences, gathering information about the world and people through their feelings. This is what makes them into good carers because they can feel into another's situation so that they can often see what another person needs without being told. This makes them particularly good with small children, the sick, the old and people with disabilities.

The Venus type especially need and want themselves, (and indeed provide for others,) emotional warmth, sharing, joy, art, nature and beauty – 'soul food'. They love the aesthetic and sensual world – massage, warm towels, candlelight, scent, a bath. When met with soul coldness, ugliness and indifference, they can become tense and shrink into themselves. This is particularly important to remember for children of this type and in this stage. Without sympathy themselves, they may wilt like flowers without water, and become listless, not caring.

The Venus type may work entirely behind the scenes. They have a tendency to be more phlegmatic and melancholic in temperament, because of their feeling nature. Nevertheless they can be excellent at arguing because they can move through emotions quickly, where some others (like the Saturn type who needs time) cannot keep up! They can be very up and down in life because they often experience more differences in emotions than other types.

Their tendency to live in sympathy *and* antipathy in the world makes them capable of hating as strongly and passionately as they love. They need to develop objectivity and equanimity in both their judgments and their reactions.<sup>22</sup> One adolescent told me that when she was

---

<sup>22</sup> The ethnic group who have been associated with Venus have been the Malayan group, which includes the beautiful people of Bali who are known for their personal beauty, their love of the arts in their culture, their friendliness and generosity. Their traditional cultural structures, both in local village organization and in the remarkable wider Subak system (which distributes water across the island and has worked democratically for a thousand years,) reflect a high priority for conflict avoidance and resolution. This did not prevent them from showing a fierceness with strangers such as the Dutch colonialists who feared them and, where possible, avoided conflicts with them in the 18<sup>th</sup>

Twelve (a Venus stage) she and her friends had a 'Hate Club' where they 'had to hate someone'. This is not just antipathy overflowing in out-of-control behaviours but an intuitive 'playing with' their feelings of sympathy and antipathy, which they may be experiencing more strongly at this time. It takes sensitive handling for an adult who discovers such activity to help the children explore antipathy in more constructive ways than 'hating' another human being in this way. Calling on the power of compassion in understanding others (a Venus strength) can bring such interest as a 'Hate Club', (which plays with reactive subjective responses) back into balance and develop objectivity.

### **The Venus type: Relationship to people**

The Venus type has a clear relationship orientation. They are relatively secure in the feeling realm and so can play with soul life. They make relationships a priority in their values and one sees this in their characteristic behaviours—they share and cooperate, and are hospitable, diplomatic, tactful, peace loving, harmonious. They can be forgiving of other people's weaknesses, a quality welcomed enthusiastically by the parents of children moving into more critical thinking. It is in relationship with others that the Venus type show their great strengths, but also their vulnerabilities, like experiencing jealousy (a threat to relationship!) and the danger of losing themselves.

### **The Venus type: Relationship to Will power**

The will of the Venus type, being somewhat dominated by feelings and a tendency to give in to other's inclinations, is sometimes described as 'unstable'. Perhaps 'flexible' would be a more sympathetic description. For the willingness to 'give way' and a more sensitive 'seeing what needs to be done' comes along with a quiet working of the will in preparing the space, maintaining the environment, doing the necessary tasks, often in an unacknowledged way. One can see this feminine Venus will most clearly in women and traditional women's work: a quiet perseverance, repeating of tasks which must be done day after day, gathering, cleaning, sorting, washing, recycling, preparing food, caring for children, the sick, the elderly, over long hours. This is the task of 'healthy maintaining', just as the Venus forces as a life force do in the physical body. The world over, in many different cultures, one sees this quiet persevering Venus 'will' in women, who work long and hard to care for their families; women still work for many more hours a day (when paid and unpaid hours of work are counted) than men in many cultures.<sup>23</sup> It shows the quiet strength of perseverance and will—Venus will.

### **Other associations with Venus**

Day of the week- Friday (dies Veneris- Latin *day of Venus*; venerdì- Italian); musical note- F; colour- green; grain- oat; tree- birch; sound for Venus - a as in 'star'.

---

and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps this also reflects Venus' close association with Mars, who is also to be found close to Venus in tradition and also as its complementary planet in therapy.

<sup>23</sup> See 2012 report from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on women and work for world wide figures on this.

## Summary of some qualities associated with Venus to be considered in relation to child development:

- They are generous with their own expressions of appreciation and sympathy but their own need for approval or sympathy makes them vulnerable. They may need to be helped to be more independent in this.
- One weakness is their tendency to judge everything through their feelings, by sympathy and antipathy; may need help to see the gift they have in being able to use their feelings as a way of perceiving, getting information, understanding, but then stand back from this to see truth, not judge, hold back objectively their personal sympathy and antipathy.
- They flow easily in their feelings into the environment and into the experiences of others. Their personal boundaries can be weak. They need to learn to be more conscious, and have more clarity about what is self, to be able to draw inwards within a clear boundary of self. They need to learn to discriminate, as the kidney does, what is useful to self and what is not.
- They love aesthetic experiences and can be distressed at the lack of it; it is particularly distressing for the Venus type to be surrounded by physical ugliness and soul ugliness, lack of order and disharmony.
- They need 'soul warmth' on every level—emotional warmth, joy, art, beauty, nature, truthfulness. They need to avoid soul coldness and indifference, under which they can shrink and become tense. They are more influenced by the way others treat them, which makes them more vulnerable to their human environment.
- They show sensuality and sexual tendencies, and relate to the feminine part of ourselves.

## A closer look at child development: Gesell Stage 3 and Venus

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.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> 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

The Gesell Stage 3 which we relate to Venus in childhood begins with 16 to 20 weeks, 52-56 weeks to 1 year 3 months, 3 to 3 ½ years, 6 ½ to 7 years and 12 years.<sup>25 26</sup> Extrapolated from these, the sixth Stage 3 would be 18 years.

We have scant information from Gesell on the stages in infancy, although it is possible we can get glimpses of Venus at one year, 3 and 6 ½ years (although Gesell does not provide a great deal of specific information on these either, perhaps because they are not normally difficult ages.) In middle childhood /early adolescence at 12 years one can see Venus tendencies manifesting. Unfortunately the last Venus stage in childhood, 18 years, falls beyond the scope of the Gesell studies which finish at 16 years. Thus the Venus stages are not quite so well covered by the Gesell research as some other stages, but nevertheless we can find the gesture of Venus within them.

Gesell Stage 3, they describe generally as being '*in equilibrium, rounded and well balanced.*' It is interesting to note that in 2011 the Gesell Institute of Child Development used the words '*sorting out*' as the single key word description of this stage.

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 Venus type. Direct quotations in 'single quote marks' or indented are from the Gesell research unless indicated otherwise.

### **16 to 20 weeks: the first Gesell Stage 3**

In *The Child from Five to Ten*,<sup>27</sup> Gesell, Ilg and Bates 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, it does put 16 to 20 weeks at Stage 3 which we are postulating to be associated with the forces of Venus. We assume that these must be the weeks that most clearly show the characteristics of Stage 3 though the period may start before this if the stages are increasing incrementally.

---

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.

<sup>25</sup> Gesell, Arnold, Ilg, Frances L., Bates Ames, L. *The Child from Five to Ten* (Harper & Row, New York 1977 p.47

<sup>26</sup> 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. In this new set of descriptions, they have used the description 'Sorting out' for Stage 3.

<sup>27</sup> Gesell, Arnold, Ilg, Frances L., Bates Ames, Louise *The Child from Five to Ten* op. cit. p.47

Gesell has given relatively little information on the specific ages in infancy regarding the emotional behaviour, or 'mood' of very young children in these stages, though there has plenty of research into what they can do physically.

Gesell describes 16 weeks briefly<sup>28</sup> as an age where the child likes to be held for brief periods in a seated position 'so that he may face the world eyes front'. He still has limited control of his hands at this stage.

There is something prophetic in the way in which the sixteen-week-old infant relishes the sitting position. His eyes glisten; his pulse strengthens, his breathing quickens, and he smiles as he is translated from horizontal to perpendicular. This is more than athletic triumph. It is a widening of the visual horizon; it is a social orientation.

Social behaviour both personal and interpersonal has greatly expanded. He or she coos with contentment, chuckles, laughs aloud. The child used to smile only on gastric occasions, but now imitates a social smile, and also smiles responsively and vocalizes on social approach....The sixteen week old child is usually well adjusted both to the world of things and to the world of persons. This is partly because he derives such great satisfaction from the free use of his eyes. He frets when his visual hunger goes unappeased. He quiets when ocular and social stimuli combine to feed his appetite for visual experience.

This really is scant information but it is interesting that this new development is both social and visual, both associated with Venus. More observation at 16 weeks is needed, keeping the behaviours associated with planetary influence in mind.

### **12 to 15 months: second Gesell Stage 3**

Here we have a little more information from Gesell studies on Twelve months. This stage lasts only three months at this stage of development, possibly only two months if we take the Gesell Institute's revised timings into account. Quoting directly from Gesell researchers:<sup>29</sup>

At the time of his important first birthday your infant is a treasure and a joy to all concerned. Your typical Twelve month-old tends to be an extremely loveable little person—friendly, sociable, amenable. Given a reasonably favourable personality, normally good health, and a modestly supportive environment, most One-year-olds seem to adapt rather easily to whatever it is the adult caretaker has in mind.

The year old baby loves an audience. This is one reason why he is so often the very center of a household group. He likes to repeat performances laughed at....Your applause seems to help him sense his own identity. He is defining a difficult psychological distinction—the difference between himself and others.

And he is capable of primitive kinds of affection, jealousy, sympathy, anxiety. He may be responsive to rhythm. He may even show a very slight sense of humour, for he laughs at abrupt surprise sounds and at startling incongruities. Fifty two weeks is

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid p.32-4

<sup>29</sup> Bates Ames, Louise & Chase Haber, Carol *Your One Year Old 12 to 24 months Fun Loving and Fussy* (A Dell Trade Paperback, New York 1979) from the Gesell Institute of Human Development

clearly the heyday of sociability. He enjoys his carriage ride ...hiding behind chairs to play "Where's the baby?" ... bath is usually very much enjoyed...[he is] usually quite easy to dress – giving little difficulty....Behaviour-wise, the time of the first birthday is not a particularly significant turning point.

This easiness and amenability does not last but is consistent, in its sociability, with Venus influence. By Fifteen months, the next Gesell stage, (Mars) behaviour already becomes more challenging!

### **Three Years to Three and a half: the third Gesell Stage 3**

While we have relatively little at 16 weeks and 12 months' on emotional behaviours specifically, we do have more behaviours of Three Years to examine. At this point the stages increase in length to six months. What we see of the mood or gesture of planetary influenced behaviours may still be more difficult to separate from other aspects of the child's maturing, both physically and emotionally but, nevertheless, if we observe what came before and what comes afterwards, we can particularly observe what might be Venus influenced.

Quoting direct from Gesell researchers:<sup>30</sup>

Dr Arnold Gesell has described Three as a "coming of age, a time at which many strands of development converge. And a new self comes into focus." The conflicting extremes of six months ago give way to a high degree of smoothness, integration, and self control. Emotions are well in hand.

Other Gesell researchers expand on this: 'Emotionally, it is fair to assume, the typical Three year old is a rather happy person – calm, collected, secure and capable, friendly and giving. He conforms easily, and thus, liking to please, he pleases.' 'Around the age of Three [he does] seem to calm down conspicuously. He says "yes" instead of "no"; "will" instead of "won't". He smiles instead of frowns, laughs instead of cries, gives in comfortably to your requests instead of resisting them.'

'...by Three many children seem to be developing a rather good self concept, seem to have a solid set of feelings about themselves. There is little question that this sense of self is influenced by the ways others treat them.' '...in fact Three is a highly "we" age. The child likes to say "let's" as "Let's go for a walk shall we?" The sense of togetherness or "we-ness" seems to make him depend on the adult and makes him lean on him or her, though he also enjoys the sense of sharing. The very child who has been so independent earlier may now ask his mother "Help me," "Show me."

There are many aspects in these descriptions which are consistent with the Venus influences: cheerfulness, affectionateness, sociability, amicableness and placidness. Even the Venus sensitivity to other people's feelings (the beginnings of empathy?) appears in the following comments:

Three seems, for all his relative immaturity, to be rather highly aware of what other people like and do not like. In fact many seem quite able to tell whether another person is happy or sad, pleased or angry, by watching that person's face. At any rate

---

<sup>30</sup> Some of this is from *Your Three Year Old Friend or Enemy* (Dell Trade Paperback, New York 1985) by Gesell researchers Louise Bates Ames and Frances L. Ilg



the typical Three-year-old wants to please. He wants to do things “right.” “Do it dis way?” he may ask hopefully. He is highly susceptible to praise and favourable comment and also highly responsive to friendly humour.

[Three’s] sociability is also in evidence with other children as cooperative play becomes possible....Three now enjoys other children, but most of all he enjoys his mother. He loves to do things with her—go for a walk, go to the store, “help” with the housework, and, above all, play. He is happiest when his mother finds it possible to give up other activities and concentrate on him. Almost anything the two of you do together brings him joy....

With regard to other children, Three is the age when cooperative play now begins to take the place of parallel play—that is the child actually plays *with* another child instead of merely beside him, as formerly. Children may seem less selfish than just earlier, and may not only share possessions with others but can themselves ...be able to persuade another child who wants to grab his toy, that *something else* might be just as acceptable...[They]’can use sharing and turn taking...’

It is interesting here too that it is in a Venus age that cooperative play starts to be established and that at Three many children are beginning to be interested in other children’s feelings, in how things seem to others. Gesell researchers describe this:

For the most part children are now more interested *in each other* than any particular activity. Behaviour shifts not only from place to place and from type to type, but also as to level of maturity...Cooperative play still tends to be...rudimentary.  
..Interpersonal relations are still tentative and experimental...[There is] less aggression but more excluding.

The increased smoothness seen in the typical child of Three has a strongly motor basis. His body is now delightfully at his demand...Three is sure and nimble on his feet...Three is also aware and proud of his increasing maturity and increasing ability. He frequently asks, after some particular display of prowess, “Could a baby do this?”

Not only is he secure physically and happy socially and calm emotionally, but language now means a great deal to him.

One could be tempted to think that maturation alone has brought the child to this new more comfortable place with so many sociable, easy going Venus qualities. Yet it does not continue quite as one might hope. As Gesell describes: ‘And then just as you are really beginning to enjoy this tractable little creature...he hits Three-and-a-half, a wild and wonderful age with characteristics all its own.’ So there follows the next age: Gesell Stage 4 and Mars influences.

### **Six Years 3-6 months to Seven: the fourth Gesell Stage 3.**

Gesell researchers describe Five in *Your Five Year Old. Sunny and Serene* by Louise Bates Ames and Frances L Ilg.<sup>31</sup> This certainly seems an apt description for a child in a Moon stage

---

<sup>31</sup> Bates Ames, L., and Ilg, Frances L. *Your Five Year Old. Sunny and Serene* (A Dell Paperback, New York, 1979)

at Five to Five and a half — ‘sunny and serene’. But then Older Fives begin to show different qualities which run into Six and they become less predictable, less easily managed and more difficult. This more turbulent time — Gesell’s stage 2 (which we hypothesize is a stage influenced by Mercury) they suggests ends at about Six-and-a-half. If there is a rhythmical predictable pattern to this, as we are discovering, the next Stage 3 may well start closer to Six-and-three-months. This needs to be better observed, perhaps using the planetary qualities to help this. What we do know is that this Stage 3 at Six-years-and- 3-to-6 months to Seven is again an easier age for adults and children, and perhaps this is why there is less said about it. Adults just give a sigh of relief instead! With a challenging age like Stage 2 it may be that the disruptive behaviours, and the adult’s response to them, flow on into the next stage while family harmony is gradually re-established.

This is what Gesell researchers do say about Older Six in *Your Six Year Old Loving and Defiant*<sup>32</sup>

‘But somewhere between the perhaps too exuberant and aggressive personality of [Five-and-a-half to ] Six and the often rather melancholy age of Seven comes this delightful time when all the lively, exuberant responses characteristic of this age come to full flower.’ ‘...Early Six was a handful. Six-and-a-half can be truly gorgeous...can be one of the nicest and most rewarding periods in early childhood.’ ‘What make him so much fun? His lively intellectuality, for one thing. Intellectual tasks are now a challenge. He *loves* to count for you, loves to say his ABCs...he is as proud of his newfound abilities as if he had discovered America....He is amusing and has a wonderful sense of humour...He loves to play guessing games...’ ‘Six-and-a-half year old child likes you and you like him. No question. There is warmth at this age quite unlike anything seen at most ages.’ ‘For a brief little time the child relates to you, and you are able to relate to him, almost as if he were another, very sympathetic, appreciative and satisfactory adult. There is a certain maturity to the child of this age that is very appealing.’

Warmth, love, sympathy, appreciation and relationship — all closely connected with Venus influences. The expansive interests described below are less so. Perhaps it reflects more their new cognitive capacities which are growing at this time.

‘Though the negative aspects of [younger] Six’s opposite extremes may have been trying, the positive part is very easy to take: biggest hugs; most “I love you, Mummy”s; worries that something may happen to Mother; boundless enthusiasm for any prospect or proposal; love of exploration, physical and intellectual.’ ‘The child of this age loves new places, new ideas, new bits of information, and (his own) new accomplishments. His capacity for enjoyment is tremendous. Make him a present or a surprise, give him praise, propose a treat, and his vigorously expressed joy and enthusiasm will well repay you.’

They say it is good for parents to remember ‘that there was, for many, this brief, blissful, enthusiastic, warmly responsive and exciting time when son or daughter was Six-and-a-half.’

---

<sup>32</sup> Bates Ames, L. & Ilg, Frances L. *Your Six Year Old Loving and Defiant* (A Dell Paperback, New York, 1979) p.9

There is one other area of interest at this age which could have some relationship to the influence of Venus and relationships. This is in the area of 'sexual interests.' Bates Ames and Ilg comment the following:<sup>33</sup>

The relative quiescence about sex, so characteristic of the Five-year-old, often changes at Six. It's fair to say that the typical Six year old is a rather sexy individual and one who is interested in sex and its ramifications.

Sex play is quite customary, and suggests the (admittedly immature) sexual appeal of the child of this age. It is our impression that more Six-year-olds than children of other related ages are subjected to sexual molestation or advances by strangers and others.

At any rate, sex play is now much enjoyed by many. Children are interested in and stimulated by exposure to or by others, such as pulling down or taking off pants. This play quite easily elaborates into doctor play...

...Things are obviously blossoming at this time. Children are feeling something or other rather strongly. They need help and calm, unanxious understanding when their actions or their questions give us clues that they have sex on their minds, at this undoubtedly rather sexy age. (One day, we hope, specialists can tell us just exactly what *is* going on, or at least can tell us about the level of sex hormones in the child's bloodstream at this time.)

Our own Australian experience confirms these observations. Parents report problems with 'sexual touching and exploration' between children of this age. Teachers report observing children's 'sex play' in the kindergarten. Often this just involves children simply hugging each other while rolling around on the floor – what the children themselves across Australia call 'sexing'.<sup>34</sup> In general the behaviours shown around six seem to be purely curious physical exploration of the genitals and excretory organs or this innocent imitation of these strange adult behaviours. They also delight in 'toilet jokes' about 'poos and 'wees' and indeed anything 'metabolic', including vomiting! The children's physical growth at this time has an emphasis in the limbs and metabolic system in the lower trunk and there seems to be a psychological interest which follows this physical growth. (It has been evident in earlier years in unusual interest in features of the upper trunk, breasts and belly buttons, when the emphasis of growth was in the chest and rhythmic system.)

In relation to our older Sixes, the interest seems to move on from the physical exploratory curiosity of Five and younger Sixes to a rather more flirtatious psychological tension between the sexes in the older Sixes, even a sensuality, consistent with a Venus influence. The games played contain a certain coquettishness; they now become 'kiss chasey', locking

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid p.67-9

<sup>34</sup> It is usually an innocent imitation of observed adult behaviours but can go as far in an extreme case of a child trying to put a penis into a vagina. In this case one would suspect sexual abuse of the child concerned or imitation of behaviours of other children who have been abused or who have observed adult love making close up. Such behaviour needs to be diplomatically investigated and stopped by restating rules about personal boundaries. If there are other signs of sexual abuse (see the work of Freda Briggs books or talks on Youtube) it needs further investigation and help from the appropriate authorities.

the girls in a cupboard or trapping them (out of the teacher's sight) in a 'cubby' somewhere. If pants are pulled down it seems less with the intent to 'see something' (as younger children would do, "I'll show you mine if you show me yours", or peeping under women's skirts or under toilet doors) and more with a boy-girl teasing intention. There may be shy talk of girlfriends/boyfriends, short cryptic notes passed around in class. Many of these behaviours disappear at Seven. These somewhat flirtatious behaviours between the sexes also appear at the next Venus age at Twelve.

One further odd link with Venus influences and its metal copper is that freckles appear particularly at 6 years but also 12 years, the next Venus year. Freckles are associated with the formation of melanin in the skin, and melanin is associated with the copper containing enzyme Tyrosinase.<sup>35</sup>

### Twelve years: the fifth Gesell Stage 3

At the next Stage 3 age, Twelve years, which we hypothesize also reflects Venus influences, we find a similar picture to Six. Again Louise Bates Ames and Frances Ilg, along with Sidney Baker, in *Your Ten-to-Fourteen-Year-Old*<sup>36</sup> describe a generally 'easy to get on with' child especially in comparison with 'not so easy' Eleven!

Passages in quotes come directly from these Gesell researchers:

'Calm Twelve follows picky, quarrelsome, objecting Eleven as sunshine follows a storm.' Venus' sociable qualities are immediately evident: 'Twelves are nicely aware of their assets. They seem to be able to pick the very ones which best characterize their age—"being good natured," "having a good disposition," "being kind," and "getting along with people." ' Twelves are described as 'tolerant, sympathetic, and friendly', all Venus qualities. In the Gesell interviews 'Twelves enjoy the interview, like to talk, like the interplay with the interviewer.' 'They are comfortable and secure enough within themselves that they can allow other people to be less than perfect. Twelve will even allow mother to make a mistake or display a less-than-even temper'. Twelve 'can merely step back, rather gently, view parents tolerantly and somewhat objectively,' and choose sometimes to be separate from them, preferring to be with their friends.

In relation to their peers, Twelve again shows Venus' priority for relationships. Friends are important to them. 'In the desire to hold things in balance, Twelves have lost the sharp edge of competition so conspicuous at eleven, preferring to be even with peers, no better, no worse. They want to do their best, have a good time, and give others a chance.' 'Most have not yet begun those probing comparisons with others and downgrading of self which can

---

<sup>35</sup> Pelikan also points out that: 'In the brain the richest part [for copper] is the *substantia nigra*, which has melanin-containing nerve cells. (The formation of melanin appears to be promoted by a protein-copper combination.) Here we meet the copper process again as it presses to the periphery [the skin], in connection with pigment formations.' (Pelikan, op.cit p 112) An unsubstantiated but interesting observation by a woman in her thirties was that her friends seemed to again develop freckles, or pigmentation in the skin in spots, around thirty, which, if the planetary rhythm continues into adulthood (as Gesell researchers suggested their Stages might), would again be a Venus age.

<sup>36</sup> Bates Ames, Louise, Ilg, Frances L., & Baker, Sidney M. *Your Ten-to-Fourteen-Year Old* (A Dell Trade Paperback New York 1988) p. 77-109

for many make the next few years so uncomfortable. Twelve is a pretty nice age to be...’ This ‘increased smoothness’ can also be seen at school where they are ‘secure, calm, expansive’ and are now ‘often quite emotionally well suited to the complexity and turmoil’ of school. The majority are said to be ‘nicer in class’, more cooperative, not as lazy, aggressive or rebellious as they were a year earlier, at least as individuals.

Like children in a Moon stage, Twelves in a Venus stage, with their reluctance to go against others, sometimes find it hard to hold their own against the group. ‘The group is important to Twelves. Their own identity can become lost within the group.’ At school ‘group behaviour may leave something to be desired’ when they ‘egg each other on’. This is an area where Twelves may encouragement to be stronger in themselves individually to do what is right and good.

The characteristic strong sympathy and antipathy of Venus is also evident. Gesell characterizes Twelve’s emotional reactions in the one word ‘enthusiasm’. ‘Much of the time boy or girl is bursting with energy. Boy just LOVES this or that; girl just HATES something else. There is little middle ground. In spite of the energy which most have at their command, there is less boiling over and exploding when angry... Many just “sit and seethe” or more likely make some verbal response. ‘When Twelve loves, he loves wholeheartedly. A more exuberant girl may sign her letters to her mother with “Love, Love, Love (multiplied by 10,000).” Twelves abounding enthusiasm may be equally expressed for pretzels, parents or religion. And hatred, alas, can be quite as strong. More often than not it is directed towards school...’ ‘Twelves extremes may be expressed in caution or daring, uproarious laughter or a complete absence of humour.’

Again consistent with the Venus type, avoidance of discord and in spite of the extremes in response, Twelve shows “a miraculous smoothing out” compared with his earlier self; ‘seems to want to keep things in balance, to level forces of disagreement, to smooth over rough places.’ The child may at times be spunky and impatient but on the whole is good-natured, pleasant, and willing to listen to reason.’

More Venus qualities are also evident in their sensitive reading of other people’s feelings and respect for these. ‘Children of this age have their own feeling enough in hand to be more aware of other people’s feelings. They are often said to read mother’s emotions clearly. They watch her face to see how she feels. Twelve respects other people’s feelings and is cautious not to tread on any toes.’

The Venus qualities of empathy, kindness, humaneness and compassion are also evident. ‘Twelve’s wishes are not only for the self, but for others. Girl or boy want to help the family or take them on a trip... Twelve not only desires peace in the world but would eradicate diseases, famine, and the threat of nuclear war’ (in the ‘70s). Twelves have something of a social conscience, caring about others. Gesell found that ‘a rather touching’ fifty five percent of girls, sixty one percent of boys, believe that they themselves, when they are older, ‘might do something to improve social and political conditions.’

Twelves also have aesthetic interests and a love of the beauty of nature, consistent with Venus. ‘Both sexes are interested in art and painting.’ ‘and some try their hand at creative writing.’ ‘They are quick to see the beauty of nature walks, and this perception produces added happiness.’

Twelves have big appetites and can be driven by hunger. In their health, 'though excellent in some', Twelve 'may not not possess consistent good health. He tires less frequently than Eleven, but periods of extreme fatigue can occur when girl or boy hates everything and everybody that demands anything. This is the time when the child would profit from a day off from school.'

Freckles increase again, as they did at Six, presenting us again with this phenomenon of increased melanin, which is associated with copper, the Venus metal.

Twelve, like Six, also raises some issues around sexuality, and erotic and sensual experiences, which could reflect Venus influences as well as increases in sex hormones levels, more in girls than boys, more in some than others. These drive more exploratory behaviours, such as the enjoyment of kissing:

Most Twelves are not as demonstrative in their affections for parents as at eleven. They restrict expressions of physical affections mainly to kissing, and this they definitely enjoy. They kiss good-bye. They kiss goodnight. Twelves may talk about whether they are for kissing or against it. No twelve-year-old party can be guaranteed safe from some form of kissing game...Girls are sometimes flirtatious with their fathers and are often said to be able to handle father better than any other member of the family does.

The 'romance' of this age is also interesting, and consistent with a Venus influence. 'While some may still be strongly 'anti-boy' or 'anti-girl', most express a definite friendliness and interest.' 'Some boys who were not interested in girls at eleven, and may not be again at thirteen, enjoy a short period of genuine interest at Twelve.' This slackening off of interest at Thirteen in some boys would certainly suggest that it is not all coming from hormonal changes— but may be Venus influenced as well. So 'dating and interest in dating increases, even significantly amongst the boys.' This romantic interest of the boys may be there for a short or long time—"in and out," 'first giving a good bit of attention to girls, then not bothering about them and being too busy.' 'Both boys and girls show a lot of shifting interest from one friend to another. Boys may get a girl in order to keep up with the other boys, and they may give her up as quickly as they got her.' At parties 'of course there must be one game such as "hide-in-the-dark" which seems essential to Twelve's craving for close accidental, and exciting contact with the opposite sex.'

The difference in maturity levels between the girls and boys is more obvious: 'Girls, on the whole are more interested in boys than vice versa. In fact the girls are often chasing the boys. They want to sit near them. The boys' interest rises as the year progresses. They express their initial interest by poking. Soon they are snatching a girl's wallet or pencil box and are off to hide it.' 'Most girls attend parties hoping that something romantic may happen' while boys may go to 'horse around.'

The subject of sex 'is really interesting to Twelve, and they tend to think of it less as dirty than earlier. Boy or girl wants information and wants to be set straight.' This has implications for the timing of sex education in school and at home.

The preceding Gesell observations were recorded in 1979. Have the children changed since then? From the feedback I have had from parents in the past twenty years in workshops on 'understanding children's sexual development in ages 0 to 12 years', it would seem that

Twelve is still a naturally receptive age for sex education for most children. By this time most children have worked through their feeling of incomprehension that adults should do what sexual intercourse involves ('my parents would not do that, willingly', 'yuk', 'don't do that kissing stuff!') and have a healthy curiosity and interest about it. They begin to 'peek' at these behaviours rather than 'shrinking in disgust' from them, the former behaviour being a sure sign that they are now more ready for information about sexual intercourse and its relationship to romantic love.

Sex education (about sexual intercourse) is often presented in schools earlier than this because there is a small proportion (5%<sup>37</sup>) of children who are already having sexual intercourse at Twelve. Experience would suggest that these more precocious children are often the same children who are interested in drugs, alcohol and unsupervised parties with older children, have older siblings or are exposed to an acceptance of sexual behaviours in young adolescents in the environment. Sadly this also includes those children who have been sexually abused; their use of sexual intercourse often manifests in unhealthy ways, for defiance, to fill unmet needs for touch or affection or self empowerment. For most other Twelves this interest in the opposite sex is still a relatively innocent 'romantic love', maybe involving 'sexual activity' (kissing, holding hands, fondling) but not full 'penetrative sex'. A recent Australian government study confirms that such initial, more innocent 'sexual activity' is perfectly normal and developmentally appropriate for Elevens and Twelves.<sup>38</sup>

All this is consistent with the influence of Venus forces, for, as we have seen, at Thirteen the interest in dating drops a little, seeming to confirm that this might have been a developmental stage influence rather than only a consequence of sexual maturation.

To return to the Gesell research: Twelve 'is the year of most rapid adolescent growth [in girls] in both height and weight. (By the end of this year, the average girl has achieved more than 95 % of her mature height.)...There is now a definite filling out of the breasts and Menarche occurs most often towards the end of this year.' The Gesell research also confirms that, in contrast to girls, boys are maturing later: 'Where Twelve marked just the traces of physical maturity features in many boys, Thirteen brings more definite changes.'<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> A 2005 US abstinence site suggest 5% 12 year olds have had sex.[http://www.focuscommunity.org/Teen\\_Sexual\\_Behavior.htm#I.%20Younger%20teens%200%2812%20to%2014%20years%20old%29](http://www.focuscommunity.org/Teen_Sexual_Behavior.htm#I.%20Younger%20teens%200%2812%20to%2014%20years%20old%29) 2008 figures in the USA nationally and California specific studies showed that among 12 or 13 year olds , 1.4% used prescription-type drugs non-medically, 1.1% used inhalants, and 0.9% used marijuana. Quoted in [http://www.prescriptiondrugmisuse.org/index.php?page=usage\\_among\\_youth](http://www.prescriptiondrugmisuse.org/index.php?page=usage_among_youth) These figures would suggest that in general the numbers are probably smaller than many parents think. Higher levels than this may of course be found in communities that tolerate more drug use, alcohol, and early sexual intercourse in teenagers or have more easily accessible drug and alcohol supplies or available money to buy them.

<sup>38</sup> Mary Stathopolous *Sibling sexual abuse* Australian Institute for Family Studies, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, October 2012

<sup>39</sup> Physical, especially sexual maturity can be affected by many factors other than 'blueprint' development; we know Menarche is brought on earlier where there is more fat in the tissues, as well

Overall in Twelve, one can again find many of the characteristics of Venus: sociability, amicableness, cheerfulness, kindness, affectionateness, amorousness, strong experience of love and hate, sympathy and antipathy, interest in artistic work and the beauty of nature, compassion, idealism, humaneness, tactfulness, and empathy, sexual interest.

### **Eighteen years: extrapolated the sixth Gesell Stage**

The last Venus stage of youth, according to our hypothesis is Eighteen, which falls outside the age range of the Gesell study. In life span development and biography work, Venus is meant to be of considerable influence in the years of 14 to 21 years, so should be mentioned in this context. The amenable qualities of the earlier Venus stages are not what one would normally associate with adolescence. For many it is a turbulent time. But it is turbulent largely because they are thrown so deeply into their emotions which are so often hard to control. Considerable changes in the brain growth patterns and unfolding new intellectual abilities support big changes in thinking. Huge hormonal changes bring considerable challenges to their feeling life. A growing natural drive for independence manifests in wilful behaviours which often concerns adults worried about their adolescent's capacity for mature decision making (a legitimate worry, it turns out!). The initial black and white thinking, the emersion in the feelings of sympathy and antipathy certainly reflect strong Venus challenges during this period. Adolescents often cover their vulnerabilities with bravado that makes them appear more tough and 'together' than they are. By 18 years which often comes at the end of high school, one can sense the maturing which brings more objectivity and control over their feeling life in many.

### **Conclusion:**

The aim of this essay was to examine whether the archetypal influences and qualities associated with Venus could be found to any significant degree in the behaviour of children in Gesell Stage 3. We have found that there is indeed evidence of Venus in the children's behaviour, in their sense of self, in their thinking, feeling, relationships with people and in their will and in their giving priority to love and relationships. As we have seen, the order of the planets— Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn— represents both youth to old age, and innocence to wisdom, and Venus falls towards the younger side of the centre in this. Venus is youthful but not as innocent as Moon, nor so self-centred or restless as Mercury. It represents the feminine side of ourselves, that part which can take a quiet place behind the action, supporting thoughtfully from behind. Even in childhood, the Venus stages bring a quiet calm between the restless independence of the Mercury stages and the active outward thrusts and inward digestion of experience of the Mars stages. The Venus stages bring affectionate, joyful times with children, with a love of creativity, beauty and nature and a little flirtatiousness in relationships.

A metaphor for Venus can be found in the beauty of the flower and the sexual part of the plant.

---

as stress factors, the presence of non biologically related males in the home, even, from early historical studies, the closer they live to warmer climates. Boys' sexual maturity appears to be delayed when there are estrogens in modern diets. All this would suggest that physical sexual maturity will be different in different environments to some extent.



From the beginning in child development in the Venus stages one sees the social good nature in the child. At 16 to 20 weeks one already sees the delighted communications of the child made more possible now by being able to sit and watch, with eyes that follow all that happens around them. They now have a social orientation but have not yet started the physically active phase which comes with Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

By the time the child has spent the last two months of the first year in the fiercely independent Mercury stage, parents welcome the more amenable Venus stage at Twelve Months, in which we find a social, friendly child, who experiences the world with new breadth of feeling—affection, jealousy, sympathy, anxiety—who can play a little with their sense of self—where’s baby?—and even show the beginning of humour. The warmth of this stage stands in contrast to the following stages where the child can seem quite socially detached. At Twelve Months we now see more smoothness, integration and self control.

Gesell found the next Venus sage at Three Years calm, collected, secure, capable, friendly and giving. They conform more easily and resist less, smile more, frown less. They are more interested in togetherness than independence. There is much in the descriptions of Younger Threes which is consistent with the Venus influences: cheerfulness, affectionateness, sociability, amicableness and placidness. Even the Venus sensitivity to other people’s feelings (the beginnings of empathy?) appears at this age. Cooperative play with other children starts very comfortably at this time because the children are more giving and less selfish and more interested in others. All this will not last when Mars comes to influence growth next.

The next Venus stage at Six also shows a friendly good nature and joyfulness in living. What is most notable however is the flirtatiousness which arises at this time. It appears that Venus brings a certain erotic interest. At Twelve too one also sees an increase in fairly innocent, amorous, sexual interest. Twelves suddenly show more interest in kissing (of all kinds) and dating, for example. Twelves have a clear priority for friendships and relationships, and again Venus qualities are clearly evident: cheerful, sociable, good natured, affectionate, kind, comfortable, secure, tolerant, accepting and cooperative. Twelves are also clearly interested in artistic work and the beauty of nature.

The sense of self in the Venus stages can appear weaker as they tend to put themselves second, but this is often their own choice as they consider other people’s needs more. The later Venus stages in general also show considerable emotional intelligence, which can be seen in their compassion, empathy, tolerance, tactfulness, humaneness, a social conscience and idealism. They are capable of the sensitive reading of other people’s feelings and have respect for these.

Feeling drives Venus and the Venus stages; they are characteristically strong in likes and dislikes, in love and hate, sympathy and antipathy. Their thinking and will power too, while quite practical, are also strongly feeling based. With a good ability to access their feelings, they can use feelings as a useful source of information. The danger is of course that they may be ruled by their feelings. In addition, avoidance of discord can make it hard to hold their own against the group. Their strength of individual self can be compromised by this.

The development in the Venus stages do indeed reveal a great deal of Venus and do not just reflect incremental, chronological development, for much will change in the following stage

as the influences of Mars again begin their work, and the determined individualizing replaces the Venus affectionate good nature and friendly helpfulness. However the opportunity that the Venus stage offers in experiencing a different way of being in the world— to develop qualities of the heart and relationships with others, to experience the world through the feelings, with empathy and compassion, to learn how to avoid conflict and live with tolerance, amongst other things—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 Venus 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](http://www.creativelivingwithchildren.com).

### What helps the Venus type and children in Gesell Stage 3

From all this we can identify many things which might help support children who are by nature a Venus type or who are in a Venus 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, especially in the case of Venus and Moon, the more amenable stages. Awareness of these needs may also help our relationships with Venus type adults!!

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

- As we do with the Saturn type, we *need to understand their considerable sensitivity*. They need to be surrounded by quality sensory experiences through *all* of their senses— touch, movement, sense of wellness, warmth, sight, hearing, smell, taste, good speech, truthfulness of thoughts and goodness in human individualities. Overstimulation, crudeness and ugliness in all of these areas are more deeply felt by these types, as well as other sensitive children.

We need to *provide protection* for them. Sensory input can be more overwhelming for them as their thresholds for it are low. They may need to do a lot less for a time, to have space, quiet times for dreaming, with no demands put upon them. We need to give them permission to *not* do things, to say “no” and learn how to protect themselves.

Living in their own feelings so strongly, the Venus type is more *sensitive to the feelings of others*. They may be better at reading other people, including the nonverbal

messages, even when nothing is said at all. Carers need to be mindful of this sensitivity and perhaps be more careful of being too strong in their reactions and admonitions. Venus and Saturn children can be effectively guided, even reprimanded, quite gently. Their sensitivity makes them more vulnerable to self blame. They may need to be helped to see when other people's feelings and reactions are not related to themselves. They may need help to learn how to separate themselves from the feelings of others and become more objective.

They may also be more *sensitive to violence* in life, in the media and movies and need more protection from it. Their deeper empathy can make these things far more painful for them than for some other hardier types. For example, sensitive children can suffer deeply with the suffering of another, when another child is picked on by a teacher or peers. If the child is surrounded in the family by others who are of hardier temperaments, their sensitivity may not be understood or responded to with sympathy. Such people may be tempted to tell these children to 'just toughen up' but the world needs their sensitivity and their insight into the suffering of others and the compassion it deserves.

- *They may need help to stay more objective.* Their weakness is the tendency to judge everything through their feelings, by sympathy and antipathy; they may love strongly but also hate strongly. They may need help to use the gift they have in being able to use their feelings as a way of perceiving, of getting information and understanding. But they may also need help to be more objective and not judge, to hold back their personal sympathy and antipathy.
- *They need beauty and nature.* They have a deep love of beauty and a repugnance for ugliness. Children at this stage and especially of this type may be more deeply affected by both physical and soul ugliness, lack of order and disharmony. Such things may penetrate them more deeply than they do others. They need more protection from these things and need more nourishment from beauty, art, order and nature around them. Nature experiences nourish and heal them. They also love creativity and all the arts and sensual things. They may be more responsive to calming touch in times of stress. All these things may be ways to bring healing at these ages when they are stressed or unhappy.
- *They need 'soul warmth'* on every level—emotional warmth, acceptance, joy and a positive social environment. Where there is soul coldness and indifference, the Venus type can shrink and become tense. They are more influenced by the way others treat them, and this makes them more vulnerable to their human environment.
- *They may need help to say what they need.* Like the Moon type, the Venus type have a people-pleasing nature and may hide their own feelings and needs. There may be a tendency for adults to overlook them because of their ease of handling and compliance. We need to understand what their deeper often unexpressed needs and feelings might be and help them to articulate these where appropriate. Because they do not manifest so many behavioural problems we must be particularly careful not to take them for granted or ignore them in the classroom or at home amidst the challenges of other children and busy lives. They really need to be 'seen' and

accepted and affirmed for who they really are. They may actually need us to be quite proactive on their behalf in this: when they move to meet our needs, we may need to say “No, I really want to know what you want, what you need!” and to help them to articulate that. With the world around them being more than happy for them to meet everyone else’s needs before their own, it may be rare for them to find someone who will insist on them expressing their own wishes, especially when they are not so used to doing that and may be slow and reluctant in doing so.

- They need to be loved, to belong, to be accepted by others for who they are as an individual person not whether they conform to peer expectations (or family expectations as well). At times, like at Twelve, they may lose their identity within the group. *We need to emphasize the importance of being an individual as well as being part of a group* and support them in their being an individual in the family. They may need encouragement to stand alone, to find their separate selves within the peer group but we also need to give them support for maintaining friendships.
- *We can help them to feel their own legitimate power, where they may have a tendency to give it away inappropriately.* They need to see they have a choice in this. We may have to encourage them ‘to stand up for their rights, their integrity’. Because they see others as important to them, it may also help them to point out the situations where being clear and strong themselves actually *helps others* as well. They may be more reluctant to be legitimately powerful if they think this is being ‘selfish’ or ‘naughty’. This empowerment of the Moon and Venus types and stages needs to start early, in the family, with helping them to express their needs and wishes and not allowing them to respond weakly, giving way to us, as well as to ‘stronger’ siblings. This is more work for us as adults at the time, but it makes stronger children in the long run. Your child needs to be able to say “Yes!” (to a game or treat, for example) *and* “No!” powerfully. This is part of learning protective behaviours to prevent abuse, bullying in the school yard and sexual abuse, in which perpetrators are looking for children who are amenable and don’t like to say “No!” We can also help them to see they have power and responsibility as a bystander in bullying situations, especially at 10 and 12, when the pressures of the peer group can be so strong. It may be that the Moon and Venus types, and the Moon and Venus stages are more vulnerable to bullying and abuse, including sexual abuse, because they are more reluctant to go against others and they want to please.
- Both Moon and Venus have erotic tendencies which may make these stages and types even more vulnerable in terms of sexual abuse, especially if they respond more easily to sensual touching, where the body says “Yes!” even if the mind or the other feelings say “No!”. They need help to know clearly about the boundaries concerning touch, about ‘privacy’, ‘private parts of our bodies’ and ‘inappropriate touch’, and the importance of the strength and right to say loudly and clearly “No!” (or “No, thanks!” if it is easier for our relationship-valuing Moon and Venus children to say!) It is our responsibility to make them strong as well as loving! This begins in infancy by what we model for them, how we respect them and how we show them what the rules are about touch, nudity, etc in different situations, with mother, father, doctor, close family, carers, extended family, friends, strangers and so on. Some children

may learn this intuitively, but others, including less aware children and those on the Asperger's -Autism spectrum, for example, may not. As adults, we have a responsibility to make sure they do learn this.

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