

ASTROLOGICAL ANALYSIS: SELECTED TOPICS IN CHART INTERPRETATION

©2005 By Donna Cunningham, MSW



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Moon Signs: The Key to Your Inner Life; Ballantine Books, 1988

The Consulting Astrologer's Guidebook; Red Wheel/Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1994

Astrology and Vibrational Healing; Cassandra Press, 1988

Astrology and Spiritual Development; Cassandra Press, 1989

The Flower Remedies Handbook; Sterling Publishing, 1992

Spiritual Dimensions of Healing Addictions, With Andrew Ramer. Cassandra, 1988

Further Dimensions of Healing Addictions, With Andrew Ramer. Cassandra, 1988



This book is dedicated, with admiration and affection to the editorial staffs of *The Mountain Astrologer* and *Dell Horoscope Magazine*, where most of the pieces in this book originally appeared. I have benefited so very much from their editorial skills over the years and would not be the writer I am today without having had them behind me. Beyond that, their encouragement and enthusiasm for my work sustains me through the often-lonely work of writing. You are my unsung heroes, folks! (Any mistakes in this final version, however, are my own.)

In particular, let me mention my most recent editors, Nan Geary, Janette Deprosse, Tem Tarriktar, and Kate Scholly from *TMA* and Ronnie Grishman, Jack Pettey and Ed Kajkowski from *Dell*. Thanks to you all!

Acknowledgements: Most of the readings in this book originally appeared in my series for the intermediate student in *The Mountain Astrologer*, and some are from ***Dell Horoscope***. Sources for individual articles will be given in the appropriate chapters. I wish to acknowledge the generosity of the publishers of those magazines in allowing me to reprint the articles and thereby to preserve them.

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This ebook mainly consists of articles that appeared in various journals and magazines over the years, collected here for the first time so that they can be preserved. In my ongoing series for intermediate students, "Essential Elements of Chart Interpretation," *The Mountain Astrologer* has provided a rewarding venue for me to examine smaller points of astrological interpretation in depth. Each essay stands alone and is related to those around it only by virtue of the fact that they all arise out of my personal perspective on the horoscope and my years of astrological practice.

(Note: An easy way of navigating this book is to click on the bookmark tab on the left, then click on the bookmark for the section you want to read You can also find the page numbers at the bottom of the toolbar and use the slide on the right to move to a page)

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However, I hope you will use this book in virtual form rather than printing it out entirely. We all love having books in our hands, and yet change is inevitable—even necessary. At the rate trees are being harvested, in five to ten years, there will be no paper for our children's textbooks or wood for homes. An e-book is one way you and I can contribute to saving the forests that are a vital part of our environment. They are crucial to our air quality, endangered animal and plant species, and rainfall levels. The *before and after* photos of an old-growth forest below may illuminate what my words cannot¹.

Donna Cunningham



¹ These photos are reprinted with permission of the David Suzuki Foundation, dedicated to preserving Pacific Northwest forests. For information, visit: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org>

A List of Charts Used in this Book



Note: The data for celebrity charts used here are based on information from AstroDataBank, the invaluable software based on a collection of over 26,000 birth records and biographies, the lifework of the late Lois Rodden and of Mark McDonough. This superb software tool has many valuable features for the astrology student, professional, or researcher, including being searchable for examples of people with any given chart feature. For more information, visit their site at <http://www.astrodatabank.com> and sign up for their free newsletter on birth data of current notables.

(For easy access to these charts, click on the bookmark tab at the side)

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Trusting Your First Impressions of the Horoscope

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Each chart contains such a wealth of information that pulling all the pieces together can seem overwhelming. You may have taken classes and attended conferences and seminars, and your library may be full of texts with diverse perspectives. The resulting information overload makes it tough

to know where to start when faced with an eager friend, family member, or co-worker who is dying to know what it all means. Before rushing to analyze the details, take a deep breath, empty your mind, and let your eyes roam over the chart, noticing what stands out. These first impressions provide solid clues to what is important.

Pretend that you know nothing about those strange symbols and pie-shaped wedges — it might even be interesting to hand the chart to its "owner" and listen to that person's response. Does the way the glyphs are distributed say anything — the patterns that are formed, how spaces are filled? Is there a large concentration in one or two areas, leaving huge empty spaces elsewhere in the chart? Perhaps that is also true of the person's life: This could be someone who devotes most waking hours to one or two pursuits but has little time for facets of life that others consider crucial. This concentration can result in great progress and achievement in the focus area, but some might see it as reflecting an unbalanced lifestyle.

Conversely, planets are sometimes distributed in a variety of sectors, suggesting that the individual may disperse energy and effort into too many areas of life. Whether there is integration and balance between these interests or whether they create tension is something you will learn from the aspects, but for now, note the potential for scattering. There are several horoscope patterns; for instance, one half of the chart may be occupied and the other half blank, which suggests a lopsided concentration of activities and also a vacuum that the person needs others to fill. Marc Edmund Jones wrote about these patterns fifty years ago, but most students find his language obscure. Besides, it's time to begin interpreting for yourself rather than relying heavily on texts and teachers.

Add one more piece of information by considering the houses that are emphasized. They are bound to represent the most crucial dynamics in the individual's life: the challenges, risks, achievements, and joys. Think about the signs naturally associated with those houses — the 10th house and Capricorn, for instance, or the 4th and Cancer. The person will have some of the dynamics of that sign, even if it is not represented strongly in the natal horoscope. A person with a

¹ This was published as "Trusting Your First Impressions of the Horoscope," *The Mountain Astrologer*, 6-7/03, p. 9, and is reprinted with their permission.

10th house concentration will be as focused on career and long-term goals as someone with the Sun or Moon in Capricorn, though the nature of those goals and the approach to vocation will be colored by the planets in the 10th and their signs. In an article for a later lesson, we will look more closely at houses that have stelliums—that is, concentrations of three or more planets in a given house. For the time being, just note those houses and know that they will represent major dynamics in the person's life.

Let's work on training your eye to see the whole chart. The planets and degrees have been removed from the four examples on the next page in order to make the chart patterns stand out. \Clear your mind, and let your eyes focus on one chart at a time. Some specific questions to ask and an example of this kind of analysis will follow, but for now, let your visual impression be the key.

four charts to analyze:

chart 1:

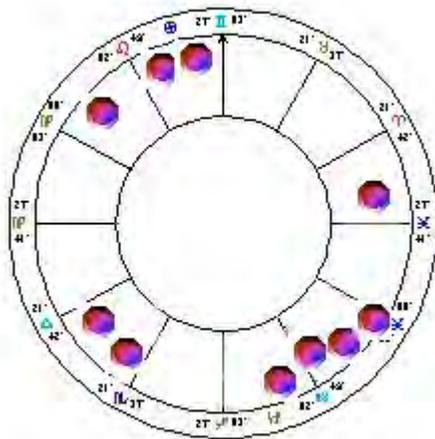


chart 2:

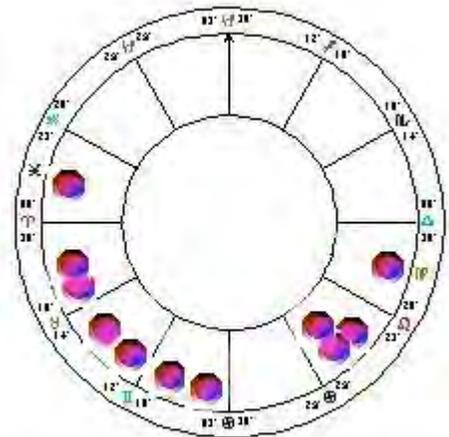


chart 3:

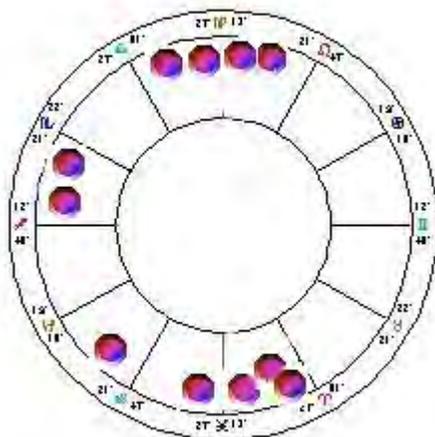
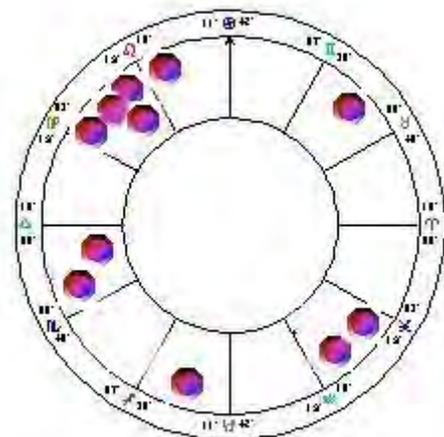


chart 4:



Ask yourself the following questions about each of these charts (A sample interpretation will follow.)

Do you have any first, intuitive impressions about the individual from looking at the energy pattern of the planets?

Are the planets distributed evenly about the chart or concentrated in certain areas? What does that suggest?

Do any of the houses contain stelliums? What would that suggest about major focuses of energy and effort for the person? What life challenges might be faced?

What houses are empty, and what might that reflect about the person's life?

Though you don't know what aspects the chart holds as yet, do any house concentrations appear to be in conflict with one another? (For instance, are there concentrations in the opposing houses?) What pulls might the person experience as a result?

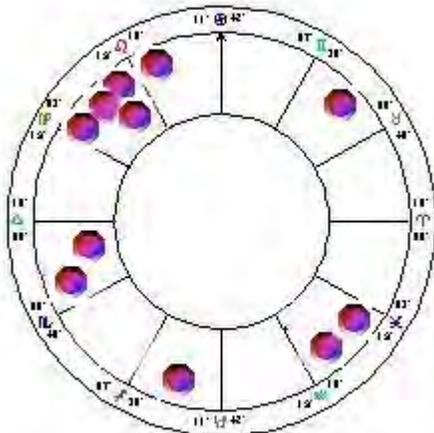
Which of the career houses (10th, 2nd, and 6th), if any, are emphasized, and what might that say about the individual? Alternatively, if all three are void, what does that say?

Which of the relationship houses (5th, 7th, 8th, and 11th), if any, are emphasized, and what might that infer about the individual?

Sigmund Freud said that the two signs of mental health are the ability to love and work. What balance between work and love is suggested by this chart's distribution of planets?

To give you an example of the kinds of information that can be gathered from examining a chart this way, let's look at Chart #4, that of a much-loved male celebrity. In the chart, overall, there are three clusters of planets—possibly several conjunctions—and there are many unoccupied houses.

chart 4:



This would suggest that the person has a strong capacity to focus on a few areas of life, areas that would be strong motivators and possible sources of either conflict or achievement. The demands of other areas of life—most likely those represented by the empty houses of the horoscope—may be virtually ignored or only given as much attention as is needed for basic maintenance. The 4th, 6th, 7th, 9th, and 12th houses are empty.

The most noticeable concentration of energy is in the 11th house, with a stellium of four planets there plus a fifth planet that appears to be sitting on the cusp

between the 10th and 11th. We don't know yet if those planets signify struggles or blessings, what signs they are in, or whether the aspects they form are hard or soft ones. What we can infer, however, is that perhaps the most important area of life for this individual is friendship and/or group activities. Almost half the planetary forces are concentrated in this one area. Thus the need to belong to a strong, solid group is a powerful motivation and takes up much of this person's time and energy. Friends are expected to fulfill many needs—the 4th house is empty, as is the 7th, and so friends may take on the role of family and fill the need for close, committed relationships like marriage. Given the powerful focus on this area of life, losing a friend would be a powerful blow.

Another concentration is the two planets in the 1st house, possibly conjunct, although one of them straddles the cusp of the second. Depending on what planets they are and what signs they are in, this would suggest that this is someone you could never ignore. He would command your attention, and given this thrust of 1st house energy, getting attention is part of what drives him. The 1st house is one of the health houses as well, representing the physical vehicle, and so maintaining that vehicle in healthy, fit condition may also have been a focus of the person's energy.

There are two planets, possibly in conjunction, in the 5th house, and so another source of satisfaction—or conflict—may be the 5th house areas of children, romance, fun, and creativity. Note that two opposite houses, the 11th and the 5th contain a total of six planets. Even in the unlikely event that there are no actual oppositions, there is a back and forth pull between the demands of the two houses. This may suggest some conflict between the needs of children or romantic partners and the needs of friends or the group and a need to balance the two. Alternately, it may indicate that at times the boundaries between friendship and romance become blurred.

We can draw preliminary conclusions from this kind of overview of the chart, and yet other factors may contradict or modify our findings. For instance, this is a very successful individual, yet the career houses are under-emphasized. The 6th is empty, while there is a planet sitting on the cusp of the 2nd and one on the cusp between the 10th and 11th. (As we will discover later in the course, a planet on the cusp of two houses often blends the energies of those houses.) We will not find the answers to this quandary at this stage of our interpretation, for we don't have enough information. As we get deeper into the chart analysis, we would look for planets in the career-related earth signs—Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn—as well as at the condition of Saturn and of planets in major aspect to the Midheaven.



Isn't it interesting what you can learn about a person from such a simple perspective? You have been looking at the chart of beloved figure skating champion, Scott Hamilton. The focus of energies in his 11th, 1st, and 5th houses definitely reflect the areas of life that are crucial to him. His friendships with other skaters and especially with the groups of skaters that go on tour with him are, indeed, one of the most important and enduring satisfactions in his life. (It was only in his forties,

after he retired from the skating tours that had been his world for so many years, that he finally married.) If you've ever watched him perform, he absolutely beams as he soaks up the love and attention of his audience. Physical challenges he faced as a young boy, as also represented by those first house planets, drove him to excel at skating. As for the 5th house, his well-known charitable works on behalf of children are inspiring.

Practice this method of observation on the other three charts given here and then on the charts of friends and family. Train your eyes—including your third eye—to see the larger patterns, in what might be called the gestalt of the chart. This will trigger valuable intuitive impressions before the analytic mind kicks in with details. An

overview of this sort helps to organize, focus, and direct chart interpretation efforts. In another essay, we will work with these same four charts, concentrating on the pattern the aspects form, but still without looking at the planets themselves.



The Four Elements and Your Essential Makeup

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The division of the zodiac into four elements — fire, earth, air, and water — stretches back to medieval times and beyond. (Rob Hand could doubtlessly tell us the year it began!) One reason this division has lasted for so many centuries is that it penetrates so deeply into the nature of the human being, even into the nature of matter itself. Knowing which elements dominate your horoscope, and which ones are muted, gives you many insights into your core qualities and needs and how you respond to circumstances. The signs are arranged by element, as follows:

Fire: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius

Earth: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn

Air: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius

Water: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

Traditionally, air types are said to be mental and communicative, sometimes living in their heads too much. Earth types are often down to earth, productive, and practical, though sometimes materialistic. Fire types can be lively, action-oriented, and warm, yet often impulsive or even pushy. Typical water types are responsive, adaptable, intuitive, and emotional, yet possibly too subjective.

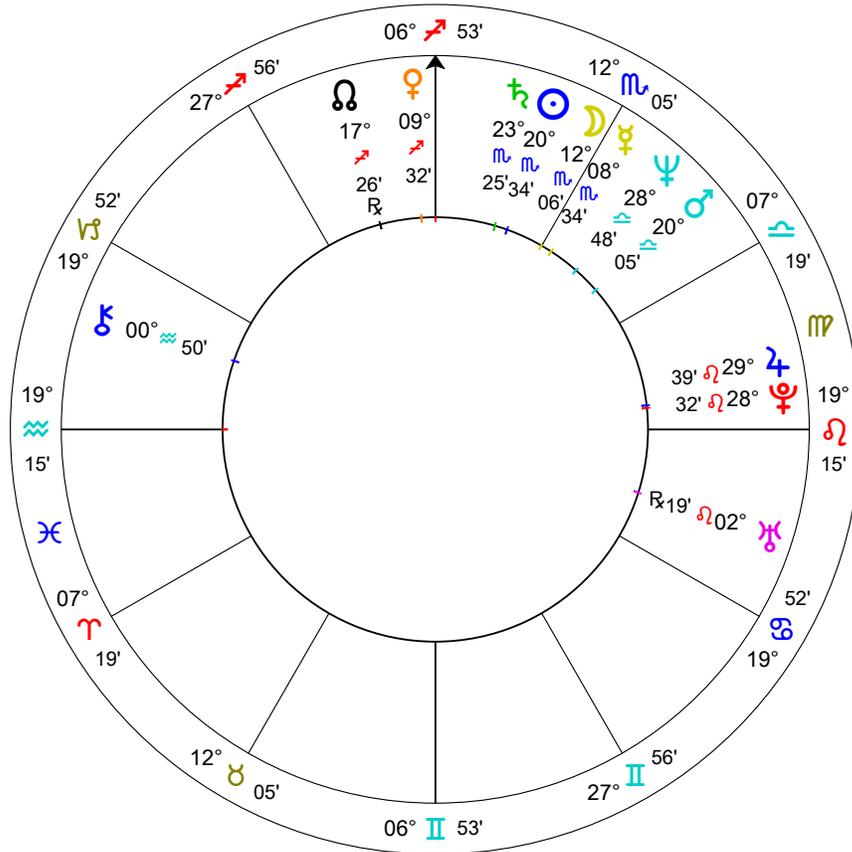
Long articles have been written about the elements, but an intellectual, conceptual, verbal grasp of them won't take you far: That would be an air-only approach. Be earthy as well — try for a sensual, visceral, even tactile appreciation. In a watery way, immerse yourself in the elements, bathe in them, let them flow through you. And, finally, chase them down in an active, fiery fashion — go get them, do them, walk them, recreate them, and they will be yours. Don't just think about fire, make a fire!

To enrich your understanding of astrology, spend time with the elements and experience how you respond to them. **For the element fire, light a candle, sit by a campfire, and watch the flames flicker, or bask in the warmth of the Sun. To love the earth, plant or visit a garden and enjoy fresh, home-grown tomatoes, inhale the rich, fertile smell of the soil or the flowers that grow in it, or be awed by the majesty of a mountain. For water, gulp down a cool drink when you are parched, go swimming, or allow yourself to get drenched in a sudden downpour. For air, feel the wind on your face, fly a kite, or go sky diving. Do these things with the conscious intention of getting to know the elements, for they are an essential part of all of us.**

Think about your own chart and the charts of people you know well. Some of us are strong in one particular element but lacking in another. Some of us are equally strong in all four elements, which tends us toward a balanced life. When one element is missing from the chart, expressing that element becomes a challenge. For determining the elemental balance, I use a 16-point system,

² This article originally appeared in *The Mountain Astrologer*, 8-9/03, pp. 45-6, and is reprinted with their permission.

Whoopi Goldberg:
 November 13, 1955
 12:48 PM EST
 New York, NY 74W00; 40N42
 Data rated AA, from the birth certificate.



assigning two points to the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, and Midheaven because they are such key features, and one point to other planets. You may wish to include a point for Chiron as well.

Find the balance of elements in the sample chart for actress/comedienne, Whoopi Goldberg, shown here³. She has four planets in Scorpio (a water sign), including two points each for the Sun and Moon, for a total of six points in water. In fire, she has three planets in Leo plus Venus and the Midheaven in Sagittarius, for a total of six points. In Air, she has an Aquarius Ascendant, Chiron in Aquarius, and Mars and Neptune in Libra, for a total of five points. Do you see anything in earth? Whoopi, then, is strongly fire and water in nature, with a good complement of air, but lacks any planets in earth.

We can easily see the fire in her nature: She is warm, lively, and outgoing and can be somewhat of a firebrand. With so much water, her emotions are powerful and strongly projected, as seen in her Oscar-nominated performances. Her airy side is shown by her wit, intelligence, and superb verbal abilities. Yet, how do you explain her lack of earth? No one seems more down to earth or earthy than this woman who came up from poverty the hard way, and she has certainly done very well materially, through decades of living a Hollywood lifestyle. She is realistic to a fault and never hesitates to puncture the balloons of those who dwell in fantasy. What chart features counteract her void in earth signs?



Part of the answer is that when we are missing an element, or weak in that element, we can overcompensate. Life circumstances can force us to develop the qualities and abilities more naturally conveyed by that element, so over time we learn to make up for our lack by conscious attention and diligent efforts. People who are lacking in earth may stumble their way into practicality through trial and error — and too many bounced checks. Air-sign Moons can learn to reason their way into an understanding of the emotions. The gifts of a missing element are seldom natural and instinctive, but they become easier as we work at them.

There is another way, however, that the qualities of an element can be part of us, and this is true of Whoopi. She is earthy because her Sun is closely conjunct Saturn, giving her a Capricorn-like core. Likewise, someone with no chart factors in water who has Neptune on the Ascendant and Pluto conjunct the Moon will be strongly emotional, intuitive, and highly sensitive to others. If air is missing from your chart don't conclude that you can't succeed at intellectual tasks. If you have Mercury aspecting Uranus, or on the Ascendant, or conjunct the Sun, you may be every bit as bright and witty as an air-sign dominant person. Like any single chart factor, analyzing the elemental balance can be productive, but it certainly cannot convey

³ According to her AstroDataBank record, Goldberg was born on November 13, 1955, at 12:48 PM EST, in New York, NY 74W00; 40N42, data rated AA, from the birth certificate.

the full picture. We will bring in more features as we go along, but do spend some time with the elements.

Four Kinds of Smart—Air, Earth, Fire, and Water⁴

We tend to rank intelligence along the lines of air sign qualities—the ability to verbalize complex ideas, perhaps even to put them down on paper, and to communicate our thoughts coherently. That, however, is intellect, and over time, I have come to appreciate that each element has its own type of genius. Common sense, for instance, is more of an earth sign quality, and can help the possessor be more effective in the world than the brilliant people who build their castles in air.

An Earth-smart individual would have strong Earth accents in the horoscope because of important placements like the Sun, Moon, Ascendant or several planets in Taurus, Virgo, or Capricorn. Since we are considering mental abilities, we might want to look at Mercury and its aspects. An Air-smart person would have much emphasis in the air signs Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius, but not much going on in Earth.

One way to contrast the brilliance of the four elements is to look at what people are like who have Grand Trines. This equilateral triangle occurs when an individual has a least one planet in each of the three signs of a particular element. The planets must be within range of a trine, no more than six degrees from exactness. (For instance, if you have the Sun at 10 Capricorn, then any planet that falls between 4-16 Virgo or 4-16 Taurus will form a trine to your Sun.)



I spent my first several years in astrology in total awe of peers born in the early 1940s who had the grand air trine with Uranus in Gemini, Neptune in Libra, and personal planets in Aquarius. They were just so brilliant, so creative, so innovative, so politically sophisticated, so iconoclastic, and so cerebral—and despite my master's degree, I couldn't understand half of what they said.



After years of observing the denizens of this grand air trine from afar—oh, so reverently—I found that far too many of them did little with all their brilliant ideas and all that youthful potential. Decades later, fascinating as they can be, many of those grand air trines are still spinning castles in the air and enjoying rambling philosophical discussions that lead nowhere in particular—although now the

⁴ Note: This essay is excerpted from Donna's e-book, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life*, Volume 3, to be published during 2005, God Willing. For information about her ebooks, visit Moon Maven Publications at <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

exchanges may be via email or instant messaging. On the whole, they are happy that way, and when they reach that great Chat Room in the Sky and don't have to contend with aging bodies or keeping a roof over their heads, well, then they'll be in heaven.

Over time, I came to appreciate the difference between "air smart" and "earth smart." An **air smart** individual may have a million bright ideas in the course of a lifetime and yet lack the skill or the motivation to put many of them into practice. An **earth smart** individual—like those born with the grand trine of Uranus in Taurus, Neptune in Virgo, and personal planets in Capricorn—may have only one or two bright ideas in the course of a lifetime. In fact, the bright idea might not even have been their own but someone else's. Maybe some air smart genius tossed it out casually as a theory or a possibility, and the earth smart genius chewed it over and saw how to bring it to fruition. Yet, the earth smart may develop the practical applications of that idea thoroughly enough to earn a comfortable living.



There's nothing wrong with *air smart*, you understand. Developing and sharing the abstract side of the intellect is a legitimate life purpose, and I hope that we all have the luxury of many lifetimes to spend that way. It's just a tad unfortunate that our materialistic society doesn't often validate and sustain these pursuits in the manner to which we'd like to become accustomed. As a collective, we do need both air and earth, in that the air type uplifts, inspires, and challenges us with a view of the greater scheme of things, while the earth type sustains us on a material level.

So that you can get a sense of the difference between air and earth brilliance, here are some celebrities born in the early 1940s with the trine between Uranus and Neptune. The group with the emphasis in earth had Uranus in Taurus, Neptune in Virgo, and at least one personal planet in Capricorn completing a Grand Trine. The slightly later group had Uranus in Gemini, Neptune in Libra, and at least one personal planet in Aquarius, completing a Grand Trine. The table below lists of pairs of notables in similar fields, one with earth emphasis, one with air emphasis. You may get more from it if you let go of the intellect for a bit and just compare your impressions of the two people in a visceral way.



	<u>Trine in Earth:</u>	<u>Trine in Air:</u>
Music:	Barbra Streisand	Liza Minelli
Music:	Wayne Newton	John Denver
Acting:	Raquel Welch	Mia Farrow
Acting:	Paul Hogan	Tom Selleck
Comedy:	Bill Cosby	Chevy Chase
Fashion:	Martha Stewart	Carlo Benneton
Metaphysics:	Jean Houston	J.Z. Knight
Astrology:	Charles Harvey	Robert Hand
Civil Rights:	Jesse Jackson	Angela Davis





What about the genius of the other elements? Myself, I am intelligent enough but am neither impressively *air smart* nor—alas—*earth smart* to any useful degree, though I may be in the 90th percentile of *water smart*. The water signs are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces, and a **water smart** person is deeply intuitive and keenly perceptive about emotions and what lies beneath the surface, over time gaining wisdom that can be used to heal and teach others about these matters. One of my personal heroes, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, led the way for the world to understand and deal with the needs of the dying. She had the Sun, Moon, Pluto and the North Node in

Cancer, plus the Ascendant and Uranus in Pisces.

The fire signs are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. Are you wondering about **fire smart** individuals? These are people with a genius for enrolling others in their enthusiasms, becoming inspiring leaders who know how to make things happen. They're the ones who light the Olympic torch for all of us, the ones with fire in the belly that can't wait around for the rest of us laggards to get off our duff and do something about the state of our world.

Searching in AstroDataBank for examples of fire smart people, I found that many of them had enjoyed their 15 minutes of fame—or more aptly, their 15 minutes of flame—and then were gone from the headlines. That's fire for you—the breathtaking burst of a firework display or brilliant sunset, the warm pleasure of a campfire, or the warm sunshine you bask in that one perfect day at the beach. Still, without the uplift the fire signs bring us, our souls would be mildewed with cold and damp, so let's celebrate their genius in bringing that abundant heat and light to the rest of us!



The Singleton: The Only, Lonely Planet⁵

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Marc Edmund Jones was the American astrologer who wrote most extensively about the various kinds of singletons — planets that are the only one of a particular type in a natal chart, such as the only planet in earth or the only planet in a cardinal sign. Unfortunately, he didn't write about this in a very accessible way, so his observations, valuable as they might be, are not routinely taught to today's students⁶. I'm not even sure I buy all of what I understood him to say, but then I am still patiently waiting for someone to translate this classic American astrologer into good, basic English!



One kind of singleton that does seem to work consistently is the breakdown of the natal planets, Midheaven, and Ascendant into the four elements — fire, earth, air, and water — so I will focus on that type in this article. We spoke of how to find the elemental balance of a chart earlier. When there is only one planet in a particular element, that element is quite a challenge for the person to express and, especially, to master. The functions natural to that element may either be weak or, conversely, receive an oddly self-conscious overemphasis. Compensating for the lack of that element can take up a disproportionate amount of time and attention, but when the individual consistently works to develop the qualities of that element, it does become easier over time. Let's look at some celebrity examples drawn, as usual, from AstroDatabank. For this purpose, let's leave off the asteroids, the lunar nodes, Chiron, fixed stars, Uranian planets, black holes, and the galactic center. (If you put enough "cosmic debris" into a chart, nobody has any singletons).

The element of earth is represented by the signs Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn. George W. Bush has a small amount of earth energy in his chart in two ways: His Mars in Virgo in the 2nd house is his only planet in earth, and it is also the only planet to fall into one of the earth-related houses — the 2nd, 6th, and 10th. His Mars may be an example of overcompensation, for money seems to be one of his primary drives and motivations, and he surely never lacks it. Some of his proposals don't seem to have been completely thought through and often show a lack of groundedness. Also, his environmental stance is not exactly that of a good steward of Mother Earth.

⁵ This article appeared in The Mountain Astrologer as , "The Singleton: The Only, Lonely Planet," 2-3/04, pp. 20-21, and is reprinted with their permission.

⁶ The information appeared in Marc Edmund Jones's *Essentials of Astrological Analysis*, first published in 1941 and still available through the Astrology Center of America, an invaluable Web site for rare and out-of-print books; see <http://www.astroamerica.com/jones.html>

Many people born in the early 1940s have but one planet in an earth sign: Neptune in Virgo. It is instructive to think about how a generational placement like that — one shared by all members of a particular age group — functions as a singleton planet. Ethereal, insubstantial, shape-shifting Neptune, ruler of the water sign Pisces, must be one of the least earthy planetary influences; so, if you have only Neptune in earth, it is nothing to brag about! As someone who has just Neptune in earth and no planets at all in the earth-related houses, I can tell you that being practical and grounded, especially in business matters, is a continuing challenge for me. Over many years of being self-employed, I *have* developed the ability to think in practical terms, but it is a bit like having an artificial hand — it's never natural and flowing in its functions, and there are things an artificial hand simply cannot do.

The water signs are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces. Two political figures with singletons in water signs present an interesting contrast. Vice President Dick Cheney has only the Moon in Pisces, though he does have Mars in the fourth, a water house. I doubt that many people would think Cheney was compensating for this lack by overdeveloping the compassion and empathy of Pisces or the other water signs. Tony Blair presents a more complex political picture — a sensitive and fairly compassionate man who is taking a hard stance against terrorism. He has only Uranus in Cancer, but he does have a stellium of the Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars and Jupiter in the 12th, though Mars is within 1.5° of the ascendant. **The lack of an element can partly be offset by house emphasis.**



The air signs are Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius. An interesting example of a singleton in air is one of the greatest geniuses of the 20th century: Albert Einstein, who had only Jupiter in Aquarius. To partially offset this lack of air planets, he does have some of the generational planets in the air houses—Uranus in the 3rd and Neptune and Pluto in the 11th. His Theory of Relativity is such a brilliant, advanced concept that even today few people understand it with all its ramifications. Was it entirely his theory, however? It is said that it unfolded for him in a dream, maybe through channeling. Don't despair if there is a child in your family who has next to nothing in air, maybe one of those born with Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune in Capricorn during parts of 1989–91. Einstein wound up doing amazingly well with that singleton of his!



The fire signs are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, while the houses associated with those signs are the 1st, 5th, and 9th houses. An example of an individual with a singleton in fire is the Dalai Lama, whose gentleness and fatherliness makes him a beloved representative of the Tibetan people and endears him to the world at large. His only planet in fire is Venus in Leo conjunct the fixed star Regulus. Those who have been in his presence would find him as regal as this combination might suggest, and yet he represents loving kindness toward all living things. Once again we

see that planets in the houses associated with that element—here the first, fifth, and ninth houses—can partially compensate for the lack of an element. The Dalai Lama has planets in the 1st, 5th, and 9th houses.

We can see that singletons by element have some merit and can represent a significant dynamic in the individual's psychology. I also find some merit to singletons in the cardinal, fixed, and mutable modalities, but I'm not convinced of the effectiveness of dividing the chart into hemispheres and quadrants. Try them out — maybe you'll make more sense of them than I do. Still, I am always careful to look for singletons by element.

Planets in Houses:
A Quick-and-Dirty Rectification Tool
©2005 by Donna Cunningham⁷

Rectification is the process of working with an unknown or questionable birth time to determine the true time. A full rectification is an elaborate process, attempting to correlate transits, progressions, midpoints, and all manner of other techniques with a list of dates of major life events. Given the time-consuming and often iffy nature of this undertaking, I cannot be induced to rectify charts for money — only for love. I will, however, run a quick-and-dirty check on the birth time by analyzing the planets' house placements and how they shift from one house to another with the various possible birth times.



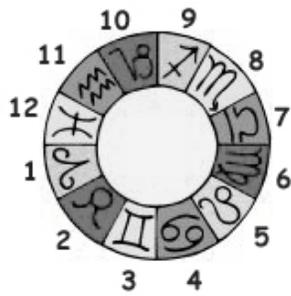
For the clearest example, suppose someone is known to be born at 5:00, but the box to mark a.m. or p.m. on the birth certificate is smudged. Given the twelve-hour time difference, many of the planets would be in opposite houses in the two charts, so rectifying the birth time would be simplified. The correct chart should reflect the influence of the planets in the houses, especially the dramatic effects of the outer planets. (This is, in fact, one solid way of understanding how planets can modify the houses they occupy.)

Matters related to the house where Neptune is placed, for instance, should have a decidedly Neptunian cast. In those areas, these people might well experience codependent relationships, perhaps with addictive personalities, and suffer from deception by others, self-deception, or self-sabotage. On the positive end of the spectrum, such individuals might have learned a great deal from their own mistakes in these areas of life — mistakes that perhaps impelled them to embark upon a spiritual path — and they may have chosen to serve others who have similar problems. One example is Neptune in the 7th house, showing the potential for codependency with a spouse who might suffer from alcoholism or substance abuse. Another example is Neptune in the 5th, suggesting that there might be a child who struggles with addiction — or a child who is highly creative yet too sensitive to fit into the material world.



Of the two possibilities — a.m. versus p.m. — the correct house placement for Neptune would not be as clear when you are dealing with people who also have a strong Pisces component in their charts, e.g., a stellium

⁷ This appeared as an article in *The Mountain Astrologer's* 8-9/05 issue and is reprinted with their permission.



BASIC WHEEL AND
SIGNS ASSOCIATED
WITH THE 12 HOUSES

**CHEAT SHEET: MATTERS ASSOCIATED
WITH THE TWELVE HOUSES**
©2004 By Donna Cunningham

<u>HOUSES & ASSOCIATED MATTERS:</u>	<u>RELATED SIGN*:</u>	<u>RELATED PLANET*:</u>
<u>First:</u> First impressions and first approach to situations; appearance; image; self-presentation; the basic physical vehicle.	Aries	Mars
<u>Second:</u> Money and ways of earning it; money management and attitudes toward finance; things valued more than money.	Taurus	Venus
<u>Third:</u> Communication; thinking and learning style; siblings and near relatives; neighbors; basic coursework; commuting.	Gemini	Mercury
<u>Fourth:</u> Home and home life; roots; family ties; heredity; family influence; the nurturing parent; senior years;	Cancer	The Moon
<u>Fifth:</u> Children; romance; creativity; self-expression; performing; leisure activities; gambling and other forms of risk-taking.	Leo	The Sun
<u>Sixth:</u> Work and its meaning; work habits; types of jobs; coworkers and employees; health and health habits.	Virgo	Mercury
<u>Seventh:</u> Partnerships—personal and business; close, committed relationships; types of people we attract; sharing.	Libra	Venus
<u>Eighth:</u> Sexuality; money you don't earn (inheritances, grants, etc); taxes; partner's resources; death; transformation; healing.	Scorpio	Pluto
<u>Ninth:</u> Religion, philosophy of life; higher education, advanced studies; teaching or preaching; law; foreign lands.	Sagittarius	Jupiter
<u>Tenth:</u> Career and long-term goals; how you are remembered; parental authority; bosses and the type of boss you are.	Capricorn	Saturn
<u>Eleventh:</u> Friendship; relationship to peer group; group membership; social consciousness, activism; aspirations.	Aquarius	Uranus
<u>Twelfth:</u> Things that are repressed or hidden; self-defeating behavior; chronic illness; service; retreats; spiritual quest.	Pisces	Neptune

* Note: "Related Planet and Sign" designations in this table refer to the planets and signs most naturally related to the houses in their interests and focus of energy. For instance, Libra, Venus, and the seventh house share a great emphasis on relationships, especially love relationship. The tenth house, Saturn, and Capricorn share a strong orientation toward career and long-range achievements. This traditional association should not be confused with the signs or planets in a given house of an individual's birth chart, based on the time, date, and place of birth.

or the Sun or Moon in that sign. In such cases, the house with the Pisces planets could act as a “false positive” for Neptune’s house placement — that is, you might decide that a certain house held Neptune, when in fact the Pisces planets were there instead. The same would hold true when Uranus’s true placement in the chart is masked by crucial Aquarius placements or when Pluto’s true placement is obscured by important Scorpio placements. A third type of false positive could occur if the outer planet in question forms oppositions to planets in the opposite house, so that both ends of the house axis (e.g., 3rd/9th or 4th/10th) come into play.

In the house where Uranus is located, people show their unconventional side by frequently doing things that fly in the face of convention in matters related to that house. With Uranus in the 3rd house, for instance, such people often embrace — and speak or write about — unconventional, modern, or even radical points of view, though their viewpoint would tend to shift dramatically from time to time. With Uranus in the 11th, they would have friendships with unusual, eccentric, or even rebellious types, with new people coming and going frequently. Again, if the birth chart also has a strong Aquarian component, you might not be able to tell the difference between Uranus’s house and the house where the Aquarius planets are placed.

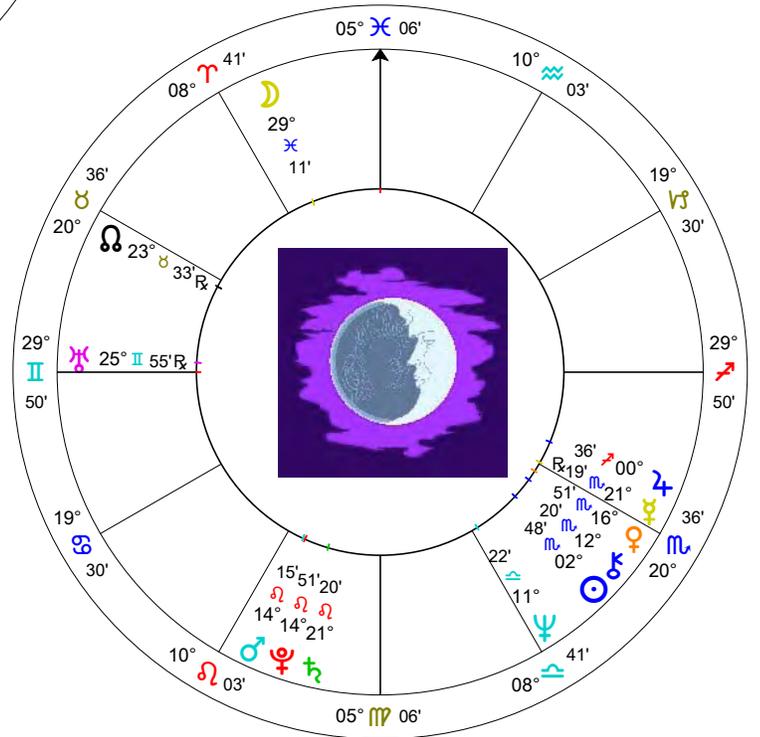
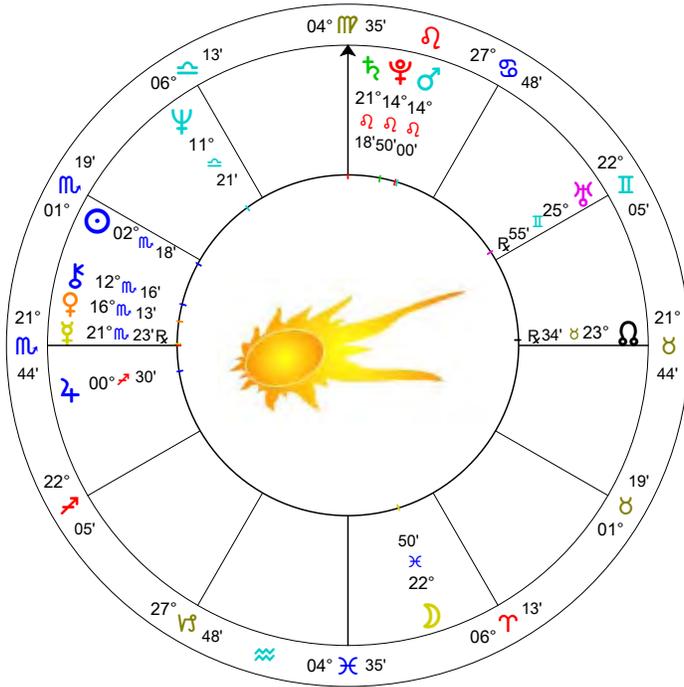
The house that Pluto occupies almost certainly indicates areas of life where people have suffered from betrayal, abuse of power, or abandonment and thus where they exhibit a tinge of paranoia or lack of trust and a tendency to go it alone. If Pluto were in the 11th, for instance, these natives might have had serious problems with peers in their youth — may even have been a target of bullying. As a result, they may be leery of groups or organizations and instead tend to have a few friends that they hang onto forever in a possessive, even smothering fashion. If Pluto were in the 3rd house, some of these same dynamics might have been present in intense (and potentially even abusive) relationships with siblings. There should be no mistaking the house where Pluto is placed, unless, again, another house contains prominent Scorpio placements.



Applying the Technique: Hillary Clinton

Let’s put this method to work with an example. Hillary Rodham Clinton’s birth time is in question, with a Rodden rating of DD (dirty data); her AstroDatabank record contains almost half a page of notes on the data, which I won’t quote. The two most commonly given times are 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Central Standard Time on October 26, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois. The two possible charts are shown here as Chart 1 (8:00 a.m.) and Chart 2 (8:00 p.m.). In this case, the two Midheavens are opposite one another — 4° Virgo in Chart 1 versus 5° Pisces in Chart 2. The house positions of the planets, however, are not all opposite one another in the two charts, so the house placements ought to be revealing.

Two Versions of Hillary Clinton's Chart—8:00 AM VS. 8:00 PM





In general, with a questionable birth time, I would recommend against making a snap judgment based on the rising sign. So many factors could affect how the rising sign is expressed: planets in the 1st house; planets that make hard aspects to the Ascendant itself; and the sign, house placement, and aspects of the ruler of the Ascendant. For instance, Pluto square the Ascendant would give a certain Scorpionic cast to the outward personality, though not as obviously as with Pluto conjunct the Ascendant. Uranus conjunct the Ascendant could make for an Aquarian type — in spades. A Leo-rising person with the Sun (Leo's ruler) in Cancer in the 12th would not necessarily register as Leonine.

In Hillary's case, the differences between the two Ascendants are suggestive. The 8:00 p.m. time gives Gemini rising, with Uranus in the 12th house conjunct the

Ascendant. It's true that Hillary espouses liberal causes, yet Uranus conjunct the Ascendant should indicate more of a rebel, maverick, or firebrand, and with Uranus in the 12th house, her involvement might be likely to backfire on her. The 8:00 a.m. chart, with Mercury in Scorpio in the 12th conjunct the Ascendant, makes a bit more sense. She is a potent speaker, political to the core, shrewdly analyzing every move. Yet, her shrewdness shows through a bit too clearly, making her less than beloved by some segments of the population. In either case, however, the Ascendant has a Mercurial tinge to it — Gemini rising vs. Mercury conjunct the Ascendant — so we must remain undecided at this point.

The 12th house is extremely prominent in the 8:00 a.m. chart, with four planets (including personal ones — the Sun, Mercury, and Venus — and Chiron) in Scorpio. It's a popular misconception that 12th-house types tend to fade into the background: George W. Bush also has the Sun in the 12th, along with Saturn. All we can say for certain about a 12th-house Sun is that the person's true self is hidden from the general public. Since the 12th is traditionally the house of secret enemies and "self-undoing," Hillary's stellium might be relevant to the political scandals that tarnished the Clinton administration. The 12th-house Venus–Chiron conjunction in Scorpio might also partly explain her apparent tolerance of Bill Clinton's sexual dalliances. (With a completely unknown birth time, it would be hard to say whether Pluto or Scorpio was operating in the 12th — recall what I said earlier about false positives.)

Uranus is the only planet in the 12th in the 8:00 p.m. chart; the 5th house is prominent instead, with three Scorpio planets plus Neptune in Libra. This combination does not ring true. Even though former First Daughter Chelsea Clinton is clearly a much-loved child, with that stellium in the 5th you would not expect an only child, but rather a lively brood. (Of course, not everyone with a strong 5th house has children; for instance, some of these natives are creative artists or performers, and some work with children as a career.) On the basis of our analysis so far, I am

leaning toward the 8:00 a.m. chart, although I had used the 8:00 p.m. chart before doing this detailed comparison of the two charts.

The biggest remaining difference is the placement of the triple conjunction of Mars, Saturn, and Pluto in Leo. In the 8:00 a.m. chart, these planets are in the 9th house; in the 8:00 p.m. chart, they are in the 3rd. Yes, having the trio in the 3rd house (communication and thinking) of the 8:00 p.m. chart could fit Hillary's penetrating mind and powerful speaking ability. However, that quality could also be accounted for in the 8:00 a.m. chart by Mercury on the Ascendant, closely square Saturn and trine the Moon. The placement of this planetary trio in the 9th house in the a.m. chart also shows Hillary's Ivy League law school success and persistent activism in legislation. Mars, Saturn, and Pluto in the 9th might also represent the legal battles and even dirty politics that she has become entangled in, including several legal actions taken against the Clintons during their years in the White House.



Was Daylight Savings Time Used? What this Technique Offers



This technique can also shed light when there is a question of whether Standard or Daylight Time was recorded on the birth certificate. This is a considerable challenge in doing charts for people born during certain eras in Illinois or Pennsylvania or other geographical locations where the laws about time changes perennially drive astrologers mad. Short of engaging in a lengthy (and justifiably costly) rectification process, you can begin by erecting the two versions of the chart and then noting which planets shifted houses. Grill the individual about life events and circumstances related to the houses where there was a significant shift.

For example, suppose that Pluto is in the 3rd house in one version of the birth chart and in the 2nd in the other. Were there abuses of power and betrayals around the issue of money (2nd house) or involving siblings (3rd)? One caution, however: In cases where the planet in question is very close to a house cusp — say, within 5° — I often see it operating in both houses and even blending

the meanings of the two. For instance, if Pluto were right on the cusp between the 2nd and 3rd house, there might have been some dirty dealings around money (e.g., inheritances) that involved siblings.

You may well be wondering how the house system you use could affect the usefulness of this technique. To avoid yet another tedious round of letters or e-mails in which the proponents of various house systems “prove” the correctness of their chosen system and the idiocy of someone else’s, let me just say this. If you have chosen a house system and are persuaded that it works consistently in your chart interpretations, then this technique will undoubtedly work for you. If it doesn’t, experiment with another house system.



Finding Strength in Numbers--Stelliums by House
©2003 by Donna Cunningham, MSW⁸



As we've been discovering, a good approach to a new chart is visual rather than cerebral—scanning the chart for anything that stands out to the eyes. One thing that is sure to catch our attention is a house or sign that contains several planets, for experience has shown that such conglomerates, known as *stelliums*, are bound to be a powerful influence in the person's life. Some insist a stellium must contain at least four planets, while others allow three, especially if one of the trio is the Sun or Moon.

In interpreting a house stellium, loosely equate the twelve houses with the signs and planets naturally associated with them, Aries with the 1st, Taurus with the 2nd, Gemini with the 3rd and so on, according to the system popularized by Dr. Zipporah Dobyns. Even when the person has no planets in the sign naturally associated with a house that is heavily occupied in their chart, the person can display some similarities to the sign. This is because matters of great import to that sign and house occupy much of the person's energy and attention.

For instance, those with a stellium in the 4th house usually have some qualities of the sign Cancer, for they are much involved with family or their homes. Depending on the sign, they may not have the emotionality or moodiness that Cancer is known for, but they still may be nurturing, after their own fashion. If the stellium is in Aquarius, they are not likely to be sentimental about family traditions nor would they generally devote much attention to housework. Still they are more likely to be found at home than elsewhere, if only hunched over the computer for hours on end.

Likewise, people with an 8th house stellium may share common interests with the sign Scorpio, depending on what the planets are. A strong 8th house suggests a preoccupation with matters of that house—sexuality, other people's resources, regeneration, or even death. Their way of handling those crucial life issues depends on the planets placed there. When difficult placements like Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto are included in the planetary mix, this may show that that house is important but problematic. It takes up a great deal of time and energy, and yet the results may be mixed and at times downright challenging.

⁸ This is an expanded version of an article which first appeared as "Finding Strength in Numbers: Stelliums by House," *The Mountain Astrologer*, 10-11/03, pp. 22-3. It is reprinted with their permission.

Matt Damon

Natal Chart

Oct 8 1970

3:22 PM EDT +4:00

Boston

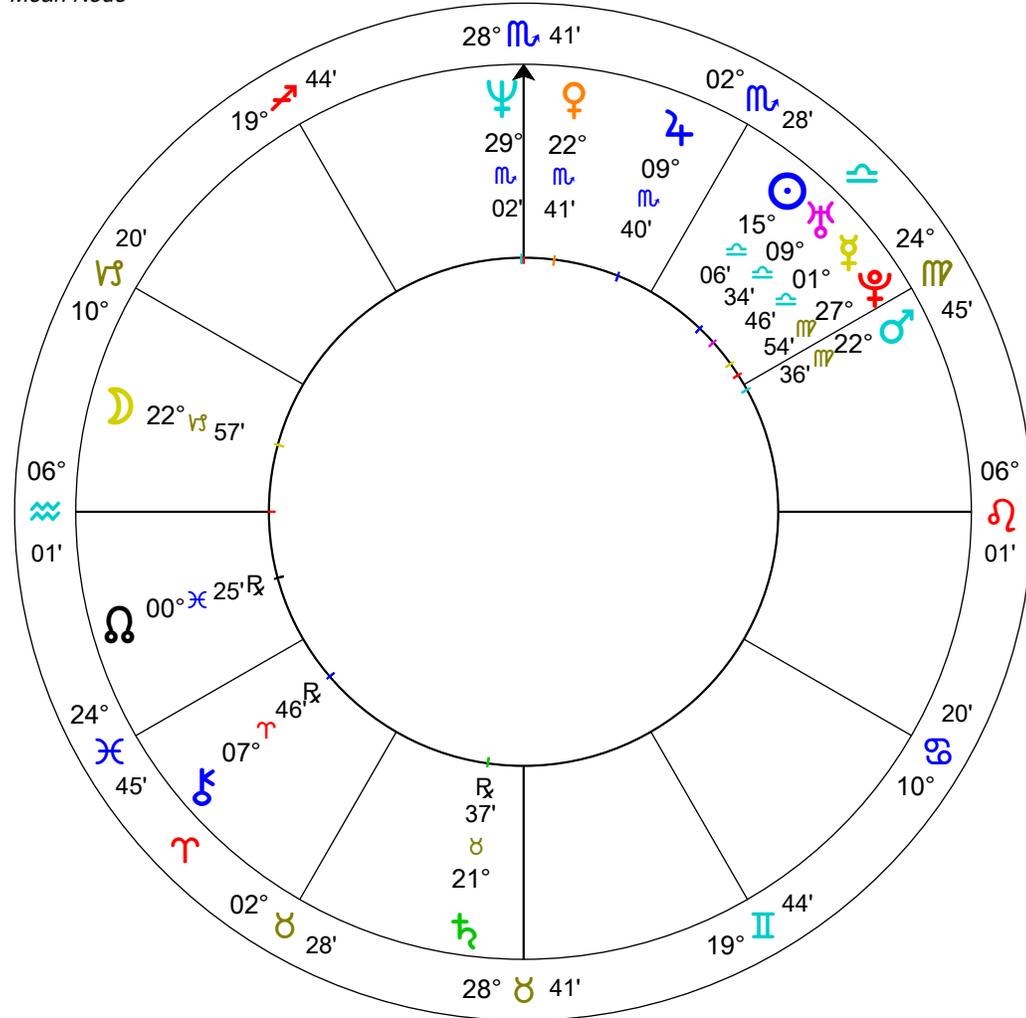
42N21 30 071W03 37

Geocentric

Tropical

Placidus

Mean Node



The chart of actor Matt Damon, shown on the previous page, is interesting to work with, as it contains no less than three distinct stelliums⁹. He has a stellium in the sign Libra consisting of the Sun, Mercury, and Venus. He has a stellium in Scorpio including Jupiter, Venus, Neptune, and the Midheaven. Finally, he has a stellium in the 8th house—similar to Scorpio—spanning the signs Virgo and Libra. The number of planets attributed to his 8th house varies with the house system—his chart is shown here with Placidus cusps. (Depending on the cusps, a stellium by sign may or may not also be a stellium by house, and a stellium by house may or may not also be a stellium by sign.)

One feature of AstroDataBank that is both fun and useful is the capacity to find charts with similarities to the one you are working on, in just a few minutes. I used it to find others with house stelliums. Sex symbols with four planets in the 8th house include:

Sylvester Stallone (Venus, Mercury, and Pluto in Leo, Mars in Virgo)
Demi Moore (Sun, Mercury, Venus, and Neptune in Scorpio)
Sean Penn (Sun, Mercury, and Uranus closely conjunct in Leo)
Julio Iglesias (Mars, Uranus, and Saturn in Gemini)
Raquel Welch (Sun, Mercury, and Mars in Virgo, Pluto in Leo).

Not my idea of a sex symbol is psychic medium James Van Praagh, yet mediumship is another eighth house application. He has five planets in the 8th—Mercury, Venus, and Uranus in Leo, Sun and Pluto in Virgo.

In dealing with a stellium by house, the old controversy about which house system is THE house system is inescapable. The merits of Placidus house cusps vs. Koch vs. Equal House were hotly debated back in the 1970s. We seem to have come to an uneasy truce on that subject—or maybe people just lost interest when they realized they weren't going to convert anyone. You doubtlessly have made up your own mind about the house system you use, as have I (for Placidus), so further debate is irrelevant.

However, you should be aware that the system you use could make a difference when interpreting house stelliums. Matt Damon has 12 Virgo on the 8th house cusp in the Koch system, giving him five planets in the 8th house—Mars, Pluto, Mercury, Uranus and the Sun. In the Placidus system, he has 24 Virgo on the 8th house and thus only technically four planets in the 8th. Mars in Virgo is in a gray area in the 7th house a mere two degrees away from the 8th cusp.

That gray area is important. In working with clients, when a planet is within five degrees of a house cusp, I describe the two possible houses and ask them which of the following options is true. 1) the planet seems to primarily act on House A, 2) the planet seems to primarily act on House B, or 3) it seems somehow to blend the concerns of both houses. Most often the answer is that it is a blend of the two.

⁹ AstroDataBank cites Matt Damon's birth certificate, from Frances McEvoy, rated AA. He was born October 8, 1970, at 3:22 PM EDT, Boston, MA, 71W03; 42N21.



**NOTABLES WITH STELLIUMS
IN VARIOUS HOUSES**
(c)2004 By Donna Cunningham

Houses & Their Associated Matters: Notable: Sign of Stellium:

<u>First:</u> First impressions and first approach to situations; appearance; image; self-presentation; the basic physical vehicle.	George W. Bush Al Gore Bill Clinton	Leo Leo Libra
<u>Second:</u> Money and ways of earning it; money management and attitudes toward finance; things valued more than money.	Carol Burnett Elvis Presley George Hamilton	Taurus Capricorn Leo
<u>Third:</u> Communication; thinking and learning style; siblings and near relatives; neighbors; basic coursework; commuting.	Christopher Reeve Jim Jones (Jonestown) John Bradshaw	Libra Aries Cancer
<u>Fourth:</u> Home and home life; roots; family ties; heredity; family influence; the nurturing parent; senior years;	Bill Cosby Walt Disney Kathi Lee Gifford	Cancer Capricorn Leo
<u>Fifth:</u> Children; romance; creativity; self-expression; performing; leisure activities; gambling and other forms of risk-taking.	Billy Crystal Mel Gibson Charlie Sheen	Leo Scorpio Virgo
<u>Sixth:</u> Work and its meaning; work habits; types of jobs; coworkers and employees; health and health habits.	Robert Redford Joan Rivers Maria Shriver	Virgo Virgo Libra
<u>Seventh:</u> Partnerships—personal and business; close, committed relationships; types of people we attract; sharing.	Jenna Elfman (Counterproductive to fame?)	Libra
<u>Eighth:</u> Sexuality; money you don't earn (inheritances, grants, etc); taxes; partner's resources; death; transformation; healing.	Jean Houston (Healer) Julio Iglesias Raquel Welch	Aries Gemini Virgo
<u>Ninth:</u> Religion and philosophy of life; higher education, advanced studies; legal matters; foreign lands; distance travel.	Marcia Clark (OJ trial) Bernie Siegel Prince William	Leo Virgo Libra
<u>Tenth:</u> Career and long-term goals; how you are remembered; parental authority; bosses and the type of boss you are.	Wynonna Judd Meg Ryan Kathy Bates	Taurus Scorpio Cancer
<u>Eleventh:</u> Friendship; relationship to peer group; group membership; social consciousness, activism; aspirations.	Michael Douglas Ted Danson Jodie Foster	Libra Leo Scorpio
<u>Twelfth:</u> Things that are repressed or hidden; self-defeating behavior; chronic illness; service; retreats; spiritual quest.	Liza Minnelli Johnny Cash Miss Cleo	Pisces Pisces Virgo

Source: AstroDataBank, <http://www.AstroDataBank.com>

Birth data rated A or AA only

For instance, a planet on the 5th /6th cusp often corresponds with salaried work involving such 5th house concerns as children, creativity, or leisure activities. Thus you may wish to defer your conclusions on any planet within five degrees of a house cusp until there is feedback from the chart's owner. In the case of always-dating but at this writing never-married Matt, Mars may well be attributed to the 8th house.

The table on the previous page contains a list of notables who have three or more planets in one house and sign. Excluded are those with a house stellium which does not have three planets in the same sign. The full list, which I researched in AstroDataBank, included many more people, but these were chosen as a representative sample.

In general, stelliums in Virgo, Capricorn, and Taurus, were strongly represented among these successful people, as one might expect with the earth signs' focus on the achievement of worldly success. Stelliums in Virgo were over-represented, and not just among the generation with Pluto and Uranus conjunct in Virgo, suggesting this sign's work ethic can pay off handsomely. A 1st house stellium also seemed helpful—including such recent presidential candidates as George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Al Gore—since people with this stellium project themselves powerfully in their surroundings and cannot escape being noticed.

On the other hand, stelliums in the 7th house were under-represented in the collection, so a strong focus on the relationship dimension of life may be counterproductive to fame. Why would that be so? Wherever a stellium stands, it indicated that matters of that house can occupy a great deal of the person's energy. With a 7th house stellium, the person is likely to be more preoccupied with partnership than career. Some of the planets in a 7th house stellium might actually square the Midheaven, intensifying the conflict between focusing on a career and focusing on relating.

The partner, especially a more traditional husband, could conceivably actively object to the person devoting energy to personal success as opposed to being a support system for the mate and the mate's career. At times and with more difficult placements (e.g. Neptune or Pisces planets in the 7th), the special needs of the mate might even drain energy from working on career goals. With an over-active Uranus in the 7th, the mate's rebellious or erratic behavior might detract from the impression the person wants to make on corporate or administrative higher-ups.

You may enjoy looking through your own chart collection to discover stelliums and consider what roles the house or sign involved in the stellium play in the individual's life. It is bound to be a major influence and can become nearly as important as the Sun and Moon in shaping the person's overriding interests in life. As one of my students once said about a stellium, "There are sure a lot of watts in that one area of the heavens!"



Chart Overview, Continued: Determining the Balance of Elements
And Observing the Pattern of Aspects
©2004 by Donna Cunningham, MSW

The same charts that we worked earlier are repeated in the course of this section. This time the degrees and signs will be shown, but not the planets themselves. They are blocked out, with orange circles for the Sun and Moon and with rainbow-colored blocks for the rest of the planets plus Chiron. You may wish to print out the charts so that you can draw in the aspects and answer the questions below. A sample analysis will be given at the end of this material.

Drawing in the aspects helps you to get to know the chart thoroughly. Use different colors for the difficult aspects, like the squares and oppositions, than for the flowing ones, like the trines and sextiles. I use an action- and conflict-oriented red for the hard aspects and a serene blue for the flowing ones. Bracket planets that are conjunct to distinguish them from other planets in the same house that are not conjunct.

A simple way to find aspects that you might otherwise miss, and even to spot major configurations like the T-square is to create a list of chart placements in numerical order of their degrees, rather than by sign. That is, sort the planets plus the Ascendant and Midheaven by degree number from 0 to 29. (An example will be given shortly.) When we work with transits later in this book, the list will enable you to spot areas that are particularly sensitive because several natal planets fall into a narrow numerical range.



Notice which planets have many aspects and which have few or none. Planets with many aspects receive special emphasis and present a variety of challenges, but these planets have a greater chance of rich expression and integration into the individual's life. Based on the colors you use to draw in hard and soft aspects, note whether the aspects to each planet are predominantly hard or easy. A planet with only hard aspects will definitely present more challenges and conflicts. A planet with only easy aspects may denote special gifts but a laid-back attitude toward using them productively. In contrast, a planet with no aspects or only a single sextile, for example, represents an energy that is difficult to integrate fully.

Get an overview of the aspect pattern. Are there many easy aspects and few difficult ones? Such individuals are likely to have many abilities and

to receive a great deal of support from others, but they sometimes lack the divine itch that would drive them to do much with their talents. Highly accomplished people are more likely to have a predominance of difficult aspects, especially in combinations like T-squares or grand crosses. Their lives are often a greater

struggle, with greater obstacles, than those blessed with mostly trines, but they also tend to achieve more.

Stage Two of the Chart Overview: Elemental Balance.

Analyze each of the charts by element with the numerical system given in “The Four Elements and Your Essential Makeup.” Give two points for the Sun or Moon, indicated by the orange circles on the chart, for a total score of 17. Here are some questions to ask yourself.



What conclusions do you draw about these individuals, based on their elemental makeup?

What chart features might compensate for any lacks you note? For instance, does the person lack planets in the earth signs, yet have a strong presence in the earth houses of the chart—the 10th, 2nd, or 6th houses? Is the 7th house empty, yet the person has Libra rising or a stellium in that sign?

Stage Three of the Chart Overview: Aspect Pattern.

Draw in the aspects for the four charts, using two different colors for hard and soft aspects. Here are some questions to ask yourself.

Are there any unaspected or virtually unaspected planets?

What is the balance between hard and soft aspects?

Is there one type of aspect that predominates—e.g. many squares?

Are there any missing aspects—e.g. no oppositions?

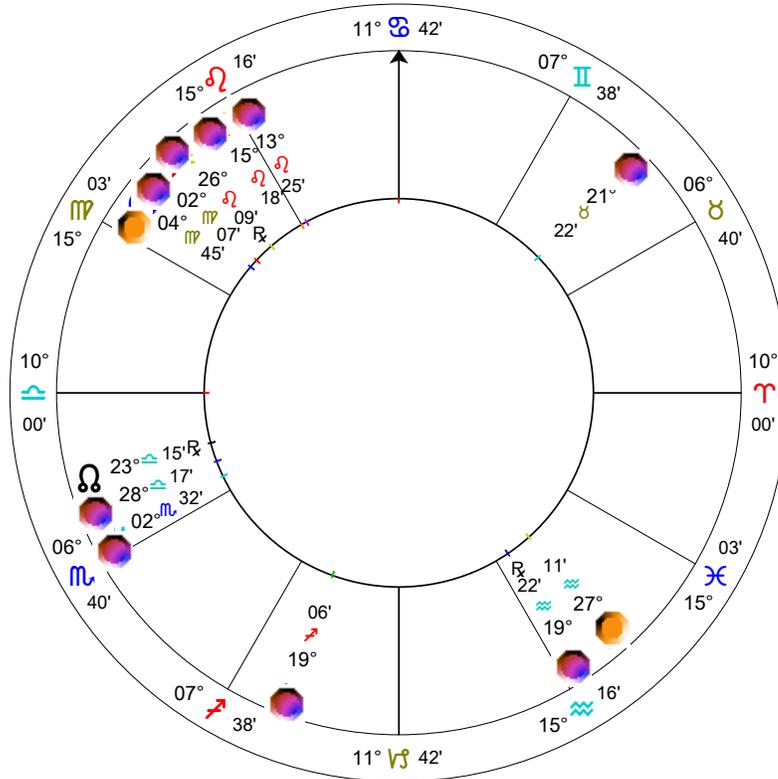
Which are the most aspected points?

Are there major configurations like a Grand Trine, T-square, Grand Cross, or Yod?

A Sample Analysis—Scott Hamilton’s Chart

As an example of the type of information you can gain from this continued overview, let’s return to the chart of Scott Hamilton, Chart 4 below. To identify which planet I am referring to in the discussion, I will give the house and degree of the planet. Note that there are orange circles—for the Sun or Moon—for the following: a planet in house 11 at 4 degrees of Virgo and a planet in house 5 at 27 degrees of Aquarius. In the elemental balance calculations, they will receive two points each. (Ignore the nodes in your scoring.)

chart #4, (scott hamilton) stage 2:



We begin by creating his degree list. Since we do not yet know what planets are represented by the circles, we will have only the list of degrees available to us just now. (In the usual chart analysis, the planets as well as their degrees would be given)

2 Virgo 07	19 Sag 00
2 Scorpio 32	19 Aquarius 22
4 Virgo 45	21 Taurus 22
10 Libra 00 (Asc)	26 Leo 09
11 Cancer 42 (MH)	27 Aquarius 11
13 Leo 25	28 Libra 17
15 Leo 18	

Here are the scores for Scott's elemental balance:

fire:	
3 planets in Leo	3
Planet in <u>Sagittarius</u>	1
Total	4
earth:	
Sun or Moon in Virgo	2
Planet in Virgo	1
Planet in <u>Taurus</u>	1
Total	4
air:	
Ascendant in Libra	2
Planet in Libra	1
Planet in Aquarius	1
Sun or Moon in <u>AQ</u>	2
Total	6
water:	
Midheaven in Cancer	2
Planet in <u>Scorpio</u>	1
Total	3

From these scores, which include Chiron for a total of 17 points, we would see that there is a fairly even balance, with no missing elements. We find that his strongest element is air with six points including the Ascendant and either the Sun or the Moon—while his weakest—with three points—might be seen as water, especially since there is only one actual planet in a water sign. Though some houses are heavily featured, the planets themselves are distributed throughout the chart, with no hemispheres or quadrants of houses empty. On the whole, this might suggest an individual with a certain balance between intellect, emotions, earthly concerns, and emotions who maintains a diversity of interests.

Taking the teachings of Marc Edmund Jones into account, the top half of the chart—his orientation toward worldly concerns—and the bottom half of the chart—more private and personal concerns—are equally balanced¹⁰. In addition there is also a good balance between the eastern (left hand) side of the chart, which represents self-directedness and taking initiative on one's own goals, and the western (right hand) side of the chart, which represents other-directedness and the capacity to work cooperatively with joint aims. Again, we get the impression of a well-balanced, complex individual.

Drawing in his aspects, the hard aspects predominate, yet there are a good number of soft aspects as well, with trines and sextiles relieving the hard aspects.



This suggests that he has had many challenges to master, and yet he has personal gifts and assets that ease his struggles and help him to learn from his challenges and mistakes. The trines and sextiles—as well as an emphasis on people-oriented signs like Leo, Libra, and Libra and his strong 11th house—also indicate that he draws supportive people into his life so that he does not face his challenges alone. The combination of Leo, Libra, and Aquarius also give him personal magnetism and charisma.

The most common aspect his chart is the conjunction, with conjunctions in Leo, Virgo, Libra, and Aquarius. Conjunctions lend force and power to the planets combined in this way, yet mean that there is no separation between the energies of those planets—they cannot stand alone. The predominance of conjunctions would be one of the reasons his personal impact is so strong and also one reason he has been able to focus his energy strongly for achievements.

Continuing to work with the aspects, we note that there are no unaspected planets, and that in fact each of the planets has a number of aspects. This suggests that each planet has several means of working out and expressing its challenges and needs—all planetary energies and the needs they represent have a good chance of being integrated into his life. When you look further into the aspects between various planets, you will find that there are THREE major configurations—a most unusual event, as few people have even one major configuration:

T-Square: The planet at 21 Taurus in the eighth house squares the planets at 15 and 25 Leo in the 11th house planets and also squares the planets at 19 and 27 Aquarius in the 5th house. The two planets in Aquarius are conjunct within eight

¹⁰ Jones, Marc Edmund. *The Essentials of Astrological Analysis*. Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2002. A classic work in which he delineates various chart patterns including the Bucket, Bowl, Bundle, Locomotive, Seesaw, Splash, and Splay. (A Print on Demand version available through AstroAmerica at <http://www.astroamerica.com> and Amazon.com.)

On-line expositions of the Marc Edmund Jones material on chart patterns can be found in Bob Marks' Lessons 10.1-10.7 at: <http://www.bobmarksastrologer.com/TOClessons.htm>

degrees The planet at 19 Aquarius opposes the planets at 15 and 25 Leo, while the planet (Sun or Moon) at 27 Aquarius opposes the planet at 26 Leo, as well as the two planets in early Virgo. In addition to being in fixed signs, the planets are also in the houses related to the fixed signs (Leo is related to the 5th house; Aquarius to the 11th, and Scorpio to the 8th)

A t-square, as we will discover in a later lesson, gives a strong, dynamic, almost driven quality to the interests and needs of the houses involved. For now, however, we will simply note the presence of this major configuration in fixed signs and fixed houses. Fixity can represent a certain amount of rigidity but also a strong capacity to persevere.

Basket: The oppositions between Leo and Aquarius are linked by trines and sextiles to the planets in Libra and Sagittarius. This fortunate pattern suggests an ease of integrating all those energies and of resolving the conflicts between the opposing signs. Again, we are getting ahead of ourselves in terms of our ability to interpret these configurations, but for now we will note that they are there and that they add to Scott's gifts and complexities as a human being. Interestingly enough, Scott's good friend and fellow skating champion, Kurt Browning also has a basket configuration in his chart. (See pp.110-116 of *How to Read Your Astrological Chart.*)



Eye of God: (Also known as the Yod or Finger of Fate) This pattern is made up of two inconjuncts (quincunxes), joined by a sextile. We will analyze it in more depth in a later essay. Here we should note that the planet in Taurus in the 8th house is the apex or pointed end of the Eye of God what includes the planet at 23 Libra in the 1st house and the planet at 19 Sagittarius in the 3rd.

The planet at 21 Taurus in Scott's 8th house is the focus of not one but two of the major configurations—the t-square and the Eye of God. When we find out what that particular planet is, we will have identified a crucial dynamic in the chart, one that encompasses many conflicts and stresses. Furthermore, it has no soft aspects to mitigate its challenges or to help it adapt gracefully, and it has no aspects to either the Ascendant or Midheaven to give it a natural outlet. The fact that it is in the 8th house, then, will be important in interpreting how he uses it. Some of the concerns of the 8th include sex, death, rebirth, childbirth, taxes, healing and transformation, and financial and other resources of a partner or other intimate relationship.

As public as he is in many ways, these are not issues that Scott Hamilton discusses readily, but the fact that he did come down with testicular cancer might in part be due to unresolved issues in this area of life. Are you itching to know which planet it is? It is Mars, which is far from energized in the sign Taurus, even without

the added challenges we have been discussing. (According to AstroDataBank, Scott was born on August 28, 1958, at 9:00 AM EST, in Toledo, OH. The data is ranked A, from his parents.)

The other charts from the earlier essay on the chart overview are shown on the following pages in the same format as Scott's so that you can gain additional practice in this method. In these two essays, we have been engaged in training the right brain side of the brain to see the chart as a whole before succumbing to the temptation to dive into analyzing specific pieces of the chart. Take the time to use your eyes, and your intuitive perceptions will open up more to the gestalt of the chart rather than isolating its myriad component parts. This type of right brain approach is the foundation and the essence of chart synthesis.



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art 1, stage 2:

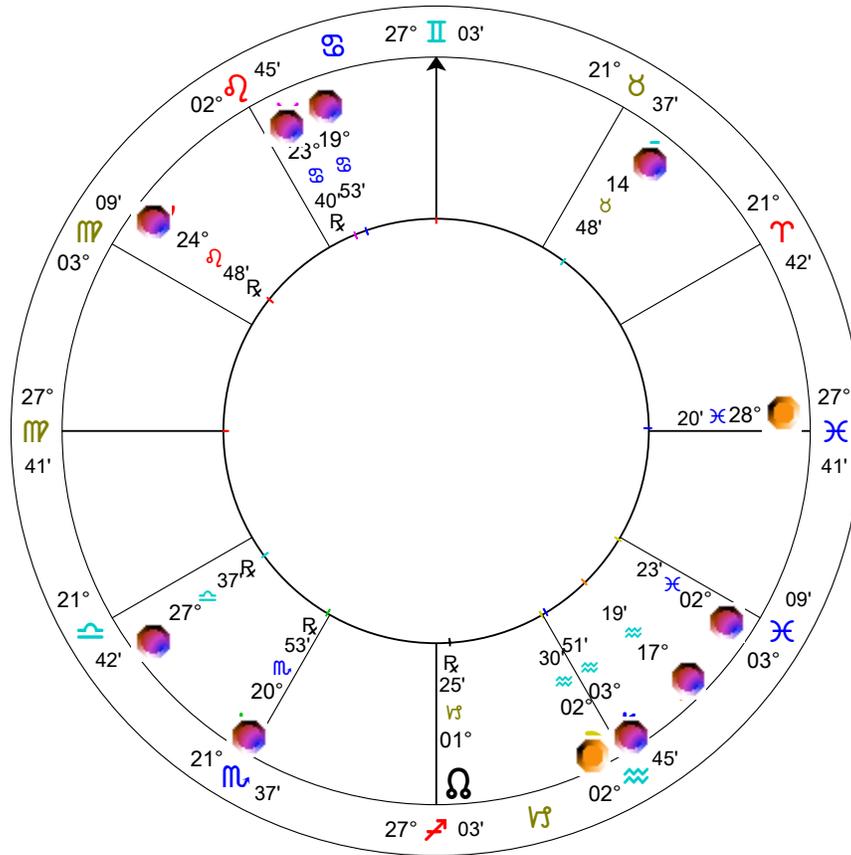
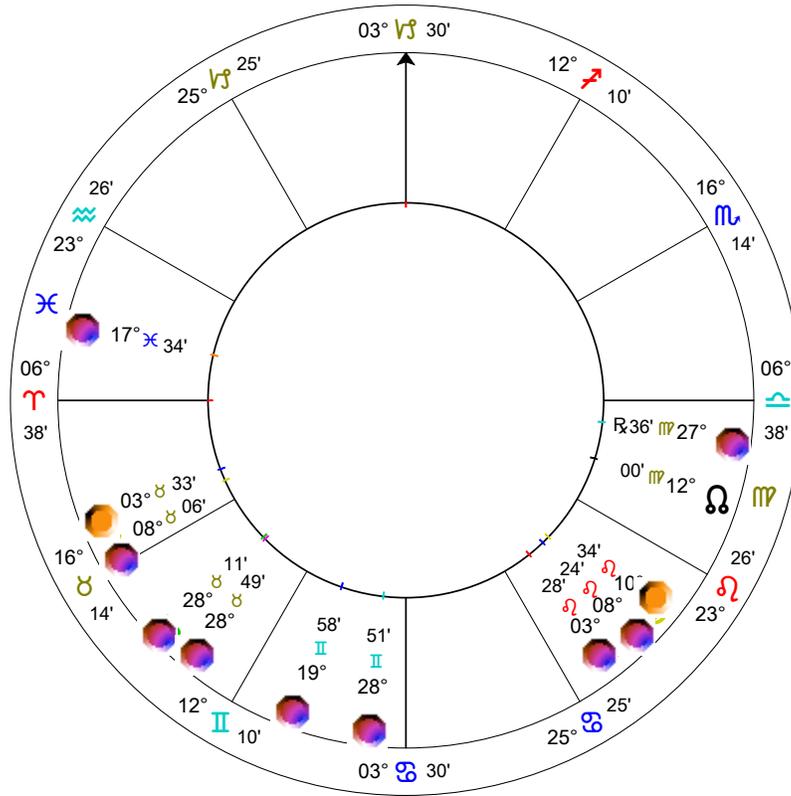


chart #2, stage 2:



What Planet are You From? What the Planetary Types are Like¹

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Attributes of the planets were once so well-known and accepted that they crept into our language. *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* describes a *Saturnine* individual as one who is sluggish, gloomy, morose, grave and taciturn--"born under the supposed influence of the planet Saturn."² A *Mercurial* individual is described as having qualities attributed to the god Mercury or supposedly influenced by the planet Mercury--eloquent, clever, shrewd, or having qualities suggestive of the metal mercury: quick, quick-witted, volatile, changeable, fickle. The dictionary also defines the *Jovial* type (ruled by Jupiter), the venial or venereal sin (related to Venus), and the *lunatic* (affected by the Moon).



Let's look at brief descriptions of the planetary types. Whole books have been written about each of them, so consult them if you feel a need to flesh out your understanding.

The Solar type: This somewhat regal individual has a strong need to shine, to stand out in bold relief, and often does just that. All the *self* words are emphasized: self-expression, self-confidence or self-consciousness, self-development, self-obsession, and even selfishness. At worst, the person can have a big ego and an insatiable need to be noticed, even the center of attention.

The Lunar type: This is someone who expends much energy tending to lunar concerns. These include nurturing, food, the home, security, women and women's needs, family, and the emotions. The past and family of origin figure strongly in the person's behavior, habits, and emotional issues and are often carried into adult life.

¹ The following is an excerpt from Donna's hardcopy text, *How to Read Your Astrological Chart: Aspects of the Cosmic Puzzle*, pp. 72-75, published by Red Wheel/Weiser, York Beach, ME: 1999. It is reprinted here with their permission. To order a copy of the book, call them at 1-800-423-7087.

² *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, Second college edition*, David B. Guralnik, editor. Simon and Schuster, NY: 1980. The definition of saturnine is given on page 1266, and mercurial is defined on page 888.

The Mercurial type: Here is a natural communicator who would do well to earn a living using those skills. Otherwise the energy is squandered on the phone, the Internet, or in incessant chatter. These individuals are restless, changeable, and incurably curious. They don't tolerate boredom well. They are cerebral and even intellectual, and often have a keen sense of humor.



The Venusian type: For them, relationships are paramount, and they feel unfulfilled without a partner. Romantic, charming, often attractive if overly concerned with appearance, they hunger for a steady dose of affection and warmth from those around them. Considerate, caring individuals, they often vacillate on decisions because they want to please everyone and keep the peace. They can be too other-directed and thus lack the drive to accomplish things for their own sake.

The Martial type: These people are action-oriented, often rashly leaping to act before careful thought or planning. They are often seen as leaders because they have abundant energy, drive, zeal, and sureness about their aims. They can be aggressive, hot-headed or competitive and lack patience with slower, less certain folks. Easily irritated, but the sign and aspects of Mars determine how readily they show anger and how it is expressed.

The Jovial type: This type seeks answers to the big questions of life. In that quest, they tend to be perpetual scholars, whether in formal schooling or self-taught. Once they find an answer they like, they aren't shy about carrying the word enthusiastically to others. Thus they are often formal or informal teachers, preachers, or public relations people. In their quest to look at life through the big picture, they are notorious for exaggeration. They can be conventional, moralistic, and preachy, but generous, with a good, though convoluted sense of humor. Optimistic by nature, they seek to uplift and encourage others and to find lessons in every trial.

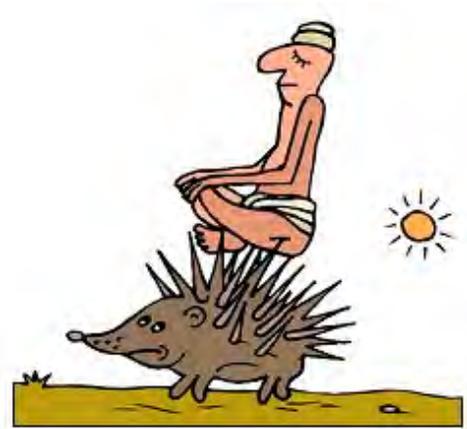


The Saturnine type: These people early in life form strong goals and devote much of the available time to fulfilling them. Serious, focused, reliable, dutiful, responsible, and capable beyond their years, they can also be somber perfectionists or depressed, anxious workaholics, especially when stymied in accomplishing their lofty aims. The older they get and the more of their goals they fulfill, the more they

grow mellow and cut themselves some slack. They can become the elders of the tribe, with valuable practical experience to pass along.

The Uranian type: These individualists--one might even say characters--abound in eccentricities that can either endear or drive others up the wall. They can rebel when society exerts too much pressure to conform to rules that go against their grain. Often advanced in ideas, supportive of social causes, or brilliantly inventive, these folks will often be *avant guard*, seldom mainstream, though they can start fads. Their beleaguered parents somehow survive a stormy adolescence, when authority is perpetually questioned. They can be contrary and often discard a workable system simply because it is *passé*.

The Neptunian type: Much like the haze that surrounds their signature planet, these beings can be confused and confusing. Their perceptions are less focused on the material world than on realms beyond--the spiritual, the astral, the creative, and the imaginary dimensions. Hard to pin down, they can shift between savior or saved, nurse or patient, saint or sinner, spiritual seeker or lost soul, inspiration or delusion. Some are prone to addictions or fantasy to escape a reality that doesn't fit their dreams. However, they can turn that pattern around, and when they do, they have much to teach all of us in this addictive era.



The Plutonian type: Often suffering painful betrayals, losses, and abuses of power in early years, these hawk-eyed observers of humanity, and of life itself, can be wary and mistrustful. Their perceptions are keen, deep, and accurate, yet the conclusions they draw can be distorted by old traumas. Shown a path to healing, they will work obsessively to overcome their own ills, or those of others, or those of society as a whole. Many become therapists, healers, or social reformers. (I devoted an entire book, *Healing Pluto Problems*, to these valiant souls.)



Outer Planet People: Commonly encountered in astrology and New Age circles, but seldom in the teller's cage at the bank, are what I call Outer Planet People or OPPs. In their charts, two or more of the outer planets--Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto--are heavily emphasized. There are sub-races of OPPS--the Uranus-Neptune type versus the Pluto-Uranus type versus the Pluto-Neptune type, as detailed in *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume 3*. However, they all share the distinction of not being "of this world" and of feeling set apart and

alienated from earthlings. Many would characterize themselves as Starseed. (If you don't know what Starseed are, there is a strong chance you either aren't an OPP or else are in denial about your origins.)

OPPs typically do not come into their own until the midlife cycle hits, when they are empowered by double doses of outer planet energies. (In the late thirties to mid-forties, transiting Neptune squares natal Neptune, Uranus opposes natal Uranus, and Pluto squares natal Pluto.) At that time, they with others of their generation gather the courage to fully express the outer planets and to remember their incarnational purposes. With all the outer planets in universal signs for the next several decades, we desperately need their help for the earth to survive and for all of us to shift to a global/galactic culture.



You may now have an idea of what planetary type you are as well as some suspicions about what planets some of your loved ones come from. Is your intended a Venusian type—or a Neptunian? Is that hard-nosed boss of yours a Saturnian? How can you know for sure, you ask? Conveniently, the next section of this book has a scale for measuring the planetary types! It may be a tad mathematical for some of us, especially those of the Neptunian persuasion, but the Mercurial and Uranian brand of astrology student will find it intriguing.

**Finding Your Planetary Type:
Measuring the Strength of the Planets in a Chart4**
©2004 by Donna Cunningham

A NOTE TO THE MATH-CHALLENGED READER: This particular piece is math-intensive, and if you detest math or it detests you, you may want to skip to the next article. If, however, you are keen on finding a way to know which are the strongest planets and aspects in a chart you are working on, the scale is worth mastering.



If you want a major clue to what is important in interpreting a chart, look for the planetary type(s) — the strongest planet or planets — because that suggests what drives or motivates us. Knowing the planetary type or types helps you anticipate behavior and responses to events and people. For example, a Venusian has Venus as the strongest chart factor, including aspects to Venus and placements in Venus-ruled signs (Libra and Taurus) or in houses associated with those two signs (the 2nd and 7th). Venusians are powerfully motivated by love, beauty, and harmony. They are usually appealing and seldom without a partner, though their partnerships may or may not be stable, depending on the aspects to Venus and the condition of the 7th house.

A Saturnian is motivated by concerns related to the planet Saturn, its sign (Capricorn), and the associated house (the 10th). Have you ever sworn that someone was a Capricorn, yet the chart didn't have the Sun, Moon, Ascendant — or any planets at all — in that sign? Chances are that Saturn was in high focus or the 10th house was strongly emphasized. Saturnians are often strongly motivated by security and the drive to succeed; they are cautious and capable, though hard on themselves and others in their quest for perfection. (Use what you know of the remaining planets to define their motives and priorities.)



I have designed a scale to measure planetary types, based on 35 years of observing clients in consultations; it shows how to assign scores to each planet and thus narrow the field down to a few possibilities. Inner planets used in this scale are Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter; the outer ones are Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. The Sun and Moon, considered “lights,” are higher in importance and given more points. (Chiron is not always used, but feel free to score it as an outer planet where it is important.)

Rulerships are the standard (modern) ones: Mars for Aries, Venus for Taurus, Mercury for Gemini, and so on — through Pluto for Scorpio. In scoring, use the astrological alphabet popularized by Dr. Zipporah Dobyns, in which signs, houses, and planets are related as in the “natural zodiac”.

4 This appeared in the April-May, 2005 issue of The Mountain Astrologer and is reprinted with permission.

Table 1: Help in Scoring the Planets

A. Equivalent Signs, Houses and Planets:

Aries, Mars, (1st house)
Taurus, (Venus), 2nd house
Gemini, Mercury, 3rd house
Cancer, the Moon, 4th house
Leo, the Sun, (5th house)
Virgo, (Mercury), 6th house
Libra, Venus, 7th house
Scorpio, Pluto, 8th house
Sagittarius, Jupiter, 9th house
Capricorn, Saturn, MC, 10th house
Aquarius, Uranus, (11th house)
Pisces, Neptune, 12th house

B. Notes About Finding the Strongest Planets in a Chart:

This system cannot work well with equal house cusps, as they hide the true Midheaven and Midheaven ruler as well as planets conjunct the MH or IC—important factors in the scoring. As well, house placements in that system are determined by the degree on the Ascendant.

Though you are free to modify the scale as you please, note that it is based on some 35 years of face to face observation of clients and their lives. If you add in five or six asteroids and a variety of additional points, the observed strengths of the true planets, Sun, Moon, and the four angles are likely to get swamped by the additional data.

If you are scoring a major configuration, and one or more ends of the configuration involve a conjunction, that does not count as TWO or more major configurations, just one. For example, a grand trine with a conjunction on one of the points is just one grand trine in this system. If a grand trine is also a kite, just score the kite, not two configurations.

Extend the orb for an aspect IF you analyze the qualities, dynamics, or issues typical of a given aspect and find that they are clearly present in the individual's life. The best source of such information is the person who has the aspect.

NOTE: The score sheet is also available as an Excel document in which the totals are added automatically. See it in the Appendix of this book, and if that doesn't work on your system, download it at:

<http://www.moonmavenpublications.com/PlanetStrengthscale.xls>

A Preliminary Scale for Measuring a Planet's Strength

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NOTE: Inner Planets are Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter; the Sun and Moon are "lights" and score higher.

(Show totals per category—if there are two conjunctions, 2x the points)	Weight	Sun	Moon	Mercury	Venus	Mars	Jupiter
Planet within 10° of the Ascendant or MC	7						
Planet within 10° of the IC or Descendant	4						
Planet, Sun, or Moon square or trine the Asc or MC.	2						
Planet in the 1st or 10th but not conjunct the Asc or MC	2						
Planet is part of major configuration (e.g., t-square) or multiple conjunction*	3						
Any planet conjunct, square, opposite, or trine the Sun or Moon	4						
Inner Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to another inner planet	3						
Inner Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to an outer planet	2						
Outer Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to an inner planet	2						
Outer Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to another outer planet	1						
Sun, Moon, or Planet is most aspected planet in the chart (additional score)	1						
Sun, Moon, Ascendant or MC in a sign ruled by the planet being scored	4						
Each Inner Planet in a sign ruled by the planet being scored	2						
Each Outer Planet in a sign, ruled by the planet being scored.	1						
Sun, Moon or Inner Planet in a house associated with planet being scored	2						
Each Outer Planet in a house associated with planet being scored.	1						
Write-in Vote:							
Total for each planet—>							

Ranges: Low = 8 and under; Medium = 9-14; High = 15-18; Astronomical = 19 and over

A Preliminary Scale for Measuring a Planet's Strength

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NOTE: outer planets Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto; the Sun and Moon are "lights" and score higher.

(Show totals per category—if there are two conjunctions, 2x the points)	Weight	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
Planet within 10° of the Ascendant or MC	7				
Planet within 10° of the IC or Descendant	4				
Planet, Sun, or Moon square or trine the Ascendant or MC.	2				
Planet in the 1st or 10th but not conjunct the Ascendant or MC	2				
Planet is part of major configuration (e.g., t-square) or multiple conjunction*	3				
Any planet conjunct, square, opposite, or trine the Sun or Moon	4				
Inner Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to another inner planet	3				
Inner Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to an outer planet	2				
Outer Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to an inner planet	2				
Outer Planet: Each conj, square, opposition, or trine to another outer planet	1				
Sun, Moon, or Planet is most aspected planet in the chart (additional score)	1				
Sun, Moon, Ascendant or MC in a sign ruled by the planet being scored	4				
Each Inner Planet in a sign ruled by the planet being scored	2				
Each Outer Planet in a sign, ruled by the planet being scored.	1				
Sun, Moon or Inner Planet in a house associated with planet being scored	2				
Each Outer Planet in a house associated with planet being scored.	1				
Write-in Vote:					
Total for each planet——>					

Ranges: Low = 8 and under; Medium = 9-14; High = 15-18; Astronomical = 19 and over

Note: To emphasize the importance of major configurations, the score for being part of a configuration is *in addition to* all the aspects formed by that planet. to others in the configuration. Major planetary configurations include the t-square, grand cross, grand trine, kite, and yod (a.k.a. Finger of God). If one corner of a major configuration is a conjunction, that does not count as two separate configurations. (Table by Kenneth Hirst and Lynne Herlacher based Donna's scale)

The scale shown on the previous page measures the strengths of various planets in the birth chart. Since there are no objective measures of the impact of such placements, these ratings are subjective, based on my decades of observing clients. In my view, based on the Gauquelin's work, a planet's strength is greatly increased if it falls within a 10° conjunction of any of the four chart angles (Ascendant, MC, IC, or Descendant) or if it aspects the Sun or Moon.

For aspects, we will focus on the conjunction, square, opposition, and trine, with aspects to the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, and Midheaven (MC) receiving extra weight. Astrologers use varying orbs; in theory, my orbs are 5° for a trine or square, 8° for a conjunction or opposition, and 2° for a sextile or quincunx. I often extend orbs, depending on how a particular aspect fits into the total aspect picture. When an aspect is wide yet completes a major configuration, it may still work. Likewise, in a multiple conjunction, I may give a wider orb to the distance between the first and the last planet in the series, but probably not beyond 10°. To me, the final authority as to whether an aspect is too wide or not is the client. If I'm uncertain, I describe the pattern, and the client frequently confirms that an aspect that would seem too wide is, in fact, a very active one.

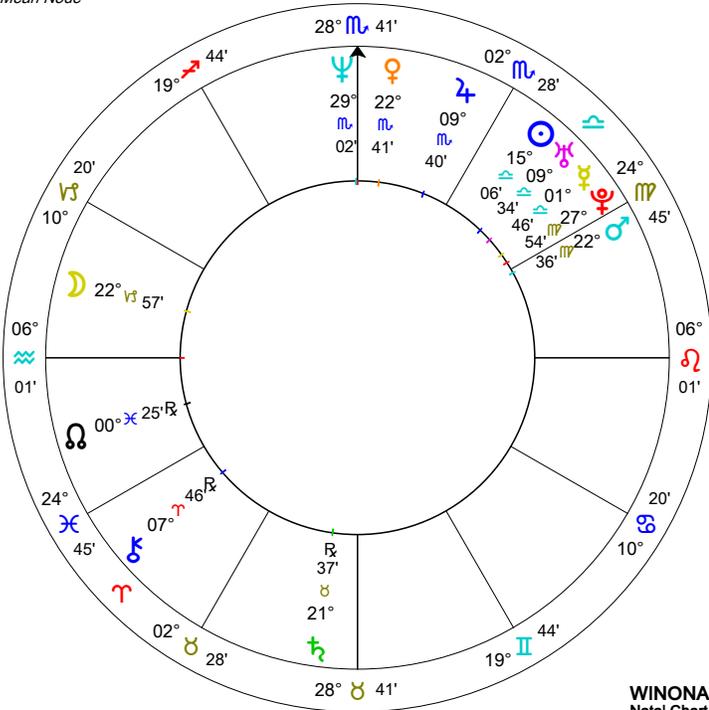
I would not generally consider sextiles important enough to merit points. At most, a sextile that is part of an important aspect picture like a kite or Yod might be granted half a point. (For instance, the sextiles in Matt Damon's chart, shown later, turn his grand trine into a kite.) The dynamics represented by the quincunx, on the other hand, can be a major issue in the person's life. A quincunx to the Sun or as part of a Yod might be given one point. The scale is a work in progress and may not include tools that you regularly use, so feel free to alter it. To add features, use the write-in blank on the table.



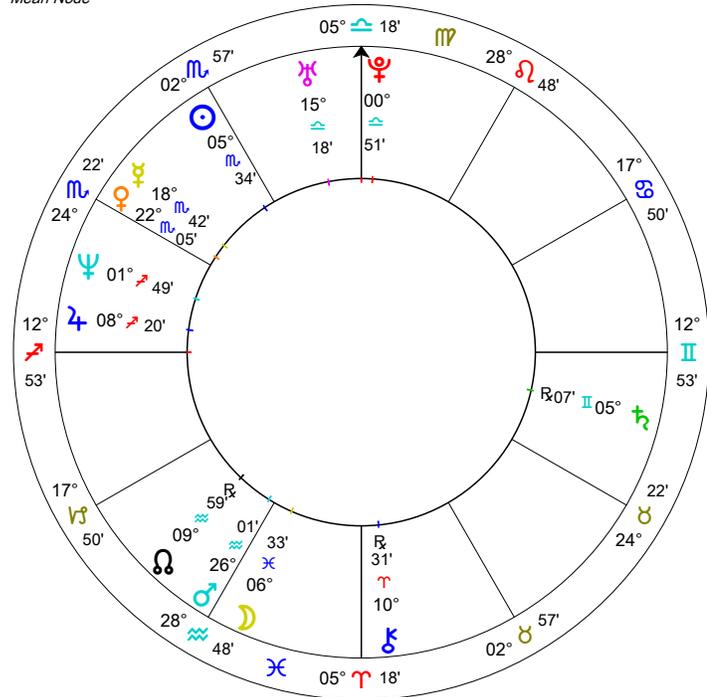
You will want to narrow the field of planets, since scoring all the planets in a chart could become tedious. Begin by drawing in the aspects and highlighting any planets within a 10° range of the four angles: the Ascendant, MC, Descendant, and IC. Note any heavily aspected planets, the ruler of a stellium by sign or house, and the rulers of the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, and MC. Score the planets that rank high on those criteria. Another interesting exercise is to use these scores to find the least-emphasized planet; start with any that have few aspects. You need a separate form for each chart being scored, so feel free to print out copies of the blank.

As an example of planetary types, let's look at the horoscope of Matt Damon, shown on the next page, and follow the scoring in Table 3. Two angles of the chart (the MC and the IC) give us our first clue — to not only his planetary types but also his great popular appeal. Since Venus, Saturn, and Neptune are all conjunct these angles, they all score 7 points apiece. According to the rules in the score sheet, Matt actually has three planets that score in the astronomical range — no doubt part of why he is so complex and charismatic.

Matt Damon
Natal Chart
 Oct 8 1970
 3:22 PM EDT +4:00
 Boston
 42N21 30 071W03 37
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node



WINONA RYDER
Natal Chart
 Oct 29 1971
 11:00 AM CDT +5:00
 Rochester
 44N01 18 092W28 11
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node



At 27 points, Pluto is extremely strong, something we might miss from looking only at his Sun, Moon, and Ascendant. Pluto is part of the grand trine/kite formation; also, Matt has a stellium in the 8th house and three planets plus the MC in Scorpio. The strength of Pluto makes this actor a sex symbol, yet Pluto is in Virgo, so his sexuality is subtle and sensual, rather than blatant.

Table 3: Matt Damon's Planetary Scores

PLANETARY SCORE FOR PLUTO:

Pluto conjunct Mars	2
Pluto conjunct Mercury	2
Pluto trine Moon	4
Pluto trine Saturn	1
Pluto in major configuration	3 (Kite)
Pluto, Uranus in the 8 th	2
Sun, Uranus in the 8 th	4
Scorpio Midheaven	4
Venus, Jupiter in Scorpio	4
Neptune in Scorpio	1
Total score for Pluto	27

PLANETARY SCORE FOR VENUS:

Venus conjunct Midheaven	7
Venus conjunct Neptune	2
Venus opposite Saturn	2
Venus sextiles Moon, Mars	1 (Kite)
Venus in major configuration	3 (Kite)
Sun, Mercury in Libra	4
Uranus in Libra	1
Saturn in Taurus	1
Mars in the 7 th house	2
Total score for Venus	23

PLANETARY SCORE FOR SATURN:

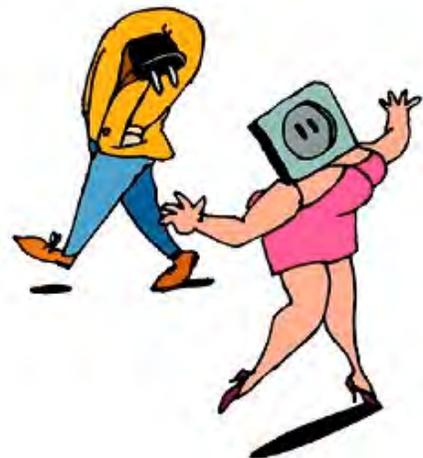
Saturn conjunct IC	4
Saturn opposite Venus	2
Saturn opposite Neptune	1
Saturn trine Moon	4
Saturn trine Mars	2
Saturn trine Pluto	1
Saturn in major configuration	3 (Kite)
Saturn most-aspected planet	1
Moon in Capricorn	2
Neptune in the 10 th house	1
Total score for Saturn	21

Matt's Venus is in the 9th house but conjunct the MC. Its only major aspects are the conjunction to Neptune and the opposition to Saturn. Here, the sextiles from Venus to the Moon and Mars are each less than 17' from exact and turn his earth grand trine into a kite formation, so they are of enough significance that they would merit a half-point each. Looking at the other planets, four of them are in the Venus-ruled signs, Libra and Taurus. One planet is in the 7th house, associated with Libra. Totaling all these factors, Venus receives a score of 23 points.

It is not so obvious that Matt is also strongly Saturnian. Saturn is in the 3rd house, opposing the MC, Venus, and Neptune and at the peak of the earth grand trine/kite formation. Saturn is also the most aspected planet in his chart. The Moon is in Capricorn and Neptune is in the 10th, the house associated with Capricorn. The total for Saturn is 21 to Venus's 23 —close enough. Since Saturn tightly opposes Venus and since both planets are conjunct an angle, the two planets are intricately related and neither can be considered the sole planetary type. Those with natal Venus–Saturn aspects who despair of finding love after reading traditional delineations, should take heart by thinking of Matt. He is very well loved not only by the public but also by his leading ladies, as his high-profile love life attests. That he has difficulty making commitments is not exactly a surprise, but Venus–Saturn types are often cautious about committing until after their Saturn return, between the ages of 28 and 30. Matt had his return in the year 2000; that window having passed, my next guess for a marriage time would be when Saturn conjoins his Descendant in 2005.

Finding the lowest-scoring planets in a chart can also be informative. The needs, preoccupations, and drives of that planet may be harder to achieve, or the person may consider them of lesser priority. Matt Damon's lowest-scoring planet — at 6 points — is Jupiter, which is also virtually unaspected, other than a square to the Ascendant and a (non-scoring) semi-square to Mars. Without knowing the details of his inner life, we cannot know how he might feel lacking in the Jupiterian areas of life. We might imagine that education is one sensitive area for him. According to his AstroDatabank biography, he left Harvard University a year short of graduation to pursue his acting career. *Good Will Hunting*, the Academy Award–winning screenplay he wrote with Ben Affleck, is about a working-class hero who confronts academia. His starring role in that movie brought him widespread popularity for the first time.

Our strongest *and* weakest planets can be a factor in our relationships. We are often drawn to those who are like ourselves; Plutonians, for instance, are often most comfortable with other Plutonians. At other times, we gravitate toward people who are strong in some of our weaker planets, as a way of filling a lack in ourselves. Jupiter, Matt's weakest planet, is by far the strongest planet in the chart of Matt's one-time love interest, actress Winona Ryder, whose chart is shown on the previous page. (With Venus and Neptune conjunct his MC, Matt has a history of affairs with his leading ladies and other Hollywood celebs.) Winona's



Jupiter scores a huge 26 points, compared to Matt's Jupiter at a weak 6 points. We might speculate that her strong Jupiter could have been part of the attraction. The fact that Saturn's score is a strong 21 points in Matt's chart (and 19 in Winona's) may have given Matt and Winona a sense of kinship.

My first suspects for Winona's planetary types were Neptune, Jupiter, and Saturn, since all three are part of a major configuration (t-square), while Jupiter and Saturn are also conjunct the angles. These planets do prove to be the strongest features. This somewhat depressive combination might have enhanced the appeal of drugs for her — a recurrent problem in her life. I allotted one point for the quincunx from Saturn to the Sun, because this aspect *is* to the Sun, it's tight, and it's one of Saturn's array of aspects to nearly every planet in the chart.

At first glance, the unsuspected Uranus in Winona's chart would appear to be weak. Behaviorally, however, it is strong, considering her stormy history and media exposure for her drug addiction, shoplifting, and other high jinks. Note the Uranus score to see where the emphasis comes from. Her highest scores are shown in **Table 4**, below. Her major configuration is a t-square involving the Moon in Pisces, Saturn in Gemini, and Jupiter and Neptune in Sagittarius.

Table 4: Winona Ryder's Planetary Scores

Jupiter:

Jupiter conjunct the Ascendant	7
Jupiter in a major configuration	3
Jupiter, Neptune in Sagittarius	3
Sagittarius Ascendant	4
Jupiter square Moon	4
Jupiter opposite Saturn	2
Jupiter conjunct Neptune	2
Pluto in the 9 th house	1
Total score for Jupiter	26

Neptune:

Neptune in a major configuration	3
Neptune conjunct Jupiter	2
Neptune square Moon	4
Neptune square Mars (out of sign)	2
Neptune opposite Saturn	1
Moon in Pisces	2
Jupiter, Neptune in the 12 th	3
Total score for Neptune	17

Saturn:

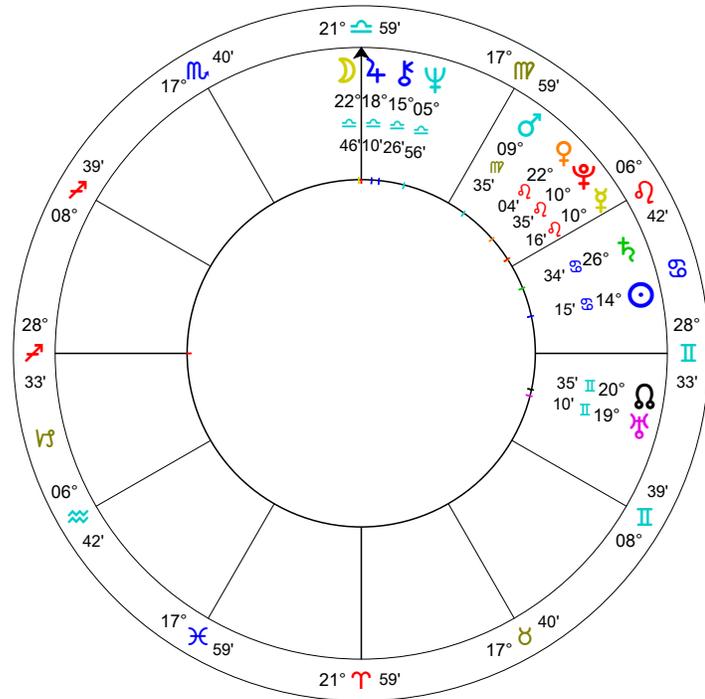
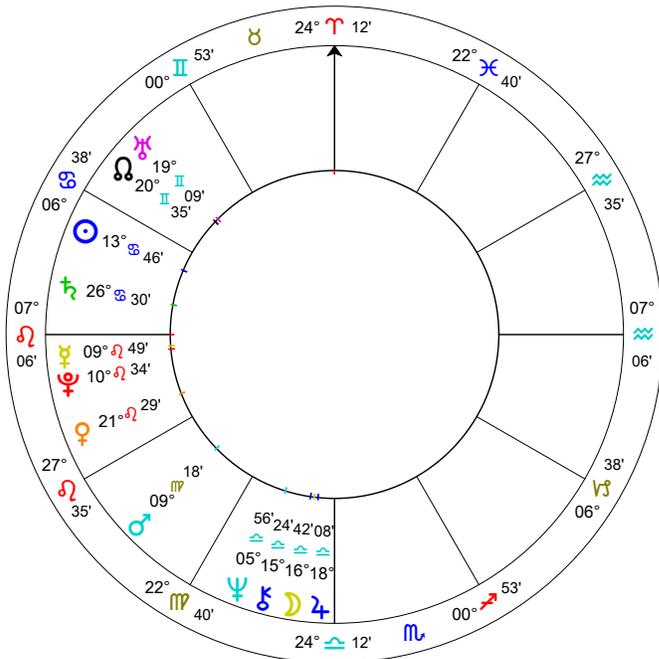
Saturn conjunct the Descendant	4
Saturn trine the MC	2
Saturn in a major configuration	3
Saturn as most aspected planet	1
Saturn square the Moon	4
Saturn opposite Jupiter	2
Saturn opposite Neptune	1
Saturn quincunx Sun major aspect	1
Uranus in the 10 th house	1
Total score for Saturn	19

Uranus:

Uranus conjunct the MC	7
Sun, Mercury, Venus in 11 th	6
Mars in Aquarius	2
Total score for Uranus	15

TOP: George W. Bush, July 6, 1946; 7:26 a.m. EDT; New Haven, CT (41°N18', 72°W55'); AA: birth record.

Bottom: Sylvester Stallone, July 6, 1946; 7:20 p.m. EDT; New York, NY (40°N42', 74°W00'); A: from the memory of his mother, astrologer Jacqueline Stallone.



Rambo in the (White) House!

George W. Bush and Sylvester Stallone were born on the same date — July 6, 1946 — twelve hours and one state apart. This makes them date twins, though not true astrotwins. Their charts, shown on the previous page, have very different house placements, so how would their planetary scores differ? This seems like a good practice example to test this system with and also to see whether your scoring matches mine. The differences in house positions and Ascendants (Leo versus Sagittarius) account for some of the variations in scores. The Moon is the highest-scoring planet for both of these Cancerians, with Bush scoring 19 points and Stallone scoring 22. Their Moons are quite different, however; they are in different houses and form different aspects. The Moon generally moves 6° in twelve hours, so Bush's Moon squares the Sun and Stallone's Moon squares Saturn.

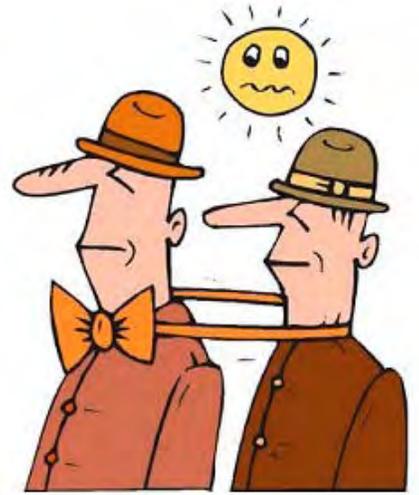


Table 5 shows side-by-side comparisons of their scores and how they were derived. The noteworthy differences between the two charts are marked with an asterisk. I was puzzled that Bush, who is clearly one of the most powerful people on the planet and has massive armed forces at his command, had a Pluto score of only 9, whereas Stallone, with his 8th-house stellium, also scored 9. One could say that Stallone is more of a sex symbol, though some women find Bush appealing as well. However, Matt Damon's score for Pluto was very high; he is not politically powerful, but he *is* a sex symbol, so perhaps this system is somehow weighted toward the sexual dimensions of Pluto, Scorpio, and the 8th house, rather than the power and transformational dimensions. Or perhaps we astrologers who yearn for the higher side of the planets to be expressed are fooling ourselves about the number of people who predominantly express that side of Pluto.

One of Bush's strongest planet on this scale is Mercury at 17 points; this is interesting, given the prevalence of satire about his intelligence. (Real brilliance comes from Uranus, however, not Mercury.) Perhaps we are underestimating Bush, for I have always suspected that he overplays the good old boy façade in order to appeal to the masses. Certainly, he is a better communicator than we give him credit for. The popularity polls regularly show that he is persuasive enough to convince nearly half of the population. Since Mercury is closely conjunct Pluto and the Ascendant, we would conclude that the source of Bush's power is in his communication and that he communicates in a Plutonian way. However, the planet Pluto is generally far more covert than open in its mode of operation, so we are forced to read between the lines to discern Bush's intentions.

Stallone's Mercury, on the other hand, scores only 6 points. Would we infer that Bush is much smarter than Stallone? All we can conclude, really, is that Bush is more verbally agile than Stallone. As for the Sun, Bush's score is 17, while Stallone's is 9, perhaps accounting for the fact that Bush is president, while Stallone is "only" an aging action hero — and billionaire.

**Table 5: Comparison of Planetary Scores:
George W. Bush vs. Sylvester Stallone**

* = Noteworthy differences between the charts.

George W. Bush's Scores:

Moon:

*Moon square Sun	4
* Moon conjunct IC	4
Moon conjunct Jupiter	4
Moon trine Uranus	4
<u>Sun, Saturn in Cancer</u>	<u>3</u>
Moon's total	19

Mercury:

* Mercury conjunct Asc	7
*Moon, Jupiter, Neptune 3 rd	5
Mercury conjunct Pluto	2
Uranus in Gemini	1
<u>Mars in Virgo</u>	<u>2</u>
Mercury's total	17

Sun:

*Leo Ascendant	4
* Sun square Moon	4
Sun square Jupiter	4
<u>Mercury, Venus, Pluto in Leo</u>	<u>5</u>
Sun's total	17

Pluto:

*Pluto conjunct Asc	7
<u>Pluto conjunct Mercury</u>	<u>2</u>
Pluto's total	9

Sylvester Stallone's Scores:

Moon:

*Moon square Saturn	4
* Moon conjunct MH	7
Moon conjunct Jupiter	4
Moon trine Uranus	4
<u>Sun, Saturn in Cancer</u>	<u>3</u>
Moon's total	22

Mercury:

Mercury conjunct Pluto	2
Uranus in 6 th	1
Uranus in Gemini	1
<u>Mars in Virgo</u>	<u>2</u>
Mercury's total	6

Sun:

Sun square Jupiter	4
<u>Mercury, Venus, Pluto in Leo</u>	<u>5</u>
Sun's total	9

Pluto:

*Mercury, Venus, Mars in 8 th	6
* Pluto in 8 th	1
<u>Pluto conjunct Mercury</u>	<u>2</u>
Pluto's total	9

The Planetary Scale: A Work in Progress



There is more to be learned from this method of identifying planetary types. For instance, it might be a way to measure the relative strength and importance of various aspects in the chart. Add the scores of both planets involved in the aspect together and compare that with the totals for other aspects. In our test case — George W. Bush versus Sylvester Stallone — the conjunction of Mercury and Pluto is present in both charts, but Bush's scores for Mercury (17) and Pluto (9) add up to 26, whereas Stallone's scores for Mercury (6) and Pluto (9) add up to only 15. If these totals are any indication of the strength of an aspect, then in Bush's chart that conjunction might be considered nearly twice as strong as it is in Stallone's.

Test drive this system and see what you think of it. Adapt the scale to include the key factors you personally use in analyzing charts. The scale is not set in stone and is meant only as a guideline. The scores are suggestions, based on more than 30 years of listening to clients in the consultation room. This scale is simply a temporary training tool to assist the student in identifying planetary types, rather than something to continue using over the years. It will help you to get a sense of the core qualities of individuals and their priorities in life.

Chart Data and Sources, According to AstroDataBank:

Matt Damon, October 8, 1970; 3:22 p.m. EDT; Boston, MA (42°N22, 71°W04); AA: birth certificate from Frances McEvoy.

Winona Ryder, October 29, 1971; 11:00 a.m. CDT; Rochester, MN (44°N01', 92°W28'); AA: birth certificate in hand from Frank Clifford.

George W. Bush, July 6, 1946; 7:26 a.m. EDT; New Haven, CT (41°N18', 72°W55'); AA: birth record.

Sylvester Stallone, July 6, 1946; 7:20 p.m. EDT; New York, NY (40°N42', 74°W00'); A: from the memory of his mother, astrologer Jacqueline Stallone.

Understanding Natal Aspects: Conjunctions vs. Oppositions¹

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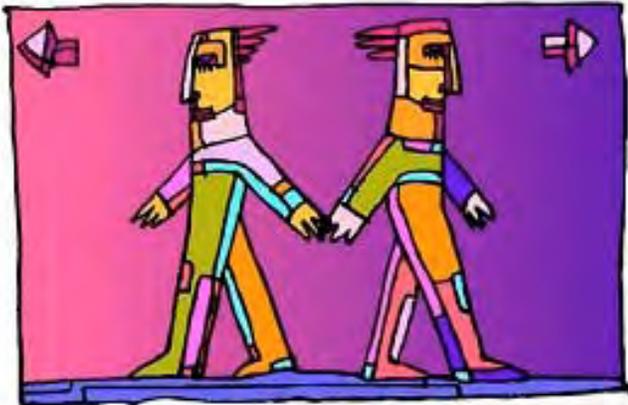
Getting a handle on behavior patterns that are common among people with various astrological aspects is both a challenge and a major step forward in learning to interpret charts. We will focus here on the differences between oppositions and conjunctions. The table on the next page lists notables with Venus conjunctions to the outer planets, side by side with notables with oppositions to the same outer planet.²

The method we are using here could be called impressionistic, an attempt to evoke key qualities of these aspects — a *watery* rather than an *airy* teaching method. What we are aiming for with this list is a right-brain approach to astrological aspects: intuitive and experiential, not logical, analytical, and cerebral. This approach ultimately makes possible a kind of visceral understanding of the differences between those aspects. Memorizing cookbook descriptions of aspects will take you partway in learning astrology, yet you can't really *own* astrology by memorization. As my college German professor used to say, when he was struggling to explain linguistic subtleties, "You have to *feel* it!"

As you work with the table, set aside your analytical mind. Begin by directing your intuitive faculties (the right brain) to tune into the qualities of the planets in question. With Venus aspects, focus on these individuals' patterns of relating, their sense of style, what qualities make them attractive, and what gives them popular appeal. Clear your mind of thoughts, and just look at the names, bringing the people to mind as vividly as possible. The conjunction and the opposition provide perhaps the

starkest contrasts. The energies of the two planets are most closely merged in the conjunction and seem most widely separated in the opposition.

For instance, people with Venus–Uranus aspects usually have a unique sense of style, to put it mildly. They are in no sense part of the mainstream, though the mainstream often winds up following their trend-setting creations. Look at the pairs of people with Venus–Uranus aspects. Juxtapose Richard Simmons with Carrot Top;



¹ This article is an excerpt from *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Part 2: Exceptional Soul Seeks Same — Outer-Planet Aspects to Venus and Mars*, one of Donna's new series of e-books. It first appeared in TMA, 8-9/04.

² The sources of the birth data of these famous people are twofold. Most are from AstroDatabank; its amazing research capabilities make it possible to generate lists of notables with various aspects in just seconds. The other major source is the impressive online biography collection, *Information Please Almanac*, at <http://infoplease.com>

**NOTABLES WITH VARIOUS VENUS ASPECTS
TO THE OUTER PLANETS**

Venus conjunct Uranus:

Actors	Tom Cruise
Actors	Warren Beatty
Actresses	Candice Bergen
Actresses	Kathy Bates
Pop Stars	Michael Jackson
Country	Johnny Cash
Statesmen	Colin Powell
Separated at birth	Richard Simmons

Venus opposite Uranus:

Lorenzo Lamas
Dennis Franz
Ellen Degeneres
Sharon Stone
Queen Latifah
Garth Brooks
Jesse Jackson
Carrot Top

Venus conjunct Neptune:

Politicians	President Bill Clinton
Actors	Christopher Reeve
Actors	Matt Damon
Actors	Richard Gere
Actresses	Jodie Foster
Singers	Johnny Mathis
Metaphysics	Dr. Bernie Siegel
Newsmen	Peter Jennings

Venus opposite Neptune:

Prime Minister Tony Blair
Michael J. Fox
Rob Lowe
Michael Caine
Mia Farrow
Stevie Wonder
JZ Knight
Tom Brokaw

Venus conjunct Pluto:

Actors	Antonio Banderas
Actors	Sean Penn
Actresses	Raquel Welch
Athletes	Kobe Bryant, forward
Ex-Wives	Sarah, Duchess of York
Poster Couple	Phil Hartman

Venus opposite Pluto:

Elvis Presley
Bruce Willis
Glenn Close
Philippe Candeloro, skater
Ivana Trump
Brynn Hartman

(Notables with aspects between Venus and the conjunctions of
Uranus-Saturn, Pluto-Saturn, and Pluto-Uranus not included.)

Warren Beatty with Dennis Franz; Michael Jackson with Queen Latifah; Colin Powell with Jesse Jackson. Do you begin to get a sense of how these people are related — and how they are similar, yet different?

When you compare Richard Simmons (Venus conjunct Uranus) with Carrot Top (Venus opposite Uranus), you can't deny that there are many similarities between them. They *could* have been separated at birth! But Carrot Top is a tad more over the top than Richard Simmons — and more provocative, as though he dared you to object to his eccentricity and zaniness. Richard Simmons doesn't seem to *get* that people consider him eccentric — he just is who he is. Though this is not necessarily true of all oppositions, with the Venus–Uranus group, there is almost a sense of parody of the qualities of both planets. If *Saturday Night Live* did a send-up of Richard Simmons (and no doubt they have,) they should pick Carrot Top to play him.

As you read through the table, you may also sense the differences between Venus aspects to the other outer planets. Venus aspects to Pluto, you may conclude, are more blatantly sexual, but the same distinctions between conjunctions and oppositions might be noted. Both Antonio Banderas and Elvis Presley have Venus–Pluto aspects, and they both project a steamy sexuality. With Venus opposite Pluto, Elvis seemed to enjoy being sexually provocative, even to push it to the limits— after all, they did call him Elvis the Pelvis. Antonio Banderas, on the other hand, seems to shrug off the effects of his looks; after all, he can't help being sexy. He seems innocent of how he comes across; it is just a side effect of the way he looks and moves.

In the category of ex-wives of the rich and famous, Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, who has Venus conjunct Pluto, has a good deal in common with Ivana Trump, who has the opposition. Yet, Ivana is substantially more flamboyant in the way she dresses and acts. They are also different in how they handle separation and the ending of a relationship, something that's never easy for a Plutonian type. Fergie somehow manages to coexist with her ex-husband, Prince Andrew, even sharing a mansion with him; Ivana's approach to divorce is best exemplified by her cameo in the movie, *First Wives Club*. Her memorable one-liner in that film was: "Darlings, don't get mad — get *everything!*"



Continue going through the table to get a sense of the differences between the conjunctions and oppositions. Conjunctions are a bit like glass, which is made from sand combined with various minerals and heated to such a high temperature that the elements become fused. When you look at a piece of glass, you don't generally recall that it started out as a handful of sand. The same is true of mixing two planets: The planets no longer seem to have a separate identity. For folks with a Venus–Neptune conjunction, for instance, it's hard to separate love and merging. Part of the appeal of Bill Clinton was his empathy ("I feel your pain"). To narrow it down to something these folks could wear on their T-shirts, the slogan for the conjunctions might be, "I yam what I yam."

For the oppositions, however, the T-shirt might say, “Look what you made me do.” People with oppositions between any two planets tend to project the conflict onto people or circumstances outside themselves, rather than taking responsibility for their part in the situation. Those with Uranus oppositions, for example, react strongly to what they perceive as society’s desire to restrict their freedom and individuality. So, they become even more outrageous and rebellious — more of a character, if you will.

People with oppositions often project their unwanted qualities onto others and then attempt to reform them or convert them to their own point of view. Those with Venus oppositions to Neptune often find partners or followers who are acting out the most difficult facets of Neptune; they then try to rescue, save, or fix them. Not surprisingly, among the Venus–Neptune aspects, we find a guru like J. Z. Knight; she has been married five times, most recently to a gay man with AIDS. A key phrase for the Venus–Neptune opposition might be: “What would they do without me?”



I must confess that this method of analysis has given me a deeper appreciation of oppositions. Having none in my own natal chart, I tended to think that their bad reputation in traditional astrology was exaggerated until I researched them with AstroDatabank. With any given pair of planets, there were markedly fewer celebrities with the opposition than with the conjunction — usually hundreds less. They also tended to be less notable: For instance, people with the conjunction might be musical stars while those with the opposition were more likely to be members of the backup band.

One possible conclusion that can be derived from this analysis is that some people with natal oppositions either encounter more difficult obstacles than do those who have softer aspects, or (more likely) that they undermine their own success. Some of these folks anger others with a provocative, stubbornly oppositional approach. “Contrary” is another word that could define them, because they may take a position opposite to the prevailing winds of opinion, just for effect.

Oppositions to the Ascendant and How They Modify Our Approach to Others³

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The Rising Sign shows a great deal about our external façade, the part of our personality most readily apparent to other people who don't know us well. We're not talking about intimate friends, family members, and lovers—people we're comfortable enough with to allow them to come through the back door of our existence, grab a brewski from the fridge, and pull up a chair in the kitchen. Instead, we are talking about people who hopefully will never see the inside of our fridge—more casual acquaintances, members of our astrology group, people we meet at a party and pray to never see again, or people we tolerate once a year at the company picnic. Who cares about them, really?

The quality of relationships with people you *do* care about, however, can be strongly affected by planets that form aspects to the degree of your actual Ascendant. Conjunctions are the most powerful modifiers—they are like doormen people have to check in with for admittance into your inner life. Trines show social assets that draw people to you, as do sextiles. Squares and semi-squares are like security checkpoints along the way, because they can show how you actively run into conflict with your environment. While I may one day write about all those aspects, here I want to work with oppositions to the Ascendant and share some observations of that aspect. For instance, there is a difference between a planet that opposes the Ascendant from the 7th house and one that opposes it from the 6th house. It turns out they are quite dissimilar.

We've covered the opposition in a more general way in other articles in this series. Briefly, when an opposition that involves two planets is being used in a healthy way, the person is effectively juggling two sets of needs, concerns, or desires, and neither one is neglected. It is seldom possible to meet the needs of both planets — including their signs and houses — at one time, but the person will often alternate the sets of demands to maintain a balance.

However, if one planet in an opposition is disowned or ignored, the planet's energies are often played out through a dialogue with the Other: Significant people may *appear* to get in the way of, or even actively subvert, the person's expressed and conscious wishes. This is, more often than not, a *projection*; on a subconscious level, the Other is either deliberately chosen as a saboteur or else seduced into playing the role by the person's (overtly or covertly) provocative behavior. Here are some typical phrases that you hear from those who are misusing an opposition in this way: "If it weren't for my (wife/boss/mother/whoever), I would..." or "Look what you made me do!"

³ This appeared in *The Mountain Astrologer* as, "Oppositions to the Ascendant and How They Modify Our Approach to Others" 8-9/05. It is reprinted with their permission.

This is more often than not a *projection*, meaning that on a less than conscious level, The Other is either deliberately chosen as a saboteur or may be seduced into playing the role by the person's overtly or covertly provocative behavior. The more completely individuals project the responsibility onto others and disown their part in the situation, the more The Other is cast in the role of *nemesis*. *Webster's' New World Dictionary of the English Language* defines a *nemesis* as "anyone or anything by which one must, it seems, inevitably be defeated or frustrated."⁴ If that term rings any bells with you, have a look at your chart to see if it corresponds with an opposition.



Oppositions to the Ascendant—"Because of Them, I Can't..."

With oppositions to the Ascendant, the Other who gets blamed for difficulties connecting with people is all too often the Significant Other. A planet that is opposite the Ascendant is also invariably conjunct the Descendant, since the Descendant is at the same degree as the Ascendant but in the opposite sign. Thus, when the opposing planet is in the 7th house (committed relationships), the partner appears to get in the way of the native's active participation in the world: "I'd dearly love to serve on the board, but you know, my husband..." Having offered a reason no one can argue with, the proposed board member breathes a sigh of relief and rushes off to do what she wanted to in the first place. (I am convinced that one of the reasons that people with strong oppositions wind up alienating others is their endless supply of lame excuses.)

There is often a push/pull dynamic in their relationships that these excuses serve to mask. That is to say, due to ambivalence about surrendering themselves to relationships, they often alternate between closeness and distance. They can first strongly exude a kind of *come on*—the planet in question, does, after all aspect the Ascendant. Then when you respond—especially if you show signs of expecting some form of commitment—the door can slam shut as they present you with the unanswerable excuse. (We are not talking about romantic relationships alone here, for this dynamic can also be present in friendship or family ties.) The dance is frustrating and ultimately tedious to people who might like to be close to them. I can only imagine that it is also frustrating to individuals with the opposition as well, for by virtue of having a 7th house planet, they by nature DO want closeness. (This is rather a Libran dynamic, is it not?)

Still, when the 7th house planet that opposes the Ascendant is a tough one, we cannot deny that the partner's frailties, demands, or needs weigh heavily on the mind of the person with the opposition and take up a good deal of time and energy. Neptune in that position, for instance, may signify a partner who is addicted, physically challenged, emotionally disabled, a starving *artiste*, or out to save the world. Saturn in that position might portray a partner who is older or heavily involved in a career or who demands

⁴ *Webster's' New World Dictionary of the English Language: Second College Edition*, p.953. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1980.

perfection. The individual with this opposition might be expected to work in the partner's business or play both parenting roles because the partner works 18 hours a day.

Yet, the Ascendant/Descendant axis explains a great deal about the types of partners that we attract and that are attracted to us. It isn't happenstance that the native with a planet opposite the Ascendant has been drawn into a committed relationship with a partner who lives out the qualities of the planet in question. For reasons related to their history, individuals with Neptune opposite the Ascendant may have entered into a codependent relationship with an addicted or emotionally disabled partner in a doomed attempt to save that person — with all the suffering that entails. Even if these people somehow break out of that particular painful marriage, they can wind up connecting with a series of addictive personalities, unless they get to the roots of their codependency.



Likewise, people with Saturn on the Descendant are often looking for a Father or Mother figure to make them feel safe and secure. As a consequence, they are drawn to people who strongly display the qualities of Saturn and who are likely to play the roles of taskmaster, authority figure, and disciplinarian — unless Saturn is well-aspected, such as making trines to Jupiter or the Sun. When Saturn is in a particularly unforgiving sign like Virgo, Capricorn, Scorpio, or Aries, the taskmaster/disciplinarian role can be an even stronger dynamic in the relationship.

The hard-won lesson of 7th-house oppositions to the Ascendant is that we pay a great price for subcontracting the functions of any of our planets to a partner. Until we are willing to take responsibility for fulfilling the needs of that planet for ourselves, our closest relationships are likely to be dominated by the planet's less-desirable expressions.

Sixth House Oppositions to the Ascendant— “I Can't Because I'm too Sick/Busy.”



When the planet that forms the opposition to the Ascendant instead is in the 6th house (the world of work), over-commitment to the job is offered up as the reason the person cannot engage with us. “Oh, I'd love to get together with you sometime, but, you know, my job just takes up all my time.” Because the planet is still forming a conjunction to the Descendant, there is generally an important though not necessarily romantic relationship that gets in the way, whether with a boss, coworkers, or customers/clients. Expect to get emails from them that say, “So sorry I had to miss your dinner

party—I know it’s the fourth time in a row—but we were running behind at work, and my boss couldn’t get along without me.”

Work pressures are real — especially in today’s understaffed workplaces — yet when these defaults on outside relationships become habitual, the pattern may have more to do with fear of connecting socially — possibly out of a sense of unworthiness. (In my observation, people with a strong 6th-house emphasis sometimes have self-worth issues arising from a blue-collar background.)

Health is another 6th-house matter that can prevent these people from connecting with their surroundings in a meaningful way: “I can’t come to your house — I’m allergic to your cat.” “No, I can’t really attend the meeting — I suffer from chronic fatigue.” “I wish we could make love, but I hurt my back on the job.”) Health, again, provides an irrefutable excuse for not participating in life; yet, with these individuals, the health problem is all too often a consequence of long-term overwork or abuse of the body in service of the job.

This is not to deny that people with the 6th house strong in the natal chart often contribute to the world at large in meaningful and rewarding ways — contributions that far outweigh the importance of socializing. Certainly, that may be their major karmic focus in this lifetime, rather than a committed partnership. However, if they want to maintain *both* their work *and* their intimate connections with others, the key is to consciously keep these two sets of needs in balance. (Likewise, those of you who are smitten with someone who has this kind of opposition, do **not** naively assume that you’ll finally become the center of their existence just as soon as they find a better job.)

Can you expect that the next essay in this series will fill in the missing aspects to the Ascendant? Will you find out why those two conjunctions to your Ascendant are so significant and result in such compelling relationship patterns? Will you learn why your partner’s Mars square to the Ascendant from the 4th house makes you feel like you have to pass through a security checkpoint every time you come home from work? Will you finally figure out why that coworker with Uranus trine the Ascendant blatantly gets away with everything and anything, yet is still the boss’s favorite? Maybe. But you see, I’ve been having this transiting opposition to my Ascendant for several years now, not to mention the opposition from my progressed Neptune, and so I really can’t say how I will be feeling when I sit down to write the next piece. You understand.



Now THAT'S a Stretch—How Quincunxes Force Us to Grow⁵

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While many texts relegate the quincunx (a.k.a. inconjunct) to the status of a minor aspect, in my years of consulting experience, that is not true. There can be considerable tension—and considerable growth—when an individual has a quincunx, either natively or by transit. The dynamics of this aspect are a force to be reckoned with in the person's life, either as a source of great originality or irritation, depending on how it is used. Analyzing the planets, signs, and houses involved in the aspect can help the individual find healthier ways of dealing with the conflicts between the two planets.

The quincunx—glyph shown here—is a 150° aspect with an orb of 2-3° degrees. Using the table below, find quincunxes by starting with the sign of the faster-moving planet. In order of their average speed, they are Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. (However, around the time a planet changes direction—retrograde to direct or vice versa—it may move slower than usual, which you could discover from the ephemeris.) Thus, in any aspect between the Moon and Jupiter, the Moon is the faster moving planet, since it will generally move around 12° per day, while Jupiter will move, at the most 7' per day. In looking for a quincunx, then, look at the Moon's sign in the table below:



Aries: Virgo, Scorpio
Taurus: Libra, Sagittarius
Gemini: Scorpio, Capricorn
Cancer: Sagittarius, Aquarius
Leo: Capricorn, Pisces
Virgo: Aquarius, Aries

Libra: Pisces, Taurus
Scorpio: Aries, Gemini
Sagittarius: Taurus, Cancer
Capricorn: Gemini, Leo
Aquarius: Cancer, Virgo
Pisces: Leo, Libra

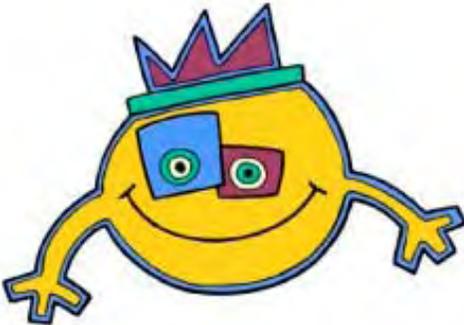
The key to the quincunx is a thorough consideration of the tensions between the two signs involved. Generally speaking, the needs and desires of the two signs are conflicting and incompatible. Through being forced to work together, tension is generated which can result in frustration or in a highly creative resolution of conflict.

The signs Cancer and Sagittarius are quincunx to one another, and the differences between them are hard to reconcile within one person. Cancer is highly sensitive and easily wounded, while Sagittarius is blunt and often suffers from “Hoof in Mouth” disease. Suppose that someone had Moon in Cancer but Mercury in

⁵ A shorter form of this material appeared in the December, 2003-January, 2004 issue of *The Mountain Astrologer*. It is reprinted here with their permission.

Sagittarius—this combination could make a person who could dish it out but not take it. Cancer tends to be ruled by emotions, whereas Sagittarius seeks to be rational.

The personal styles of these two signs in intimate connections are also very different. Cancer clings, while Sagittarius wants its freedom. Cancerians love their homes, while Sagittarians love their freedom. Since resolving the irreconcilable urges of two signs in quincunx aspect often demands an inventive approach, it wouldn't be surprising if the natal chart of person who designed the first mobile home had a Cancer-Sagittarius quincunx.



Far from being a minor dynamic in people's lives, the quincunx may actually be harder to resolve than an opposition. At least the opposite signs have a commonality of needs and abilities that can balance each other out. Sagittarius and Gemini, for instance are far more compatible than Sagittarius and Cancer, because of their common interest in things of the mind. Sagittarius and Gemini share a restless intellectual curiosity, while Cancer and its opposite sign, Capricorn, share an innate cautiousness and need for security.

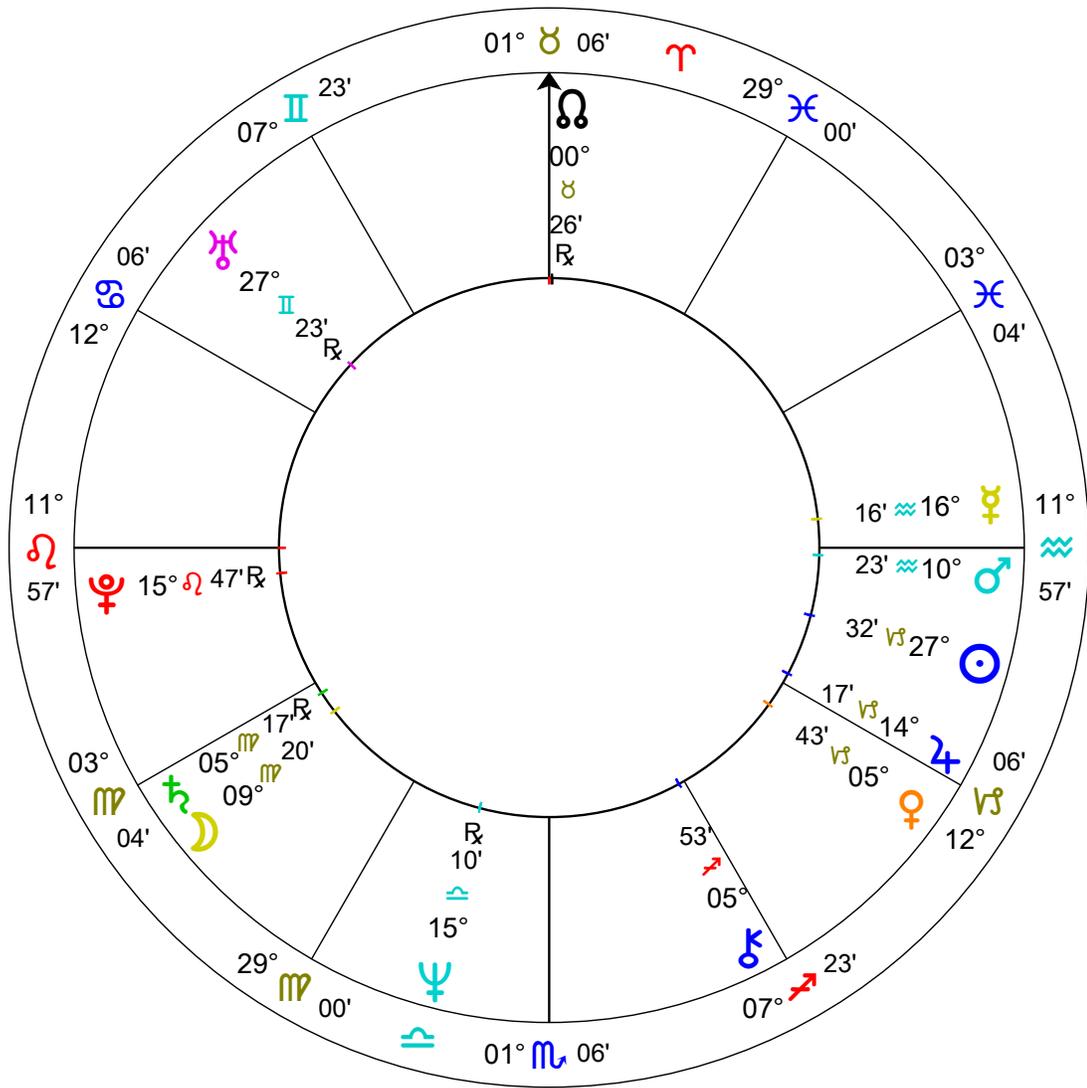
Aries has two quincunx signs, Virgo and Scorpio. Consider some of the qualities attributed to the sign Aries and contrast them with typical Virgo qualities. Aries can be rash and impetuous, while Virgo is slower, more cautious and less likely to rush into action before thoroughly considering possible flaws in the plan. Aries isn't known for persistence and follow-through, while Virgo dots every *i*. Aries is sometimes naively, even indiscriminately enthusiastic, while Virgo can be critical and discriminating. Clearly not a match made in the heavens!

As an example of the Aries-Virgo quincunx being forced to work together in one person's life, a social work student had Sun in Virgo quincunx Mars in Aries. This is not an easy combination, as Mars in its own sign Aries echoes the conflict with Virgo, but how it worked for her was admirable. She volunteered at an Inner City church, coaching a baseball team for young boys. She was giving service (Virgo), but in a positive way that put her in touch with that primal male energy.

What about the tension between Virgo and Aquarius, Virgo's other quincunx sign? Virgo is down to earth and practical, while Aquarius is cerebral and abstract, often visionary. Virgo is task oriented, whereas Aquarius is transpersonal and looks at a bigger picture. Virgo can be critical and sometimes pessimistic about people, while Aquarius preaches tolerance and brotherhood, with a Utopian view of life and humanity. Virgo is cautious and somewhat conservative, while Aquarius is abrupt, fond of change, and frequently radical. Virgo's sometimes prim and proper demeanor clashes with Aquarius's propensity for doing things for shock value.



andy kaufman
 January 17, 1949
 6:03 pm est
 Jamaica, ny
 73W48; 40N41

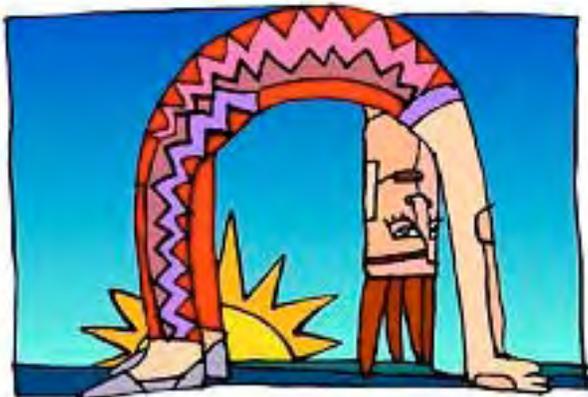


An individual who epitomized the incongruities between these two signs was the late Andy Kaufman, a rather bizarre comedian who had Moon in Virgo and Mars in Aquarius⁶. *Incongruity* is one keyword that often describes the functioning of a quincunx, and one way it often plays out is in either intended or unintended humor. Actually Kaufman's chart, shown on the previous page, is rife with quincunxes. His Sun in Capricorn in the 6th house is very closely quincunx Uranus in Gemini in the 11th, and his Jupiter in Capricorn in the 6th is quincunx Pluto in the 1st and his Leo Ascendant.

It is true that quincunxes can sometimes mean trouble when not used consciously and constructively and that, especially if the health houses are involved as they are here, the aspect also can play itself out in health problems. Kaufman, with his series of quincunxes involving two of the health houses (the 1st and 6th), died of lung cancer at the age of 35. His AstroDataBank record is also reprinted here, with ADB's permission, and as his history shows, he could be considered the poster child for the quincunx aspect.



However, with conscious work on owning and expressing both planets in the quincunx in healthy ways, the quincunx can be an asset. The two signs can be used in evolved ways that support one another's aims. Both Virgo and Aquarius, for instance, are objective, each in their own way, and reasoning is a way that such tensions may be resolved. In a certain sense, both are concerned with principles such as honor, and Virgo CAN be somewhat detached, albeit in a more pragmatic way. With all these considerations, they may make a better pair than Virgo/Aries, as neither is especially self-involved. Both CAN be altruistic, whereas the sign Aries is not necessarily so by nature.



From years of observing this aspect in action, I have a sense that the keyword for quincunx is "stretching." When two planets are quincunx by sign, their basic natures are so completely different that the only way they can connect is a stretch, maybe a creative leap. This produces an expansion of perspectives, and so quincunxes wind up helping us grow in a way that a square or opposition does not—it's not a conflict as much as it is an evolution.

The reason is that the two signs involved (e.g. Virgo-Aries) have little common ground, in that they are not in the same

⁶ According to his AstroDataBank record, Kaufman was born January 17, 1949, at 18:03 EST in Jamaica, NY, 73W47 40N41. The Data is rated A, from his memory. His AstroDataBank record is reprinted with ADB's permission.

quadruplicity (Cardinal, Fixed, or Mutable) nor in the same element (earth, air, water, or fire.) Signs that are quincunx are also not in the same grouping by Richard Idemon's division of the signs into Personal, Social, and Universal. The Personal signs (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer) are very self-referencing, though not necessarily in a bad way. Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio—the Social signs—are focused on their connections to others close by, and Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces—the Universal signs—are motivated by longer-range concerns, universal principles, and abstractions.

Many people use the tension and energy created by a quincunx in very dynamic ways. It contains a paradox, a contradiction you are always trying to resolve. Since necessity is the mother of invention, many creative ideas are developed in trying to combine to apparently non-combinable sets of needs and urges. Famous people use these aspects in creative and inventive ways—in fact it can be one source of their genius.

The Transiting Quincunx—An Easily Overlooked Stimulus to Growth

For significant parts of the past two decades, outer planets transiting the Universal signs (Sagittarius through Pisces) have been making quincunxes to natal planets in the personal signs (Aries to Cancer). For example, Pluto in Sagittarius has been forming quincunxes to planets in Taurus and Cancer. First Uranus, then Neptune in Aquarius have formed quincunxes to planets in Cancer and Virgo. The personal signs have been quite challenged and stretched by these quincunxes from such Universal/impersonal/global signs.



There is a bit of near-sightedness about the personal signs, and these transits are forcing them have to think in larger terms—not a comfortable process, yet it broadens them considerably. It makes them put away the "what does it mean for me" perspective and start to develop a more global outlook. Maybe one reason the term **paradigm shift** has become so popular is that there is no common meeting ground with these quincunxes between the personal and Universal signs, especially with the transpersonal focus of the outer planets. To understand the complex problems these tensions create and to derive viable solutions will require an entirely new paradigm.

The sign Cancer has been caught in the crossfire of outer planet quincunxes from both Sagittarius and Aquarius continually since 1995, so Cancerians with planets in the affected degree ranges have experienced considerable stretching through these transits. Currently, Pluto in Sagittarius is calling Cancerians to look at things from a more universal perspective--the philosophical, the global, the religious. Neptune in Aquarius, likewise, is challenging Cancerians to look beyond tradition, family, to a more universal and global perspective. Cancer often clings to the past and tradition, while Aquarius is oriented toward the future and can all too easily throw out the heritage of the

past. Aquarius is very cerebral, detached, and rational, while Cancer is very subjective, intuitive, and emotional.

President George W. Bush has had a series of outer planet quincunxes by transit to his twelfth house Sun at 13°44' Cancer. Uranus was quincunx it 1998-99, as he was running for president, and Pluto was quincunx it in 2000-2001 in the aftermath of 9/11. Neptune's quincunx in 2003—2004, suggests he may have found illusions about himself and his place in the scheme of things crumbling. To give him his due, he may genuinely believe he is making the homeland safe, but he has had some difficulty in fathoming how his personal fears and insecurities are simultaneously threatened by and threatening to the global balance.



The United States itself has Sun at 12°44' Cancer, and so we as a nation have been profoundly impacted by these same transits and by George W. Bush's actions. Historically there is a certain tension in our collective nature that seems to be represented by our Cancer Sun, Aquarius Moon. (The clash between Sun and Moon sign seems profound, even though they are not quincunx by degree, only by sign.)

Used in its highest form, the stretching common to the Cancer-Aquarius quincunx would lead to nurturing individuals who can look beyond the immediate family and surrounding environment. We as a nation could be moved by global hunger, wake up to the way pesticides and other agricultural and industrial practices are destroying the environment for everyone, and embrace the human family, not just the family of origin. Princess Diana surely did that in a way that brought the awareness of others to those needs and causes. She had the same Sun/Moon combination as the U.S., in nearly the same degrees, and that was doubtlessly part of why she was so appealing to us. Though her bulimia was doubtlessly related to this combination and though the tensions between Cancer and Aquarius seem to have created considerable personal anguish, she would be my nominee for Most Evolved Use of this particular quincunx.

Hopefully, this explanation has piqued your interest in this fascinating aspect. A way to understand quincunxes, if you have none natively, is to experience them consciously through current transits or by reviewing your past transits. (Use the bookmark at the side to find the transit tracker elsewhere in this book.) If you can't identify any quincunxes of your own, then look for them in the charts of people you know well and ask the people about the ways they are being stretched. To learn more, you might enjoy Karen Hamaker-Zondag's *The Yod Book* (Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003.⁷), which is primarily devoted to this aspect.



⁷ To order Karen's book or Donna's various books published by Red Wheel/Weiser, visit their website at <http://www.redwheelweiser.com/> or call 1-800-423-7087.

Detailed Biography

Filte (Unnamed)

Name: KAUFMAN, ANDY

40 N 41

Gender: M

73 W 47

Date: 01/17/1949

Place: Jamaica, NY

Lat:

Time: 18:03 EST

Lng:

A

From memory

Source Notes: Mary MacKenzie quotes him. Shelley Ackerman quotes him as a friend for 6:30 PM. ("Lost in the Funhouse" gives 2:00 PM, no source.)

Biography: American actor who performed his off-beat, highly original, stand-up comedy and impressionist routine on TV, in clubs and concerts. His act ranged from brilliant to boring to bizarre. His career snowballed after he began appearing on Saturday Night Live, 1975, and then became a regular on the series, "Taxi," 1978. He was in the film "Heartbleeps" with co-star Bernadette Peters, in which he played a romantic robot.

He died of lung cancer 6/16/1984 at the age of 35. Fifteen years later he had a resurgence of interest with a memoir by his friend Bob Zmuda, "Andy Kaufman Revealed," (September 1999) and a biography by Bill Zehme, "Lost in the Funhouse," (December 1999). On 12/22/1999, a movie based on his life, opens, with Jim Carrey playing Kaufman.

The comic performed for himself from the time he was a kid, alone in his room. As he grew older, he put on his acts for his two younger siblings. As a teen he acted at kid's birthday parties. At Grahm Junior College, he discovered his lifelong interest in transcendental meditation, which also gave him the confidence to take his act into small Manhattan clubs, then to the Improv in Los Angeles. His pinnacle was a 1979 performance at Carnegie Hall, where he rented 20 school buses to take a crowd of 2,800 out for milk and cookies at a nearby school after the show.

Kaufman's twist became darker and was often offensive. Not everyone was amused at the cruelty he leveled at an audience, but eventually, his viewers simply got tired of the abuse. In 1982, after his 14th appearance on SNL, viewers voted him off the show in a call-in poll and the following year, "Taxi" was cancelled. Late in 1983, he was exiled from the TM movement, a bitter blow.

At 20, Kaufman had a daughter with a girlfriend but for the rest of his life, played the field, even when dating film editor Lynne Margulies. Near the end of 1983, a persistent cough was diagnosed as lung cancer. Until the end, he believed he'd get better, trying every remedy including hypnotism and faith healing.

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Leo/Libra: Here's a romantic duo, but Libra's flattery and gratifying attention can put Leo on an ego trip. If Libra doesn't really mean it and moves on to someone else, the Lion can be very hurt. Behind that "you first" front, Libra does want reciprocation, and if Leo remains too self-involved, Libra can become indignant at the inequality.



Virgo/Scorpio: Unless both signs are functioning on an evolved level, this could definitely be a case of bringing out the worst in each other. Both Virgo and Scorpio can be critical, analytical, and even a tad fanatical in their beliefs about the right and wrong way to do things. Both can be reformers, wanting to make people over. Pity the nearest Pisces when these two get together. If Virgo and Scorpio turn these characteristics on one another, a very bitter feud can ensue—a la "Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe."

Libra/Sagittarius: This combination could be frustrating for both sides. Libra is known for its diplomacy and tact, while blunt Sagittarius often suffers from hoof-in-mouth disease. Libra, the marriage sign, wants a close, committed relationship above all else—but Sagittarius is called the bachelor sign because its motto is, "don't fence me in."



Scorpio/Capricorn: If these two signs are functioning on an unevolved level, they are probably worse for the outside world than for each other. At their worst, Scorpio can be devious and Capricorn can be ruthless—a power-hungry combination that would stop at nothing in business and politics. In terms of intimacy, Scorpio hungers to be close—almost joined at the hip—while Capricorn is reserved by nature.

Sagittarius/Aquarius: They are well-matched on the whole, except being together might exaggerate the tendency to live in their heads and be overly-idealistic. The only real complication I can think of is that Sagittarius can be very moralistic and preachy, wanting to maintain a front of propriety, while rebellious Aquarius hates being preached to and often does things just to shock the establishment.

Capricorn/Pisces: Here we have the best organized and the least-organized signs of the zodiac—the original odd couple. Capricorn wants to achieve worldly success, while Pisces is not certain it wants to be in this world at all. Capricorn wants recognition for its abilities and accomplishments, while Pisces can be self-effacing and wants to hide from the world.

Aquarius/Aries: Aquarius asks, "What does this mean to Humanity," while Aries wonders, "How does this affect ME?" Even more than with Aries/Gemini sextiles, there

is conflict between Aries physical approach and Aquarius' cerebral or even intellectual approach.

Pisces/ Taurus: At worst, Taurus can be the most materialistic and earthbound sign of the zodiac, while Pisces is the most otherworldly. Taurus wants concrete results, while Pisces is a dreamer and wants what cannot be.

We have seen, then, that in every so-called compatible sextile, there can be a clinker that can create incompatibility. No doubt I have focused on the faults of the signs and on those who are not "highly evolved." Still, many of us who congratulate ourselves on being highly evolved have not entirely escaped the faults of our signs.

Compatibility is attributed to signs that are sextile, yet sometimes signs that are traditionally considered incompatible have something to offer one another. Take Gemini and Scorpio—two signs that are quincunx. Scorpio's depth and intensity can lend weight to the more superficial approach Gemini can sometimes take to new ideas. Gemini's diversity and flexibility can broaden Scorpio's tendency to be fixedly intent on one thought or goal. Gemini's wit and gaiety can lighten Scorpio's tendency to gloominess and brooding. Different? Yes, but in an odd way, they do complement one another. We need to think again about the idea of compatibility, for it is more complex than we might believe.



Spotting Themes in a Birth Chart:
The Rule of Three¹
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An old rule says that for an astrological interpretation to be true, you must be able to see it expressed three ways in the chart. If you see it once, it is only a possibility; if you see it twice, it becomes more likely; but if you can see the same theme a third time, that interpretation then becomes a probability. In all my years of working with charts and passing along my interpretations, I am more and more convinced of the wisdom of that teaching. These repeated and related chart features, in fact, often point to major themes in a person's life.

What constitutes a theme? When analyzing a chart, you would look for sign and house placements and aspects that are similar in nature to one another. One starting point is the astrological alphabet popularized by Dr. Zipporah Dobyns, which held Aries, Mars, and the 1st house as equivalents, Taurus, Venus and the 2nd house as equivalents, and so on.



Then look for repetitions in the chart. A concentration of Pisces planets, plus the Sun or Moon in the 12th house and several aspects to Neptune would make a person highly Neptunian. The themes of Neptune, Pisces, and the 12th would, therefore, be a strong dynamic in this individual's life, whether expressed primarily in a positive way (such as spiritual study, creativity, and service) or in more problematic ones like addiction, rescuing, self-deception, or even delusion. With any such concentration, the life path of the individual may be strongly colored by attempts to master the issues and drives connected with that sign, house, and planet.

Another person might have Cancer rising, the Moon as the focus of a grand trine, and the Sun, Mercury, and Venus in the 4th house. Lunar issues — home, security, family, the mother, nurturing, and food — would strongly motivate this individual and be a major focus of effort. However, such a person will not necessarily deal with these issues in a typically Cancerian way, for the sign and aspects of the Moon become important modifiers of the pattern. Also, when the Sun and other planets are located in the 4th, the individual places great emphasis on home life and family but may not be as moody and emotional as the typical Cancerian, depending on the Sun's sign and element. A person with a stellium in air in the 4th may not be particularly emotional but would still tend to be deeply invested in the home.

¹ This article appeared in the December 2004-January 2005 issue of *The Mountain Astrologer* and is reprinted with their permission.

One conceivable interpretation of someone with Mercury on the Midheaven could be that a brother or sister functioned in a parental role, since Mercury, like the 3rd house or Gemini, often indicates the role of siblings. Suppose you also note that Saturn, one indicator of parental authority, falls in the 3rd house — a repetition of the sibling/authority connection. Then, you find that the Moon, which describes the Mother, is in the Mercury-ruled sign of Gemini. This is another clue that a sibling may have taken on a substantial share of the parenting functions. You are then fairly safe in venturing that interpretation — and smiling modestly when the client gasps, “How on earth did you know that?” (A second level of interpretation of these same placements, given Mercury on the Midheaven, would focus on the career. We might infer that this individual is very much a communicator and will pursue a career in a related field.)

Astrology students often worry about a particular facet of a chart, but they need not become alarmed unless this factor is confirmed in other ways. For instance, many people born without planets in the water signs have sworn that they are not especially emotional. Yet, some of them have Neptune on the Ascendant and Pluto conjunct the Moon; these people are, on the contrary, *extremely* emotional. Their challenge, instead, is to manage those emotions.

Other people worry excessively about some feature of their chart that is shared by most of the people born around the same time. For instance, almost everyone born in the winter months of the early 1940s had Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto all retrograde. This astrological event is no doubt deeply meaningful in the psychology and sociology of the entire generation born on Earth in that era — though I couldn't articulate it in less than a volume. However, when individuals assume that a single retrograde planet in that collection (say, a retrograde Saturn) pertains to their life *alone*, rather than to the challenges held in common by their entire generation, they are personalizing a generational influence.

Others congratulate themselves prematurely on some facet of their chart without balancing it by considering aspects or house placements. For instance, people with Jupiter on the Midheaven might conclude that they would enjoy good luck and fabulous success in their career. Before lying back and waiting for fortune to find them, however, they'd best take a look at the aspects to Jupiter, Saturn, and any 10th-house planets. Early in my career, I taught astrology as a volunteer at an alcohol treatment center in a poverty-stricken area, and I was chastened to find that some patients who had lived on the streets for years had Jupiter on the Midheaven.

To give a more complete example of how the Rule of Three works, suppose that a client had Neptune and Saturn conjunct in the 4th house, which shows conditions in the home life and often in the family of origin. I might speculate that there was some mystery, hardship, and maybe a loss in the family of origin, but I would look further to see what it might be. Suppose I then noticed that the Moon was in Pisces in the 8th house. The suspicion of a painful



loss involving the mother and the family of origin would grow stronger. If the Moon also formed a difficult t-square, that would pretty much clinch it for me. I would inquire about the early loss of a female authority figure — maybe even go out on a limb and ask if the client was adopted, since natal or transiting Neptune aspects in the 4th or 10th have shown up numerous times in my practice, in cases of adoption.

Seeing a difficult placement in the chart — like that 8th-house Pisces Moon, for instance — would you automatically conclude that the mother will die? All mothers die ultimately, but when and how they die are not written in stone. You would never make a fixed prediction, especially one so negative in tone, based on a single aspect in a chart, whether natal or transiting. You'd need to look for confirmation in several ways, according to this principle we've been discussing.

I'd say that fully a third of the people who write to my "Dear Abby"-type advice column in *Dell Horoscope* magazine are distressed about some dire interpretation they have read — or concocted for themselves — about a single transit or natal aspect. You need to look for confirmation in repetitious chart patterns and for balancing forces, such as supportive natal or transiting aspects.



You also need to ask questions about how that placement has worked in the person's life, especially during important past transits to that point, and what the native has learned in the course of living about how to express the higher potential of that placement. In the case of a transiting aspect, you must have a clear grasp of the natal condition of the planet in question and also look at all the other transits currently going on in the chart, for balancing factors.

If you are still concerned about a natal or transiting pattern in your chart, consult a seasoned professional astrologer with a well-balanced approach. Find one who can admit the realistic drawbacks of a given placement but can also help you to work toward its positive expressions. Just as we are advised when dealing with health issues, ask for a second opinion about any astrological diagnosis or prognosis that worries you — especially if that first opinion was one of your own!

Debunking Mercury Retrograde

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Note: the following is an excerpt from the 2005 Edition of Donna Cunningham's classic, *An Astrological Guide to Self-Awareness*, revised and in ebook format. To order this or other of Donna's Ebooks, visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com> or Online College of Astrology.

Pop astrology has created entirely too much hysteria about Mercury retrograde. I've had endless phone calls from clients and prospective clients hyperventilating over the fact that Mercury was about to turn retrograde. We are told to sign nothing, buy nothing, make no major purchases, and to expect cancellations, missed appointments, bank errors, and being stood up on social engagements. We



are given reams of anecdotes and horror stories to back up this taboo. And yet, vast numbers of people buy cars, begin jobs, get married, and buy homes while Mercury is *retrograde*¹ without experiencing any difficulty whatsoever. The world simply cannot come to a screeching halt for the three or four periods a year that Mercury is retrograde for three weeks at a stretch. Imagine the impact on the economy if it did!

Why, then, do so many followers of astrology find these periods troublesome? By well-known metaphysical principles, the power of belief can cause followers of astrology to manifest more Mercury retrograde difficulties than in the general population. By repeated negative suggestion, we can talk ourselves into making major blunders during this time, because we “know” they’re going to happen. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and

when the inevitable snafus of daily living do occur, devotees of astrology say, “I told you so,” reinforcing the belief. It has also become a convenient excuse for sloppy

¹ Retrograde motion is something that occurs at various times of the year with all of the planets in the solar system--excluding the sun and moon, since they are not, properly speaking, planets. In these periods, which can last several months at a time for the slower-moving outer planets, the planet appears to be moving backward from the point of view of the earth. This is strictly an illusion, based on the fact that they are on the opposite side of the sun from the earth and thus while we are moving forward, they appear to be moving in the opposite direction from us. Perhaps the simplest way of understanding why this is so is to draw a diagram of the solar system and place coins on the oval that represents the earth's orbit and on one or more of the other planet's orbits. As you move the coin representing the earth around its yearly orbit, you can see how the orbit of the other planet might appear to be retrograde from our perspective.

thinking or incompetence, as well as a socially acceptable reason for not showing up for commitments. Then too, it's more dramatic to blame your mental vagaries on the stars than to confess that you've had a senior moment!

It would be interesting to conduct a research project in which a roomful of people who are interested in astrology but who are not astrology students are told that Mercury is retrograde. After a description of the pitfalls ascribed to it, they are asked to write down examples of how it has been operating in their lives over the past week or two. The only thing is, the experiment would be conducted at a time when Mercury was not retrograde at all, but direct and clipping right along. I'm willing to bet that, by power of suggestion, nearly every person in that room would come up several juicy textbook examples of Mercury retrograde situations.

That's not to say that there's nothing to it...there are things I simply could not be induced to do in those periods, like buy software or communications equipment. I'm cautious to check important communications and appointments and back up computer files. I double check all astrological data for my clients and advice column and add all totals twice where money is concerned. I back up important computer files before the retrograde starts and continue backing them up regularly. It is a good idea to do backups periodically anyway, but the impending event of Mercury going retrograde prompts me to tackle the job. (Whatever works!)

Still, the Mercury **RE**trograde periods are a natural and even helpful recurrent cycle, totaling no more than 70 days each year—it is part of the natural rhythm of life, just like the seasons. At these times, we get the opportunity to **RE**think, **RE**view, and **RE**visе our thinking and our written and spoken communication. If we use it to **RE**examine the flow of our work and our day-to-day lives, these little mishaps can teach us something about Right Action. They can be a valuable corrective that helps us prevent more serious and ongoing errors in our work that might otherwise be compounded over time. Used correctly, these intervals can enhance our productivity and the quality of our work.



For instance, Mercury retrograde is a good time for revising and updating your procedures, mailing lists, and other systems, because during the retrograde, you tend to go over things from the past and find the glitches or dead wood. Sort out old files, catch up on correspondence, finish that backlog of paperwork, compile those tedious statistics the boss insists on every few months, get back in touch with associates and clients, and catch details that have fallen through the cracks. Reconcile your bank statements, adding all the figures twice for good measure. Deal with those stacks of mail and credit receipts. Go through that pile of magazines, newspapers, or journals that has accumulated, remove the articles you need to keep, and recycle the rest. You get the picture.

As a writer, I cherish and rely on the Mercury retrograde weeks of the year. In fact, I'm not sure I would ever complete a large writing project if it weren't for this natural rhythm of retrograde and direct motion, for I always have many more ideas and inspirations than I can use while Mercury is direct. I schedule editing and revisions for the retrograde phase, because looking back over the material, I see places where my communication is unclear. I also seem to have more patience to

check my data for accuracy, to catch errors and typos, do needed research to back up my conclusions, and do the really tedious pieces like footnotes, a bibliography, and a table of contents. In **RETRO**spect and with a cooler head, I also see the places in the text where it would have been better to keep my opinions to myself! I chose to do most of the revisions for the new edition of *An Astrological Guide to Self-Awareness* during a three-week Mercury retrograde. The work went swiftly and well (apart from a tendency to moan, “what was I thinking” when confronted with the more opinionated pronouncements in the 1970s version.)

Those of you who are more advanced in your studies may be interested to know that not all Mercury retrograde spans are alike. Some are smooth, passing with hardly a ripple if one uses sensible precautions. Others are real bears, with nothing running smoothly, an epidemic of computer crashes, and great difficulty in getting paperwork finished or ironing out agreements. In my observation, Mercury’s retrograde motion is not the deciding factor, but rather the aspects Mercury forms to other planets around the time it is stationary turning retrograde. From around the time it turns retrograde to the time it turns direct, it moves fairly slowly, so any difficult aspects Mercury forms will be in effect continuously for about three weeks



What if your chart printout shows that you have Mercury retrograde natively? Does that mean you will always endure the kinds of mishaps and struggles that are attributed to Mercury’s retrograde periods? There are many claims about what it means to have Mercury retrograde in the birth chart. Some books claim that the person’s development is delayed in that area of life or that they are more introverted in that area or slower to take action or as if that planet were a bit of a dumb note. Frankly, I am not convinced that any of those theories would hold up if subjected to rigorous statistical study. With AstroDataBank, we have a wonderful tool for testing conclusions about any given astrological pattern.

One reader of my advice column who was concerned about this question had natal Mercury retrograde in Sagittarius conjunct the Sun, and I thought it would be fun to see who matched her Mercury and its aspects. Using AstroDatabank’s search function to find individuals with Mercury Retrograde in Sagittarius, I came up with 103 examples, including quite a number of astrologers, authors, evangelists and artists. To belie the claim that Mercury in Sagittarius would be more introverted when retrograde, the group included such live wires as Better Middler, Tina Turner, and Sammy Davis, Jr. I next looked for people sharing that reader’s conjunction of Mercury retrograde in Sagittarius to the Sun and narrowed it down to 54. They included billionaire J. Paul Getty, former House Speaker Tip O’Neal, mystery writer Rex Stout, and the wild and woolly entertainer Little Richard—hardly folks who are mentally backward or slow to take action.

One noticeable pattern is that when Mercury is retrograde in the birth chart, it does seem to reverse many of the "rules" about Mercury's retrograde periods. Many people with this placement seem to find it natural to sign contracts, buy cars, and make major decisions while Mercury is retrograde, and they do just fine. Especially if the aspects to Mercury in the natal chart are favorable ones, there seems to be little difficulty.

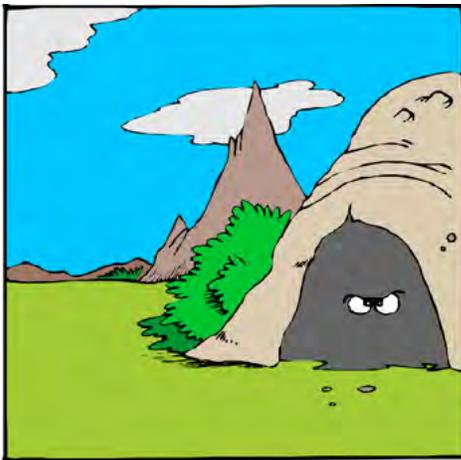
Night and Day: Transits from the 12th House to the 1st

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Over the years, I have observed what happens when a planet that has been transiting the 12th house finally emerges into the 1st. It is then that an important process that has been deeply private for some time finally emerges for the whole world to see. Though hidden from view, the 12th house is rich with significance. Analyzing the associated signs and planets in the birth chart can reveal secret wellsprings of growth and strength, or it can point out ways we covertly undermine ourselves and create suffering. The difference between these two possibilities is willingness to consciously examine and take responsibility for self-defeating behaviors and thoughts and to take a look at feelings we don't like to admit we have. The tendency of natal 12th house signs and planets, however, is to remain hidden from others and, all too often, from ourselves—we deny self-defeating patterns of behavior not only to other people but also to ourselves.

Typical 12th House Transits



It is precisely during a transit of the 12th house that these hidden parts of ourselves are revealed so we can begin to work on them. We are given the opportunity—and, usually, the impetus—to change them if they are hurtful or to enhance them if they are of value. The unconscious becomes more and more conscious, whether through painful encounters with consequences of self-defeating habits or through voluntarily entering into contemplation and self-inquiry.

The 12th being a house of retreat, we are usually given the gift of space to work on these patterns in private, without having to expose our shortcomings or our wounds. Sometimes the circumstances that create this valuable space seem like misfortunes—a prolonged bout of ill-health, say, or a spell of unemployment—but in the long run they are revealed as gifts of Spirit. When we embrace the silent and often solitary process of self-exploration, we can stop undermining ourselves. The energy that self-defeating pursuits used to consume can instead be directed into

² This article originally appeared as, "Night and Day: Transits from the 12th House to the 1st," in the 4-5/2000 issue of *The Mountain Astrologer*, pp. 89-92. It appears with their permission.

growth and spiritual seeking. With our new insight, we are granted a compassionate understanding of others, so we may also find ourselves giving service in new ways.

Suppose, instead, we choose to remain in denial and even beef up our defenses against owning these painful facets of our lives. Then the 12th house transit can show a progressive intensification of old self-defeating habits and their destructive potentials. Depending on the content of the 12th natally, we might escape into addictions to substances, compulsive or even abusive relationships, or workaholism, until they take on a life of their own. As time goes on, we enter a “bottoming out” phase, madly persevering in these old behaviors despite their increasingly obvious failure to fulfill our needs and their increasingly painful consequences. In the end, we can only go so far down that path before we reach a turning point, and, hopefully, choose to pursue the 12th house’s more loving expressions.

A 12th house passage and the processes associated with it can go on for some time, as determined by the number of degrees in that house natally. You may even find that the month or two each year that the Sun, Mercury, and Venus are coursing through your 12th are a time when you instinctively withdraw from involvement in the world and its demands and devote time to inner life. It is only our results-oriented society that devalues these retreat periods as unproductive rather than recognizing the ways they restore and revitalize us and grant a new perspective on our lives. The longer the 12th house transit lasts, the more life-changing the process, and the more important self-awareness becomes. Jupiter transits generally last a year and Saturn takes two or three years to pass through a house. Uranus may take seven years, while Neptune and Pluto transits may endure ten to twelve years.



The Shift from the 12th to the 1st



However long the transit, and however intense the inner process, there is a distinct shift when that planet emerges from the 12th house into the 1st. With slower moving planets, the energetic change can be gradual, as they cross the Ascendant, then retrograde back into the 12th a couple of times.

Let’s use Jupiter as an example. As Jupiter spends a scant year in each house in turn, it is there long enough to notice the effect of the transit on the matters of the

house yet short enough to notice the sequence it creates when it moves along to the next. During Jupiter’s year in the eleventh, there is often a social whirl that seems to

give way to a time of contemplative solitude during its sojourn in the 12th. People instinctively pull inward to contemplate their life direction and observe their emotional life. The 12th house is the house of the ashram, and a Hindu word for Jupiter is Guru, so even those who have not been especially drawn to spiritual practices may find themselves studying philosophy more seriously.

These, of course, are the more positive expressions of Jupiter, which is supposedly very fortunate in this house. Still, Jupiter is inclined to excess, so this transit can exaggerate any self-destructive behavior patterns, as represented by natal 12th house placements. People overdo wildly in the belief that, “I can get away with it, God is on my side, and anyway I won’t get caught.” For those inclined to addiction or overeating, Jupiter’s thirst for More and More can lead to an intensification of the addiction.

When Jupiter shifts from the 12th into the 1st, the person who has taken the higher path with this transit moves out of self-imposed isolation with a new enthusiasm and sense of purpose. Having learned some important new truths during their period of study and contemplation, they may now feel they have something important to impart, so they may begin teaching or preaching. The signs of natal and transiting Jupiter determine what it is they want to teach and whether they are gifted at it or merely arrogant and opinionated. All the same, the year of quiet retreat with Jupiter in the 12th tends to rekindle energy and hopefulness.



Contrast that with Saturn’s two-year or longer sojourn in the 12th. In anticipating what it might bring, it is important to have a thorough understanding of Saturn’s natal condition—sign, house, and aspects. It is also instructive to assess how the individual, at this stage of life, meets Saturn’s demands for responsibility, maturity, self-discipline, accomplishment, and dealing with authority figures. If the individual is handling those functions well, there is less chance that a 12th house passage will bring unwanted repercussions.

If, however, the individual typically behaves irresponsibly and immaturely, has no real purpose in life or career direction, and expects authority figures to take on the role of indulgent parents, then Saturn’s passage through the 12th may well be an encounter with some sobering realities. Among the sobering realities would be reaping the consequences of destructive patterns signified by planets in the 12th natally.

Even those who are generally Saturn-friendly can find this transit challenging, though they have developed the tools and strategies to cope with Saturnian demands, both inner and outer. Highly-motivated achievers may find it a frustrating period, in that often the career or life goals seem to be on hiatus, enjoying few outer manifestations. The exception, of course, is for those who are pursuing 12th house related careers of service, in which case they may find themselves, finally, in

administrative or supervisory positions. For spiritual disciples, also, it may be a time of important initiations.



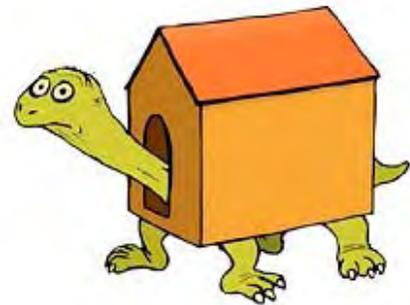
Those who find themselves stymied or stagnant in their careers, however, may wish to recall what we said earlier about the merits of a retreat time which enables us to process and digest what has happened up to now. Here, it is time to evaluate our accomplishments and how they have or haven't truly satisfied us. The 12th house is a house of service, and if we have accomplished a great deal or have been given much, perhaps it is time to give back to the world.

It is also a house of inner life, of spirituality, and of health difficulties brought on by repressed emotions or self-defeating practices. If we have sacrificed the inner life, postponed developing our spirituality, and neglected our health in order to achieve material goals, then this is a time to bring our lives back into balance. If we refuse to do so, in the course of this transit, we may be faced with anxiety or depression (Saturn emotional imbalances) or perhaps with work-related health complaints. We may suffer from spiritual angst as well, a sense of emptiness in the midst of material accomplishments that eventually has us turning to spirit for relief.

What happens when Saturn crosses the Ascendant and goes into the 1st depends completely on how the individual has used its passage through the 12th. Those who have a history of irresponsibility and who haven't grown up any in the past couple of years may find, if they haven't already, that there are times they simply have to pay the consequences of their behavior. Those who have overworked habitually and ignored their body's needs and limitations may face a health crisis that forces them to let go of overwork and take care of themselves.

Those who have taken the quieter, more contemplative path of reassessing their life path and biding their time, however, are quite likely to find themselves with new skills and character development to offer the world. When Saturn emerges into the 1st, such individuals begin to impress others with their new-found maturity and capability, and so it is often a time when they are "drafted" to fill a highly responsible new position or role. The mantle of authority now sits more lightly on their shoulders, and they come into their own in a new way.

I won't cover the outer planets and their slow passages through the 12th, but the same type of assessment will help you to understand the more gradual process these transits bring. What houses, signs, and aspects does the planet inhabit natively, and what does that suggest about the person? How important—or how muted—is its expression in the person's life? Paramount, of course, is the strength of the 12th house in the birth chart and how the person has come to express any 12th house planets in the course of this lifetime. How has



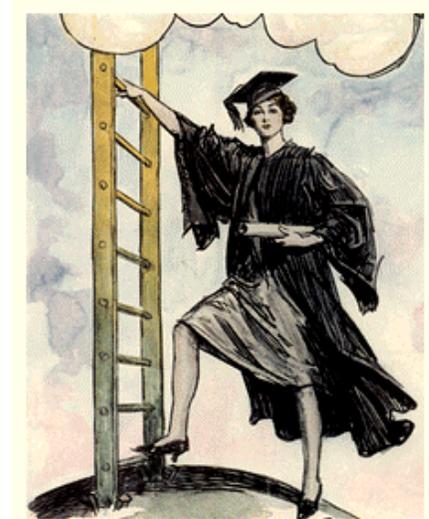
the person used that planet historically, and what development has unfolded in the course of a lifetime in that planet's expression?

Check in periodically and see how the person's use of that planet changes in the lengthy course of its passage through the 12th. Even if it is initially used in a self-defeating way or if it is repressed, how does its expression evolve during its seven to twelve years in the 12th? When you begin to get a feel for these questions, you will have a more solid basis for predicting what will happen as the transiting planet emerges from the 12th and crosses back and forth over the Ascendant. You will divine what it is that has been going on in private that will now emerge for the whole world to see.

What About Other House Shifts?

You may be wondering if a similar process occurs when outer planets finish transiting other houses and cross into the next. Shifts across intermediate house cusps are not so clearly demarcated. Only the four angular house cusps—the Ascendant, IC, Descendant, and Midheaven—are points that produce specific events during transits. Thus, the crossing of transiting planets from the 3rd house over the IC and into the 4th, the 6th over the Descendant into the 7th, and the 9th into the 10th are all similar in import to the one we have been considering from the 12th into the 1st. The 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th houses are traditionally called the **cadent** houses and are considered more background than foreground in their actions. Thus the shift from a cadent house into an **angular** house (1st, 4th, 7th, or 10th) results in a shift of energies from an inner to a more external focus.

For instance, when a planet has been in the 9th house for some time, usually significant time and energy has been devoted to an important course of study, however formal or informal. I find this to be true regardless of the age of the person. (The nature of the transiting planet and sign involved tell much about the type of study and how the work has gone.) When the transiting planet emerges from the 9th, crosses the Midheaven, and becomes ensconced in the 10th, then that course of study becomes part and parcel of the person's life work. You may find it fruitful to research and track the course of the other shifts from cadent to angular houses in your own chart or the charts of people whose lives you are interested in understanding better.



A Promise Fulfilled: When Transits Echo Natal Aspects³

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Each natal chart aspect contains a host of promises, since even the most difficult of combinations has gifts to bestow once we learn to use the energies of the two planets well. Throughout our lives, transits to a natal aspect represent windows of time when we are challenged to make changes in how we use that aspect. If we are wise, we gradually learn to let go of self-defeating ways of expressing the energies of those planets and manage, instead, to capitalize on their strengths.

Never is that more true than during the periods when the natal aspect is echoed by the transit — that is, when one of the planets involved natively is the transiting planet as well. For instance, suppose that Saturn is square Mars in the birth chart, and now transiting Saturn is opposite natal Mars. The aspect isn't the same, but the pair of planets in the picture (Mars and Saturn) are. Saturn forms hard aspects (such as squares or oppositions) to its natal position about every seven years, during its 29.46-year orbit around the Sun; so, at seven-year intervals, Saturn will echo all of the major difficult aspects it makes in your birth chart. (It also forms trines to its natal position twice during that orbit, providing opportunities when Saturn's better qualities can be developed with somewhat less stress.)

In those recurring intervals, you will be challenged anew to master the lessons of Saturn and to make substantive progress through self-discipline, hard work, and a more mature perspective on your old limitations. You may wish to consider how you've been using your Saturn energies in the seven years or so since the last such aspect. If you have worked hard in the areas of life represented by that natal aspect, the transit might very well be a time when your efforts reach fruition — provided, of course, that you have been both diligent and wise. Sometimes, we work much harder than we need to, when not only our methods but even our game plans are flawed. If so, it may be time to evaluate your priorities and redirect your efforts toward more appropriate ends, so you won't wear yourself out.

The so-called Midlife Cycle of the late thirties to mid forties is a crucible for much change and growth, because the astrological picture at midlife includes a series of outer-planet aspects by transit to their own natal positions. Transiting Uranus makes an opposition to its natal position in the chart, transiting Neptune squares natal Neptune, and transiting Pluto squares natal Pluto. In the process, the transiting outer planets trigger all the aspects that the outer planets form in the birth chart, giving us the chance to learn how to use those aspects better and to fulfill

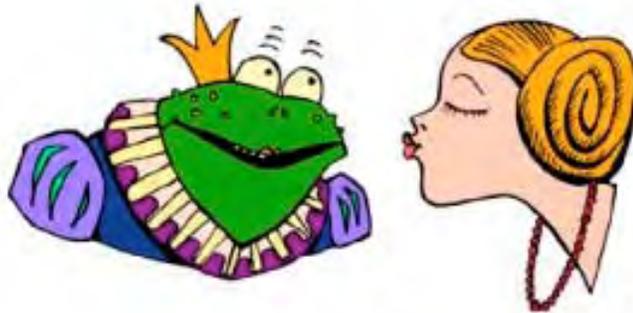


³ This originally appeared in *The Mountain Astrologer*, Feb-March, 2005, and appears with their permission.

more of their innate potential. (The exact ages when these aspects occur vary from generation to generation, because the orbits of these three planets around the Sun are not as regular as the orbits of the inner planets.)

The energies of the outer planets are not as accessible to our consciousness, nor are they easy to express; instead, they require a great deal of maturity to handle well. This sort of meandering through life and having a variety of experiences seems to be a necessary part of growth and evolution — as though the life journey were a long pilgrimage through a wilderness. It's easy to lose our way with the outer planets; where these planets are located in our charts, we often do so repeatedly — learning much from our mistakes as we stumble and fall on our faces. It is usually at midlife, when all the natal aspects to an outer planet are also set off by transit, that we bottom out on the less-productive uses of these energies and are impelled, if we are blessed with sufficient maturity, to work toward more uplifting expressions.

For example, suppose you have a Venus–Neptune conjunction in your birth chart. The slogan for that combination might be: “Someday my prince will come — but first I have to kiss a lot of frogs.” (Of course, there are many ways to express that particular combination, but this is a fairly common pattern.) During earlier transits to that conjunction, over the years, frogs of countless varieties are likely to have appeared — looking for all the world like princes. Unfortunately, your heartfelt efforts to turn the current frog into the prince you know he *could be* are doomed to failure after wrenching failure. Reluctantly, you're forced to conclude that this particular frog will remain a frog until he croaks. Still, you may persist in the notion that, if you could just somehow succeed in morphing yourself into a princess, your prince would surely appear.



A likely window for changing this persistent pattern is during the Midlife Cycle sometime around the age of 40, when transiting Neptune squares natal Neptune. In the case of this particular conjunction, transiting Neptune will square natal Venus as well. One of the numerous ways that this transit can manifest itself is that the frog of a lifetime arrives — clad in such elegant, princely attire that you are certain your soul mate has finally come along. If he is *not* in fact a prince, the experience of trying one last time to kiss someone into princeliness may represent the bottoming-out of an old codependent pattern of relating through rescuing. Under this transit, the romantic haze that has always clouded your ability to see potential partners clearly may lift.

Sadder but wiser, you now begin to look more realistically at new prospects. Relationships will never be the same, and that's a good thing! Until now, that same romantic haze has kept you from recognizing the occasional true prince who does come your way (perhaps because you can't get past his frog-like spots and raspy voice). Now you may recognize him — and learn how to relate to him in a healthy way.

One way to evaluate the intervals when natal aspects are echoed is to consider the type of angle (e.g., square, trine, or quincunx) formed by the natal aspect and compare it to the type of transiting angle. The transiting angle does help us to revise how we have worked with the planetary energies in the natal angle. Especially when these energies are used consciously through an in-depth analysis of the meanings of the current and natal planetary placements, the transit represents a fruitful time to upgrade how we express those energies. For instance, suppose someone has natal Pluto square the Sun, involving the career or money houses (the 2nd, 6th, or 10th), and now, transiting Pluto is trine the natal Sun. This is an opportunity to address the problems that this square may have highlighted for much of the individual's life.

Perhaps that individual has always been visited by self-doubt, or even self-loathing, when confronted with those in powerful or wealthy circumstances. This self-esteem problem may have alternated with a sneaking sense of pride at not being as corrupt as “those awful power-mongers with all that filthy money” — a pride that may have created persistently self-sabotaging financial patterns, such as remaining underpaid.

Under the transiting trine, catalytic events, opportunities, healing work, or new self-awareness may well create a major shift, both in self-confidence and in financial dealings. The resulting greater prosperity could give rise to a benign spiral over the two years or longer that the transit is in effect: As the sense of self-worth grows, the workplace may reflect that growth with additional well-deserved raises, which in turn grant new confidence.

In contrast, suppose someone has a natal trine between Pluto and the Sun. Depending on the signs and houses involved, the mantle of authority or power often sits very naturally on the shoulders of such individuals. This may not be worldly power. If the 12th house is involved, it might be spiritual power where the person's mere presence can be healing and comforting to those who suffer, helping the downtrodden to reclaim their own power. Likewise, if the 4th house is involved, this person might be the family matriarch or patriarch around whom the whole family network revolves.

The problem with trines is that we don't always make of them all that we might — it's so easy just to coast. However, for such individuals, a transiting *square* of Pluto to natal Sun is highly energizing. It echoes the natal trine between the two planets, yet represents a golden opportunity to make much, *much* more of the



potential of that trine. Circumstances shift, new demands are experienced, and although the resulting challenges may make the person doubt those taken-for-granted gifts, the end result is likely to be a new and more powerful way of expressing innate abilities. Through the pressure of the transiting hard angle, the natal promise can be fulfilled.

When working with clients, I watch very carefully for transits that echo natal aspects,



for they are among the most meaningful transits of all. In our session, we then spend considerable time grappling with that natal aspect and the life patterns — both self-defeating and self-fulfilling — that they represent. If you yourself are in the process of an echoing transit, analyze that natal aspect thoroughly to see how you are currently using it, for the transit can be a true gift that allows you to raise your use of that natal aspect to a new level. Unlike the often overwhelming transits that represent entirely new influences — that is, combining planets that do not aspect one another natively — an echoing transit is like an old favorite song sung in a whole new key. The melody is hauntingly familiar, yet in this brand-new arrangement of the song, you discover exciting possibilities that never existed before.



Never Rains but It Pours— When a Planet Transits Multiple Chart Points⁴

©2004 by Donna Cunningham, MSW

Have you ever noticed that, with some charts, no major transits happen for years, while the person's life remains pretty much on an even keel — but then everything pops at once? (It never rains but it pours!) The cause of this situation is a chart pattern where several key natal placements fall into the same degree areas of the signs. When a slow-moving transiting or progressed planet reaches those degrees, it stays for a while and stirs up many of the areas of life associated with those natal planets and houses.

In the chart of Bruce Willis, shown on the next page, six of his planets plus his Ascendant and Midheaven (MC) fall between 19°50' and 28°20' of the signs. You often see clusters like these in charts where there are major configurations. Bruce's chart contains two fixed T-squares (Mars and Pluto are too far apart, in my view, for a grand cross), plus a Grand Trine in water and a Yod ("Finger of God" consisting of two quincunxes tied together by a sextile).

Creating a list of placements in numerical order is a simple way to track transits and to spot sensitive degree areas. Sort the planets and the four angles by degree *number* rather than by sign. Any sensitive areas will stand out sharply. Here is the list for Bruce Willis:

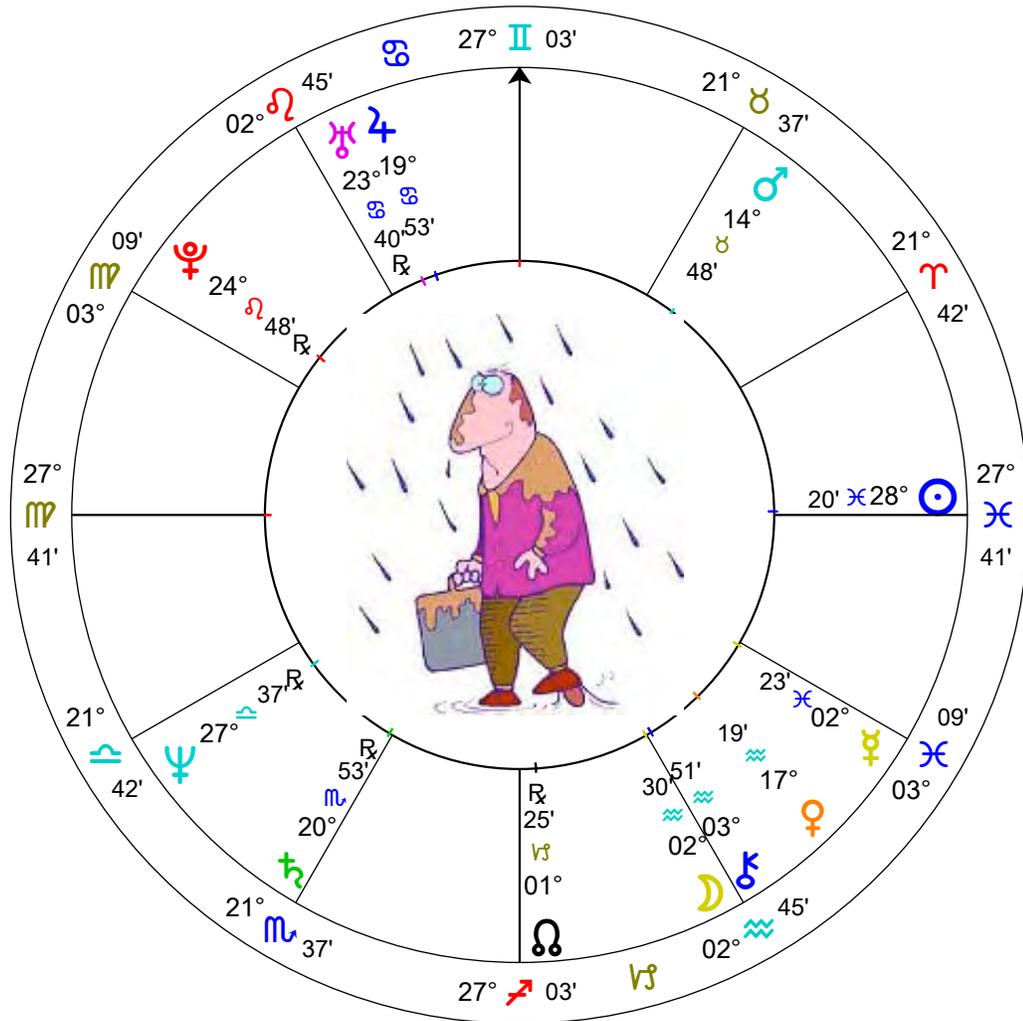
Mercury:	2 Pisces 23	Uranus:	23 Cancer 40
Moon:	2 Aquarius 30	Pluto:	24 Leo 48
Chiron:	3 Aquarius 51	MC/IC:	27 Gemini/Sag 03
Mars:	14 Taurus 48	Neptune:	27 Libra 37
Venus:	17 Aquarius 19	Asc/Dsc:	27 Virgo/Pisces 41
Jupiter:	19 Cancer 53	Sun:	28 Pisces 20
Saturn:	20 Scorpio 53		

Note that Willis has nothing between 4-13°, so a transiting planet would not be a strong influence while in that range. However, the area of 20–28° of the signs is strongly emphasized, thus his life is likely to be eventful when outer planets travel through those degrees.

When the four angles (the Ascendant, IC, Descendant, and MC) of the birth chart square one another as they do here, a life-changing series of events could be expected to occur each time an outer planet passes through that degree area. In charts like these, four potent parts of the horoscope are repeatedly activated by transits for two or more years. This series of aspects is likely to produce significant events and changes in career direction (MC), the person's image or approach to others (Ascendant), the home life or residence (IC), and partnership (Descendant).

⁴ This article appeared in *The Mountain Astrologer*, Oct-Nov, 2004, and appears with their permission.

Bruce Willis, March 19, 1955; 6:32 p.m. CET; Idar-Oberstein, Germany (49°N42, 07°E19); A: from memory; Steinbrecher quotes a mutual friend, from Willis.



Transit Tracking Table for 1990-2010 (Rounded Off)

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Year:	Saturn:	Uranus:	Neptune:	Pluto:
1990	15-25 CP	5-9 CP	12-14 CP	14-19 SC
1991	25 CP-6 AQ	9-13 CP	13-16 CP	17-21 SC
1992	5-18 AQ	13-17 CP	16-18 CP	20-23 SC
1993	16 AQ-0 PI	17-22 CP	18-20 CP	22-25 SC
1994	27 AQ-12 PI	21-26 CP	20-23 CP	25-28 SC
1995	8-24 PI	25 CP-0 AQ	22-25 CP	27 SC-0 SG
1996	19 PI-7 AR	29 CP-4 AQ	24-27 CP	0-3 SG
1997	1-20 AR	3-8 AQ	26-29 CP	2-6 SG
1998	13 AR-3 TA	7-12 AQ	28 CP-0 AQ	5-8 SG
1999	26 AR-16 TA	10-16 AQ	1-4 AQ	7-11 SG
2000	10 TA-0 GE	14-20 AQ	3-6 AQ	10-13 SG
2001	24 TA-14 GE	18-25 AQ	5-8 AQ	12-15 SG
2002	8-28 GE	22-28 AQ	7-10 AQ	14-17 SG
2003	22 GE-13 CN	26 AQ-2 PI	10-13 AQ	17-19 SG
2004	6-27 CN	0-6 PI	11-15 AQ	19-22 SG
2005	20 CN-11 LE	3-10 PI	13-17 AQ	21-24 SG
2006	4 LE- 25 LE	7-14 PI	15-19 AQ	24-26 SG
2007	18 LE-8 VI	11-18 PI	18-22 AQ	26-28 SG
2008	1-20 VI	15-22 PI	20-24 AQ	28 SG-0 CP
2009	15 VI-3 LI	19-26 PI	23-26 AQ	0-3 CP
2010	27 VI-14 LI	23 PI-0 AR	24-28 AQ	2-5 CP

NOTE: The basic information on this table was compiled from Solar Fire Astrological Software's ephemeris generating function.

To determine whether this situation applies in a given chart, check the degree numbers on the MC and Ascendant to see if they are within five degrees of one another in signs that are square.⁵ Bruce Willis has the Ascendant at 27° Virgo, the IC at 27° Sagittarius, the MC at 27° Gemini, and the Descendant at 27° Pisces, along with his Sun at 28° Pisces.

Using the degree list for a particular chart, you can discover any “hot zones” for transits and pinpoint crucial periods when those zones are being activated. The Transit Tracking Table on the previous page shows the range covered by each of the outer planets from 1990 through 2010. Compare those listings to the degree list for a given chart to identify important years.

Uranus and Neptune were in the last degrees of Capricorn and Pluto was in the last degrees of Scorpio during the years 1993–97, while Bruce Willis was busy becoming a superstar, and his young children were an important part of his life. During the years 1998–99, when both Neptune and Saturn were in that crucial degree range of cardinal signs, he separated from his wife, Demi Moore, and starred in two giant box office hits: *Armageddon* and *The Sixth Sense*.



Multiple conjunctions, where a series of natal planets fall close together in the same sign and/or house, are also interesting to watch. A sequence of events and developments will occur while a transit sets off one planet after another in the series. The earlier transits set the tone for later ones, so how the individual masters the challenges of the first transits can alter the outcome of the later ones.

The usual result of transits to multiple conjunctions is a series of stages related to the order of appearance of the planets. For instance, the romantic relationships of someone with a multiple conjunction in Leo of Mars, then Venus, and then Saturn might follow a typical course as the transiting planet kicks off each of the natal planets in turn. First, the individual might experience a physical attraction, taking the initiative to actively pursue the love interest (Mars in Leo). Then, we might expect warm, fuzzy intervals with lots of good times (Venus in Leo) when the individual is demonstrative and generous toward the love interest, promising the moon and undying loyalty.

Then, as the question of commitment — and especially of children — arises, Saturn in Leo kicks in, and the walls may go up. Suddenly, there is fear and caution, as the individual asks: “Is this person a worthy consort — and good enough to perpetuate the dynasty? Would Father approve? Is love growing cold? Am I getting

⁵ This condition is common among those born in certain latitudes whose Ascendant (1st-house cusp) is in early Leo to mid Libra and whose MC (10th-house cusp) is therefore in early Taurus to mid Cancer. The IC (4th-house cusp) is the opposite sign and degree from the MC, and the Descendant (7th-house cusp) is the opposite sign and degree from the Ascendant.

enough attention?" The capacity for a lasting relationship depends on how the couple weathers this fear-of-commitment crisis.

Suppose, however, that you were working with the chart of someone born a week later, with Saturn in Leo first, then Venus, and then Mars. How might that alter the unfolding of relationships? The fear of commitment (Saturn) would probably kick in right away, and the question of suitability would need to be resolved before the native could open up. Once the romantic prospect was deemed acceptable (Saturn), a highly romantic courtship (Venus) would begin, and finally the physical attraction (Mars) could be pursued.

Can you predict how a person will fare during the time a transiting planet (or sometimes more than one planet) is moving through a hot zone? The answer goes back to any cluster of natal planets in the degree areas and what aspects these planets form. Doing research with the Transit Tracker, you'd need to find out what happened the last few times there was a significant transit to that cluster, for it is likely that similar issues and behavior patterns would have arisen. You would also need to inquire how the person has historically used the transiting planet in question.

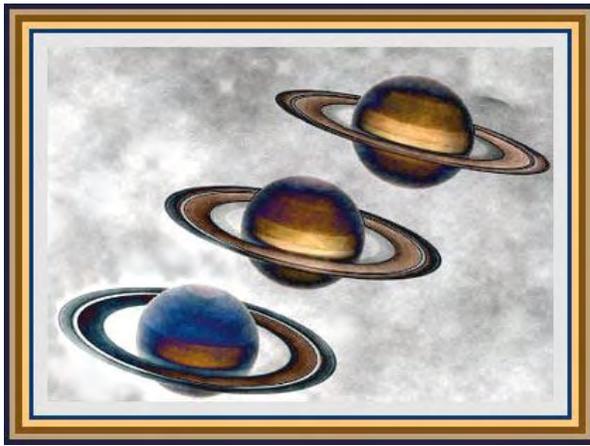
Suppose you were faced with one of the two individuals described above, with the multiple conjunctions in Leo, and you noted that transiting Neptune in Aquarius was setting off each of the three planets in turn. Checking the recent transits to those points, you'd want to know what romantic twists and turns occurred while Saturn in Taurus squared those planets and, then, while Uranus in Aquarius opposed them. Astrology alone is generally not enough; history is the best predictor of the present, so don't hesitate to ask questions.



Saturn and The Mature Life Cycles

©1997 by Donna Cunningham, MSW⁶

Saturn has great significance for the Fifty-Something crowd. According to astrologers, it has to do with the wisdom gained of experience. Sometimes that wisdom comes from repeatedly bumping up against reality, and sometimes we learn our lessons more gracefully. Still, the Saturn times of our lives--like the ages of 50 and 57 and every seven years thereafter--are eras when we grow and mature, even when that isn't exactly what we had in mind. Saturn's orbit is divided into seven-year fractions, leading to the familiar observations about the seven-year itch.



I once saw a stunning photo collage from NASA of the four seasons of Saturn⁷. The good news is that on Saturn, summer lasts 7 years. The bad news is that winter also lasts 7 years. Perhaps that is the source of the Biblical quote about 7 fat years and 7 lean years.

In keeping with Saturn's association with maturation cycles, the approximate ages of 7, 14, 21, and 28 are significant times of maturing, along with every seventh year thereafter, including 49-50 and 57-59. The ages of 63-65, when many people retire, is another of those periods. If you are entering a Saturn cycle, you won't feel it keenly for the entire two and a half year period Saturn is in that sign. The actual time it would affect you is less--anywhere for a couple of months to off and on for a year. Depending on where in a sign your Saturn falls at birth, you would only be affected while it is near Saturn's original position in your astrology chart.

Some time between your 57th and your 59th birthday, however, you experience what astrologers refer to as your Saturn return--the time when Saturn comes back to the exact spot in your birth chart where it was when you were born. Since Saturn's orbit around the earth takes 29½ years, you've already been through the return once, when you were in your late twenties. If that stands out as a particularly tough time of your life, however, remember that you're older and have collected a great deal more of that priceless wisdom of experience. Therefore, the second experience of this cycle is bound to be different from the first.

Let me not give you the impression that Saturn is causing your troubles--or, for that matter, bestowing rewards. The planets in your astrological chart don't actually cause anything to happen to you that you yourself haven't already initiated.

⁶ This article appeared as "Saturn and the Mature Life cycles—Times of Challenge and Reward," *Dell Horoscope Magazine*, 1/97, pp. 67-69, and is used here with their permission.

⁷ If you are in the mood to take a break, let me invite you to visit my favorite playpen on the web, the Astronomy Picture of the Day (<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/archivepix.html>). Their archives have hundreds of stunning astronomical photos.

If you look in the mirror and your hair is going gray or you've put on a few pounds, you don't blame the mirror, do you? Your astrological chart and the cycles it goes through are like that mirror, not creating your reality but merely reflecting it--in a most useful way. Saturn is not the only planet playing a role in the 50-Something segment of your life cycles, but it is a major one.

Let's take a look at how the second Saturn return affected three of the recent 50-Something generations. In reading these descriptions, you will find that Saturn's sign modifies the experience considerably. For example, Saturn in Pisces at birth is far different from Saturn in Aries. Pisces is a dreamy, visionary, introspective sign while Aries is action-oriented and outer-directed. The challenges each faced during their Saturn returns reflected their own basic nature.

An issue for dreamers born with Saturn in Pisces is the conflict between their vision of how things should be and the realities they face and deal with in the real world. An idealistic lot, especially in youth, during their Saturn returns, they had to face, once more, the fact that we live in a world that is far from ideal. Thus, that transit could have been painful time of relinquishing certain ideals and saying goodbye to certain dreams. Sadder but wiser, they adjusted to dealing with the world as it actually was. Still, it helped many of them to be more grounded individuals and to build a more solid foundation for the future.



The lesson for those born with Saturn in Aries was patience and doing things properly rather than in a hasty and haphazard way. They are action oriented warrior types, and yet they all too often go off half-cocked, not planning well in their enthusiasm to tackle some new project. The presence of Saturn in Aries slowed things down to a crawl, much to their frustration and irritation. The end result, however, was a positive one, as they challenged themselves with far more difficult but worthwhile endeavors, and at the end of the two plus years, those who applied themselves built something of substance.

For those with Saturn in Taurus, the major issue during their second Saturn Return was their way of dealing with material possessions and finances, so they were challenged to forego unwise spending patterns, start to trim the fat, and stow away some savings. Many of them also confronted the fact that their tendency to accumulate STUFF made their lives unmanageable, so they pared down their storehouse of possessions to live more freely.

Whatever Saturn's sign at birth may be, if you or your friends and family are entering a Saturn return or another part of the Saturn cycle, it is time to call on all the strengths you have gained from your years of living. Saturn has much to do with the wisdom gained from experience, and this is a time to digest and reflect on what you've learned and accomplished. Even when you're an honors graduate in the School of Hard Knocks, you can gain a sense of accomplishment and competence.

Some astrologically savvy people panic about their second Saturn return, particularly when the experiences of the first return—some time between the ages of

28-30—were devastating. The second Saturn return can be a much different experience than the first, as the Saturn functions in the second half of life have to do with maturity, reaping the rewards of long years of efforts, and the lessons we learn from experience. Where the first Saturn return has been difficult, it shocks people into reality, and they begin to develop the positive qualities of Saturn—self-discipline, responsibility, a canny sort of caution, self-reliance, and doing things right the first time we do them. Over the 28-30 years from the first return to the second, people who are doing Saturn right build solid foundations and go a long way toward accomplishing some of their life goals and purposes.

Some Saturns are more difficult than others are, granted, and I might rank Saturn in the water signs among the more difficult (Scorpio most, Pisces second, and Cancer third among the water signs) and in the air signs (Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius) as less troublesome. I would expect that you have learned from whatever mistakes you had been making at the time of your first Saturn return. What is important in assessing a Saturn return—or any Saturn transit—is to get the whole picture, including other transits that might have been in effect at the time.



One reader of my Dell Horoscope column was frightened about her second Saturn return because the first return was a disaster. Her mother died, her career hit the skids, and her first husband died in an automobile crash. To understand the future through astrology, it pays to look at the past, and not just at a single planet like Saturn, but at the whole picture.

After studying all the transits at the time of that first Saturn return, I was able to assure her that Saturn was in no manner accountable for that series of events. In her case, there were quite difficult, once-in-a-lifetime aspects from transiting outer planets at the same time as the return. Transiting Pluto was square her Sun and conjunct her Moon, while transiting Uranus set off the same aspects. In neither case was Saturn acting on its own, nor would any outer-planet aspects remotely as difficult be forming to Saturn at the time of her second Saturn return.

Even when the first Saturn return is difficult without any assistance from Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto, however, I am not convinced that the second return will be as difficult. I interview the person about the issues and events that came up during the year or two of the first Saturn return. I then ask what the person has learned and built in those areas of since the first Saturn return, in order to gauge what the second return might be like.

I consider the state of Saturn in the birth chart—its sign, house placement, and the aspects it receives from other planets. A strongly-placed Saturn with several difficult aspects may signal a difficult area of life, one that hopefully improves as the person matures. I question the person about the house of the horoscope it is placed in, for the issues around the matters ruled by that house are bound to come up once more. In the 7th house, for instance, a long-standing relationship like a marriage may need attention, for limitations in the way the relationship has nurtured each of the

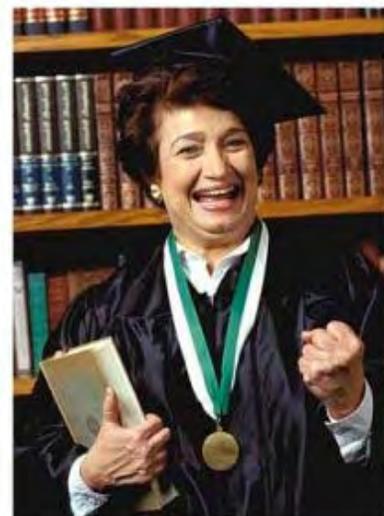
partners would have to be addressed. In the 2nd house, I would want to know about money management habits and how responsible the person has been in planning for retirement. When people can list ways they have learned lessons and grown in the areas of life Saturn represents in their charts and can demonstrate that, in fact, they are on fairly solid ground in those realms, I am less concerned about a difficult Saturn return the second time around.

Saturn times signal a reaping of what you've sown. The shorthand symbol for Saturn looks like a sickle, and what the ancients meant to evoke by that glyph was the sickle Father Time holds in his arms. The glyph is a reminder that when you've sown wisely and well, working hard for your goals, you tend to reap accordingly, but if you've neglected to weed, water, and till, your crop may be sparse. If you--or your younger relatives in their late twenties--are facing a Saturn return, it pays to examine what, exactly, you've sown over the past seven years, for that has a great deal to do with what you will reap. Those who have worked wisely and well often find the Saturn return a time of fruition. The second Saturn return, then, can be the pinnacle of a lifetime of work, but also a time for reflection and planning about how the next stage of life will be arranged.

Thus, if you're 50-Something and you haven't already begun to plan how you'll spend your time when you do retire, this second Saturn return is a good time to start. In astrology, Saturn also has to do with facing reality and the consequences of our actions, so starting now to correct any unwise health or financial practices is also a way to avoid future difficulties upon retirement. To paraphrase the old saying, Saturn helps those who help themselves!

I first committed myself to the field of astrology around the time of the first Saturn return—I have Saturn conjunct Uranus. My second Saturn return was quite a pleasant surprise. As happens to many of us in our late 50s, a Jupiter return was also in store, and, in fact, the Saturn return and the Jupiter return were exact the same week. That week, I got the urge to organize all my written works, sorting out “tear sheets” of my articles that had been published over the past several decades and floppy disks with the files for the articles and book. In the middle of this project, I started to realize how well the materials from various eras fitted together. Finally, I was stunned and pleased to discover that the materials I was organizing were falling into place as not one but two new books! I always say that if you take care of Saturn, Saturn will take care of you. My Saturn was natally in Gemini, and this Saturn return was a wonderful reaping of all the writing I had done over the years.

Many people find their Saturn cycles gratifying times of harvest, when they get to enjoy the rewards of years of hard work. They also experience new challenges, since the world seldom allows us to rest on our laurels very long. Without new challenges, however, we would stagnate, rather than face and even embrace each new stage of life. Greeting and discovering what is new about each stage of maturity is part of what I call The Joy of Saturn, who is for me, by now, an old, old friend.



The Retirement Axis—Chart Clues to What Retirement Means for You

©2002 by Donna Cunningham, MSW¹

What is the retirement axis in your chart, and how can it help you in planning? I call the 10th house cusp and the 4th house cusp, which is directly opposite it on the chart wheel, the retirement axis. Over the past several decades, the research of French psychologists Francoise and Michel Gauquelin and the vast anecdotal evidence collected by Astro*Carto*Graphy practitioners suggest that the areas near four of the house cusps are active and crucial. They respond to transits and location shifts in a way that the rest of the house cusps do not. These four include the Ascendant (1st house cusp, also known as the Rising sign, an image and health indicator), the IC (4th house cusp, signifying home life, family, and roots), Descendant (7th house cusp, describing partnership) and Midheaven (MC or 10th house cusp, which tells about career and public recognition).



These four angles break down into two pairs, because the Ascendant is always exactly 180° from the Descendant, while the Midheaven is always exactly 180° from the IC.

The fact that the Midheaven (career developments) falls into the sign and degree opposite the IC (home and roots) makes this pair important in career planning and retirement. When a transiting or progressed planet forms an angle to the Midheaven, it simultaneously forms a corresponding angle to the IC. Thus, during your working years, transits indicating a new job opportunity or a promotion may also entail a transfer, while transits indicating retirement may also



signal a major geographical move. (For certain Rising signs and for births near the equator, all four angles may intersect at right angles to one another. In those cases, a major transit or progression could affect home, career, partnership and physical vitality all within a short time frame)

The transiting planets involved as well as the type of aspect describe the conditions—and the ease or struggle—involved in the accompanying changes in status and even in residence. When the planet squares the Midheaven, for instance, it squares the IC as

well, suggesting some degree of difficulty in making the job and/or residence shift, but also a time when the energy and impulse for a high level of personal

¹ This article appeared in Dell Horoscope Magazine as “The Retirement Years: Chart Clues to Help You Make the Most of Them,” 1/02, 23-29 and is reprinted with their permission.

growth is possible. A conjunction to the Midheaven makes an opposition to the IC, often meaning that retirement might take a back seat for a time to continued work responsibilities. A conjunction to the IC (thus an opposition to the Midheaven) is by far the strongest indication of retirement, and we will be looking at the circumstances suggested by each of the outer planets in that position.

The easier aspects—trines and sextiles—make for an easier transition into retirement. When the transiting or progressed planet trines the Midheaven, it also sextiles the IC, suggesting that changes may flow well due to nice opportunities and to support from others. (How well, relatively, depends on the nature of that planet and on its condition in the original birth chart.) If the planet sextiles the MC, it simultaneously trines the IC. That may place it in the 8th house, house of pensions, IRAs and other kinds of retirement income, suggesting a cushion that eases the transition from work to leisure.

How to Use the Transit Tracking Table for Retirement Planning

The Transit Tracking Table (see the bookmark) gives degrees of the zodiac transited by the outer planets in upcoming years. Later in this article, interpretations of the meanings of these transits will be given, but first we need to identify any that affect you or your loved ones. To find out if these crucial degrees impact your career and retirement axis, get out your natal chart. The 10th house cusp (MC) should be at the top of the circle, and directly across from that would be the 4th house cusp (IC). This pair, the MC/IC axis is your personal retirement axis, so note the degrees and signs on those cusps in order to compare them to the degrees given on the table.

One caution is in order. An exact birth time is always a plus in astrological work, but there are parts of the chart that are not so strongly affected by the time. The MC/IC axis, alas, is not one of them. House cusps change approximately 1° each four minutes on the clock. Thus an error of, say, twenty minutes, on the time of birth could mean 5° error in the cusps. Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto move very slowly, as you will see on the table, and due to retrograde motion, cross over the same degree repeatedly in a two to three year period. If your MC/IC



axis is 5° off, then the timing of your retirement or career developments could be off by a couple of years. (In fact, when career events do not happen in a time frame that fits transits to those cusps, it is a clue that the birth time may be off.) When you have found your Retirement Axis, go to the Transit Tracking Table and see if those degrees are listed among the transiting planets for the year in question.

The first aspect to note would be the conjunction, a very potent impact in terms of its capacity to catalyze change and almost guaranteed to create an event if the birth time is correct. (A transiting planet is forming a conjunction when it is in the same degree as a natal planet, here the MC or IC.)

Next are the 90° aspects called squares, usually meaning that some tension or struggle arises due to conflicts of interest between matters of the two houses involved. (A square to the MC/IC axis is often formed by planets in the 1st, 6th, 7th, or 12th houses.) The third of the “hard” aspects is the opposition, creating a tug of war between the houses involved, often due to our own ambivalence. In this case, a conjunction to the MC (career developments) creates an opposition to the IC (retirement and home life) and vice versa. Two more major aspects are trines (120°) and sextiles (60°), “soft” aspects indicating a measure of support and ease in making this transition.

Don't stop if you find your degrees listed once, for more than one of the transits may apply to you in the next several years. For instance, suppose that your 10th house cusp falls at 18° Leo and your 4th house cusp at the opposite degree, 18° Aquarius. You are hoping to retire during 2006, and you are looking at transits to determine if that seems feasible. You notice that Neptune will be crossing back and forth over 18° Aquarius during parts of 2005 and 2006, suggesting some Neptunian conditions may complicate the retirement process. (Read on for descriptions of each of the outer planets and what retirement issues may come up.) A more likely window could be when Saturn in Leo crosses that 18 Leo Midheaven in September, 2006, and again April-May 2007. Uranus in Pisces will also form a quincunx to the Midheaven during parts of 2007-8².

Thus not one but three factors are setting off your retirement axis, making for a rather eventful phase of your life. Read all the interpretations that apply and blend them, noting the sequence. If, based on these readings, it appears that the shoals of retirement might be tough to navigate, this might be a good time to consult a professional. Some readers who are not in the retirement range may discover through the table that their own MC/IC axis is being triggered by a transit. That should not be taken as an indicator of a premature retirement, but it generally does signal a shift in the balance between career and home life, with new developments likely in those areas. While the readings coming up are aimed at the question of retirement, nonetheless they may give some clues as to what is going on.



² Review what was said about the transiting quincunx in an earlier essay, “Now That’s A Stretch!”

The Adjustment Phase—What do Your Transits Show?

Now that you've located any relevant transits, what do they show about how you and your retirement? Generally a transit indicates a process rather than a single event, given that the outer planets may make several aspects to the same point over a year or two. Likewise, the process of adjusting to retirement can take a good while—also a year or more—and it can be anything but smooth because it is such a major life transition.

The early stages—a heady sense of relief, vegging out for months on end, or taking a lengthy vacation—are no indication of what retirement will be like for you in the long run. After the first few months, reality sets in and you come face to face with—well, with yourself for one thing! If you have been somewhat of a workaholic or have filled your life with busyness as well as business, you also face up to issues that you may have successfully avoided for years. These might include difficulties in your partnership or closest ties, an inner spiritual void that work may have filled, or lack of a sense of purpose. If you have cultivated leisure interests and loving ties, then the transition will tend to be easier.

The IC, the bottom of your chart, represents your foundation. Retirement forces you to contemplate exactly what has been the foundation of your life and perhaps shift it to a new and more appropriate one. That doesn't mean that the old foundation was wrong, just that over time, circumstances have slowly evolved so that it may no longer be suitable for your older years. Looking ahead to outer planet transits to the IC or to planets in your 4th house can give a sense of what the process of adjusting to retirement and laying a new foundation may be like. Remember, however, that transits are transient—they may last a year or more, here delimiting the acute adjustment period after leaving your job, and then they pass.

One last bit of information from your birth chart may illuminate matters. In the readings that follow, we will be looking at transits from Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Transits are always more significant if they somehow repeat a feature of the natal chart. Here, we would want to know if any of those planets were already connected with your career houses, because then a transit from that planet to your retirement axis would be even more impactful. To find that out, look at the houses numbered two, six, and ten in your birth chart, for those are the three houses most connected with your vocation. If natal Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto falls into one of those houses, make special note of it, for a transit from that planet would signify an important shift in how you use the energy of that planet. Generally, at retirement, that would mean that rather than focusing that planet's energy on the workplace, you would now be exploring avenues for expressing it constructively in your personal life.

For example, suppose you had Neptune in your 10th (career) house natively. That might show that you worked in the helping fields, but that you yearned for a more creative way to earn a living. Alternately, you may have settled into a less than rewarding line of work due to family responsibilities, so your creative or spiritual interests had to take a back seat. If so, a Neptune

transit to your MC/IC axis may mean that retirement will give you the space you need to pursue these neglected interests.

SATURN TRANSITS: Saturn transits to the 10th house and Midheaven often go along with promotions and career advancements, so if Saturn is transiting your 10th (career) or 6th (work) houses, but there may be a delay in retiring. You may be drafted for new responsibilities because your skills, capabilities, and experience are irreplaceable. Or, you yourself may decide to work longer because of practical necessities.



However, Saturn transiting the 4th house and especially crossing the IC can be an indication of retirement. Alternately, you may cut back on work hours and work out of the home, perhaps starting a small business. Involuntary retirement may also be seen with this transit if you work for a company with rigid age requirements or even outright age discrimination, so planning in advance for other ways of earning an income would be wise.

Under Saturn transits, some people temporarily experience worry, anxiety, or depression, and this can occur when retiring under a Saturn transit. (Career-oriented people with strong Capricorn, Saturn, or 10th house natal placements are especially prone to such responses because work and career have been such an important part of their lives.) Tackling major, long-needed home-improvement projects like remodeling to increase the house's value or clearing out wall-to-wall junk that has accumulated in the garage or attic can relieve some of this transient anxiety.

Saturn often presents us with a reality check. You may be facing up to ways you have not planned wisely for the years to come, either financially or in developing interests that would fulfill you. Thus, if you see a Saturn transit coming up to your retirement axis, making sensible changes in your lifestyle may be in order, to set a solid foundation under yourself. Saturn transits also may go along with feeling old, so looking at and changing negative ideas about the senior decades is important to your happiness and self-acceptance.



Not every retiree goes through a difficult time under Saturn transits, especially when the transit is making good aspects like trines and sextiles to the MC/IC points from the 2nd house (money earned) and the 8th house (pensions and income other than a paycheck). Saturn is Father Time, whose sickle represents reaping what you have earned. Saturn generally rewards wise and diligent people—like those with the earth element strong in their birth charts or with Saturn natively in one of the career houses. These are often people who have worked hard throughout life, met their responsibilities, planned for their senior years, and

look forward to being the elders in our society. The gold watch upon retirement is no longer a worthy symbol, but today such people may find themselves with a nice severance package. These folks often find joy in sharing their years of experience with others, say in volunteering to mentor small business owners or in being foster grandparents. Staying productive and useful keeps them fulfilled.



URANUS TRANSITS: If Uranus crosses your MC and goes into the 10th house or if it makes a trine to your MC from the sixth house, you are not likely to retire, but the form of your career is likely to change radically and frequently for a while. You are likely to work more independently and at something new and exciting, maybe even being on the cutting edge with your own business. Likewise, a trine from the 2nd house (earnings) can mean that you become an independent contractor and set your own, abbreviated schedule.

These transits can give you a great deal of free choice and something new and exciting to do, something too interesting to give up for total retirement.

If Uranus crosses the IC and hits 4th house planets, you are very likely to retire, even if it's not in your plans to do so. It can come about suddenly and unexpectedly, for instance due to your company's sudden relocation or a corporate shakedown with personnel cutbacks. It can happen, too, that you wake up one morning—after months or years of discontent—and proclaim, "I'm out of here!"

There is no doubt that Uranus transits can be exciting and/or unsettling, even for folks who thrive on change and novelty. However, people with substantial placements in the fixed signs (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and even Aquarius, especially with the Moon, Sun, or Rising sign or a collection of personal planets in those sign) tend not to like change or surprises, so such times of transition can be harder on them. As the outside is more often than not a reflection of the inside, self-examination may reveal that they have been bored and frustrated with the status quo for a long time but have simply endured it out of fear of change. After the quake subsides, these folks are likely to thrive on the new freedom, stimulation, and leading edge qualities such transits bring.

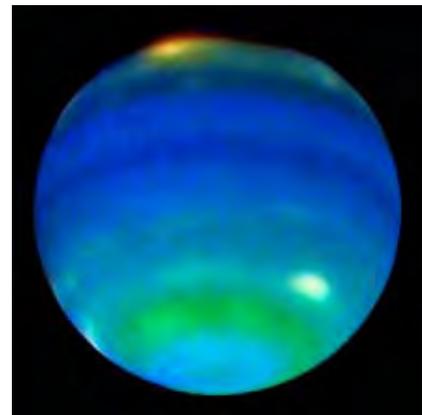


While Uranus transits the IC or planets in the 4th house, people are likely to change residence several times, so investing in a single piece of property and thinking you will retire there forever is probably unsound. It's more a time for investing in a camper or mobile home and indulging your desire to travel and to sample the vast variety of people and places your country has to offer.

Alternately, it is possible that you will go back and forth between a winter and a summer residence, even one that you timeshare with friends or other unrelated people. Travel light, and free yourself from the shackles of possessions that only weigh you down.

Rather than viewing these several years of shifting residences with alarm, as fixed sign types are prone to do, treat it as an retirement adventure in which you have the freedom to experience diverse locations and diverse lifestyles. You are in a period of experimentation that will help you find a new lifestyle to suit you for the rest of your days. Those who have natal Uranus in the 2nd, 6th, or 10th houses should take to retirement like a duck to water, for they most often have been experimenters and pioneers who loved their freedom and hated routine, chafing at the rules and strictures of the traditional workplace.

NEPTUNE TRANSITS: If Neptune crosses your MC and goes into the 10th house, you may not retire on schedule because of confusing and frustrating circumstances that leave you feeling rather sorry for yourself. You may find yourself rescuing those in charge, who are now not in the best of shape emotionally or physically, and who insist that the business will go down the tube unless you stay on. Alternately family responsibilities—or your own shortsightedness in financial planning—may keep you in the harness longer than you like.



Don't be a doormat or allow people to take unfair advantage, but do consider whether you might not be paying off some karmic debt or developing your spiritual self in the midst of this difficulty. With softer aspects from transiting Neptune, say a trine from the 2nd or 6th house, the chances of integrating your spiritual and creative interests are better, and you more likely to experience that state of grace that using Neptune well can bring.

If Neptune is crossing the IC, sometimes for as long as two years, you may find that the path to retirement is shrouded in a fog. You may have come to feel trapped by your work situation, and yet circumstances—or your own inertia—intervene to keep you there. You may also not feel comfortable where you are living any more, yet don't have clarity about where to go.

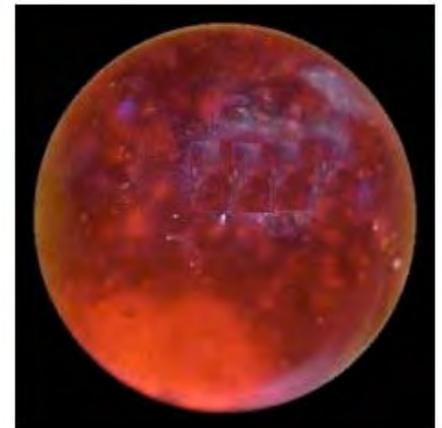


To make sense of the delays and inertia, it is important to understand that you are in some measure like a blindly groping baby in a womb—not quite ready to emerge into your new and radically different life—so you can only proceed slowly to find your way. I liken some Neptune transits to a walk through a foggy valley where you can only see to put one foot in front of the other. The eventual destination—where the path is

leading—is a spiritual unfolding, because The Universe is in charge here. Still, you are far from ready for The Grand Plan to be revealed—you might well feel inadequate to fulfill it, based on your current level of development. So, just keep putting one foot in front of the other, doing the thing that comes next, and when the time comes, you will be ready.

While you wait for the new life to unfold, live one day at a time, and do what pleases or comforts you. Filling the interval with positive Neptunian pursuits like spiritual studies, plying or appreciating the creative arts, or giving service to those who are worse off than yourself can be deeply rewarding AND can result in avocations that will fill your retirement with joy. This is particularly true for those mentioned in the introduction to this section who have natal Neptune in the career houses.

PLUTO TRANSITS: If Pluto crosses your MC and goes into the 10th house or if it makes a trine or even a square to your MC from the 6th house, you are not likely to retire, either. In fact, one of the biggest developments of your career may be waiting in the wings, for Pluto can have to do with wealth and power. The trouble with any Pluto transit to the MC/IC axis, however, is that it often leads to hardball confrontations with wealthy people or the Powers that Be, and you have to become comfortable playing on their court. If you aren't good at politics, you will need to learn how, for you can't avoid political machinations now. (Those with natal Pluto in the career houses have already dealt with this concern at length and so have more experience at it.)



(Photo as I imagine it.)

When transiting Pluto crosses the IC, opposing the MC, these confrontations with the Powers that Be may be your swan song as far as the job track you've pursued up to now. You may well leave the corporate world for a time, and as Pluto moves into your 4th, you may find yourself in a solo business working out of your home. (Even then, be prepared to deal with powerful and even well to do people, because each customer or client is your new boss.)

If you do retire—and Pluto conjunct the IC is one of the strongest retirement indicators—you may find that you are deeply engrossed in solitary pursuits that come to fascinate you, like research into genealogy, the occult, or healing. You may find yourself with the urge to restore your home or to amass antiques or other collectibles, the latter being a hobby that may well turn into a moneymaking enterprise. Those with a strong Pluto or Scorpio influence natively, especially in the career houses, are fully capable of such solitary, focused pursuits and may have yearned for years for the time to go deeply into these interests without the unwelcome interruption of work.

Relocation in Retirement

In traditional astrology, the 4th house of the natal chart—the sign on that cusp plus any planets in that house—is held to describe the conditions we face at the end of life. Is that completely true today, or have changing social conditions and customs altered it somewhat? In earlier times, few people lived long enough to enjoy years and years of retirement.



Furthermore, apart from immigrants, people of bygone times weren't always as mobile as we are today, so what happens when you move cross-country to join the legions of retirees in sunny climes? Does the relocated 4th house describe your sunset years better?

My view is that the original chart wheel and the 4th house cusp—also known as the IC or Immum Coelum—do still have a descriptive quality. However, the well-documented effects of the relocated angles of the chart must also be taken into account when you retire any more than 750 miles east or west of your birthplace, for they can affect your quality of life. (Since

moving due north or south does not always produce a change, you cannot speculate on the effect without the relocated chart.) Let's have a look at the things your chart can tell you about your best places to retire—and the best timing for that kind of move. Astro*Carto*Graphy or other astrolocality techniques will suggest good places to live, while the transits or progressions to your birth chart describe various windows for retirement³.

The MC/IC axis of the relocated chart is also important. Lines across the Astro*Carto*Graphy or other astrolocality maps are computer-generated calculations that show where each of the planets in the natal chart are conjunct the four major chart angles. Depending which type of map you order, you may see the notation MC or MH for the Midheaven, while the IC is called just that on most such maps.

If a planetary line falls near the MC, that means it falls right on the Midheaven—and therefore opposes the IC. During your working years, moving to a positive MC line at the right time could maximize career growth. But when you are yearning and needing to retire, moving to a positive MC line may just present you with opportunities too good to pass up, so you go right on working. Or, you may find yourself pushed into the spotlight with civic responsibilities that keep you hopping.

Likewise, a planet falling near an IC line forms an opposition to the Midheaven. Such lines may be contra-productive for the career during your

³ You can find sources for Astro*Carto*Graphy maps and for listings of certified Astro*Carto*Graphy practitioners and a library of informative articles at the web site for Continuum, the organization dedicated to furthering development of this technique at <http://www.continuumacg.net>.

working years, because they emphasize the home life and needs of the family. Living on an IC line, no matter how positive, you may be too involved with home and family to zero in on career in an optimal way. Inherently, there is no difference in merit between an MC or IC line. In terms of life purpose, some people are meant to focus strongly on career, others have home and family as a major life direction, while still others need a balance between the two. When you retire, however, creating a good home life and cultivating family ties can be a wonderful use of your energies. All things being equal, a good IC line is generally better for retirement than a good MC line.

Some Final Thoughts on Retirement



Have I made the process of retirement seem like a daunting one? When you read about retiring under the influence of Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto—at least in the hard aspects—do they all sound difficult? In fact, many people who have dreamed for years of retiring are surprised to find it less than the pure, unadulterated bliss they imagined. It is a major rite of passage, especially for the vast numbers of Baby Boomers who have been so career-oriented. It is even in some respects a crisis, though a crisis that most people in your age group will share.

Outer planet transits to the retirement axis last a year or even sometimes two. Likewise, retirement is one of those huge lifestyle changes—not unlike marriage and first time parenthood—that require tremendous adjustments and that initiate a process that requires a year or longer to complete. With any of these major transitions, old habits and old ways of operating often prove inadequate, so new behaviors and new ways of coping have to be developed over time. Ultimately the transits I have been describing pass, as do the growing pains related to retirement, and most of us come to love our new lives.

Your Birth Order and Your Horoscope-- Where Do You Fit Into Your Family⁴?

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You are responsible, conscientious, organized, perfectionistic and highly motivated to succeed. You're a Capricorn, right? Maybe, maybe not, but chances are you are the first born in your family. Your mate is too independent for his own good, a maverick and rebel who doesn't fit into his family but devotes much of his energy to his groups or friends. He's an Aquarian, right? Maybe, maybe not, but he's probably the middle child. And then there's your adorable but exasperating little brother--the show-off, the class clown, charm out the kazoo, but not someone to rely on in a crisis. A Gemini-Leo mix? Perhaps, but these traits are also typical for the baby of the family.



Psychologists have studied the effects of birth position for decades, and their results are consistent and fascinating. A very readable exposition of their findings is Dr. Kevin Leman's entertaining and helpful paperback, *The Birth Order Book*⁵. Although it pooh-pooed astrology, it moved me to consider how astrology can modify or even increase the effects of birth order. Check out some thoughts on your chart's most important facets--the Sun sign, Moon sign, and Rising Sign--in the readings that follow.

One qualification--you may identify as strongly with the reading for your Rising Sign (a.k.a. Ascendant) as with the one for your Sun sign. The Ascendant and any first house planets house describe the tap dance you learned to do to get along in your family. Rather than the real you, it is the role you were assigned by family members. Capricorn rising is often "the responsible one," who had to grow up fast and take on many family responsibilities. Doesn't that echo Leman's description of the first born? The Moon, which shows mother's influence, can also be relevant.

Let's take a look, then, at how birth order modifies the nature of the twelve signs. If you don't identify with the description of your Sun, Moon, or Ascendant, perhaps one of the outer planets in the solar system makes an important angle (aspect) to your Sun or sits on your Ascendant. For instance, Neptune aspects give a Piscean flavor, while Pluto imparts a Scorpionic intensity, and a strong Saturn can make you seem like a Capricorn.

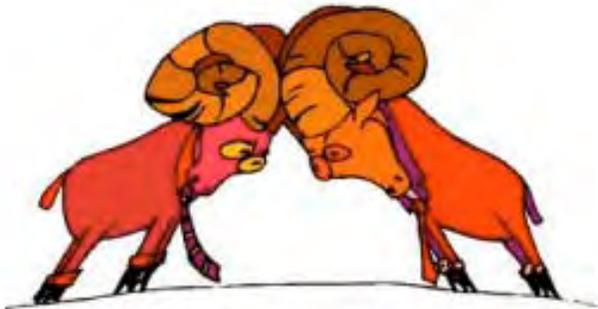
As Dr. Leman's book explains, there are many modifications in birth order characteristics, especially with gaps of five years or longer between siblings. The

⁴ This essay first appeared in the *1998 Llewellyn Sun Sign Annual*, and is reprinted with their permission.

⁵ Dell, 1992, out of print, but search the internet or Amazon.com for used copies or more modern versions.

first-born male in a long line of sisters may have a special place. A disabled or otherwise unusual child may make a difference in the lineup, as may step and half siblings. Onlies are a breed of their own, part oldest, part baby. Still, you will doubtlessly see facets of yourself and your siblings in these descriptions.

ARIES SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: Except where planetary aspects interfere, the leadership qualities of your sign are enhanced by the steadying effects and strong motivation to succeed of your birth position. Aries thrive on being first, and you were the groundbreaker for your siblings and now for your set or workplace. Just don't take your followers' compliance for granted, for a good leader is also a good listener.



Middle Child: The rebel or maverick side of the middle position would be even stronger in an Aries native, who fumes at criticism or being told what to do. You are ill suited for mediation, so you are apt to strike out on your own with even more independence than most middle children are. Just be sure the groups you so naturally lead don't wind up leading you

astray.

Last Born: Aries thrives on attention--indeed, demands it--and so does the baby of the family. When you don't get your way, temper tantrums are a temptation. Don't indulge in such ploys too often, as they won't make people love you any more than they already do for your freshness, zest for living, and razor-sharp wit.

TAURUS SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: Except where planetary aspects interfere, adding the self-discipline and success potential of the first born to the solid business sense and perseverance of a Taurus can result in a steady climb to the top and a healthy bottom line. As both first borns and Taureans can be conservative, you are likely to stick to the tried and true path to success.

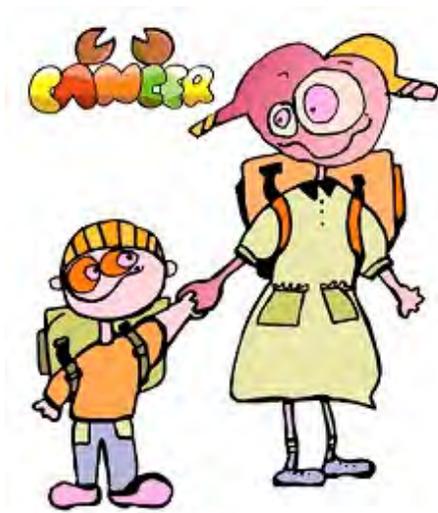
Middle Child: You are the least conservative natives of the sign, for you're enough of a free spirit to stray from the tried and true. Not for you the family business, for you want to make it on your own--and you probably will, but you'll complain that you get no respect or recognition from your loved ones. In your quest to belong somewhere, you may have to learn the lesson of not mixing money and friendship more than once.

Last Born: It's tempting for the Taurean "baby of the family" to equate money and lavish gifts with the unconditional love your birth position craves. Conspicuous consumption can also be used as an attention-getter, but don't equate possessions with self-worth. You are one of the best-grounded last borns in the zodiac and thus are likely to do well for yourself.

GEMINI SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: More focused and disciplined than the average Geminian, you are likely to excel in scholarly pursuits or communication. Siblings being a major concern, you may well take on more responsibility or worry about them more than is healthy. If there is a family newsletter or Round Robin, you're doubtlessly the editor.

Middle Child: It's hard enough for Geminis to sort out their identities separate from relatives without being caught between elder and younger siblings, so figuring out who you are and where you fit into life is a long-term project. The middle child propensity for mediation added to that Gemini flair for words could result in professional excellence as a family or marriage counselor, deal negotiator, or mediator of disputes.

Last Born: The baby of the family is often the class clown, and who can play that role better than verbal, witty Gemini? You show off, but with such charm and flair! Still, in crisis times when you need to relinquish center stage and get serious, these usually appealing traits can prove disappointing to loved ones that want you to shoulder your share of the burden.



CANCER SUN, MOON, OR RISING:

First Born: You were doubtlessly put in the position of being Mommy's little helper--the responsible Big Sis or Big Brother--and you may still be playing the indulgent parent to all the waifs and strays you meet. Though you may well have come far professionally, you haven't forgotten your roots and still can be counted on to nurture your loved ones. There's just that distressing tendency to overeat to make up for the energy you expand on taking care of others.

Middle Child: The middle child tendency to feel betwixt and between, not fitting anywhere, is so difficult for Cancers, to whom roots are everything. Though family feuds

can prove distressing to your sensitive nature, you can provide a nurturing environment for the disputes to be resolved. Where family ties prove too hard to maintain, you are likely to make a second family among friends.

Last Born: Sorry to say it, but you can be the baby of all babies, looking to find Mommies and Daddies everywhere, and feeling aggrieved and deprived when the t.l.c. you were brought up thinking you had to have isn't forthcoming. Still, you'll do anything to keep the family alive and to make family times a memorable delight.

LEO SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: Talk about the heir apparent--you were born to rule, and, unless other aspects work against you, your birth position makes your ascension



virtually a certainty. Coming first in the family, you doubtlessly soaked up tons of attention and came to see it as your due. Still, your sense of responsibility and keen motivation for accomplishment make you anything but a lazy Leo.

Middle Child: What a tough thing for a Leo--to always share the spotlight with older and younger sibs, not to mention Dad, when you really wanted the starring role. Still, as family mediator in that pride of Lions, you carved out a memorable niche. You may well seek out community groups where you'd shine due to your capacity to create a small universe around you.

Last Born: The Leo's Leo, Lucille Ball, has nothing on you--you were born to perform and hold court. Seriously, you should find some outlet--even a local theater group--for that charm, that flair for drama, that star quality. Otherwise, the perpetual propensity for drama can come out in door-slamming domestic tiffs.

VIRGO SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: Virgo is known for being reliable, trustworthy, serious, hard-working, perfectionistic, and critical--and so are first borns! Thus, unless there is serious interference from a planetary aspect, the first born Virgo is a paragon, the rock for family and employer. Unlike the usual striving, success-oriented first born, however, modest self-effacing Virgos are by nature worker bees rather than queen bees, uncomfortable at the helm and likely to be the real but unrecognized center of productivity.

Middle Child: Rebel? Maverick? Doesn't sound like conservative, careful Virgo at all, does it? Maybe you just every now and then neglect to change your underwear. But independent, for sure. Perhaps you are a natural for the alternative health fields, where non-traditional but sound approaches and attention to detail are an asset.

Last Born: We'd hardly know you were the baby of the family at all, as those conscientious and hard working Virgos shun the center stage and feel love has to be earned. Could you be the exception to the birth order rule? Or, do you unconsciously arrange for the attention your birth position craves by suffering from a variety psychosomatic ailments?

LIBRA SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: The first-born seeks to please and thus can be too placating--as can Librans, so be sure you aren't taking on too much responsibility and overdoing in an effort to keep everyone happy all the time. Too much stress comes from the impossible striving to be perfect--looking perfect, always socially correct, considering everyone's needs and point of view. You have more leadership ability and drive for success than the average Libra, but are likely to lead in a gracious, diplomatic manner.





Middle Child: You are sure to seek love outside your family, since it's hard to compete with siblings for the short supply. Middle children are born mediators and so are Librans, so you will doubtlessly find yourself in this position often. You're gifted at reaching compromises between warring parties, so maybe you should do it professionally. Just don't become too committed to peace at any price!

Last Born: The Libra need for unconditional love can become an obsession for the baby of the family. "Love me, Love me, Love me," is your plea to the world, and you can be so delightfully charming, engaging, and winsome, that this demand is almost--but not quite--fulfilled. It's just that people want such tedious and unglamorous things in return for all that love and attention.

SCORPIO SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: Combine Scorpio's political savvy and understanding of the dynamics of power and wealth with the first born's dogged determination to succeed, and you have an unstoppable combination, unless there are other planets interfering. It's up to you whether that power to make things happen is self-serving or dedicated to transforming or reforming parts of our world that need to be healed.

Middle Child: The alienation many Scorpios feel in a society that lives on the surface can be intensified by this birth position, where you are betwixt and between and seldom first in your family's considerations. Still, your keen understanding of underlying motivations and dynamics could make you a natural mediator or healer of family or group conflicts, even as a profession.

Last Born: Last borns are often manipulative in their quest to get people to take care of them and can be aggrieved if they don't get the attention they feel they are entitled to. Scorpios have a genius for "psyching out" other people and knowing what buttons to push to get the results they want. The combination of last born and Scorpio could be a bit much, until you learn to appreciate other people's unspoken needs and motivations as only Scorpio can. As last born, you can be more easy-going, light hearted, and fun to be around than the intense and murky type of Scorpion.

SAGITTARIUS SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: Academia may well be your forte, for you are a scholar at heart. Even if self-educated, you are a serious thinker, a spiritual seeker. More likely than most of your sign to stay focused on a long-term goal, your natural desire for growth and expansion can make you a success.

Middle Child: Your roots may not hold you, and you may become the traveling type of Sag. If you're sports-minded, your commitment and loyalty to your team

can make you a valuable player. In scholarly pursuits or your quest to answer the great questions of the ages, you are likely to strike out on your own and take the road less traveled.

Last Born: What enthusiasm, what pizzazz, what joie de vivre--no wonder people seek you out! Unless other planets dampen your spark, you're like the Fourth of July every day. The Fourth of July has its place--but every day? When they expect you to pitch in and clean up after the picnic, you can be long gone.



CAPRICORN SUN, MOON, OR RISING:

First Born: As we noted in the very first line of this article, traits attributed to Capricorn and traits of the first born are virtually identical, so to be both doubles the perfectionism, drive, and success potential. You

doubtlessly had heavy family responsibilities growing up, and the result is a highly capable, reliable individual born to be a CEO, unless other planetary aspects undermine you.

Middle Child: With Capricorn's innate desire to rise to the top, you are stuck in a position with older siblings always being ahead of you in learning and younger siblings needing more attention and caretaking. You'll probably find your niche in middle management, for you have a sure sense of how to juggle the demands of those above and below you successfully.

Last Born: Unlike the first born Capricorn, if you read the descriptions of your position, you probably think it's hogwash, for Capricorns never get to be babies anyway. They emerge from the womb with lunchbox in hand, headed for prep school. If there really are any last-born Capricorns, they were probably born seven years or more after their older siblings, so they're more like only children--that is, like first borns in spades.

AQUARIUS SUN, MOON, OR RISING: First Born: You're more conservative than most Aquarians--based on your experience, you may even be convinced that the old rulership of your sign by Saturn is true. Still, even though you probably organize as well as any Capricorn and are prone to success, your point of view is original and inventive, and you're in the foreguard of your line of work.

Middle Child: One of the first observations I made about birth order was how many middle children are Aquarians. Rebel, maverick, and loyal to your homies? Your special destiny--and most Aquarians want to believe they have one--may well rest in your contributions to groups, and that may have been why you chose a birth position that gave you distance from your family.

Last Born: Would the word zany describe you, by any chance? At the very least you march to an entirely different drummer than anyone in your family--part of

what gives you that pied piper charisma. Just be sure, when you shock for shock's sake, that you're not shooting yourself in the foot at the same time.

PISCES SUN, MOON, OR RISING:



First Born: Mother Theresa had nothing on you- you probably adopt every stray dog or human that crosses your path and then wonder why you can't keep all the promises you make. And guilt? You are NOT single-handedly responsible for the burgeoning national debt or the shrinking rainforests, no matter what you think. Work on loving yourself as human and fallible, and you won't be so overwhelmed.

Middle Child: You feel for those above you, you feel for those below you, you can identify and empathize with all their woes, but who are you and where do you belong in the universal scheme of things? Sorting out spiritual and ethical questions like these can keep you busy for the next several lifetimes, but at least you'll

probably remember enough about the last few to give you a head start.

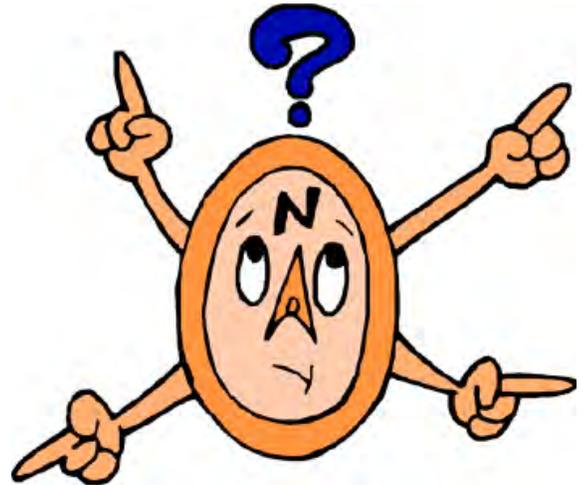
Last Born: They doubtlessly call you fey, whimsical, and charming. You're a soulful performer even if you never get on stage, with the heart of a poet or musician, but all too many of you are the type mother warned us against. You know, the type portrayed in the song, *Don't Fall in Love with a Dreamer*. Ah, well, the rules don't apply to you anyway. You're not here to run the local savings and loan.

Remember the suggestion that you include your rising sign and your Moon sign, if you knew them or that you send for a computer chart if you did not. Which did you relate to the most? My money is on Rising sign! That's because the Rising Sign or Ascendant often tells what role you were assigned in your family.

Would Relocation Change your life?
A Look at Astrology's Answers
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A major geographic move is a huge displacement in your life and ranks high on the lists of stressful situations published from time to time. It is not something to be entered into lightly, for even the best of moves require an intense adjustment period of at least a year. You would want to read about your chosen location in *Places Rated Almanac*, a reference book that belongs in any astrologer's library. In the internet, you also have a number of great tools for researching and getting to know any given area you might be considering.

However, astrology itself—particularly the branch known as locational astrology—provides helpful tools for making an informed decision about where and when to move. Locational astrology techniques can take much of the guesswork out of moving, especially the highly sophisticated tool of Astro*Carto*Graphy or other computerized maps that show the spots on earth where the various natal (or progressed) planets come onto the four chart angles (Midheaven, Ascendant, Descendant or IC). Working with this tool, I am often surprised at how many people are instinctively drawn to spots that are excellent for them—although others with less trustworthy instincts are strongly drawn to spots that represent their own worst nightmares.



The first consideration in relocation work is how accurate the birth time might be. Astro*Carto*Graphy and other locational astrology techniques are not forgiving of birth time errors. (A time of 3:20 PM, for instance, looks promising, as it seems less likely to be a rounded-off estimate than 3:30 would be.) One minute of clock time equals about 60 miles east or west at the Midheaven. Thus, if the birth time is as little as four minutes off, the relocation angles could be off by 240 miles. If it is 15 minutes off, the Astro*Carto*Graphy lines could be off by about 900 miles—a difference of a state or two. With a rounded off or vague birth time, some rectification may be required, and though a good rectification can be costly, so can a move that is several hundred miles off target!

Transits—The Moving Force Behind a Move

Transits are usually the stimulus for a major geographic change. Moving to a new home may be part of what happens under a transit to the natal Moon, the 4th house cusp (IC), through the 4th house, or aspecting a natal planet in the 4th. Such transits are the primary triggers for changes in residence. Relocation goes more smoothly under a trine—with the Moon/Uranus trine being the swiftest and the least hassle. A move under a Moon/Saturn trine, however, is more

organized and more likely to be permanent! Under a Moon/Uranus or Uranus/IC aspect of any kind, you might as well keep nonessentials packed in their boxes, as you're likely to move more than once during the two or three aspects you will generally experience from transiting Uranus. Under Moon/Neptune transits, you're probably not thinking things through carefully enough and may regret the decision—DO NOT buy a house until the transit passes. You're not so much moving **to** something as moving **away** from something because you've become disillusioned. Your fantasies about a wonderful new life tend to be unrealistic.

Generally speaking, when life conditions change dramatically at the time of a move, the change is not just due to the location but also the timing. You will probably find a similar message in transits to both the birth and the relocated charts. Often, someone who moves during an important transit is drawn to the exact area where that transiting planet is on one of the four angles. For instance, many 28-30 year olds who are undergoing their Saturn return seem unerringly drawn to an area where Saturn is on one of the angles. They are drawn to a place where the energies of Saturn are maximized. Whatever the planet, under transits like these, the new location makes the issues and lessons of that planet even more pressing to resolve—you might say it forces the issue—but that is not generally a good place to stay for any length of time.

A smooth move is a combination of two things—the right time and the right place. You may hit one of them and not the other—for instance, the location may be promising but the timing stinks! Timing is important even when moving to a positive location. Don't move when nothing is happening to your Moon, IC, or 4th house planets, or when Neptune or Saturn are aspecting them. If you do, you could just sit and spin your wheels for a costly year or two. (Cyclo*Carto*Graphy, based on progressions and transits to the natal Astro*Carto*Graphy map, is the best clue to understanding why a location may be promising at one stage of your life and not at another.)



“Wherever You Go, You Take Yourself Along”

When considering a move based on your map, it is important to refer to the birth chart for interpretation. Suppose you are thinking of moving to one of your Venus lines, generally considered the best places in the world to find love, believing it will improve your chances in relationships. First, you have to consider what your own natal Venus is like. If natal Venus has difficult aspects, then any undesirable long-standing patterns in relationships would be not only active but intensified there. For example, if you were born with Pluto on Descendant squaring Venus, and you move off the Pluto line to a place where Venus is on the angle, you are only increasing the strength of that already challenged Venus. In fact, now you probably have Pluto square the local angle. You'd be better off picking one of the Descendant lines, like Sun or Jupiter on the Descendant, if love were your goal.



Another example might be relocating to improve career potentials. You might expect that Jupiter or the Sun on the Midheaven would be an excellent choice. Suppose, however, that natively Neptune closely squares Jupiter. If you moved to your Jupiter/Midheaven line, you would at the same time be moving to a spot where Neptune squared the local Midheaven—an aspect that is easy to miss, and harder to diagnose a possible undertow of self-sabotage. Difficult conjunctions or oppositions in the natal chart can present a special blockage in relocation, for wherever one of the pair is on an angle, the other one is as well. Thus highlighting that pair of planets by placing them on the MC or IC would not be a good career move.

Difficult aspects and placements in the birth chart represent ways that we create our own difficulties, so analyzing the behaviors represented by those astrological factors is essential to a successful relocation. What you need to consider is that your self-defeating attitudes and behaviors go right along with you when you move, so if the problems you are having in the old location are mostly of your own making, they will be with you in the new one as well.

You may get a temporary break from them, given new people and unfamiliar circumstances where you are on your best behavior—a kind of honeymoon period. However, unless you have well and truly learned whatever lesson is involved and healed whatever wounds or patterns you kept tripping on in the old place, the old patterns will eventually creep back in the new one. Thus, if you entertain the thought of a move, you need also to examine your contributions to recurrent problems honestly. Take responsibility for shaping a new reality for yourself in the new location through new attitudes, behaviors, and relationship strategies.

However, suppose that you have been working on yourself and have truly changed, and yet the people and situations in the old place have become so rigidified that they cannot allow you to be different and to grow. In situations like these, then a major change in location can give you the space to create a new reality. This is particularly true of long-standing roles that family or others around you have assigned you (Family Mess-Up, for instance, or Savoir of Us All), roles that you are no longer willing to fulfill. A whole new set of people will not have the same expectations, so you have room to grow.



Consider Your Motive in Moving

Sometimes we relocate for the wrong reasons, and when we do, we are likely to make costly errors in judgement. An ill-considered move can be a major

roadblock in our lives. While the transiting planet involved shows the circumstances of the move, the real question is why are you doing it? It is generally due to an important shift in the lunar areas of life. Often, the reason is that the womb has gotten too confining. As a young adult, you leave your parents' house to go on your own. Later, maybe you move to make a home with someone--or a home without someone. Sometimes, because any aspect to the IC is simultaneously an aspect to the MC, either you or your partner may find a job in a new place. Maybe you have a family now and the house has gotten too small. Or, your family has grown up, and you don't need so much space. The Moon waxes and wanes, all within a life cycle. The pressure to leave the womb precedes the relocation. There is a lunar realignment before the move, followed by a long adjustment to the new home.

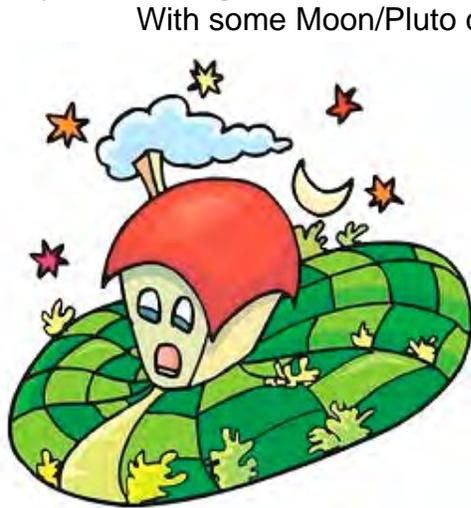
It has been especially interesting to me to observe what happens when people are struck by nostalgia and think along the line of a pilgrimage to their roots—maybe even moving back home with the folks for a time. This type of pilgrimage generally comes about with a major transit to the Moon, the IC/MC axis, or a 4th house planet by Saturn, Chiron, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto. (When more than one of those points is impacted by transits, it is even more of a rite of passage.) Thomas Wolfe said that you can't go home again. That ringing phrase has become part of conventional wisdom, the sort of truism that people love to utter.



Like most bits of conventional wisdom, it is wrong as often as it is right. In observing people over these past 35 years—clients, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances—I've repeatedly been struck by how profoundly they are affected by returning home after a long absence. Often it is a deep healing of old wounds. Especially when the Inner Child is still stuck in seeing the parents as All Powerful, spending time with elderly parents can provide a reality check. They become just people, maybe mellower or frailer and thus finally seen as life sized rather than the giants our unconscious makes them. Often, based on exposure to the people your parents have become, you can begin to forgive them for what they did to you 30 or 40 years ago, and that forgiveness can be a great healing. Even if you cannot forgive, the experience of confronting them and seeing their humanness can be empowering. Yes, You CAN go home again—but you'll never be the same!

Often, major moves will entail purchasing a house, so I also look into the effect of transits on that particular decision. Buying a home, especially the first one, is a rite of passage into adulthood. Having a home of your own gives you a greater sense of security, roots, and belonging--for lunar types, especially. Moon/Saturn and Moon/Pluto aspects are the most likely to involve actual purchases of real estate, although Pluto as often accompanies major remodeling efforts. With Moon/Saturn or Saturn to the MH/IC, a home of your own may be

the result of well-earned success. You may be conservative in your purchase. You may settle for something smaller or less luxurious than you'd like, because you are being realistic about not taking on too hard of a financial commitment.



With some Moon/Pluto contacts, the new house may be financed by something other than your own efforts. The source could be an inheritance, a gift or bribe from your parents with strings attached, a trust fund, or a divorce settlement--or, it may be a last-ditch effort to keep the marriage together. If you've suffered losses during this phase, take time to mourn the end of one chapter in your life. The grief may be intensified by a period of isolation in the new location.

If you buy property under a Neptune transit to the Moon or other points listed above, you probably haven't inspected the cellar or foundations. The realtor saw you coming, and you may have a lemon on your hands for a

good, long time. What to do about it? Ah, well, it would be reprehensible of me to suggest you find a buyer who is also under a Moon/Neptune aspect, wouldn't it? Maybe you could donate it to the church, your guru, or some charitable organization. Or, hang in there for whatever deep spiritual lessons it may teach you--like the one about not signing anything you haven't read and understood.

What Relocation Charts Can and Cannot Do For You

You would want an Astro*Carto*Graphy or other computerized map if you are moving more than 500 miles east or west of your birthplace. Especially if you have no idea where you want to live, this tool can help you find optimal locations for business, love, home life, health, and travel. It can also help you avoid really serious relocation mistakes, like moving to a place where Saturn, Neptune, or Pluto fall on an angle. While you may want to order such a map, relocation is not a do-it-yourself project. Getting an Astro*Carto*Graphy printout can help you narrow down choices, but for all the complexities of the map you really need the advice of a trained Astro*Carto*Graphy professional, one who will take into account the natal chart features it reflects. While such services may entail a fee of \$100-\$250, moving itself is extremely costly in life force energy, finances, and other resources⁶.



⁶ For a list of professional astrologers who are certified in this technique, visit the website of Continuum, the organization dedicated to preserving the work of the late Jim Lewis and to furthering knowledge of locational astrology. (<http://www.continuumacg.net>) On that site, there is also a library of articles on this topic.

Know that a geographic change cannot offset an important transit to the natal chart, though it might mitigate it somewhat or strengthen a supportive astrological aspect. Under a major outer planet transit to a natal placement, people often spontaneously gravitate to a place that puts that natal planet (or the transiting planet) on an angle, to intensify it for purposes best known to their higher self.

It would be important to have a relocated chart calculated, showing the new Midheaven, Ascendant, Descendant, and IC and any aspects natal planets form to them. (I do not experience the relocated house positions as overriding the natal interpretation.) You need to scrutinize the resulting chart carefully to make sure you're not fooling yourself, for you may move to a place where the locational angles are aspected by difficult planets. Suppose your motive is to get away from a difficult outer planet line at your birthplace. Did you really get away from that outer planet, or is it now aspecting a different angle? Suppose you have Pluto natively conjunct Midheaven, only to find out that now you're living in a place where it squares the local Ascendant. (There are times when, like that old song from the Seventies said, that you can't read your horoscope, cheat your fate.)

You would want to watch the transits to the angles of the relocated chart, also, as these transits have a strong, though not permanent effect. Suppose you move to a place where you have Aquarius on the Midheaven, and Neptune will be crossing back and forth over that Midheaven for two or three years. You are likely to have a devil of a time establishing yourself career wise. That transit to the local Midheaven would be particularly important if you already sensitized to Neptune by natal impact on career houses. In going to a place where Neptune is emphasized, you may fool yourself that that what is coming is spiritual, creative, and therefore wonderful, but it may still mean several years of floating in space.

Relocation astrology becomes more complex the more people there are in a household. Often a desired location is excellent for one partner but the pits for the other. Or, it suits both parents fairly well but is a disaster for one or more of the kids. Especially when business is calling a family to that spot, situations like these become a very hard life decision. You can find out interesting things about the dynamics of a family, however, by comparing their relocation prospects. I have sometimes done relocation work for couples in which many regions of United States were promising career-wise for the wife, but none for the husband. Relocating abroad to satisfy the needs of both partners is not always feasible. In cases like these, explaining the situation in astrological terms has made it less frustrating for the couple to understand and deal with a role reversal in which the wife is likely to be more successful than the husband. Astrology is a superb tool for gaining detachment and letting go of needlessly blaming oneself or another for things that just ARE.

Getting Out of Dodge: Can Relocation Help the Outer Planet Person?

Outer Planet People (OPPS) are those with more than one of the outer planets emphasized in their birth charts, especially those with the outer planets

on one or more chart angles⁷. If you have an outer planet on the angles natally, locations far east or west of your birthplace can change your life and career in very important ways. With Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto on the Midheaven, for instance your relationships with parents and other authority figures have doubtlessly presented an ongoing challenge in terms of having the freedom to pursue a fulfilling life work. (As mentioned earlier, this technique is not forgiving of birth time errors, and when dealing with such powerful planetary forces, you need to be exact. However, those with outer planets on the Ascendant natally have often had dramatic birth circumstances and other dramatic events that make it easy to check whether the birth time is in the ballpark.)



I hear from many OPPs who have struggled a lifetime with the complications that an outer planet on an angle can entail. Having one on the Ascendant, for instance, can color their social connections with everyone they meet. Since mainstream individuals often have little clue about what to do with their own outer planets, they tend to be very reactive and rejecting when encountering a person who wears one of these planets as an outer garment. Consistently being treated this way can be alienating in the extreme. Moving half a continent away can mean getting out from under familial parental pressures and the projections of everyone around you so that you can start over fresh. But as we've discussed already, leaving home won't change all your problems so you can't avoid the work you need to do on your use of the outer planets, or the same patterns will catch up with you.

Suppose you don't have an outer planet on an angle natally, but the outer planets are strong in your chart in other ways. If the outer planets represent our genius—those ways we help ourselves and the collective move beyond everyday reality—then could it not be argued that the OPP **needs** to move to where those planets are on the line? Should you not, in fact, put that planet on the locational Midheaven if you want your contribution to be recognized by the world? Still, you have to ask yourself if you are not biting off far more than you can chew, maybe even asking for a broken tooth or two. If Pluto, for instance, is strong in your birth chart, it will always be a strong part of you, but do you want to make it even more dominant by living in a place where you can NEVER get away from its pressures? Since Plutonian types are prone to becoming the targets of other people's projections, would you want to live in a spot where others are continually projecting their disowned Pluto qualities onto you? Is that even safe?

⁷ How does a planet become prominent? The Sun, Moon, Ascendant, or Midheaven could be conjunct, square, trine, or opposite that planet. Or, the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, or several planets could be in that planet's sign. A planet would be strong if it is in a major configuration like a T-square, grand trine, or grand cross. It gains strength if it is one of the most aspected planets.

Before making such a choice, assess how purely and how consistently constructively you are using the energies of the outer planet in question. Be honest with yourself, for when you intensify a planet's energies by moving to line on the map where it is angular, keeping it all in balance may become far more difficult. It becomes harder not to crash and burn, dramatically. You will doubtlessly also find yourself surrounded by others of the same type—a mixed blessing, since it can be wonderful to find like-minded souls. However, you'd also have to monitor your associates' expressions of those energies carefully, as they can pull you toward the negative expressions. As long as you are going to the considerable effort and expense of moving, you might instead wish to emphasize a more solidly grounded part of your chart.

The Outer Planet Person—City Mouse or Country Mouse?

Certainly there are individual differences, but it is my observation that the various outer planet types thrive in certain types of locales and are miserable in others, depending on the nature of the highlighted planet. Except for Neptunians,



who are extremely sensitive to their environment, OPP often thrive in larger cities, where they less apt to fall under the scrutiny of small-minded others and more likely to meet like-minded folks.

Uranians love the glitter and excitement of big city life, where they can stay abreast of all the newest trends, like seeing the newest film releases immediately. They love the intellectual stimulation and the concentration of bright, innovative, and often quirky thinkers. They finally have a chance to have a group around them who thinks like they do. Here, they find true peers to validate their counter-culture ways, so that they can be who they are without shame or social pressure to conform. (They may handle small town life better now with Internet access to the myriad of groups and email lists that flourish on the net.) The less evolved Uranian loves excitement for its own sake.

Plutonians, too, may be happier in large cities, where they can have the privacy and anonymity they crave. They are often singled out or ostracized in small towns for their differences and even for their power, since nothing remains a secret in such places. All is judged and remembered. The less evolved Plutonian likes cities for the sleaze, especially the license to engage in sexuality compulsively and anonymously, without continually tripping over their discarded conquests on the Town Square.

Neptunians may not do so well in large cities, especially those who have become psychically and environmentally sensitive (as often happens under Neptune transits to the 6th, 1st, or 12th houses). Psychic sponges, they can

become hyper-reactive to noise, neighbors, crowds, environmental toxins, and other disturbances in the force. As they become increasingly sensitive, they may not be able to handle cities any more and may need to go to a remote place where meditation and other spiritual practices are made easier. They thrive on quiet spaces to immerse themselves in creative pursuits, and they often thrive on being near water.

Moving Stress? Be Good to Yourself?

As you can see, relocating isn't just a matter of packing boxes and calling a mover. For instance, you may find that while packing, you take an intense trip down memory lane. Each object you touch has memories and feelings attached, which you may relive. The process of deciding what to keep and what to get rid of involves reevaluating your priorities and values. The home is related to the Moon and to the sign Cancer, and a move is an immense readjustment in many lunar areas of life, for what is more basic than the home? A crab goes through a period of vulnerability when it sheds its shell.



We, too, may feel especially vulnerable for at least a year after a move--a complete cycle of lunations. There can even be strong somatic reactions, particularly to the stomach or menstrual cycle. In particular, lunar types—those with the sign Cancer, the Moon, or the 4th house prominent in their charts—can find relocation distressing. A move is nothing to take lightly—it is a major displacement requiring maybe a year or longer to recoup those forces and adapt to the new location. Give yourself plenty of space to feel the losses and insecurities and to lay down roots in the new home.

*Note: Want to learn more about relocation or find a certified practitioner? Visit the web site of Continuum, the organization dedicated to preserving and expanding the work of Jim Lewis, who developed Astro*Carto*Graphy. On that site you will find a list of certified practitioners, a suite of articles on the topic, and an up-to-date bibliography. (The books, alas, do go out of print quickly.) Visit: <http://www.continuumacg.net>*