

APOLLON

THE JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASTROLOGY



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY: CHIRON-PLUTO ~ LIZ GREENE
LEAVING HOME ~ GLENNYS LAWTON
NORTH NODE AS *NUMINOSUM* - LAURENCE HILLMAN
THE DALAI LAMA: PRIEST-POLITICIAN ~ FRED A EDIS
PLUTO, SHAMANISM, AND THE DANCE OF POWER ~ KAY STOPFORTH
THE PORTENT ~ A SHORT STORY ~ RICHARD LEIGH

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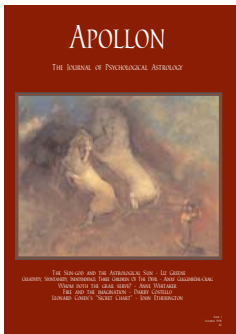
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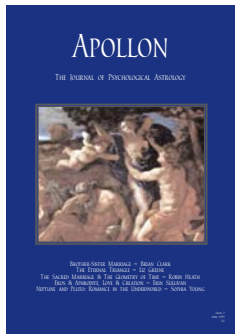


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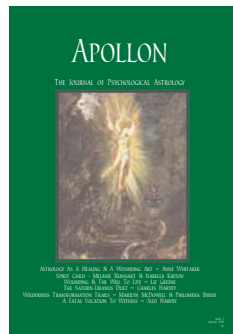
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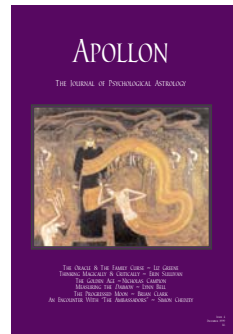
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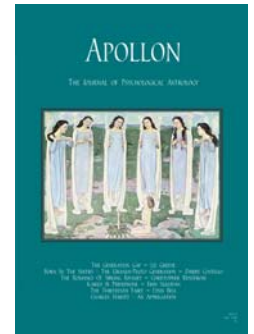
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Cover Picture

Silence

Oil on gesso on paper, painted in 1911
Museum of Modern Art, New York, Lillie P. Bliss Collection
Odilon Redon, b. April 20th 1840, d. July 6th 1916

"Like music", he declared, "my drawings transport us to the ambiguous world of the indeterminate." ...Redon's art was always commanded by his dreams, but the thematic content of his work over his last twenty years is more densely mythical, brimming with newfound hope and light which rose quite unexpectedly out of the depths of the artist's personality. This is particularly apparent in the various canvases depicting the chariot of Apollo, the god of the sun."

Symbolism, Michael Gibson, Taschen



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Published by:

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London WC1N 3XX

England

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Back Issues:

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Thanks:

Anne, for services angelic

John & Ruth for patience

Liz, for window-opening

Brian, for stone-rolling

Printed by:

The Magazine Printing Company Plc

Mollison Avenue, Enfield EN3 7NT

United Kingdom

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APOLLON

polon

haploun

iepaieon

he who causes the heavenly bodies to move together in harmony
the simple, a euphemism for the complexity of the oracle, which is also honest
to heal, also to throw or strike (with consciousness)
from Greek and Egyptian Mythologies, compiled by Yves Bonnefoy, transl. Wendy Doniger
University of Chicago Press, 1992

Editorial

Crisis - what crisis?



Dermod Moore is a Dubliner. A former actor with Ireland's National Theatre, the Abbey, he holds the Diploma in Psychological Astrology from the CPA, where he teaches. He is a writer, columnist, and Psychosynthesis therapist. He has moderated the discussion group on the Internet on psychological astrology since 1995, and runs the Metalog Directory of Astrologers at www.astrologer.com.

I The Man Watching, Rainer Maria Rilke, *Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart*, trans. Robert Bly, Harper Collins

Ok, ok, this issue is impossibly, ridiculously, extravagantly late. My apologies. I blame my chart. I'm Pisces. I'm too spiritual for this world, I can't cope with mundane things like publishing deadlines - I'm an *artiste*. Leave me to dance naked in the forest under the harvest Moon, thank you very much, I'll come out when I'm good and ready, and not a moment sooner. There's a charming sycamore who's been on my dance card all night.

Spiritual emergencies are respected in some cultures - times to reflect, to look within, to heal, to rest; to discharge the demons that have gathered like static-crackling stormclouds around a church steeple, needing to run to ground, to earth their crazy energy.

In our Western culture, these periods of deep change, prior to a deeper acceptance of spiritual values, are frequently pathologised: depressions, breakdowns, phobias. Even mourning has broken into a suspect, unproductive state, to be "remedied" with medication. Astrologers, of course, can be just as reductive, hiding behind jargon to describe someone engrossed in a soul-forging pilgrimage to the unknown and back: oh, he's just having Pluto square his Jupiter-Moon midpoint. Well, that's alright, then. That explains *everything*.

In attempting to describe the ineffable quality of spirituality, even the most skilled word-smiths are often silenced. But it's always worth trying. This issue, spirituality is our theme.

To start, **Liz Greene** sets the tone by looking at the challenges to our philosophical and spiritual worldview that the Chiron-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius has brought. Then, **Kay Stopforth** introduces us to the modern practice of shamanism, and a brief look at its history. She suggests that Pluto is the main signifier of the shamanic journey, and looks at the charts of shamanistic practitioners to support her view.

As a counterpoint to this issue's theme, we have **Glennys Lawton** addressing the astrological and psychological issues relating to leaving home. Then, we have **Laurence Hillman** shining some light on the often nebulous concept of the Moon's Nodes, in a clear and insightful way.

If you subscribe to the idea that spirituality is all love and pacifism and fluffiness, there's Liz


again, urging us to share her enthusiasm for Russell Crowe's heroic Martial character Maximus in her review of the film *Gladiator*.

Freda Edis joins us to offer a Kabbalistic and astrological perspective on the life of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, one of the more attractive of the world's spiritual leaders, who is also treading a difficult path leading a political movement to free Tibet.

Richard Leigh then offers us a beguiling and atmospheric short story, entitled *The Portent* - ripe with mythic resonances. **Erin Sullivan** then examines the issues raised by the number of clients asking for spiritual guidance; what it means on a personal and societal level. And, lastly, **Juliet Sharman-Burke** completes this issue with her customarily informative look at the Tarot, this time introducing us to the priestly figure of the Hierophant.

As a recidivist Irish Catholic, spirituality has never been an easy thing for me to digest. Having grown up in a theocracy, where all sorts of crimes were committed in the name of so-called "spiritual" values, it requires a special leap of faith to start believing again. Religion is the most profound divider of humanity, as well as unifier. I would hazard a guess that those who are reading this journal are on a quest for something far subtler than religion - perhaps a fine tuning in to that subtle melody of loving serendipity.

And that's all we have time for this issue. We're taking a break from publication, hopefully not for too long, to see if we can regroup, and establish a firm enough container to hold all this Apollonian light - it burns potently, and attracts maenads. But it's always worth the attempt to get it right, for the rewards are sublime. Spiritual growth, or Self-love, is described beautifully by Rilke, who speaks of an Old Testament angel:

Whoever was beaten by this Angel
(who often simply declined the fight)
went away proud and strengthened
and great from that harsh hand, that kneaded
him as if to change his shape.
Winning does not tempt that man.
This is how he grows: by being defeated,
decisively,
by constantly greater beings. 

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: The Chiron-Pluto conjunction

Liz Greene

If **Liz Greene's** writing were edible, this article, on the current Sagittarian ferment, would taste like pickle; a sharp sauerkraut, or an edgy borscht with sour cream - for this is the flavour of the Chiron-Pluto conjunction. An acquired taste, perhaps, repellent to some, but rich, nutritious soulfood for those who are digging in and are here to stay.

For those of us who are inveterate planetary cycle-watchers, the limelight was stolen for much of this year by the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction - with which we may associate not only recent stock market wobbles, but also the pervasive sense of an old era ending and a new one beginning. There has been a lot of anxiety about. Much of our millennium hysteria, crystallising in prophecies of the end of the world and rampant overstocking of tinned food and toilet paper, was energised not only by the solar eclipse in August 1999, but also by the gradual approach of this great cyclical conjunction which made its exact aspect at the end of May 2000. In ancient and medieval astrology, the conjoining of Jupiter and Saturn signifies the death of the old king and the birth of a new one; and in many arenas we are continuing to observe the gradual ending of old value systems and outworn structures, especially in political and economic spheres.

However, there is another major planetary conjunction which has been within orb for over a year, largely ignored by astrologers: perhaps subtler in terms of related worldly events, but equally relevant to our "state of mind" and, more importantly, our "state of spirit", as a collective and as individuals. This is the cyclical conjunction of Pluto and Chiron, which is presently occurring in Sagittarius. Chiron entered Sagittarius in January 1999. It dipped back into Scorpio during July, August and September, and re-entered Sagittarius in October. It made its only exact conjunction with Pluto in the last days of December, 1999. Although these two planets made no more exact conjunctions, they remained within orb of conjunction throughout 2000, and will not part until February 2001. Their interaction will have lasted for a full two years.

As astrologers, we tend to look first at worldly events to make some sense of major planetary aspects in the heavens. But this may not be the only, nor even the most helpful, way in which we may grasp the deeper meaning of such aspects and what they have to offer us. We can certainly get insights from events; but events are difficult to define. When, for example, does a marriage end? When the two people divorce,

or when the relationship dies on the emotional level? These two "events", one concrete and the other emotional, may occur years apart. Or we may look at five different automobile accidents in which the driver has died, and say that they are the same "event". But the first occurred due to drunken driving, the second occurred because the driver was speeding, the third occurred because a flat tyre threw the car out of control, the fourth occurred because of another driver's idiocy, and the fifth occurred because the driver had a heart attack at the wheel. These apparently identical events are deeply different in cause and meaning. Or we may say, "When Saturn and Uranus formed a conjunction in Taurus and Gemini during the 20th century, World War II occurred." But wars have always occurred, with or without Saturn-Uranus conjunctions. What matters is the nature of a particular war, its "motives" and "purpose", its effects on the people involved, and, ultimately, the archetypal background which infuses that particular conflict.

Transiting planetary aspects do not describe events. Events describe aspects. These aspects in turn reflect archetypal patterns which might or might not manifest as events, in part depending on the choices of all those who are receptive to, or identified with, the pattern. Transits such as Jupiter-Saturn or Chiron-Pluto reflect something "inner", something which is activated in the psychic life of the collective as it unfolds and reaches critical junctures and transformative stages. These transits are inside us. For the first part of 2000, we all discovered a little of how it feels to have a natal Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in Taurus; and we are continuing to discover how it feels to have a natal Chiron-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius. We all share in the responsibility of dealing with these planetary movements as creatively as possible. How we feel, what we experience, and how we ourselves enact and embody these transits, knowingly or unknowingly, is as relevant as what "happens" in the world outside. We are not the victims or pawns of planetary movements; we are, each of us, creative participants in the shaping of the future course of events.



Liz Greene holds a Doctorate in Psychology and the Diploma of the Faculty of Astrological Studies, and is a qualified Jungian analyst. She works as a professional astrologer and analyst, and teaches and lectures extensively throughout Europe. She is a Patron of the Faculty of Astrological Studies. She is the author of many books on astrological and psychological themes, including *Saturn, Relating, Astrology for Lovers*, *The Astrology of Fate*, and *The Astrological Neptune and the Quest for Redemption*. She lives in Switzerland. *The Mythic Journey*, written with Juliet Sharman-Burke, has been published by Gothic Image.

Olivia & George Harrison



I There is, admittedly, a lot of confusion about George Harrison's birth time. According to Taeger's *Internationales Horoskope Lexikon*, Harrison was born on 25 February 1943 at 00.05 local time (23.05 GMT on the 24th) in Liverpool. Taeger classes this data as Group 2P, which means fairly reliable because it is an autobiographical statement. This is the chart data I have used above. However, according to Frank C. Clifford in *British Entertainers: The Astrological Profiles* (Flare Publications, London, 1997), Harrison, in an interview with Tashi Grady in *Billboard*, stated that his astrologer had rectified his chart to 23.52 local time or 22.52 GMT, giving him an Ascendant of 0° Scorpio. The progressed Ascendant for this birth time would be 7° Sagittarius, although the Pluto-Chiron conjunction would still have been opposite his progressed Saturn.

Although able to freely offer that piece of good advice, I of course disregarded it myself when first observing this important planetary aspect, and initially I tried to see if I could identify any worldly events with what I understood to be the meaning or flavour of the Chiron-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius. This is, in the main, a fruitless exercise, for we see what we want to see. But Chiron's peculiar relationship with the suffering of the "outsider" seemed clearly enacted when, on a trip to London at the end of April 1999, I arrived just in time to hear about the Soho pub bomb, a little piece of atrocity targeting the London gay community, killing a number of people and injuring a great many more. This was the third in a series of bomb attacks which took place within a two-week time span, the first targeting blacks and the second the Bangladeshi community, organised by one psychopath determined to terrorise "minority" groups in the city. Terrorist bombs are an everyday occurrence these days. But these attacks had a different flavour from most. They were not political in nature, but revealed that most frightening and dangerous of human propensities: the fanatical intolerance and destructiveness which arise when we project the despised and feared "outsider" in ourselves on others around us, and see them as a threat to our survival.

In December 1999, when the conjunction was exact, I waited to see what might appear in the papers over the next few days. Lo and behold: the stabbing of the George Harrison, the "quiet Beatle", occurred on 30th December 1999. What, I wondered, could this event possibly mean in terms of the collective psyche? Harrison was always the least obtrusive of the Beatles. He lives a private, introverted life, as befits his Pisces Sun, Scorpio Ascendant, and Scorpio Moon. Did this strange event mean anything at all, except to George himself? It did smack of scapegoating: there was George innocently minding his own business, and horror intruded from the world outside. In George's progressed chart, the Ascendant had moved from 2° 23' Scorpio to 9° 14' Sagittarius, with the transiting conjunction (Chiron at 11° 13', Pluto at 11° 20') sitting close to this progressed Ascendant and within a degree or orb of opposition to progressed Saturn. This suggested that George was inadvertently serving

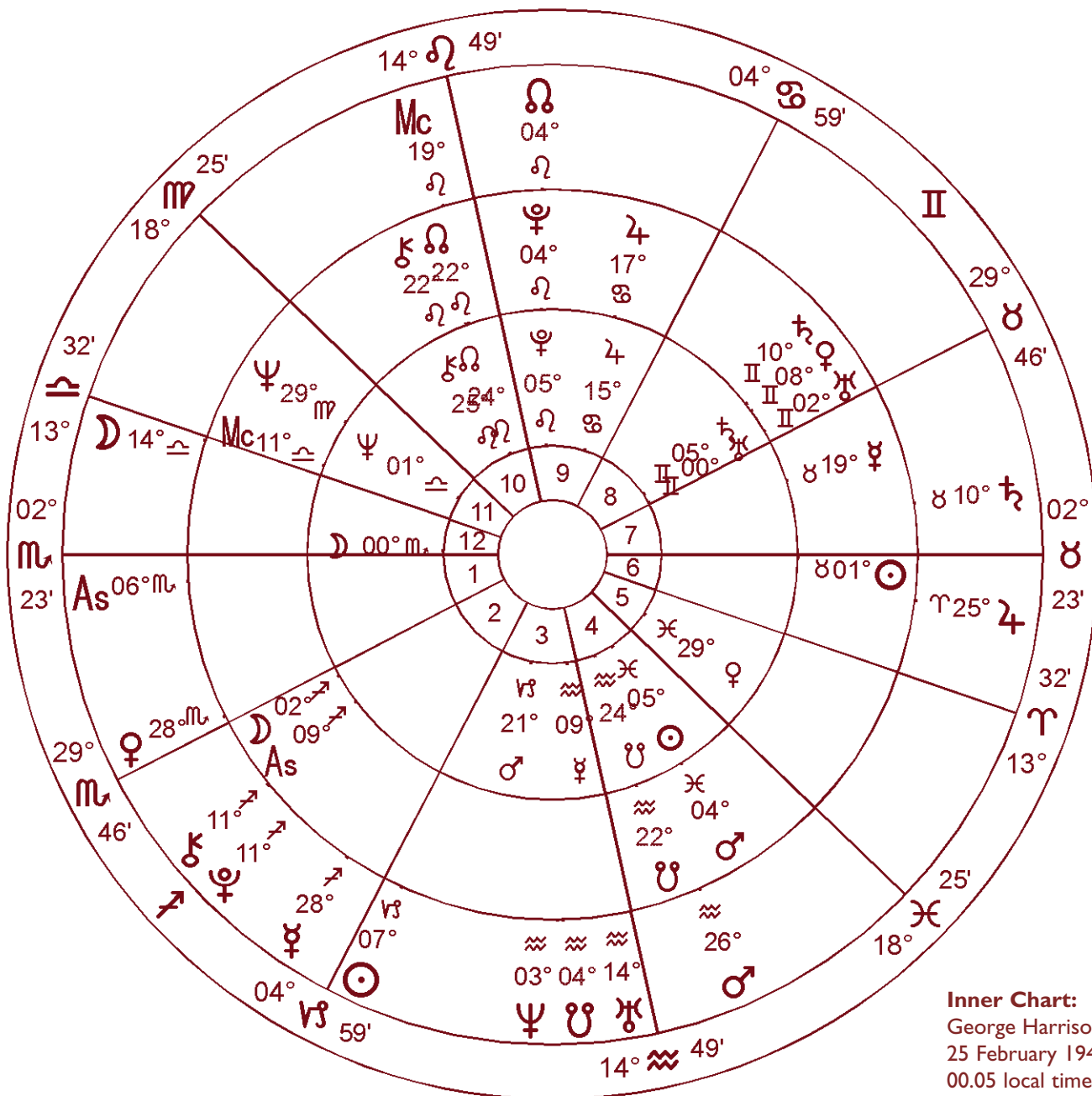
as a kind of lightning conductor for the energies of the Chiron-Pluto *zeitgeist*, and would be likely to meet, in his immediate environment, an embodiment of the meaning of the conjunction. On 31st December, the day after the attempted murder, *The Sunday Times* produced the following headline, and another noseful of Chiron-Pluto's distinctive odour wafted by on the breeze:

"STABBING SUSPECT THOUGHT BEATLES WERE WITCHES"

The components of the conjunction

Pluto reflects the instinctive survival mechanism of the collective, and of nature itself. It is impersonal and ruthless, as nature herself is; one extinct species, one dead animal, is as nothing in the overall sweep of the evolution of organic life. When we are threatened with extinction, physical or psychological, we discover that we have Pluto in our chart. That which wishes to survive must destroy or transform what is life-threatening or no longer viable, internally and externally; and the process of cleansing of dangerously outworn and useless survival mechanisms, regenerating new survival mechanisms, is reflected by Pluto's 246-year transit through the zodiacal signs. Our Pluto generation - the age group born with Pluto in a particular sign - shares fundamental ways of defending itself in the face of what we perceive as a survival threat. Pluto moving through each astrological sign describes the changing spheres and ways in which the collective weeds out those elements which threaten its survival. None of us will live to see a complete Pluto cycle; we are part of something larger, in which our individual lives and deaths are embedded. Therefore we have to take it on trust.

Since Pluto entered Sagittarius, we have been forced to confront what threatens our physical and psychological survival in the spheres of morality, religious beliefs, spiritual aspirations, law, our concepts of right and wrong, and our definitions of the "highest good". So far, we have run the gamut from the ridiculous to the sublime: from the pantomime of Monica Lewinsky and the impeachment of the US President to whether we intervene in the bloodshed in Kosovo or Sierra Leone, and whether the death penalty is any kind of solution at all to the problem of human destructiveness. We have been told by the Vatican in no uncertain terms that consulting an astrologer or a psychoanalyst constitutes a sin as serious as contraception. We are being faced with a barrage of moral questions which are not as simple to answer as they might once have seemed. Behind these moral questions are deeper spiritual questions: What God do we, as a collective and as individuals, believe in? Do we believe in anything at all any longer? Slowly but



Inner Chart:
 George Harrison
 25 February 1943
 00.05 local time
 (23.05 GMT on the 24th)
 Liverpool

(See note opposite re time)

Middle Chart:
 George Harrison
 Secondary Progressions at
 time of attack

Outer Chart:
 George Harrison attacked
 3:00 am GMT
 30 December 1999
 Henley-on-Thames
 Source: BBC

*Tropical
 Geocentric
 True Node*

inexorably, Pluto reveals to us our dangerous religious blindness, our naivety, our infantile belief in the "goodness" of authority and the moral rightness of the legal and spiritual systems we have created, and our desperate allegiance to political and spiritual gurus who promise quick fixes and an over-the-counter antidote to the condition of being human. Pluto in Sagittarius also raises issues of the foreigner and what is foreign, forcing us to recognise that, for some, survival depends on crossing the borders - physical, mental, emotional, spiritual - to find a new life, while for others, survival depends on keeping the borders closed.

Chiron, pursuing its erratic orbit between Saturn and Uranus, stands at the interface between the individual and the collective. We suffer as individuals, not only because of personal conflicts, but also because we are part of the human species, and our human collective is

inevitably torn between the animal and the divine. We make terrible mistakes through our emotional and instinctual compulsions, and equally through our intellectual arrogance; yet we need to understand why we suffer, and are forever seeking ways of healing our wounds. Chiron describes the compassionate impulse to pursue and offer wisdom, and to heal ourselves and others - not from a Neptunian vision of oneness, but because we all, somewhere, experience a sense of irrevocable wounding or damage through factors over which we have had no control. Our urge to heal the world's pain is always, sooner or later, doomed to disappointment, because humans are what they are and life is always unfair; and there are some things we cannot fix. Yet we persist in trying. The myth of Chiron describes a wise teacher and healer who is caught in the cross-fire of a battle between Herakles, the solar hero, and the wild and savage centaurs. Chiron is

good and wise, yet he is injured and suffers - perhaps because he is good and wise, and understands both sides, and thus will not join the battle. The archetypal struggle between light and darkness, through which, over aeons, we gradually civilise ourselves, inevitably breeds casualties, reminding us that our aspirations can only be fulfilled within mortal human limits.

The 50-year cycle of Chiron through the signs describes those changing spheres in which we experience our greatest wounding, disillusionment, and bitterness, through encounters with destructive impulses in ourselves and in the collective about which we can do nothing, and where we may feel blameless and scapegoated. Our Chiron generation group describes those ways in which we experience ourselves as injured irrevocably - rendered permanently alien and "outside" - and where we are most likely to experience disillusionment and bitterness. This is also the arena where - if we remain unconscious - we are likely to project what is most injured in ourselves. It also describes those spheres where our questioning, born of suffering, can lead us to deepen and mature in our beliefs and convictions, and can open our hearts in compassion for all creatures which suffer through the condition of being mortal. While Chiron transits through Sagittarius, we are, as a collective, compelled to experience disillusionment and loss of faith as we are faced with our moral errors and hypocrisies, our spiritual gullibility, our misjudgements and prejudices, and our impossible hope that life will always be fair and the good guys on white horses will always win.

Where Chiron is concerned, healing seems to involve relinquishing any claim to immortality or divine power. When he is wounded, the mythic Chiron retires to his cave in agony and begs for death, which is granted to him; thus he descends from an immortal to a mortal form, and is freed from his suffering. This myth suggests that Chiron's healing is not about "fixing" things, but about relinquishing the fantasy that we are godlike and capable of changing everything. The acceptance of mortality is also the acceptance of human limits, and the recognition of our vulnerability. We all partake not only of heroic solar aspirations, but also of the savage centaurs' destructiveness; and in Chiron's world, no amount of self-purification can purge us of our humanness or heal the wounds of our disappointed ideals. Only an acceptance of imperfection and unfairness, in ourselves and in life, can allow us to forgive and make peace with those things we cannot alter or redeem. It may be that the passage of Chiron through Sagittarius is presently reflecting a profound impetus for us to mature, in terms of both our God-image and the ways in which we define good and evil.

Chiron-Pluto on the individual level

Because we are still in the middle of this conjunction, it is hard to get a clear perspective on it in global terms. When I began to work on this article, I had no idea what I would find in the way of historical parallels for earlier Chiron-Pluto conjunctions, and I had no collection of facts with which to "prove" any preconceived hypothesis. I do have experience of many clients, however, who, born under the last conjunction of Chiron and Pluto in 1941, and also under the long opposition between them during the 1960's, seem to carry or have carried -- at some point in their lives - a very particular sense of alienation and scapegoating, of rage against life, of feeling at the mercy of collective forces they cannot cope with. Deep mistrust and bitterness are sometimes characteristic of both the conjunction and the opposition, but often this cannot not be linked with specific childhood issues. Also, the bitterness may be unconscious, like an unhealed abscess, drawing hurtful situations which seem to come from "outside". Chiron and Pluto together form a coalition which, if unconscious, believes that offence is the best defence in the face of a survival threat, and that life is an unsafe place in which the weak, the "different ones" who do not belong, are wounded and victimised, and only the powerful survive. I have found that healing, for many born with these aspects, seems to begin first with recognising the bitterness, and accepting that some of the mistrust is valid and true, given our sorry human history. This may involve relinquishing a false spirituality which masks considerable anguish underneath; and it may also require facing one's own savagery and complicity, often unconsciously enacted. Opening this secret wound can help the individual to discover, through real experience, that, despite life's unfairness, individuals and collectives can also be motivated by good will and compassion; and this kind of realism can help the individual to make peace with the past.

Those with planets in the first two decanates of the mutable signs have been experiencing the Chiron-Pluto conjunction very powerfully. When this conjunction makes hard aspects to personal planets, the individual is challenged and awakened, in the sphere of the natal planet, through painful memories, re-enactments of past suffering, and a recognition of the darker elements in human nature. External events such as losses and separations are possible; illness is also possible; but more common are inner events such as depression, a sense of failure, and a feeling that the past is repeating itself and one is trapped in something which cannot be changed. Confrontation with the inevitable may initially fill the person with feelings of impo-

tence, powerlessness, and victimisation. The effects of such experiences, because the transiting conjunction is in Sagittarius, make a profound impact on the individual's world-view, spiritual convictions, definitions of "right" behaviour, and trust in the future. I believe the potential this transiting conjunction brings to natal planets is to mature them, making them deeper, subtler, and wiser, and bringing about an acceptance of life's limits which allows a greater possibility of joy and compassion because one's expectations are no longer impossibly high. Through one's personal experiences of pain, one joins the human race. This transit reflects childhood's end, and challenges our innate narcissism. We may experience sadness, grief, and mourning for what is irrevocably lost: on a personal level, and in the spheres of hope, faith, religious beliefs, spiritual aspirations, and trust in legal and religious institutions and systems of knowledge. Pluto in Sagittarius precipitates serious rethinking and re-evaluation in these spheres. But the presence of Chiron here teaches us that some things cannot be fixed, and that our determination to survive may blind us to the ways in which we injure others as well as ourselves.

The peculiarities of the Chiron-Pluto cycle

Certain oddities occur in this planetary conjunction cycle which do not occur in the cycles of other pairs of planets. The conjunctions of Chiron and Pluto occur roughly 60 years apart. But due to their elliptical orbits, the conjunctions only seem to occur in four signs of the zodiac: early Sagittarius, early Gemini, early Leo, and late Pisces. Our present Sagittarian conjunction echoes the previous Sagittarius conjunction in 1752-1753; the Leo conjunction in 1941-42 repeated the earlier Leo conjunction of 1697; the conjunction in Gemini in 1881-1885 repeated the earlier one of 1642-43; and the 1818-1821 conjunction at the end of Pisces repeated the 1579-82 conjunction. What this pattern might mean in terms of the evolution of the collective baffles me; but it is a very succinct pattern, as though we only experience the challenge, suffering, and potential healing of the Chiron-Pluto conjunction through very particular spheres of experience. We cannot assume that events of a clear and unambiguous kind, easily attached to the meaning of the two planets, will occur under every conjunction. In fact, we have to admit that, contrary to popular expectation, nothing especially enormous "happened" at the dawn of the millennium, except irrational exuberance on the Nasdaq, some very exciting parties, and a general sense of disappointment because the world did not actually end. Yet we are facing particular moral and spiritual challenges at the moment which are affecting individuals and collectives very powerfully.

The 20th century conjunction cycle

Historical research can, however, sometimes give us glimpses, if not answers. A brief exploration of the previous conjunction of Chiron and Pluto might be useful at this point. Chiron entered Leo in October 1940. It joined Pluto for an exact conjunction in July 1941, in 4° Leo. Although they made only one exact conjunction, they were within orb of conjunction, initially out-of-sign, through the second half of 1940, and continued within orb through the summer of 1942. During the closest phase of this conjunction, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, and Hitler invaded Russia, resulting in the debacle of Stalingrad and the loss of millions of German and Russian lives. The Chiron-Pluto conjunction landed exactly on Hitler's natal MC at 4° Leo, and widely conjuncted his Saturn in the 10th house - perhaps reflecting an activation of the Leonine archetype of imperial grandeur and domination and the divine right of kings as a mode of survival, but with dark roots that fed on long-forgotten grievances harking back to ancient Teutonic/Slavic conflicts of the past. The mythology of a superior race destined to rule the world perhaps also belongs to this Leonine archetype, and was, it should be remembered, adopted by many people in many nations during the time of the conjunction. This was a universal *Zeitgeist*, and not merely the creation of one mad Austrian with a funny moustache; and the sound of marching jackboots could be heard in America and Britain as well as in the streets of Berlin. Sir Oswald Moseley and George Lincoln Rockwell were not German exports. They were home-grown. Transiting conjunctions of outer planets reflect something happening in the collective psyche, which means that they happen within each of us. Until we understand this, we will continue to seek answers to life's barbarity in isolated individuals who, although we deem them evil, could never wield such psychological power over so many unless they were mouthpieces for some spirit of the time moving in the depths within all of us.

When Chiron and Pluto meet, an ancient survival mechanism is activated, sometimes quite savagely, rooted in memories of ancestral wounds. Also, perhaps most importantly, the theme of the scapegoat - peculiarly connected with Chiron - is invoked. This was played out, under the exact conjunction in 1941, in the setting up by the Nazis of the first extermination camps, and the beginning of the systematic murder of "outsiders" - Jews, gypsies, Slavs, and homosexuals - throughout Russia and Poland. Hitler also invaded Yugoslavia under this Chiron-Pluto conjunction, on 6th April 1941, with, according to recent reports, the encouragement and support of Pope Pius XII. This is a sad and horrific judgement on the leader of a great reli-

gious institution, only revealed - with awful aptness - during the present conjunction of Chiron-Pluto in Sagittarius. And under the same aegis, in August 1941, Slobodan Milosevich was born, with the Moon conjunct Pluto conjunct Chiron in the 4th house. When, later in this particular Chiron-Pluto cycle, Chiron moved into Leo in 1992-93 and formed the incoming square to Pluto in Scorpio, Milosevich began his policy of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. The themes of the Chiron-Pluto conjunction of 1941 have continued to reverberate over the 60 years between that conjunction and the present one, revealing to us what we are capable of when our wounds become survival issues and feed on a centuries-old past; and also pointing toward a potential change in consciousness that might allow forgiveness and a letting go of the past.

The first square of the 1941 cycle occurred with Chiron in Scorpio and Pluto in Leo. They were in exact square only once, in November 1947, in 14°. The opposition between Pluto and Chiron occurred between Chiron in Pisces and Pluto in Virgo. This opposition lasted for a long time. Chiron entered Pisces in April 1960. The two planets made eight exact oppositions between July 1961, in 6°, and November 1965, in 18°. Uranus was also involved in this configuration in its later phases, and Saturn was likewise involved in the last two oppositions as it transited through mid-Pisces. Many people are born with these double oppositions. It is a generation group signature of a particularly powerful kind. The oppositions coincided with the height of social unrest during the 1960's, with Kennedy's assassination, with student riots and "flower power", and also with the outbreak of the Vietnam War. The disruptions of the 1960's are usually blamed on Uranus conjunct Pluto. Yet the elements of bitterness and disillusionment, present at the very beginning, are, to my mind, characteristic of Chiron's involvement. This was a time when the scapegoats, the "outsiders", rose in rebellion against what they experienced as life-threatening power structures, in politics, society, and religious institutions. Many born under this opposition feel victimised, or carry immense bitterness at life's unfairness, and battle against oppression, sometimes violently, on a deep, instinctive survival level; and they have few illusions about the good intentions of others. Many of them also feel impelled to change the world, to cleanse the wounds, to heal the bitterness. It is perhaps worth noting that Princess Diana was born under the first exact opposition of Chiron in Pisces and Pluto in Virgo, in July 1961.

The final square of the 1941 Chiron-Pluto cycle took place with Chiron in Leo and Pluto in Scorpio. They were exactly square for the first

time in 22/23° during November/December 1992, and they were exactly square for the second and last time in 23° in July 1993. It was during this period that the marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Diana broke down; this was only one surface sign of a general sense of pain and disillusionment around issues of sexual fidelity and loyalty, sexual promiscuity and the transmission of AIDS. With Chiron again in the sign connected with the divine right of kings, disillusionment with all those Leonine emblems in the outer world was perhaps inevitable, and enacted, on one small stage, by the British royal family.

The Chiron-Pluto conjunction of the late 19th century

It is worth briefly mentioning the Chiron-Pluto conjunction at the end of the 19th century, although it is long ago and we have less personal associations with it than we do with the 1941 conjunction. Yet it, too, echoes the themes of collective suffering and a powerful survival instinct unleashed through the finding of a scapegoat - this time justified by "scientific knowledge". This conjunction occurred in the early 1880's, at the beginning of Gemini - directly opposite our present Chiron-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius. During this period, colonial expansion of the European powers (especially in Africa) was at its peak; perhaps it is dreadfully fitting that now, under the present Chiron-Pluto in Sagittarius, we are observing the inevitable backlash, as scapegoat becomes scapegoater in places such as Zimbabwe. Also rampant during the Gemini conjunction was the promulgation of the concept of "inferior" races; indeed, the scramble for the raw wealth of Africa was justified on this basis. Pseudo-scientific doctrines issued by the University of Vienna, and subsequently spreading across Europe, proclaimed that some races were innately inferior, which included not only the Jews, but also the Swiss - for it was believed that the inability to speak correct and properly pronounced High German indicated a congenital failing signifying racial inferiority. This insidious doctrine eventually worked its way into Nazi propaganda, and is still believed by many. Yet also during this time, major discoveries were made in medicine: Koch discovered the TB bacillus, Pasteur developed preventive immunisation for anthrax and then successfully inoculated against rabies. The colonial expansion and accompanying assumption that the white man had to bring enlightenment to the "heathen" inferior races, and the doctrines of racial superiority, encapsulate the destructive expression of this Chiron-Pluto in Gemini, which equated survival with scientific knowledge utilised against the "outsider". The scientific discoveries of this time encapsulate the healing potential of the conjunction: disease, itself an "outsider", can only be fought if it is recognised and understood.



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The millennium conjunction

With Chiron-Pluto now in Sagittarius, one of the archetypal themes which has been activated is fear of the foreign (xenophobia, toward both people and "outside" influences). Our compassionate impulse to welcome the out-cast stranger is polarised with our fear of the potential destruction wrought by those who do not respect our own values and social structures. An immense influx of wanderers is polarised with a rising xenophobic spirit. Sagittarius is a dual sign, and is often self-contradictory in its morality; it is both the originator of the "Do as I say but not as I do" ethos, and the quickest of all the signs to perceive and decry such hypocrisy in others. This is why the Monica Lewinsky episode was so hilarious - even, eventually, to Americans themselves. To illustrate the strangeness of this Sagittarian dichotomy, I would like to quote a man who had the Sun conjunct Jupiter in Sagittarius: Heinrich Himmler, who said, "We must be honest, decent, loyal, and comradely to members of our own blood, and to nobody else. What happens to a Russian, to a Czech, does not interest me in the slightest." The thorny issue of immigration is presently heating to boiling point in the collective psyche, and clearly linked with the Chiron-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius; and realistic fears are inflamed in otherwise reasonably inclined individuals by ancient memories of invasion and the destruction, and transformation, of culture and society by the "outsider".

We are painfully polarised, both outside and within ourselves. This ancient fear has erupted notwithstanding the demographic evidence of population drops in all the European countries, including Catholic Italy; despite this, there is resistance against making up the numbers with those of foreign origins. Political correctness is part of this strange constellation, an attempt to present an unprejudiced stance; but it is frequently sadly ineffectual, often grossly hypocritical, and tends to constellate its opposite. Humans are wounding other humans badly at the moment; we are confused and bewildered when we find ourselves capable of blind hatred and prejudice, and equally confused and bewildered when we discover that our compassion and generosity may be coldly and ruthlessly exploited. Political leaders such as Jörg Haider (who, born on 26 January 1950, has Chiron in 18° Sagittarius in close trine to Pluto in 17° Leo) use emotional methods to achieve power, playing on our ancient atavistic fears, and many decry such tactics; yet we would not respond so powerfully, pro or con, if we did not experience, somewhere within, ancient terrors being aroused. Beyond the economic and social issues lies a much deeper issue: What is the right thing to do? How deeply do we believe our own religious tenets? Gullibility and cynicism vie

within us, depriving us of clarity of thought and action, and undermining our confidence in our own decency.

Under Chiron-Pluto, our dark collective secrets can no longer be kept; they burst like boils for all the world to see. Scandals in the political arena are forcing us to rethink our values. Films like *Erin Brockovich* present us with the issue of the individual's power or lack of power to challenge the destructive irresponsibility of large companies and institutions, yet also reveal that, even if we succeed, we cannot heal what has already been irrevocably destroyed. And where, in the midst of our stone-throwing, is our own collusion? Compensation money will not raise the dead, nor eradicate the horrors of the past, nor address the roots of the dilemma; we have yet to discover this in the midst of our new-found fervour to take our misery to the law courts and barter it for cash. Communication, now global and instantaneous, may be used as a means, not only of revelation of the truth and a release of ancient suffering, but also of inflammation of ancient grievances: the transformation of the scapegoat into the scapegoater. We know, from a psychological perspective, that the perpetrators of crimes against "outsiders" usually experience themselves as painfully, irrevocably, incurably "outside". Do we police the internet to root out "hate" groups, or do we honour our belief that freedom of speech is one of the fundamentals of a democratic society? Do we pillory a nation which has democratically elected an extreme right-wing leader, while condoning the equally repellent excesses of the extreme left? The exposé of the collusion of Pope Pius XII and Hitler comes, appropriately for Chiron-Pluto, at the moment when the present Pope has seen fit to offer his version of an apology for the Church's past wrongs. It should come as no surprise that many individuals question the sincerity of such apologies, and the moral integrity of the edifice which has offered them; and, once again, we are thrown back into the painful questioning and disillusionment which accompany this Chiron-Pluto conjunction in Sagittarius. And, finally, our pain seems to be making us question, rather than merely blindly exterminating.

What is important for us, as individuals, is the ways in which these factors operate within each of us. We all have our struggles with that which is foreign, and we may identify either with the foreigner or the native, the scapegoat or the scapegoater. We need to avoid projecting this struggle outside, and deal with its implications inside. Otherwise we simply wind up signing extremist petitions against immigration, or petitions against right-wing extremists, without having learned anything at all about where extremes can lead. Chiron-Pluto raises ancient hurts which make us polarise in a highly emotive way, because we

remember, in our blood and bones, the centuries-old wounds which cannot be redressed.

Milosevich, as I have pointed out, was born under the conjunction in Leo; he acted out its most devastating dimension by perpetrating on others the savagery he and his people had experienced themselves. Yet many people born under this conjunction see all too well the destructive potentials inherent in nursing past grievances, and they commit themselves deeply to the path of healing and teaching. This is the positive face of Chiron-Pluto. Yet the enlightened healer may himself or herself also suffer, or be victimised by forces beyond any individual's control. The good guys may also be casualties in any war, inner or outer. Chiron-Pluto gives us the opportunity to see our own evil as a collective, to peer deep into the poison of our ancient wounds, and to find a new perspective which can allow us to make peace with the flawed nature of our human inheritance.

Forgiveness and humility are essential for this conjunction, and we badly need it now; without these qualities, at least in some small degree, we polarise and find ourselves acting out the savagery in big or little ways, without consciousness and without moral reflection. We may well feel bitterness about the unfairness or corruptness of the law, or of our politicians, or of our religious institutions. We may be furiously frustrated by the fruitless pursuit of Serbian war criminals, or the endless trials of garden-variety thugs who walk free because a lawyer's cleverness has proved more powerful than the blatant truth. We may sometimes abandon hope for Palestine, for Kosovo, for Northern Ireland, for Rwanda, for Chechnya, for Zimbabwe, for Sierra Leone. We are likely to be disappointed in all of these things because even our best efforts will give us only compromises, not solutions, and the dead will not rise again. Yet we have to find a way to live with these things, and keep our faith in whatever we define as the highest good.

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Even astrologers often do not want to look at these issues; they come up uninvited, personally and collectively, when Pluto and Chiron are in aspect, and they are then forced upon us. In "New Age" circles, such themes are often not spoken of, because they are deemed "negative" and "unspiritual". We are thinking now more than we did in 1941, and perhaps more than in 1883 when we assumed our racial superiority. We have, perhaps, a little more consciousness at present than we did during earlier Pluto-Chiron conjunctions. The wanderer, the scapegoat, the wounded healer, the healing wound; these are Chiron's themes. Survival, fight to the death, the end of that which has outlived its usefulness, the cleansing of the past, the desperate need for a new world-view: these are Pluto's themes. This is

not a cheerful conjunction, yet it could free us from so much, in our personal lives and as a collective. The myth of Chiron concerns his final acceptance of death, because he can no longer bear his pain as an immortal. Perhaps, under this conjunction, we need to relinquish our infantile dreams of immortality, of being looked after by a divine, caring State, or by believing that, in our personal lives as well as in the world outside, goodness is always immediately recognisable and rewarded, and evil punished. Healing, for Chiron-Pluto, comes with a mysterious blend of hard realism and profound compassion: accepting the world as it is, while avoiding bitterness, passive resignation, and the stance of the victim. This, I believe, is the deepest meaning of the Chiron-Pluto conjunction and what it is presently offering us. 

Pluto, Shamanism and the Dance of Power

Kay Stopforth

Kay Stopforth explores the practice of shamanism, and suggests that Pluto is the primary significator of those who are attracted to this ancient way of being - and that shamanism demonstrates the “highest potential” of the Plutonian personality.

The Shamanic Universe

Shamanism is probably the oldest spiritual practice known to humanity. It is also universal; some form of it has been practised all over the world at some point in history. In this country, shamanism lies in the distant past. Our shamans were known as druids and witches, and their practices were eventually eradicated or driven underground. In the rest of the world, however, many shamanic societies remain extant today, mostly traditional tribal cultures that are assumed to be primitive by the western world. These tribal cultures practise what is often called traditional shamanism, where the spiritual activities of the shaman are a central part of daily tribal life. Shamanic practice takes on many different forms, but there are certain attributes that all shamanic cultures share. First and foremost is animism, the belief that everything in our world is alive and has spirit. This includes not just people and animals, but rivers, rocks, mountains, volcanoes, the wind, the Earth itself. The shaman also believes that there are many levels of reality beyond what we can see, hear, taste, touch or measure and the spirit of all living things exists in all realities. The role of the shaman is to journey to these other realities, or other worlds as they are known, to find information, assistance or healing. In these other worlds, the shaman has allies or helpers which act as intermediaries in this work. The allies play a vital part in the work of any shaman, for without them the shaman is helpless to act.

In order to apprehend the other worlds, the shaman must alter his or her consciousness. This can be done in a number of ways, including the ingesting of mind-altering substances. Unfortunately, it is this face of shamanism that has become most familiar to the uninitiated, through the works of Carlos Castaneda. The image of the shaman taking psychotropic drugs and going on fantastical “trips” is a distortion and a hangover from the 1960s. Some traditional shamans do use mind-altering substances, but in a very different cultural context to ours and usually with a different intention.

Traditional shamans do not choose the shamanic path, they are marked out for this vocation in some way, usually by a life-threatening or debilitating illness. In the process of healing their illness, the shaman faces death in some way, and is changed. The illness is often brought about by the shaman's refusal of their vocation, for becoming a shaman is not taken lightly in traditional cultures, and is seen as a dangerous and extreme profession. Interestingly, many modern western shamanic practitioners have also come to shamanism in this way, often through an illness or condition which western medicine is helpless to treat.

The Modern Practice of Shamanism

A key figure in the re-introduction of shamanic practice to western culture is Michael Harner, the creator of the U.S.-based Foundation for Shamanic Studies. Harner is an anthropologist who studied with traditional tribal shamans. He developed a format whereby westerners could safely practice shamanism, which he calls “core shamanism”. This comprises a set of basic practices which are common to many shamanic cultures and which have been shorn of their culture-specific attributes. A key aspect of core shamanism is the shamanic journey, which enables the western shaman to journey to other realities safely, without using drugs or indulging in any inappropriately dangerous activities. The shamanic journey involves listening to a steady drumbeat, which helps the shaman to alter their consciousness in a safe and controlled way. To begin the journey, the shaman will allow their consciousness to shift to an inner gateway or entry point to the other worlds. He or she will then move through the gateway and journey to a landscape. This landscape is a representation of the other realities in a way that the shaman can comprehend. Here, the shaman will encounter his or her allies and carry out any shamanic “business”, such as asking for help, advice or healing.

Psychologically trained people may recognise elements of the shamanic journey in such techniques as active imagination. The two tech-



Kay Stopforth is a shamanic practitioner, writer and astrologer. She has trained in shamanism for about five years and is committed to developing a grounded spiritual practice relevant to people today. She has a shamanic practice in London, offering workshops and individual sessions. Kay is the author of the *Universe Cards*, a new divination pack based on images of the universe.

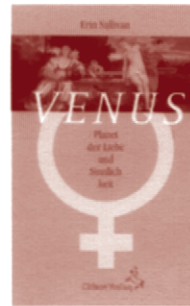
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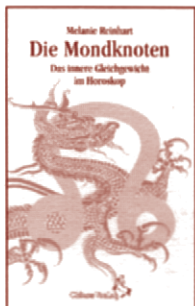
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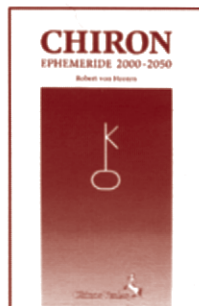
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niques are similar in many ways, but there is a key difference: active imagination focuses on the personal unconscious and the symbols it produces, whereas the intention with the shamanic journey is to engage with other realities directly. What one experiences on a shamanic journey is not a projection of one's own unconscious (although the activities of one's unconscious can sometimes intrude and get in the way of shamanic practice!). This is often a difficult hurdle for psychotherapists and counsellors who enter shamanic training. It is not something that can be proved or written about in any rational way. It is only by the experience of working with shamanism and the developing of trust in the information given by one's allies in the other realities that the difference can be truly understood.

The proof of the pudding with the shamanic journey is its use for healing. Probably the most common use of shamanism in the western context is for healing work with clients. The shamanic practitioner journeys to retrieve lost energy on behalf of a client and then returns to ordinary reality and restores this energy to the client. In the shamanic model of reality, personal energy or power can become lost in other

realities. This is usually due to some physical or psychological trauma where the person's energy remains attached to the event. In a very real way, the trauma is still happening for the client. These traumas can range from the severe, such as childhood abuse, to the seemingly trivial, such as a minor physical accident. This loss of power is often termed "soul loss" by the shamanic community and is seen in terms of a fragmentation of one's soul. The return of the lost energy, or "soul part" by the shaman is called "soul retrieval". We all suffer soul loss to some degree in our lives, and it is possible to look at all human illness, both physical and psychological, as resulting from varying degrees of soul loss.

Pluto and the Shaman

In the course of his or her training, the shaman learns to be familiar with energy, or power, in all its manifestations. This energy is invisible in ordinary reality, but is the seat of our personal power, and underpins ordinary reality like a web. The shaman is a traveller through the web of realities and gradually learns to apprehend the unseen. There are many reasons - and many chart factors - involved in a decision to enter shamanic training. However, entering

shamanic practice in any serious way is always a process of death and rebirth; one must relinquish one's old beliefs about the nature of reality in order to truly embrace shamanism. It is my feeling that shamanism is, astrologically speaking, Pluto's realm. From an astrological perspective, unseen power is represented by Pluto. In Greek myth, Hades is rendered invisible by his magical helmet whenever he enters ordinary reality. The shaman's universe, the web of realities, the allies, all are invisible in ordinary reality. Although Chiron bears many of the classic characteristics of the traditional shaman as wounded healer, I feel that Pluto, on a collective level, embodies the shaman's path. The price of this is that one is often considered to be on the lunatic fringe of our culture, where this kind of animism is seen, at best, as primitive and naïve. The modern, western shaman must

also be prepared to relinquish any sense of being part of the mainstream and become, at least culturally, a Plutonian outsider. At a deeper level, one must surrender one's personal will to the will of the universe. One must truly understand that the shaman acts as a conduit for the power of the universe; it is not the shaman who heals, the shaman merely acts as a channel for healing energy. This sounds Neptunian, but the shaman does not surrender their consciousness in the way that a medium does; the shaman must remain aware and in control of the proceedings at the same time as allowing themselves to act as a bridge between the worlds. This is a tough balance to maintain, and requires a true Plutonian commitment to transformation, to riding the waves of power without becoming either overwhelmed or ego-inflated. My own view is that shamanism

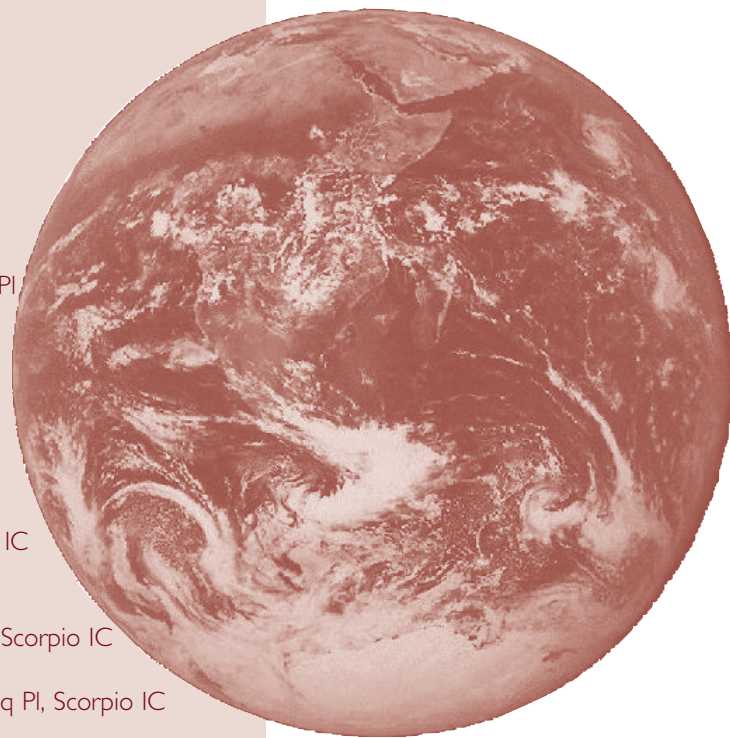
Individual chart details

Chart No.	Major Pluto Aspects
1	Mo/Pl, Ju/Chi opp Pl, MC in Scorpio
2	Mo opp Pl, Pl/MC in Leo, Ve tri Pl
3	ASC/Pl in Leo, IC in Scorpio, Me sext Pl
4	Mo sq Pl, Pl sq ASC, Ju/Chi opp Pl
5	Sun sq Pl, Ve tri Pl, Chi opp Pl
6	Sun opp Pl, Mo sq Pl, Me opp Pl, MC in Scorpio sq Pl
7	Sun opp Pl, Mo tri Pl, Ju tri Pl
8	Mo/Pl, Ve opp Pl
9	Sun sq Pl, Pl/MC, Ju tri Pl, Sat sq Pl
10	Mo/Pl/IC, Chi opp Pl
11	Mo in Scorpio sq Pl, Ve tri Pl, Chi sq Pl, Sat/Pl
12	Mo/Pl, Su tri Pl, Ve sq Pl, Pl sq MC
13	Ve tri Pl, Me quincunx Pl, Sat/Pl, Chi sq Pl
14	Mars/Me/Sat/Chi opp Pl, Ju sq Pl, Pl tri MC, Scorpio IC
15	Pl/MC in Leo, Scorpio ASC, Me tri Pl, Ma sext Pl
16	Mo quincunx Pl, MC in Scorpio, Pl sq MC
17	ASC/Pl in Leo, Mo tri Pl, Ju/Pl, Ve sext Pl, Sat sq Pl, Scorpio IC
18	Su sq Pl, Me tri Pl
19	ASC/Pl in Leo, Mo quincunx Pl, Ve sq Pl, Ju/Pl, Sat sq Pl, Scorpio IC
20	Ma in Virgo/Pl in Leo, Pl tri MC

Breakdown of Pluto Aspects

Planet/Angle	Aspects
Sun	6 2 oppositions, 3 squares, 1 trine
Moon	12 4 conjunctions, 1 opposition, 3 squares, 2 trines, 2 quincunxes
ASC	4 3 conjunctions, 1 square
MC	8 3 conjunctions, 3 squares, 2 trines
IC	1 1 conjunction
Mercury	6 2 oppositions, 2 trines, 1 quincunx, 1 sextile
Venus	8 1 opposition, 3 squares, 3 trines, 1 sextile
Mars	3 1 conjunction, 1 opposition, 1 sextile
Jupiter	7 2 conjunctions, 2 oppositions, 1 square, 2 trines
Saturn	6 2 conjunctions, 1 opposition, 3 squares
Chiron*	7 5 oppositions, 2 squares

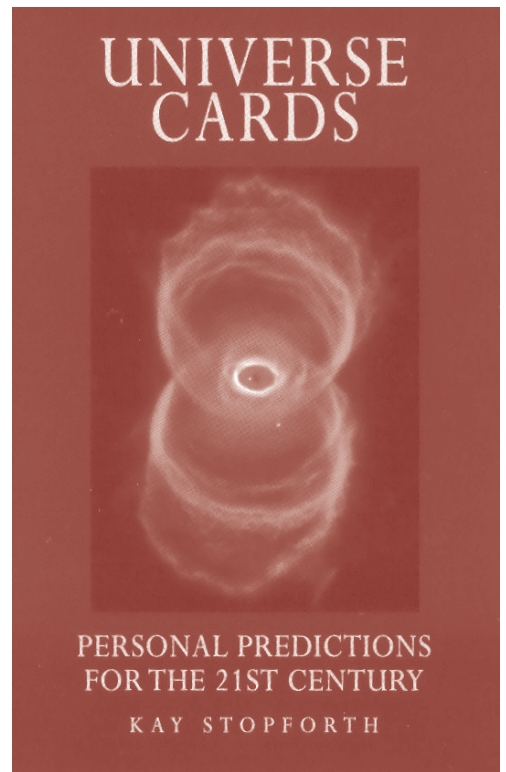
* I would consider these to be generational aspects.



demonstrates the highest potential of the Plutonian personality. The people who are seriously attracted to shamanism are often therapists or alternative practitioners who have spent many years working on their nitty-gritty Pluto issues. Many will have encountered death in an up-close-and-personal manner, such as a bereavement, a near death experience or the experience of a life threatening illness. The "lower" manifestations of Pluto are familiar and have been faced, if not eternally vanquished. What is left is the essence of Pluto - the power of the unseen, the ability to travel between the realities and to transform oneself and to act as an agent of transformation for others.

A Survey

For the purposes of this article, I carried out an ad hoc survey of 20 charts of shamanic practitioners to see if my feelings about Pluto's link with shamanism are borne out in the charts of individuals. In this very unscientific study, I prioritised Pluto conjunct, square, opposition and trine the luminaries, and Pluto conjunct the angles. I think these contacts are the strongest indicator of an essentially Plutonian personality. However, I also considered Pluto in aspect to the personal planets, other Pluto aspects to the angles, and Scorpio ascendant, MC and IC. The results were surprisingly definite. Sixteen out of the twenty charts had Pluto in a major aspect to a luminary, or conjunct an angle. Six charts had Pluto in aspect to either both luminaries or both a luminary and an angle. The most common aspect was Moon-Pluto, appearing in twelve charts. Of the four charts that did not have Pluto in major aspect to a luminary or angle, three had aspects to Pluto from personal planets, and one had Moon quincunx Pluto and Pluto square MC in Scorpio (charts 13, 14, 16 and 20). I am particularly struck by the prominence of Moon-Pluto aspects. Pluto in aspect to the Moon deepens and sensitises the instincts, and perhaps sharpens our ability to sense other realities.

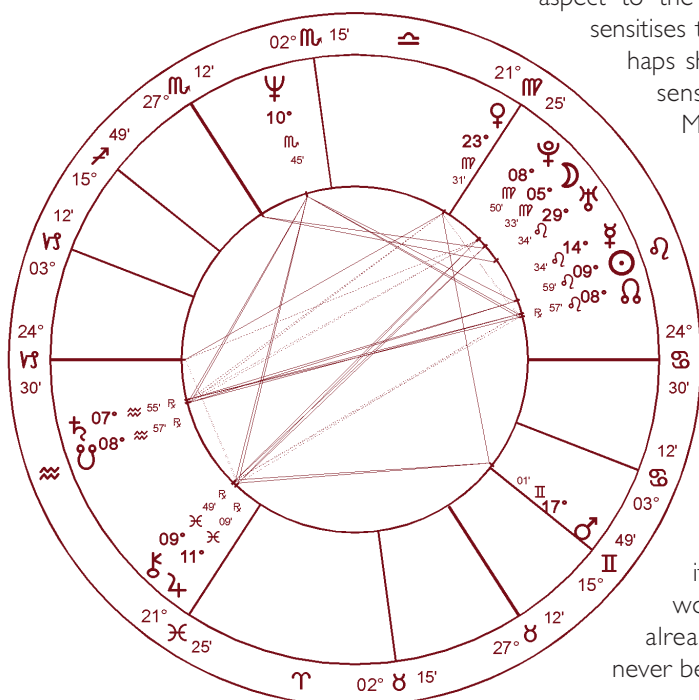


I don't know if one can draw any more definite conclusions from this information, apart from the fact that this select band of shamanic practitioners is strongly Plutonian. They are all people who are known to me, to varying degrees of intimacy. My own Plutonian nature (I am chart no. 1) may be an influencing factor - I may simply attract Plutonian shamanic practitioners! However, I have attempted to draw on a variety of sources, and many of the charts are those of people I do not know well. Any study of this kind has a subjective element and I invite the reader to draw further conclusions from the data I have presented.

A Case Study

Here's a brief look at Pluto in action in the chart of a practising shaman. Caitlin Matthews is not only a shamanic practitioner and teacher but also an accomplished musician and Celtic scholar. She has written over 30 books about Celtic shamanism and spirituality. Her chart shows Pluto in close conjunction to her Leo MC, Scorpio rising and Venus in Scorpio in the first house. Her Mercury in Sagittarius also trines Pluto. This is a strongly Plutonian chart. I am particularly struck by her Pluto placement, perhaps signifying a person who embodies Pluto in a very public way. Caitlin uses her musical ability in her shamanic work. For her, sound and singing are an essential part of the healing process - a mediation of Plutonian healing energy through Leonine creative expression. Caitlin's initiation into shamanism came in the form of a classic healing crisis. She suffered from a debilitating illness between the ages of 20 and 28, which effectively ended her ambition to become an actress (a more obvious expression of that Leo MC) and even-

Kay Stopforth
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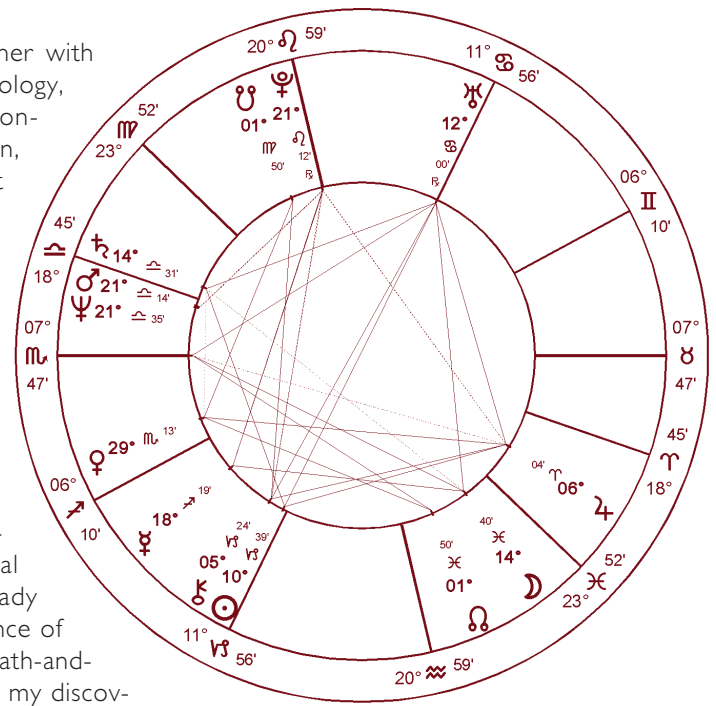
perhaps sharpens our ability to sense other realities. Moon-Pluto people may tend to pick up invisible energies and manifest them through physical symptoms, or they may just "know" something, without being able to explain why. They may be attracted to shamanism because it gives them a framework for what they already know but have never been able to express.

tually brought her to shamanism. During this period, Pluto transited no less than seven of her natal planets, including the Sun. At age 20, Pluto was in early Libra, creeping up on Caitlin's natal Chiron-Jupiter square. This square forms part of a cardinal grand cross, with a wide Saturn-Jupiter opposition squaring Chiron conjunct the Sun in Capricorn, which in turn opposes Uranus in Cancer. Over the following eight years, Pluto would touch every planet in this grand cross. By age 28, Pluto was at around 21°-22° of Libra, just completing a transiting conjunction of her natal Mars-Neptune conjunction in Libra. It is interesting that the first planet to be touched in this long process is Chiron, the planet of the unhealed wound, and it was in physical illness that this transit expressed itself. Pluto's slow movement across such a vital area of her natal chart indicates Caitlin's death and rebirth struggle to heal, a struggle that marks her initiation as a shaman. Physically immobilised, Caitlin was forced into a period of introspection and rediscovered the contact with the spirit world that she had naturally as a child. Shamanism gave her a framework to express this natural ability. Transiting Pluto has recently completed a twelve-year transit of her 1st house, a period in which Caitlin has built a shamanic healing practice and developed her reputation as a teacher of Celtic shamanism. During this time, transiting Pluto also squared the natal Pluto-MC conjunction, underlining that this was very much a public process. Caitlin describes her spiritual path as "making visible the unseen" and she has indeed become a very visible advocate of the unseen in her teaching and writing.

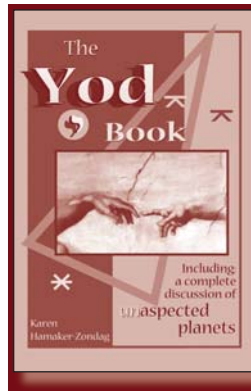
A Personal Perspective

At this point, it seems right to confess my own vested interest in this subject. As a

shamanic practitioner with an interest in astrology, and a natal Moon-Pluto conjunction, you might say that this theory of mine comes from a certain amount of personal experience. My own initiation into shamanism came as transiting Pluto squared my natal Moon-Pluto. As a natal Plutonian, I already had some experience of Pluto's dreaded death-and-rebirth process, so my discovery of shamanism was a kind of coming home. I instinctively recognised the truth of this process, although I also fought against it - naturally! I entered shamanic training in November 1996, as Pluto was 2° away from the transiting square to my moon. At this time, I had attended some basic workshops in shamanic journeying, and read some books on the subject. I felt an immediate affinity for journeying and I decided to undertake a training course in shamanic healing. I was unprepared for the profound effect that this work would have on my life. Although I had faith in the shamanic journeying process, I still believed, in my heart of hearts, that maybe I was just making it all up (a common fear among novice journeyers). In February and March of 1997, as the transiting square became



Caitlin Matthews
Data withheld by request
Geocentric
Tropical
True Node

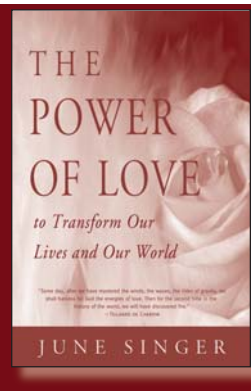


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Further Reading

The Way of the Shaman by Michael Harner (Harper and Row, 1990)

Soul Retrieval by Sandra Ingerman (Harper San Francisco, 1994)

Singing the Soul Back Home by Caitlin Matthews (Element, 1995)

To find out more about Kay's shamanic practice, please email her on kstopforth@lineone.net or see her website at website.lineone.net/~kstopforth

exact, I did a series of shamanic journeys as part of my training that has altered my life, and that continues to act as a foundation for practically everything I do. These journeys took me beyond death, taught me about my ancestral inheritance, and revealed to me a vision of a larger reality that was awe-inspiring. I was shown a vision of the Earth and I felt a true sense of its uniqueness and its preciousness amongst all the other wonders of the universe. This vision was the initial inspiration for the "Universe Cards", my divination pack. All this sounds wonderful, and it was, but it also demolished all my old ideas about myself and about reality. In a slow, creeping, irresistible way, all the old sureties of my life became empty, and I was left with a sense of being in a void, a dark place where the only reality, the only truth, was my continuing awareness. Over the past three years, as Pluto has ground its way through this transiting square to both my Moon and my natal Pluto, I have explored the darkness, and have been slowly (far too slowly!) reborn, with a new awareness of the universe and my place in it. Shamanic practice has given me a framework for making the inner journey, and my power animals and guides have accompanied me on this perilous voyage, offering wise counsel when

it was most needed. Shamanism has offered containment for the powerful emotions of a Pluto transit. It has helped me to stay with the process without "acting out" Plutonian dramas all over the place. For me, the void has not been a barren place. It has been - and continues to be - a fruitful darkness that has become a place of retreat and inspiration. So much so that I now think of this place not as a void but as the "cauldron of being".

In my experience, shamanism is about rebuilding one's own relationship with the universe. An awful lot can be learned from a good teacher and from books, but ultimately one must trust one's own allies and the universe itself. To work with shamanism in a deep way is to surrender to one's own process of spiritual unfolding. This is not an ecstatic, Neptunian giving up of self, but a conscious, Plutonian divestment of the trappings of the earthbound ego as one descends into the cauldron of being. A strong, balanced sense of self is an important requirement for the shamanic practitioner. The influx of power that comes from working with shamanism can merely serve to inflate the ego if there are unacknowledged issues in that area. This is a common pitfall on the path. Every shaman learns the old Plutonian lesson that power comes with responsibility. This lesson can rebound on the unwary and inexperienced practitioner in all sorts of unfortunate ways. Shamanism is not something one can learn in a couple of workshops and then decide to practice. Like the movement of Pluto, the path to shamanism is a slow and often frustrating one. However, in time, and with the deep levels of courage and commitment that only Plutonians can summon, the doors of perception can open and the highest expression of Pluto can manifest. ☉

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Leaving Home

Crossing the Threshold to the Outside World

Glennys Lawton

“Until we have psychologically left home, we can’t return home” writes **Glennys Lawton**. If we see “returning home” as a metaphor for spiritual experience, it is perhaps salutary for us to take a look at the first time we cross the threshold, for it may be that the same symbols are echoed on our journey back “home”.

Silently closing her bedroom door
Leaving a note that she hoped would say more
She goes downstairs to the kitchen
Clutching her handkerchief
Quietly turning the back door key
Stepping outside she is free¹

Lennon and McCartney
She's Leaving Home

The Beatles' lyrics to the mid-60's hit encapsulated the desperate way many of the Pluto in Leo generation left home. Turning her back on her parents, without any goodbyes, she sneaks away into the early morning darkness to rendezvous with her destiny. Her parents, who claimed to have given her “everything money could buy”, are in shock. They are left with disbelief, feeling abandoned and betrayed. The heroine leaves the stifling atmosphere of her parents' home for the promise of more fun with the “man from the motor trade”,² who represents a new and exciting liberated life. Unprepared for the road ahead and unaware of the grief her separation from home will stir, she is at risk of having no security or safety net once her relationship fails. The familial environment has failed to help her prepare for the initiation of “leaving home”. Without the encouraging messages that will support her in crossing the threshold to the outer world, she is at risk of recreating the stifling home atmosphere she desperately wants to leave. Astrologically she is at risk of regressing to the 4th house, unable to separate from the powerful and archaic patterns that underpin her foundation stone, the IC. Her future security rests on this base, which has been constructed with the material supplied by her family and ancestors.

An earlier, more light-hearted tune, sung by Sue Thompson, *James Hold the Ladder Steady*, tells of elopement as the only option left after both mother and father had rejected and ridiculed the daughter's pleas to marry her

sweetheart. Leaving home for the Pluto in Leo generation was often a traumatic experience for everyone involved in this stage of separation.

One of the most common ways for this generation to leave their parents' home was into a marriage, romantically being carried over the threshold of their new home, yet poised to recreate the same familial scenario they had vowed to leave. Or into the arms of a lover who held the promise of a new life, or onto an aeroplane or ship that took them to a faraway adventure. Naively there was an assumption that the world would provide nourishment the way the parental home should have. Unfortunately this important transition was often poorly executed, with no rituals or conscious process of separation, so those left at home often felt abandoned or betrayed, while those who left felt guilty and unworthy.

However, it was not only this generation that struggled to cross the straits between the familial home and the outside world. This stage of the life cycle is an archetypal experience, a passage myth often detailed.³ Mythic heroines also left their parents' home leaving behind them a storm of feelings of betrayal.

Ariadne fell in love with the shining face of the young hero Theseus, who had been sent to her Minoan palace from Athens to face the Minotaur, her half-brother. Besotted, she arranged to help him slay the Minotaur. Fleeing the palace with him, she escaped into the dark Mediterranean night on his Athenian ship, betraying her family by transferring her loyalties to the foreign hero. She colluded in killing her half-brother and abandoned her younger sister. Phaedra, on the threshold of puberty, watches the course her older sister takes to leave home, being impressed and influenced by her actions and choices. Having betrayed her family, Ariadne is herself betrayed, left abandoned on the

Glennys Lawton is one of the main tutors in the four year program in applied astrology, Astro*Synthesis, at the Chiron Centre in Melbourne Australia. Besides her full time astrological practice, Glennys is also a family therapist, registered as a clinical member of the Victorian Association of Family Therapists, as well as an accredited bereavement counsellor and educator. She has lectured at major astrological conferences overseas, as well as lecturing at family therapy conferences and conducting specialised workshops on areas of grief in Australia.

¹ Lyrics quoted from Paul McCartney and John Lennon, *She's Leaving Home*, from the Beatles' album *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

² Throughout the text, lyrics from *She's Leaving Home* are quoted.

³ For amplification on this see Liz Greene and Juliet Sharman-Burke, *The Mythic Journey; The Meaning of Myth as a Guide for Life*, Eddison-Sadd (London: 1999), pages 74-90.

island of Naxos, the first port of call after their departure from Crete.

Similarly, Ariadne's cousin, Medea, betrays her father, kills her brother, and abandons her homeland to help a foreign hero. Without Medea, Jason could have never completed his quest. Like Theseus, Jason also turns his back on his helpmate/lover.

Betrayal is recreated in both relationships. The partner, who has been the impetus for leaving home, is now the one to leave. The trauma of the severed relationship with family and homeland is a haunting and powerful force, which will reverberate throughout their life and be replayed at other endings. The success of this transition from the homeland not only signifies the end of childhood and parental dependence, but also is a pattern that reemerges whenever old ways of being are no longer valid. During major life changes, the unfinished business of "leaving home" is revealed, emotionally catapulting the individual back into the earlier patterns of separation turmoil. To leave home emotionally requires not only the heroic impulse, but the support and encouragement of those we leave behind.

Leaving home represents a transitional time in every family member's life. This pivotal time is crucial, as leaving home represents the movement away from the safety and security of the familial womb out into the world beyond the family. Astrologically, the crossing of the threshold between the 4th house of family and the 5th house of the heroic self represents this liminal phase. Developmentally, the 4th house marks the ending of the first four houses of the personal initiation, ideally ending with the 4th house sense of inner security. The 5th marks the first of the four inter-personal houses and the beginning of the labours of forging identity outside the family, as well as the beginning of transferring the loyalties away from the familial matrix out onto the beloved. The 5th house cusp, which separates the homeland from the world beyond, is the threshold crossed when leaving home:

"The hero leaves home and often the 5th house cusp is a vivid indication of the process of leaving home."⁴

Like the other cusps of the "houses of life" (1 and 9) the 5th house cusp represents the emergence into new worlds of discovery. The Beatles' heroine turns the "back door" key and steps across the threshold into the arms of her lover. Like Theseus and Jason, he is the embodiment of the hero who stimulates the urge to leave and venture into the world

beyond family. Lamenting, the chorus realises "fun is the one thing money can't buy". The 5th house represents a world of exploration that no longer can take place in the familial home. The heroine falls in love with the foreign hero, the representation of the world outside her familial container. The lunar world of the 4th house and the symbiosis with the family matrix are left behind in the transition towards the solar hero. The 5th house constellates the mythic hero who battles the dragons of the Great Mother and who ventures outside his comfort zone. When the 4th house environment is polluted with the toxicity of secrets, lies or repressed monsters (like the Minotaur and the Dragon) then the heroic impulse is to "kill off" the monster which sets the circle of betrayal in motion.

Underpinning this change is an enormity of grief invisible in the excitement of separation. Childhood is finished. Unconditional acceptance is threatened. When the leaving home process is complicated or threatened the individual indiscriminately places their trust in the outsider. The assumed reality is that the world outside will be supportive. Disillusionment often follows, shattering the assumptions that the external world will be more welcoming. The misplaced loyalties and love rebound. Mourning is generally not ritualised at this stage and sits as a hollow feeling of emptiness under the upwardly mobile urges to discover the world outside. Without the proper mentoring the mourning can turn to despair, self-destruction, at worst self-loathing. The courage to leave what is familiar is often projected onto another who then must betray us in order for us to find the interior courage embedded in the 5th house.

Attachment and Separation

Separation is intimately linked to bonding. The ability to separate without destructive emotional undertones is a product of secure attachment. Broadly we could categorise this into three groups.⁵

Bond – Separate

Secure attachment facilitates a healthy separation. If the individual's needs are met, then the feeling of being well-nourished and a sense of belonging promote the ability to be separate. This can only occur if we have been encouraged to explore beyond what is familiar, to have been acknowledged for that exploration and applauded on our return. Our secure base supports our explorations outside. This helps to create mastery over our environment, which is an essential component of secure development. Astrologically, this would suggest a well-supported Moon, or similar themes.

4 Brian Clark "Gemini: The Search for the Missing Twin", *The Mountain Astrologer* (May/June 2000).
5 John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth are the pioneers in delineating attachment styles. See John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*, Routledge (London: 1988).

Bond – Can't Separate

This attachment style promotes dependency and symbiosis, or suggests the inability to separate due to the high level of rigidity and pressures to conform. Both promote a chaotic atmosphere, which engenders fear and anxiety at the juncture of separating as no secure base has been developed. When astrological archetypes prone to enmeshment, chaos or rigidity (Neptune, Pluto & Saturn) are in difficult aspect to the Moon, the tendency towards this style of attachment is heightened. Examples might be: Neptune square Moon, where separation could constellate fears of not being able to survive outside the *alembic* of the family, or the fear that those we leave will be weakened by our departure. Pluto quincunx Moon may evoke a dread of betraying those we leave behind, or being betrayed by those we are trying to trust. Saturn opposite Moon may evoke guilt when we feel we are not caretaking those we have left, or self-criticism and fear of how we will manage to provide for ourselves. Difficult lunar aspects will highlight separation issues.

Won't Bond – Can't Separate

An inability to bond promotes disconnection, separation being more a dread of

connection than authentic separateness. When attachment has not been successful then the individual may instinctually sense disconnection, which interferes with the process of bonding. Astrologically this could bring the principles of freedom and separateness into contact with the Moon; for instance the simplistic statement of the Moon in Air could identify this dynamic. Brian Clark in *The Sibling Constellation* suggests this:

"Having the Moon in an air sign implies that the drive for emotional security is constantly filtered through an experience of disconnection. The earliest feelings, recorded by the Moon, include an innate sense of separateness, space and distance. Hence there may be a strange sense of dislocation: a feeling of being disconnected from where one is or where one settles. The gulf between the sense of closeness and separateness propels the Moon in air to swing back and forth between extremes."⁶

Other astrological indicators would be derived from Moon/Uranus themes. This astrological combination suggests the tendency to amputate security systems due to an anxiety or dread of being trapped or suffocated.

⁶ Brian Clark, *The Sibling Constellation: The Astrology and Psychology of Brothers and Sisters*, Penguin Arkana (London: 1999).

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Attachment is a necessity in human development, as it instinctually develops the ability to discriminate between the protector and the predator. When the familial home has been violated by abuse or the atmosphere is clouded with violence, then the world outside is also unsafe. Without secure attachment the individual is often at risk of making the wrong choices, trusting the wrong individual and therefore constellating betrayal. At the transitional point of leaving home, our sense of secure attachment becomes a primary indication of the transition's success.

Astrologically, attachment styles are recognised in a myriad of ways connected to the lunar archetype (the Moon, 4th house, and Cancer), the other "houses of endings" (8th & 12th houses) and their derivatives of Scorpio, Pisces, Neptune and Pluto. However a definitive way of delineating attachment styles begins with examining aspects to the Moon. When the slower-moving planets are in a difficult aspect to the Moon, then the "leaving home" process may be fraught with incomplete feelings and ambiguity. Complexes, which complicate the transition, may be organised by their aspects to the Moon. These are potent aspects, which reverberate through the system of the family. Following is a short synopsis of these aspects, however I would encourage you to delve more deeply into these images reflecting on your separation process and attachment style. These themes will also be evident with the planets in or ruling the 4th house.

Saturn

Saturn/Moon aspects could constellate familial themes of rigidity, authority and rules. When the parental values and rules are at the expense of the young, then the individual may be fixed in a system, not of their choosing, which keeps them bound to the old system. Compelled to live out the un-lived life of the parent, they may feel trapped and fearful of leaving the only structure provided for them. Predictability and controllability are vital allies to secure development, however if they engender fear and anxiety, then the rigidity of the family system suffocates development. Hierarchy is essential in early childhood, however this balance must loosen if we are to develop a sense of personal autonomy. Otherwise structure and safety, predictability and controllability become rigid and imprisoning threatening the creativity of the individual.

Chiron

Themes of abandonment, estrangement, or displacement may have permeated the family atmosphere to the extent where the individual feels unsafe and unfamiliar outside the

family culture. If the family is the outsider in the society, then the individual may feel that safety can only be sustained in the family. Often with this aspect, the familial myth may suggest the pain of living is great, wounding the will and the spirit that promotes adventure and exploration outside the family and culture. With a Chiron/Moon aspect, we are also alerted to the potentiality of a familial wound which cripples the young person's attempt to leave home.

Uranus

Disengagement and separation are themes that resonate when the archetypes of Uranus and the Moon combine. The possibility of a fractured or dislocated family atmosphere, or lack of unconditional bonds is suggested, whether perceived or real. A cold family climate or an unconscious memory of feeling abandoned or cut off from security could emphasise the need to be disengaged, so freedom and separateness are always at the expense of closeness and togetherness. When the safety of our childhood atmosphere has been punctured by a sudden or unresolved severance, then our own ability to sustain relationship and our adult family unit will be compromised.

Neptune

With both Neptune and the Moon, the urge to merge is dominant. Therefore themes of enmeshment, sacrifice, abandonment and illness may be part of the familial inheritance when these two planets are in aspect. The individual's sense of self is sacrificed for the family well being, often rendering the young person invisible. Leaving home may place others at risk, therefore the individual could feel compelled to stay to care for the parent who is in need, increasing the danger of becoming psychologically stranded. The young person may become ill as an unconscious attempt to delay the leaving home process.

Pluto

Family secrets, shame, unexpressed grief, power and control may dominate the family atmosphere with Pluto aspecting the Moon. If the family atmosphere is polluted with a family secret or unexpressed grief then the young person feels unable to be intimate with outsiders for fear of betraying their family. In this case Persephone's "leaving home" process may be emulated, where the Underworld God is evoked to abduct us into another atmosphere of control and domination. When the family is bonded through an inappropriate secret or shame this "protects" the family as a unit and anyone leaving is at risk; the message becomes "if you leave us we will be destroyed". Transferring of loyalties to a lover or partner outside the family is seen as a betrayal, which constellates the fear of being disinherited.

The Moon is systemic in nature as it also describes Mother and her feeling life, perhaps her experience of her familial atmosphere. In this way the Moon describes a legacy from the ancestors, especially Mother's line. Quite literally, it may also describe the route Mother took to leave home, a roadway we may have instinctually traveled. Young people often repeat the leaving home pattern of their parents.

The lunar statement in the horoscope suggests how we bond, and how our urge to bond was met in the atmosphere of the home, directly shaping the way we separate and leave home. When the lunar constellation or 4th house is too difficult to deal with, we may split off from that aspect in favour of a more supportive one. Perhaps our Beatles' heroine left her Saturn-Moon constellation to pursue a more favourable aspect of her horoscope, however without the support to help her cross the threshold that leads to the outside world, she is destined to carry this Saturn-Moon image into her relationships.

Leaving Home Messages

Jay Haley, one of the pioneers of the Family Therapy movement, suggests four important messages to help us leave home without guilt, shame or feeling encumbered by parental grief.⁷ The roots of these messages are held in our early experiences of attachment and separation and are important for encouraging the development of ego strength. Mythically this is similar to the commencement of the heroic trial or labours where the gods offer the hero important gifts for their forward journey. These four messages are:

1: You can go

Released by the parent's love and encouraged to pursue their life away from home, the individual is free to explore themselves away from parental control. Their journey forward is buoyed by memories of approval, support and encouragement. However often the unconscious message is "you should not go", which hovers as a ghost over every successive adult relationship. With this negative message the individual feels compelled to seek freedom from every relationship, and to be constantly reassured that they will be free.

2: We believe in you

Armed with faith in themselves, instilled by the parents, the hero is free to learn by his mistakes. But when the parents do not trust their child can make their way in the world the message is toxic. If the message is "we don't believe in you", then the individual constantly struggles to believe in themselves, driven to prove themselves in the world at large.

3: We will miss you

Leaving with the sense of feeling valued helps free ourselves from the compulsive need to be loved by another. Knowing we are loved allows us to love. When the message fails and "we won't miss you" is internalised, then the feelings of not being valued seep into each successive relationship, creating the need for the partner to provide constant reassurance that they are desired and needed in every new relationship.

4: We will be fine

The young adult is launched into the world freed from feeling responsible for those they are leaving. They leave home with feelings of completion and an authentic knowing that this phase of their life has ended. Failing this the individual may fear "if you abandon us, we will be destroyed". The individual then feels unable to cope, with others relying on them or unable to leave difficult situations. Without the freedom to go, the individual may feel imprisoned in a situation they cannot leave.

With security in their attachment to the family, the crossing to the world beyond family is accompanied by memories of encouragement and applause. These internalised memories form the foundation of ego strength, an anchor for future separations or times of fear and despair. This strong base enables the person to move through the dark nights of their lives, rather than become paralyzed and impotent. The solidity of the IC and the 4th house provide the launching pad for the solar and heroic impulses, explored in the 5th house.

The prominent factors in the familial environment that place the individual at risk of a rough crossing include rigidity, enmeshment, chaos and disengagement. The individual who finds him- or herself swinging between being tightly bound by the rigidity of the familial container or completely unbound and uncontained, lacks a centre, a secure base. The foundation stone at the IC is weakened, and the lunar container is vulnerable. Another continuum stretches from one pole, where the individual's personality may be engulfed and smothered by the family, to the other pole, where the individual could feel cut off from the heart of the family. Both extremes complicate the leaving home process. In a healthy familial environment, we feel more centred and less dismembered by these extremes. Astrological themes that combine the lunar archetype with other planets sketch the landscape of the familial terrain.

When the Saturnian archetype is overemphasized, the family structure probably is rigid. Family members may be at risk of disavowing their authenticity in favour of an external authority. Important in the rigid family are

⁷ These four messages are inspired by the work of Jay Haley. See Jay Haley, *Leaving Home: The Therapy of Disturbed Young People*, Second Edition, Brunner/Mazel, Inc. (New York: 1997)

Leaving Home

Optimum Time: Late Adolescent Phase

First Nodal Return	Approx 18.6 years
Waning Progressed Moon Square	20.5 years
Neptune Waxing Semi-Square	20.5 years
Uranus Waxing Square	21 years
Saturn Waning Square	22 years
Second Jupiter Return	24 years

accepted traditions, rules, and authority, not individuals. When Saturn is weakened, a chaotic family atmosphere may be present and no form or structure is present to contain the developing individual. No safety net is available to help the individual feel secure in exploration and discovery outside the familial structure and rules. At the other extreme, in a chaotic atmosphere, hierarchy is non-existent, and the young child may feel responsible for their parents or siblings, and feel the need of take charge of the situation.

Within a disengaged familial atmosphere, or with a feeling of parental distance, then the separation process is weighed down with anxiety. Here the archetype of Uranus is constellated. At any sign of dependency or emotional bonding, the individual instinctively pulls away. The urge to bond unconsciously beckons others; however, when they respond, they are pushed away. This engagement-disengagement dynamic sabotages both the attachment and the separation processes.

High enmeshment between family members also inhibits the process of separation. Astrologically, this can be described through the archetype of Neptune. Statements like Neptune in the 4th house, the Moon in Pisces, or Neptune-Moon aspects are a signal for the individual's propensity to sacrifice themselves for the communal wellbeing of the family. If this is the case, the webbing of the family traps the individual and leaving home is difficult. Plutonic enmeshment could also occur through family secrets, or the threat of familial betrayal, binding the individual to the familial unconscious.⁸

Time to Leave

The optimum time to leave home varies with each culture, the familial environment, and the current social and economic climate. Family therapists suggest that, in Westernized cultures, the optimum time for the launching of young adults is late adolescence, between the ages of 18½ and 24. Astrologically, this embraces the period from the first nodal return to the second Jupiter

return, and includes the other important planetary cycles, which cluster around the ages of 21/22. Currently this passage is being journeyed by the Pluto in Libra (with Neptune in Sagittarius) generation.

When the leaving home process is enacted too early, there is a danger of being ejected from the family home, whereas if this occurs too late, the individual may feel immobilized. The leaving home process is a shift from the familial to the social world and the developmental cycles of the planets represent this transitory period. Each generation redefines this process in its own way.

Until we have psychologically left home, we can't return home. We continue to take the incomplete "leaving home" issues into every aspect of our lives, especially during transitional periods when we are about to traverse another important threshold. Of course, in later life, home leaving does not necessarily mean we go anywhere: sometimes someone leaves us. What remains is a reminder of what once seemed secure. In the chasm that opens with the separation, we are challenged to draw upon our skills of mastery, as our assumed reality is once again shattered. Our ability to handle the "black holes of despair", a developmental process first strongly tested in adolescence, will continue to inform our leaving home experiences. We are challenged in adolescence with the task of reducing our attachment *schema* to the externalized images of mother and father in order to develop our internal sense of autonomy and ego strength. This reforming of identity carries implications from our earliest sense of belonging and separateness. Although this template at adolescence can only ever be superimposed over the initial statement of attachment, it provides a reinforced base that creates the platform from which we can effectively leave home.

The astrological threshold crossed in leaving home is symbolically the 5th house cusp, the gateway to our creative self. This is a world beyond family, yet informed and shaped by the experience of the family of origin. Leaving the familial environs (of the 4th) is an archetypal experience, which, when poorly executed, leaves its scar on each successive transition. The Pluto in Leo generation typified this difficult transition in leaving their Pluto in Cancer parental home. Having "quietly turned the back door key" perhaps this generation is in a more conscious position to launch their own children into the extra-familial world of adventure and self-discovery.

⁸ For amplification on family systems see Erin Sullivan, *Dynasty, The Astrology of Family Dynamics*, Penguin Arkana (London: 1996). Pages 53-60 explore the archetypes of Uranus and Neptune in light of the disengaged-enmeshed family system.

North Node as *Numinosum*

Laurence Hillman

The meaning of those pesky nodes often escapes us, as they do not carry easily-identified mythic *personae* with whom we can dialogue, metaphorically speaking; and most Western astrologers get a little shy in the presence of oriental dragons. Here, **Laurence Hillman** helps to demystify the Moon's Nodes for us.

As an astrologer at the Millennium, I am consulted for different reasons than in previous decades. Whereas earlier, the questions mostly concerned the Big Three – work/money, sex, and health – there is a distinct shift towards asking astrology to direct a client's spiritual quest and to describe the native's place and purpose in a larger cosmos. Over the past twenty years, I have started most every astrological reading with the question: "Why are you here today? What would you like out of this reading?" The issues raised by this inquiry have hitherto centered largely around the aforementioned emotional issues.

Also at the Millennium, there is a prevalent looseness with philosophical terms. While science and the language of the politically correct seem to be getting increasingly specific with new words added all the time, in the philosophical community, old words such as soul, psyche, collective unconscious and spirituality are being re-applied and peddled to the public *en masse*. Let me therefore define the terms *spirituality* and *spiritual quest*. I will use the term spirit – loosely meaning filled with air – as that which is opposed to matter, that which transcends the physical form. While when many speak of reality they are referring to scientifically measurable earth matters, the spiritual reality I am referring to here is that lightness of being we enjoy when we step outside of our body and transcend the physical: in memories, in daydreams, and in fantasies. Because we are not limited by the hardness of matter, in this spiritual, airy world there are no limits to our flights of fancy. There is no gravity, for instance. We can conjure up ideas, juggle them in the air, and have anyone we please drop in for a chat like Mary Pop-in-s. We are connecting to an unlimited experience beyond the physical world to which we are attached, quite literally, by gravity, or *gravis*, and where our body ends up in the grave. We are able to feel connected to what is beyond us and this, like a breath of fresh air, fills us with a sense of freedom. While some term these escapades flights of fancy, others call these experiences

religious. No matter the label, they are experiences of transcending.

The way to this "other" realm has, through the ages, been linked to the element of each particular Age. Going back to the Age of earthy Taurus, (very roughly 4000-2000 BCE), the *post mortem* voyage into the unknown was accompanied by a plethora of objects, entombed in large earthy vaults, and hidden in - or beneath - huge earthy structures. In the Age of fiery Aries (very roughly 2000 – 0 BCE), burning bushes, fiery rituals, and myths about lightning bridged us to the other world. At the Millennium, as we leave the Age of watery Pisces, we are only beginning to awaken from the emotional, blurry era from which we are barely emerging. A time where symbols of fish, the discovery of the unconscious and a climax in unbridled capitalism that uses watery symbols – liquidity, banks, frozen assets, and cash flow – copiously. Now, at the dawning of the Age of airy Aquarius, the philosopher is seeking to go beyond by reaching towards the stars and thinking about things in new ways. Airy connections are now made between previously unrelated issues and between hitherto unrelated individuals, peoples, and galaxies. Tools such as the Internet, mass transportation by plane and an unprecedented access to information and places is freeing great masses of the shackles that governments and religious institutions once held over them. No longer are we bound by place, tied to our homeland, and rooted to the family. One of the many flip sides of this latest revolution is a delirious high from information overload, a guru-infested mega mall of ideas where hyperventilating masses pass out.

Astrologers must keep up with the shift in Ages that is reflected in the shift of the collective consciousness. Mostly, we have counselled in a muddy, earth-watery, and emotional world thereby working side-by-side with psychologists, clergy, and others in the helping professions. By delineating a person's personality, how her inner characters are combined and



Laurence Hillman moved to the United States in his twenties. After acquiring a degree in Architecture, he earned Masters Degrees in Business and in Engineering Management from Washington University in St. Louis. He has been an astrologer for over 22 years. Laurence specializes in helping his clients understand their deeper purpose or life "calling." He is at present deeply involved in exploring the deepening merger of astrology with contemporary psychology. He has lectured internationally, and conducted such conferences as Star Cross'd Lovers at the Globe Theatre in London on Shakespeare and Astrology, and Venus in America, a workshop at the 1997 "Cycles and Symbols Conference" in California both co-presented with his father James Hillman. Laurence speaks five languages, and has travelled to over 40 countries. He lives in St. Louis, Missouri with his wife and two daughters. He is now focusing his full attention on his astrological practice, a forthcoming book and on teaching what has been his greatest passion - astrology.

interacting on her inner stage, we astrologers have provided a service for a long time. We described how the native was best to handle money, where her strengths and weaknesses were in relationships, and how best to deal with that difficult health issue.

At the dawning of the Age of Aquarius - as its symbols are appearing virtually, literally, artistically and architecturally (c.f. Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim Museum and the new Rose Center for Earth and Space in New York City) - we also had a significant conjunction of Uranus and Neptune in Aquarius in the mid nineteen-nineties. While Richard Tarnas has aptly described the Uranus-Neptune conjunction cycle as an indicator of times for the imaginal to break through to the masses, a simple analysis of the answers I get to my introductory questions before readings may serve as hint of what the latest conjunction is trumpeting.

Increasingly, people are searching for spiritual meaning. They are seeking to connect with their spirituality. They want to move beyond the physical where the world is awash with capitalism, and where organized religion is drowning in a sea of skepticism. Slowly, the idea is sinking in that perhaps happiness is not found in a new car. Increasingly, individual human beings are awakening to the realization that something is not good simply because it makes money. Therefore, the more we are threatened to drown in pop-psychology, religion, and capitalism, the more perhaps we yearn to be lifted beyond into the world of spirit, of air.

The new answer I am getting in my brief interview is: "I am here to talk about my purpose in life, why I am here, what my place is in the larger order of things." A recent article in a national publication asked the question: if you could talk directly to a higher power, God, infinite being, the Divine, whatever, and ask one question, what would you ask? The top question, hands down, was: "What is my purpose in life?" Perhaps, as astrologers, we now have a new task to perform and a new set of answers to provide. But, are we equipped?

For over twenty years, I have focused my astrological practice on precisely this question. While I am interested in personality and how we psychologically create and interact with the world around us, I have always been most interested in the question of what a person's purpose is here in life, their calling. There has always been, I figured, a place where your soul wants to go to in this lifetime. I define soul here as that part of us which is immortal and extends beyond our physical life, both before and after. Soul: a backpack into which we gather experiences along our lives paths. This is a view of soul that extends its existence through many lifetimes and comes to the western world from India and Buddhism. Twenty-five-hundred years ago, Gautama Buddha awakened many to the ancient mysteries that held answers to life's most basic question when he described life as an episode, what the Orientalist often refers to as a bead on a string of pearls.

Here is an image: let me describe a set of train tracks to you. Suppose your soul is traveling on a train track. It comes from infinity and goes to infinity. If you are so inclined, you may call this infinity the divine, God, the Universe, whatever. This reminds me of the words of T.S. Eliot:

And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time

The important part is to see a continuum with ever increasing *knowing* along the way. Not information, *knowing*: those numinous moments that fill you with awe because their sacred power has been experienced by you. Like great sex, where you know the other person (in the biblical sense, so to speak), or when you know a symphony. On this train track, in a certain time and place, the soul bursts through a membrane stretched across the track and gains a physical body. You are born. At another point along the track your soul breaks through another membrane and releases your body. You die. The period between these two points we call life on Earth and we are here in linear time. The process is repeated several times until - following ancient esoteric teachings - we have learned all our lessons on the cross of life (described by the intersection of the MC-IC and ASC-DES axis in astrology) and become enlightened or once again part of the place I loosely call the divine. The two key parts of this image are a place of learning towards where your soul needs to go, and a place of gathered experiences from where your soul originates. This place of origin carries

Guggenheim Museum
Bilbao
Frank Gehry



with it experiences and knowing from previous incarnations.

There is also a train on the track. In the dining car of the train, there is a group of characters. Some call them “parts of me,” some call them planets, some call them archetypes, some call them actors on a stage, and some call them personality traits. No matter what you call them, they are interacting in distinct ways. Some are at war, perhaps having a food fight; some are flirting in the corner. One character is perhaps even turned away and not wanting to talk to anyone. This scene is described in your natal chart: all the struggles, harmonies, rifts, feuds, romances, seductions, and any other human emotion you can name. Behaviorists study what the characters do and try to change the script by offering chocolate. Gestalt therapists buy a ticket, get on board, and get emotionally involved in the ongoing interactions.

But remember the train is on a track. The Soul has laid out a specific direction for you. There is a calling to be hearkened, a purpose to be fulfilled, and a mission impossible to be tackled. At birth, the train leaves the birth station and is immediately on its way to your final destination – destiny. The question is, do the characters on board know where your train is headed? Perhaps you are approaching your mid-life crisis; do you know where your track is going? There are also switches along the train track. Sometimes there’s a choice between two directions; sometimes there are eleven choices. There are also signals along the way. Some are quiet and we zoom by, others are loud and flashing neon signs. We call these signs calamities and dreams. We may or may not change direction. We may be so caught up with our personality that we simply have no idea what the soul wants to learn.

The soul’s learning is described by the end station of the track. It is the description of a place, not a personality trait. Your life purpose is not a specific career, you are not called to be something particular. You are called to explore a place. If I say Paris or Florida, you will conjure up different images of these places. Your soul is here to learn what is indicated by its place of destiny.

Such becomes now the millennial Astrologer’s task: to conjure up the description of places that the soul needs to learn about, thus answering the predominant question of our time. But how?

Enter the Moon’s Nodes and the power that these curvy glyphs in the chart hold. The

North Node is a sign that quietly indicates your calling, where your soul wants to go, your purpose in life. It is as powerful as that, seemingly as simple as that, and immediately as complex as that statement. Rather than attempt to make a case here for *why* this works by going back to Indian mythology, Rahu and Ketu, and dragons, I instead challenge the reader to an experiment. Seasoned astrologers will perhaps find it worth their while to look over a dozen familiar charts under this proposed light. Novice astrologers or laypeople interested in their purpose may find it beneficial to have someone tell them where their Moon’s Nodes are, and to guide them in the integration of the chart as described below. In case after case and story after story, I am repeatedly humbled by the power of the North Node. I have focused my entire practice on learning about how a native’s personality – traditional makeup of the chart – helps or hinders the soul in its quest to get to the North Node. For instance, having three planets on the South Node might translate into a giant rubber band that pulls your train back to where you were at birth. As such, this constellation can remind you of issues that you have dealt with in previous lives, things that come easily, naturally but where you “can’t get no satisfaction” in this lifetime. Or, Neptune conjunct your North Node can put the train station of your destiny into dense fog, leaving you lost about your purpose



Rahu, the North Node
www.hindugallery.com

and demanding of you special courage to head forward into the fog, trusting that the tracks will roll into the station in due time.

Because of our physical anchoring in the earthy, material and sensual world, the house position of the North Node is more important than its sign. This is misunderstood in many texts. Because you need to have the birth chart to describe the North Node's house position and a simple table can let anyone find their North Node's sign position easily, there tends to be a focus on the sign before the house in the textbooks. I cannot emphasize enough how much more important the house placement is when helping a client understand their destination. The house points out where in the world your soul wants to go, and if you align your personality with this place, there is a sense of contentment, of being in the zone, of being congruent with your purpose, a sensation that is hard to describe but recognizable by most. There is also a certain reverence or even fear inherent in this place. It is the sensation of stage fright. You know you have to do it but you resist. The serenity you feel when you do go is in part due to the overcoming of the fear and the awe-some feeling of doing that which you must. The astrological sign of the North Node then adds flavoring to the description of the place: is it Libran/Venusian? Cancerian/Loony?

Once I know my purpose in life as described to me astrologically by the house position of the North Node, I have only just begun. There is not a quick formula to answer the complex question of purpose. There are not twelve callings because there are twelve houses. The variable is the personality. What kind of gear do I have to get there? Anyone on board know about trains? Is there an engineer in the house? As a psychologically aware astrologer, I must learn to integrate the complete chart into this one place. Is this a wild man traveling to Paris? An Eskimo going to Florida? The overriding idea here is to create congruency between personality and purpose, between what you want and what your soul needs. The ride is neither a straight line nor a quick journey. At times, we backtrack, are sidetracked, get off track or even lose sight of the track. Mostly, I tell my clients: this is a life long trip; it may, in fact, take more than one lifetime to fully explore the destination indicated. The grand photographer Ansel Adams was once asked what the most important item was in his dark room. His response was simply, "The trash can."

There are also those who prefer to reverse the train to the place of departure and not

to set off in any direction at all. I have found this to be true particularly for natives with a very harmonious chart. This is what some have poignantly called a "cruising life." On the other hand, natives with much tension in the chart, with experiences of pain, separation, death, and other milestones along their tracks seem more akin to exploring their North Node. Most often, when I describe the North Node to these natives, they have an intense emotional reaction, frequently including tears of relief. How many times have I heard, "I knew it!?" As some astrological callings go against the current dictums of society, this alone may prevent a person from following their track. For instance, a 1st house North Node may call you to explore being more selfish and saying, to yourself and the public, this is I. This is not a very Piscean, self-sacrificing purpose. However, for every 1st house North Node native, there is (at least statistically), a 7th house North Node native whose purpose is to be less selfish and take her cues from the Other.

Perhaps the reader will allow me to share a few observations I have made over the years. First, it is quite often the case that the North Node is in the element (by sign or house) that is the least represented in the chart or that is otherwise not present at all. This observation cements the importance of the North Node. Here the North Node also indicates the place to explore the element you lack. Second, the native must learn how to understand the South Node. This place shows an area of refuge, of illusions, of quick fixes. For instance, I can help a desolate client feel better if I offer them activities indicated by the South Node. By moving, even temporarily, to the place of comfort, the South Node, we can quickly feel OK but in the long run our life seems to lack meaning in that place. We feel as though we have been sitting on a couch too long in need of a good stretch. Say, for instance, I have the North Node in the 6th house. I am thus called to service and to work diligently in my surrounding world. If I am in crisis and feel overwhelmed with the busy, busy life I find myself in, going off to sit in isolation in a place of worship (12th house South Node) would give me an instant sense of relief but would not, in the long run, fulfil me. And, third, transits to the Moon's Nodes are to be seen as shining light at the areas indicated. For example, if transiting Saturn is conjunct a client's South Node (and therefore opposing his North Node), I tend to explore with him the meaning of his South Node. This may not be the best time to travel towards his purpose, but instead this is an excellent time to focus on and resolve what is keeping him from going there.

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So, finally, how does the North Node relate to the spiritual world? If the purpose in life is to use our personality as best we can to travel to the soul's destiny, then we are learning the greatest possible lessons in this lifetime. The North Node becomes a numinous awe-inspiring place, because of the intense knowing we experience when we operate in that part of our chart. The German Theologian Rudolf Otto in his 1917 book, *The Idea of the Holy*, describes the numinous as a fundamental and distinguished experience common to all religions. C.G. Jung was much inspired by him and later developed the idea of the *Numinosum*, which some claim is the essence of his whole work. Otto says that the numinous creates in us a feeling of being created. This, he says, is a feeling not just of dependency but also of the creature's nothingness in the face of its creator. The presence of the creator is experienced as a *mysterium tremendum* that is a feeling of awe and shuddering. This is what I refer to as a feeling of awe before that which is unspeakable. But, says Otto, in contrast to the *tremendum*, the numinous is simultaneously experienced as a *Fascinans*, that is as something that attracts and fills with blissful exaltation. The numinous is also felt as a confrontation with an unsurpassable value, to which absolute respect and obedience are due out of a feeling of

inner obligation. It is precisely to this inner obligation that I hope to awaken my clients: an inner obligation to stretch to the maximum towards that which is to be learned here in this life. To get as uncomfortable as necessary and to dare to go forward. Just how much effort will have to be expended to travel to the numinous North Node will have to be seen in the rest of the chart.

There are also other needs to be met in the chart. The personality can not be ignored. There is sometimes something in our heart that calls out to us and that may be different from our node. Our personality can be quite noisy. James Hillman, in his book *The Soul's Code* elegantly describes this inner push to that which must be unfolded. If you have six planets in the 4th house of roots and home and your North Node is in the 2nd house of money and values, we can not ignore your real need for family, a secure home, roots and ancestors. But, perhaps your way there is by getting a job where you get paid well, by buying a nice home and by hiring a gardener and a genealogist. An effort to integrate the chart into the numinous experience of being part of a bigger picture, this gives us the awesome experience of being on track. 

Film: *Gladiator*

Liz Greene



Embedded amongst these articles whose themes concern various dimensions of spirituality, the opening sequences of *Gladiator*, with their violence, cruelty, and display of the might of a ruthless war machine, will no doubt seem grossly out of place, if not glaringly politically incorrect. Where, one may well ask, is the spirituality, let alone ordinary human compassion, in a Roman commanding officer whose objective is the utter destruction of a recalcitrant tribe? This film, whose visual magnificence is tainted with a simplistic script and a characteristic Hollywood *laissez-faire* about the facts of history, is nevertheless a remarkable portrayal of a particular kind of spiritual fervour - the passion of the war-god, whose divine inebriation once sent the Norse berserker invincible into battle and catapulted a small tribe of Italic natives into supremacy over the whole of the known world. We might do well, as astrologers, to understand the enduring attractions of the war-god, for in an epoch when war has demonstrated its more horrifically Plutonian face and lost the nobility and honour which were once essentially part of Mars' array of attributes, we have lost our comprehension of why some people love to fight. Myth can teach us a great deal about the divine nature of prowess and honour in battle; the Norse Valhalla and the Elysian Fields of the Greeks are only two examples which bear testimony to the afterlife rewards which lie in store for those who live and die honourably by the sword. Figures like Napoleon and Alexander continue to hold a powerful fascination for those who seek a human model for an archetypal pattern once deemed to be a god. *Gladiator* can teach us a lot about this god; and despite its Hollywood pyrotechnics and unabashed sentimentality, it may also help us to understand why those whose birth charts are Mars-dominated need to honour what they are made of, and find constructive outlets for it, rather than being made to feel they are bad, unspiritual, or "unevolved".

The figure of the Roman general Maximus, played by the delicious Russell Crowe, is distilled essence of Mars. He is manly and beautiful. His physical body is an expression of the energy and instinctive grace of a deity born not of the upper ethers of the sky-gods but of the dark blood-flow of the chthonic realm. He is not afflicted with the need to display gratuitous

cruelty; that is the emblem of a blocked or twisted Mars, not a healthy one. He lives to serve his empire and his god, and his honour is worth more than his life. He is passionate, devoted, fearless, honest, and loyal. He is also a realist; he does not whinge and whine about the spiritually superior merits of pacifism when faced with the stark necessity of winning or dying. In a time when we are virtually muzzled by the collective idealisations of Neptune in Aquarius, Maximus is refreshingly unhypocritical. Even the eye-for-an-eye principle of revenge, also part of Mars' nature but so apparently un-Christian and unfashionable these days, is portrayed here as noble. That is undoubtedly part of the film's enormous popularity: it presents us with emotions we secretly feel but are afraid to articulate. Maximus is not stupid enough to think war is anything other than a brutal necessity. But he chooses to fight with discipline, clarity, nobility, and skill. This is the "night side" of Mars with its Scorpionic devotion and self-discipline, reflected by the Sephira Geburah in that other great symbolic system, the Kabbalah. Here too, Mars is recognised as a divine principle, not a random display of destructiveness and chaos.

The film's "feminine interest", as it is euphemistically known in Hollywood, is token. Maximus' Spanish wife, and the Roman princess to whom he is passionately attracted, are both stereotypes. It is a man's film, which is not to say it cannot be thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by women. The relations between Maximus and Commodus, the cowardly, neurotic and deeply damaged young Emperor, are far more important, and hint at (perhaps inadvertently, but nevertheless suggestively) a profound human issue concerning the distortions of Mars. Commodus is a rejected son, and while the film is not overburdened with psychological sophistication, nevertheless this figure is common enough in everyday life - the young man who is a disappointment to his father and who, rather than fulfilling the strengths of his own nature, settles into a good nasty seethe about those whom his father loves more. Commodus hates Maximus because Maximus has the qualities the old Emperor Marcus Aurelius would have wanted in a son. Commodus is not a warrior, and he knows it; he is sensitive and indolent rather than brave,



Russell Crowe
© 2000 Dreamworks SKG

sensuous and self-indulgent rather than disciplined. So he begins to hate. He is eaten up with jealousy, and this turns him destructive. We may see this dynamic at work in many families, between father and son and also between mother and daughter. When Mars is not expressed constructively, with honour and respect, it may turn poisonous and emerges as a kind of cowardly cruelty and malice aimed at undermining all those who trigger the individual's sense of impotence. Many instances of child abuse and domestic violence owe their existence to just such a dynamic. In its simplistic way, the relationship between these two male figures in the film gives us a succinct image of how destructive envy arises, and how it can so easily slide into unmitigated evil. Although the film does not purport to be either deeply philosophical or deeply insightful into human character - it is, after all, a Hollywood spectacular - it can, nevertheless, make us think philosophically about the nature of evil, the roots of violence, and the undeniable magic and mystery of a clean and shining Mars reflecting the divinity of the archetypal warrior.

In some ways, the second half of the film could be dispensed with, because the plot loses its way and the script becomes increasingly trite and simplistic. This film is not a work of art. Yet the filming of the great battle sequence between the Roman army, with Maximus as its commander, and the Germanic tribes who "refuse to admit they have been conquered", is a cinematic masterpiece. At the end of the film, when Commodus is finally killed by Maximus in the arena and the Senate declares that the Roman Republic will be restored, those of us who respect sound historical research may fall about laughing. The Roman people in the 2nd century CE were not remotely interested in the restoration of the Republic, and this anachronistic plug for an

essentially modern concept of democracy is utterly absurd. Commodus was in fact murdered in his bath by a slave, and rather than inaugurating the dawn of a new republic, the murder of the Emperor simply ushered in the rule of yet another Emperor. The American movie-making machine, with a little help from Mel Gibson, seems intent on turning historical fact into sentimental proselytising. But the performances in *Gladiator* are convincing, and the recreation of the Roman world, Mars-imbued and steeped in glory, is vivid and realistic. There are many kinds of war and many kinds of heroism; and if we are fortunate enough to live in a culture which has, albeit only recently, begun to work out what a bad idea it is to rush blindly into battle, we may still exercise the unique spirituality of Mars through battle with our own inner demons as well as the demons unleashed around us, and still maintain the courage and loyalty which allow us to live our lives with honour. The football hooligan and the lager lout, the conscienceless mercenary and the corrupt dictator, are deformed Mars, not Mars parading in his full beauty and potency. Rather than less Mars, we may need more. Deity without Mars means a castrated deity which deprives us of our capacity to maintain our integrity; then we run the risk of becoming horribly similar to Commodus, in thought and feeling if not in actual deed. *Gladiator*, although no doubt too violent for the tastes of many filmgoers, too simplistic for the intellectually-minded, and perhaps too overtly and spectacularly brutish for the refined sensibilities of many spiritual souls, can make us question some very fundamental issues we ordinarily take for granted. Every planet has its own form of spirituality as well as its own form of baseness and destructiveness. The next time we interpret Mars in a birth chart, we might do well to think of Maximus.



The Dalai Lama: Priest-Politician

A Kabbalistic and Astrological Perspective

Freda Edis

Offering a wonderfully catholic variety of perspectives, **Freda Edis** weaves an insightful portrait of one of the most prominent spiritual leaders of our time, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

Freda Edis is Head Tutor of the Faculty of Astrological Studies. She is the author of *The God Between: a Study of Astrological Mercury*. She teaches classical Kabbalah and kabbalistic astrology. She works as a counsellor and astrologer in Glasgow, continues to write and lecture and gives workshops in both astrology and kabbalah. Her special interests are political astrology, mythology and the history of astrology and astronomy.

Wider Perspectives

Why a Kabbalistic perspective? Isn't the astrological world-view enough? In truth, no. Essentially, astrology can only encompass the psychological and material aspects of human life. It can supply information indicating possible spiritual development and a sense of the divine, but, of itself, it does not offer a perspective which encompasses the whole of existence. Kabbalah does. So does Buddhism. So does the mystical heart of any world religion.

I've chosen to study the chart of the Dalai Lama from a Western perspective because, in the last fifty years of the Tibetan Diaspora, Buddhist precepts have become increasingly available to the West largely due to the industry of Tibetans-in-exile. As such, Buddhism is entering the Western collective unconscious at a very fast rate and there is a current debate in Tibetan Buddhist circles concerning whether Buddhism should be adapted to "fit" the western psyche, or whether it can stand on its own precepts, with the West adapting to Buddhism.

My own view is that both apply, mainly because any perennial philosophy which has the whole of existence as its main focus cannot, in essence, exclude what seem to be extremes and opposites. The same applies to Kabbalah, particularly the form of Kabbalah which I adhere to, the Platonic and Neoplatonic Toledano Tradition, which has been revived and re-visited by Warren Kenton, the London Kabbalist.

The Toledano Tradition has its roots in early medieval Spain, where the confluence of Judaic, Islamic and Christian thought was influenced by the Platonism and Neoplatonism brought back to Europe by the Arabs during what was the Dark Ages. Dark in the rest of Europe they might have been (though that is debateable), but in Spain there was a glorious intellectual, spiritual and artistic flowering which influenced the development of European culture up to and beyond the Renaissance and is still with us today, not least in astrology.

All strands of culture influence all others throughout the whole course of history. As an example, Tibetan astrology is based on both the Chinese and Hindu forms. Hindu astrology, as we know, has many similarities with that used in the West. Locked as they were behind their mountains for many hundreds of years, the Tibetans still had access to India, China, the Middle-East and the Mongolian steppe lands. We often forget, too, that the Greeks and Romans and, later, Middle Eastern and European merchants and traders had commerce with India and the lands running along the North-Western edge of what is now Tibet, and that the great Silk Route from the Lebanon to China ran just north of what are the Tibetan nomadic lands. Where human beings travel, ideas are exchanged and take root, sometimes in a form which is adapted to the cultural and intellectual seedbed in which they find themselves. Then they seem to become separate and different intellectual outcroppings. Examined carefully, this is not so, and there is more overlap between astrology, Kabbalah and Buddhism than cultural dress and trappings would sometimes allow.

I could have taken, with some validity, the separatist astrological view in this article, but have chosen to attempt a more syncretist viewpoint, bringing together, if possible, strands of astrological, Kabbalistic and Buddhist thinking in examining the Dalai Lama's chart.

At the core, Buddhism and Kabbalism examine the same phenomena – the totality of existence, encompassing both what is seen and what is not seen. The difference between them is that Buddhism states that there is enough to do by knowing what happens within existence; speculation about what remains beyond existence is just that – speculation. The Neoplatonic form of Kabbalah allows for such speculation: what lies beyond existence is the Absolute from which all existence springs. Unprovable though it is, it attempts to make sense of where and how existence came into

(continued on page 39)



The Centre for Psychological Astrology

Seminar Schedule - Spring 2001

21st January

Relationships - Finding ourselves in the crowd

Every house in the horoscope describes a specific type of relationship whether this is with ourselves, with other people or with the outside world. Paradoxically, it is through relationships that we discover who we are, and an exploration of the projected, denied or devalued parts of our horoscope, whether by planet, house or sign, will provide valuable information about the kinds of relationships we will find ourselves in. This seminar will explore the powerful influence of archetypal relationship patterns at work in our lives, operating at each of the developmental stages, from parent/child to adult/adult to *anima/animus* relationship patterns, and the problems which can arise when these levels become confused. Attention will be paid to the transition between astrological ages and the corresponding collective shift in consciousness which, along with the transits of the outer planets during the last century, have profoundly altered the dynamics of relating. The CPA is delighted to welcome Clare Martin who has been teaching astrology for ten years, and has Diplomas from the Faculty, CPA and in Psychotherapy and Counselling. Currently President of the Faculty of Astrological Studies, she is completing a masters degree in Integrative Psychotherapy and works as a consultant astrologer and counsellor. Her particular interests are the history of astrology, alchemy and the esoteric and mystical traditions.

28th January

Tarot Study Day

We will use this day to deepen experience of the tarot. It is intended for those who have a working knowledge of tarot, especially those who attended the Beginners' Course, and wish to further their understanding. We will concentrate on practical work such as readings and exercises in the group.

4th February

Plutonic Themes: Pluto and the 8th House

Few people understand what they do with their own Pluto, it seems as if he has his mythological cap of invisibility on his head when we try to look at ourselves. How is Pluto acting out in your chart, and in which ways you are confronted with it? What can you do with Pluto in the houses, in aspect to planets and house-rulers? What kind of pain does he cause and how does his transformation processes work? The 8th house has a special dynamic, and we feel a kind of love and hate at the same time towards its contents. We'll explore why this is the case, and how we can understand its dynamics to cope with our problems in daily life. We'll learn how to delineate planets in the 8th and in aspect to the ruler of the 8th house. Pluto in transit very often brings us things we don't expect but we have to pay a certain price for it. We'll look at what Pluto tends to bring, and what would be the best attitude to work with what shows up.

11th February

The Moon and Mercury as Natural and Cultivated Memory

Memories well up from the past when least expected, and sometimes least desired. Yet when we try to remember something that seems important, we can feel it hovering just out of reach, out of consciousness. Often we remember events with others that they remember quite differently - and many of us have memories that go farther back in our lives than is possible. This seminar will look at the Moon and Mercury and what role each plays creating and weaving the story of our lives. We will look at natural memory (the Moon) and cultivated memory (Mercury) - their actions, interactions and role in our lives. We shall look at signs, houses and aspects to the Moon and Mercury to discover habits of mind that block our own and our children's ability to learn, and ways of clearing the pathways as we go along.

Clare Martin

18th February

Saturn In Gemini

Whenever Saturn enters a sign, we begin to notice areas that need extra attention, that have become a bit run down and worn out; issues that demand focus and conscious support to keep going. Gemini has to do with deep splits in our nature, with our duality, with our trickiness. It is not only our relationship to words and what we do with them, but also our connection between the dark and light within ourselves. What kind of tests and choices come when Saturn transits through this sign? Saturn in Gemini will oppose Pluto several times over the next two years adding a more powerful underground dimension to Saturn's transit. We will look at the larger issues of this mundane cycle and how they illuminate the inner, individual passages of the Saturn-Pluto opposition.

25th February

The Fixed Houses

How do we choose the things we need in order to define who we are and to assert ourselves in the world around us? These questions are of major importance for us, when we have planets in the fixed houses. The fixed cross seems to symbolise major stations in the development of a distinct identity, personally as well as culturally. In our present "age of globalisation", personal and cultural "territories", our boundaries, are challenged in new and unforeseen ways. In this seminar we will look at the developmental challenges of planets in the fixed houses, the axes in Taurus/Scorpio and Leo/Aquarius, and the dynamics of aspects between planets, transits and progressions through the fixed houses. The CPA is delighted to welcome Alexander von Schlieffen, who is a painter and an international teacher and lecturer in astrology. Alexander studied painting in Vienna, Frankfurt and Düsseldorf and now teaches astrology at the DAV-schools of Berlin and Cologne and at the SARASTRO-College in Vienna.

11th March

The Trouble with Trines

This seminar will explore the group of aspects usually known as "good" or "easy" - trines, sextiles, and semi-sextiles - which are often interpreted in a simplistic way without the context of the complexities of human psychology. The undoubted gifts and aptitudes reflected by these planetary configurations need to be viewed together with the more difficult dimensions of the horoscope to understand why they are so often undeveloped, or linked with serious problems, and why transiting planets in trine or sextile to natal ones frequently do not reflect the cosmic bonus that astrologers anticipate. Particular focus will be given on ways in which we can work with and develop the "benefic" aspects with greater consciousness.

18th March

The Thug and The Warrior: Making Peace with Mars

This seminar will explore the many facets of the "red planet", once deemed a malefic but now understood to be at the root of many inner and outer difficulties if it is not acknowledged and expressed. Mars may be linked with some of the worst human excesses of violence and brutality, but the aggressive instinct is vitally necessary for ego formation and the individual's capacity to develop character potentials; and the desire nature, if thwarted in blind or negative ways, can undermine the entire personality structure. Through myth, psychological patterns, and astrological placements by sign, house, and aspect, we will examine both the pathologies and gifts of Mars, its power in relationships, its links with creative expression and with physical health and illness, the ways in which it is often blocked both individually and collectively, and possible avenues of positive expression which can help the individual to feel more comfortable with Martial energy in an age when it is, even at best, deemed politically incorrect.

Lynn Bell

Alexander von Schlieffen

Liz Greene

Liz Greene

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About the Centre for Psychological Astrology

The **Centre for Psychological Astrology** provides a unique workshop and professional training programme, designed to foster the cross-fertilisation of the fields of astrology and depth, humanistic, and transpersonal psychology. The main aims and objectives of the CPA professional training course are:

- a) To provide students with a solid and broad base of knowledge, within the realms of both traditional astrological symbolism and psychological theory and technique, so that the astrological chart can be sensitively understood and interpreted in the light of modern psychological thought.
- b) To make available to students psychologically qualified case supervision, along with background seminars in counselling skills and techniques which would raise the standard and effectiveness of astrological consultation. It should be noted that no formal training as a counsellor or therapist is provided by the course.
- c) To encourage investigation and research into the links between astrology, psychological models, and therapeutic techniques, thereby contributing to and advancing the existing body of astrological and psychological knowledge.

History

The Centre for Psychological Astrology began unofficially in 1980 as a sporadic series of classes and seminars offered by Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, covering all aspects of astrology from beginners' courses to more advanced one-day seminars. In 1981 additional evening courses and seminars by other tutors were interspersed with those of Liz and Howard to increase the variety of material offered to students, and Juliet Sharman-Burke and Warren Kenton began contributing their expertise in Tarot and Kabbalah. In 1982 the "prototype" of the CPA - the Centre for Transpersonal Astrology - was born, with the administrative work handled by Richard Aisbitt, himself a practising astrologer.

In 1983 the name was changed to the Centre for Psychological Astrology, because a wide variety of psychological approaches was incorporated into the seminars, ranging from transpersonal psychology to the work of Jung, Freud and Klein. The Diploma Course was eventually created, with additional tutors joining the staff. The Centre continued to develop and consolidate its programme despite the tragic death of Howard in 1992, when Charles Harvey became co-director with Liz Greene. Richard Aisbitt continued to manage the administration until 1994, when the burden of increasing ill health forced him to restrict his contribution to beginners' and intermediate classes. At this time Juliet Sharman-Burke took over the administration for the Centre. Richard himself sadly died in 1996.

In February 2000, tragedy struck again with the untimely demise of Charles Harvey, after a long struggle with cancer. Liz Greene now continues to run the Centre as sole director, and with the help of the wonderful team of tutors and staff, looks forward to develop the CPA in both familiar and new directions as these make themselves apparent, with the constant reminder of the excellence of Charles' work and personality.

For further information, including our full prospectus, visit our website at www.astrologer.com/cpa. You can receive email bulletins from the CPA by sending a message to listserv@astrologer.com with the words *subscribe cpalist* in the body of the message. For those without access to the Internet, please send a SAE to the administrator.

The CPA Press

Since the Centre's inception, many people, including astrology students living abroad as well as those attending CPA seminars, have repeatedly requested transcriptions of the seminars. In the autumn of 1995, Liz Greene, Charles Harvey and Juliet Sharman-Burke decided to launch the **Centre for Psychological Astrology Press**, in order to make available to the astrological community material which would otherwise be limited solely to seminar participants, and might never be included by the individual tutors in their own future written works. Because of the Centre's module-type programme, many seminars are "one-off" presentations which are not likely to be repeated, and much careful research and important astrological investigation would otherwise be lost. The volumes in the CPA Seminar Series are meant for serious astrological students who wish to develop a greater knowledge of the links between astrology and psychology, in order to understand both the horoscope and the human being at a deeper and more insightful level. **Apollon**, launched on October 1st 1998, is the latest publishing venture of the CPA Press.

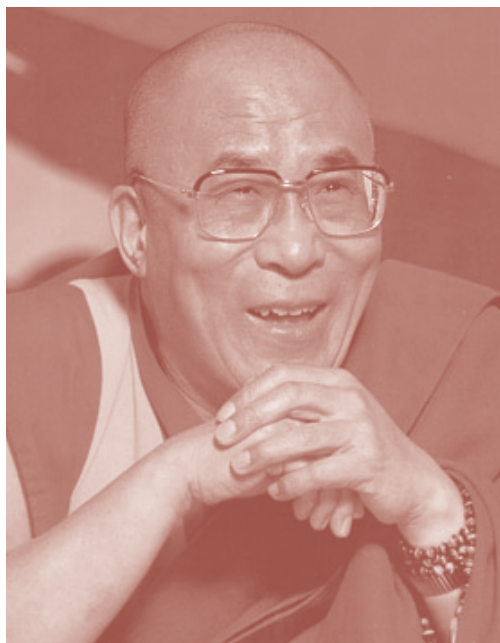
(continued from page 34)

being. Through the centuries this has been termed the emanationist theory; as such, it is clearly outlined in Plotinus' *Enneads*.¹

The Kabbalistic form of Neoplatonism postulates that existence has four dimensions which emanate serially from the Absolute. The first emanation is the pure world of total consciousness within existence, known as Azilut, or the world of the Divine, from that emanates the spiritual world of Beriah, the Platonic world of Ideas where time, space and duality come into being. This world devolves into the psychological world of Yetzirah, the Platonic world of Forms where astrology, among other forms which attempt to make sense of human experience, is located. The final emanation, the outcropping of Yetzirah, is the material world of Assiyah, also known as the world of Action, the observable, concrete world which we see around us. All the worlds are linked to each other and to the Absolute by consciousness. It is man's task and inner yearning to become aware of this process of continual flux, change and interconnectedness, the modern outline of which is put forward in Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi's *A Kabbalistic Universe*.² Man's conscious individual and collective journey back to his origins can be supported by a knowledge of the steps, the worlds, which Kabbalistic theory provides.

Similarly with Buddhism. The examination and interaction of causes and conditions within existence which result, in the Mahayana, or the Great Vehicle tradition, in the three states of Dharmakaya, Samboghakaya and Nirmanakaya, are among the basic precepts of Buddhist metaphysics. The Dharmakaya is the ultimate state of the fully enlightened mind from which emanates the Samboghakaya, which is the state of realisation where separateness dissolves into unity, and the Nirmanakaya, in which fully enlightened beings can manifest.³ While they do not directly overlap with Kabbalistic theory, a theory of emanation is clearly visible in Buddhist thought.

The Dalai Lama's training is such as would ensure the understanding of these theoretical perspectives within Buddhism. As a result, he might push to understand the affinity with other philosophical traditions, examining their similarities and differences. He has, over the years, set up a series of discourses with spiritual leaders, scientists and psychotherapists from the West. That he has an innate curiosity about the human condition is clear from his chart,⁴ which will be examined later. (See p.42)



As the article will consider the Dalai Lama as politician as well as priest, perhaps a note might be made of political theories which could be regarded as appropriate to an analysis. Traditionally, mystical perspectives do not take on a political dimension; they encompass them, but are fully aware of their limitations. The feudal politico-religious perspective of Tibet's traditional rulers has now broken down under the imposition of the Chinese form of Communism. This itself is in the process of being adapted and redefined since the death of Mao Tse-Tung and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Indeed, we hear very little these days about Chinese Communism as such. From the Tibetan perspective, the human rights violations visited by the Chinese on Tibetans are little short of a vicious form of imperialism which does not reflect their spiritual, psychological, cultural or physical needs. From the Chinese perspective, Tibet is an integral part of China and has been for many centuries, therefore, Tibetans easily fit into their system of government; it is only political recidivists who look back with longing to the days of the Dalai Lama. Chinese propaganda tells us that these are few in number. News leaking out from Tibet itself tells a very different story.

The Dalai Lama, in exile, has had to straddle many cultural, theoretical and spiritual perspectives in his attempts to bring to the world recognition of Tibet's inviolable right to exist as a self-determining nation. As a result, the Tibetan government-in exile operates many democratic forms gleaned from Western practice and the Dalai Lama travels extensively to bring his political and spiritual messages to many parts of the world.

1 Plotinus, *The Enneads*, Penguin Books, abridged edition 1991, pp 361 - 386

2 Halevi, Z'ev ben Shimon, *A Kabbalistic Universe*, Samuel Weiser, 1977, pp. 7-16

3. Dowman, Keith, *Sky Dancer: The Secret Life and Works of the Lady Yeshe Tsogyel*, Arkana, pp. 222-224

4 See editor's note, p. 47

The Astrological Perspective

The perspective as we use it today encompasses the study of man's psychological make-up and possible development. So, it can give an indication of people's divine and spiritual aspirations, an understanding of their unique approach to their inner worlds and some explanation of how their inner worlds might manifest in outward life. Astrology, rightly used, is one of the complex and sensitive tools which people can apply in order to understand themselves better - a core need, not only if they are to live fully in the material world, but also to explore how they can relate their life experience to the inner yearnings for connectedness which prompt us all. That yearning can often take us beyond the world of the senses, whether or not we are conscious of it in the first instance. A spiritual journey is most often a training in reconciling the inner worlds with the outer, and Kabbalah and Buddhism, as well as other spiritual trainings, familiarise us with those inner worlds: astrology can help us pinpoint, in some detail, what we need to know about ourselves in order to facilitate that deeper journey.

As it stands now, Western astrology links both the 9th and the 12th house to spiritual needs and developments; both are prominent in the Dalai Lama's chart. The location of Jupiter and Neptune and aspects to them indicate the processes by which these needs are

expressed; again, both are located at crucial points of the Dalai Lama's horoscope. Traditionally, Sagittarius, Virgo and Pisces are associated with a sense of the mystical and divine; Virgo and Pisces operate strongly in his natal configuration. My astrological experience has indicated that, often, the 5th house is involved in the creative expression of spiritual needs; interestingly, the Dalai Lama's 5th house is tenanted by both Jupiter and the Vertex.

Astrology can also indicate the tendency to political involvement. The 10th and 7th houses, placements of the Sun, Jupiter and Saturn and the signs of Capricorn and Cancer are, traditionally, implicated in the formation of the political personality. All of these signifiers are prominent in the Dalai Lama's chart, even the untenanted 10th and 7th houses; some of them are the same as the signifiers for the priest.

In essence, the Dalai Lama cannot avoid the destiny of the priest-politician; where one configuration operates, the other must as well. Overall, his chart indicates that he is well placed to express both the spiritual and the temporal, the commonplace and the esoteric, with heart and a well-developed sense of compassion. As Kabbalists would put it, he has the capacity to link Beriah and Assiyah through the medium of a finely-tuned Yetzirah. Whether he has a sense of the mystical and divine world of total con-



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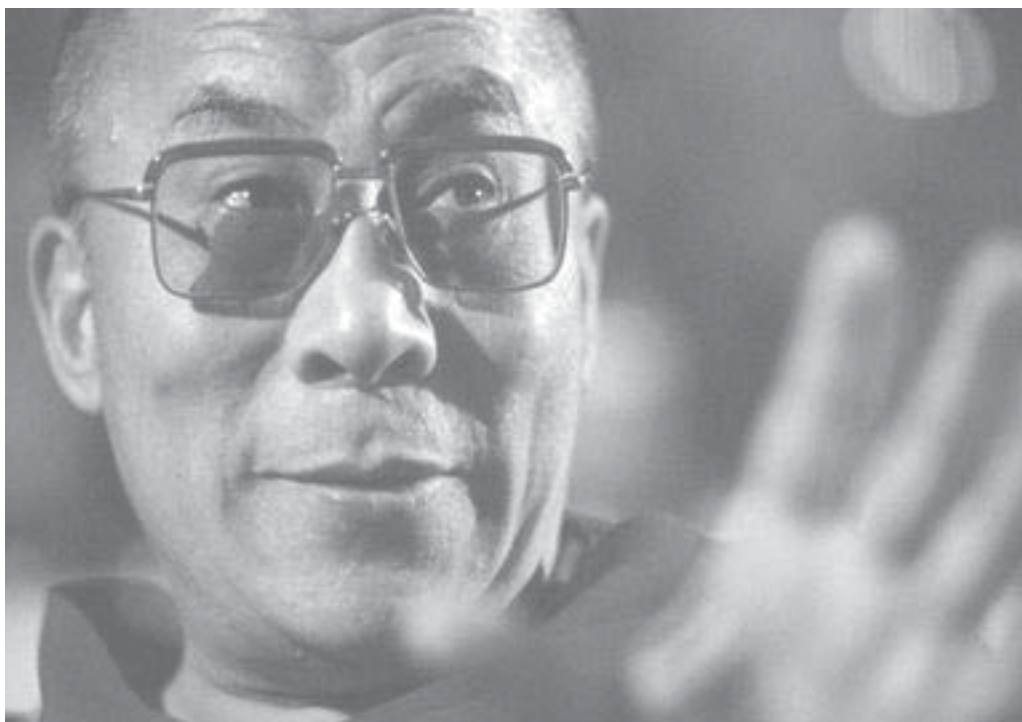
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sciousness, Azilut, we do not know; all he has told us is that he is still in training, has had some mystical experiences and is taught by some of Tibet's finest mystics, those from the Tantra and Dzogchen traditions. But mystics are notorious for not speaking of their inner experiences until the time is ripe to tell the world. As yet, the Dalai Lama's public teachings concentrate mainly, though not entirely, on the lower and middle range of Tibetan Buddhism, its philosophy and practice.⁵

He has the capacity for simple and direct explanation, yet has a mind honed to razor-like sharpness and incisiveness by many years of philosophical training, meditation practices and debate. These qualities are as useful for the politician as they are for the priest.

Priest and Politician

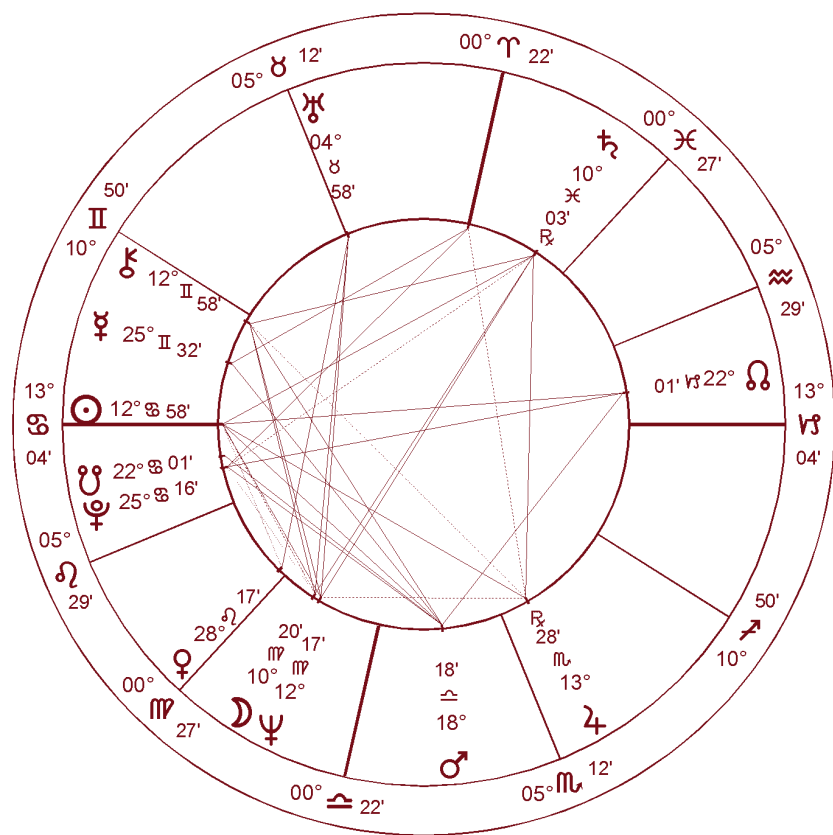
All Tibet's Dalai Lamas have been politicians and priests. The fifth Dalai Lama was more mystic than politician; the present incumbent's immediate predecessor, the thirteenth Dalai Lama was more politician than priest. The current Dalai Lama has recognised the feudal, perhaps undemocratic way in which his predecessors ruled and has, in exile, tried to separate the powers of priest and politician by setting up a government-in-exile which operates more democratically. On the whole, however, his people, in exile and those still in Tibet, see him as both ruler and spiritual leader. Perceptions are sometimes stronger than created forms. The archetypes of both priest and politician operate for the Dalai Lama, whether he wills it or no; his Grand Trine in Water between the Sun, Jupiter and Saturn ensures that will be so.

Our current Western archetype of the priest has its roots in the Latin idea of the *pontifex maximus*, the builder of bridges between the spiritual and the human worlds.⁶ In fact, the idea and the practice go back much further than that. The Babylonian priesthood was in operation from at least 500 years BCE; certainly, a priestesshood can be dated back many hundreds of years, perhaps a millennium before that. Buddha, at around the same time, insisted on the exploration of mind within existence primarily because the Vedantist priesthood of his day spent so much time in metaphysical speculation. The Judaic priesthood descended from the Levite and dates from the time of the great Exodus from Egypt. Dating varies, but most speculation for the time of the Exodus is around that of 1500 - 1200 BCE.

Wherever, it seems, man had a sense of otherness beyond the world of the senses and could communicate it, a capacity for priestliness existed, out of which, humanity being as it is, priestly organisations discretely formed. Where the ranks of the priesthood congregated, politics inevitably raised its head.

No organisation, temporal or spiritual, can exist in the material world without a hierarchy and a form of self-government; nor, often, can religious organisations help but overlap with their temporal counterparts. This applies as much to churches, mosques and synagogues as it does to Tibet and its monasteries. Much of the recorded history of West has been taken up with wars of religion and with wars and civil wars, to ensure the separation of spiritual and temporal power: Tibet has had its own wars of religion over the past millennia.

5 Sharman-Burke, Juliet, & Greene, Liz, *The Astrologer, Counsellor and the Priest*, CPA Press, 1997, p. 105



14th Dalai Lama

5:04am

6 July 1935

Taktse, Tibet

29°N40' 91°E20' (-7:00)

Geocentric

Tropical

True Node

(See editor's note p47)

At a very individual level, even if the Dalai Lama were to separate off the spiritual from the temporal rulership of Tibet's people, he would still be a monk of the Gelug tradition, one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Ergo, he would not escape its politics and organisation. Standing where he is, bearing in mind his birthchart, he is well placed to bridge the spiritual and the mundane and, indeed, does so daily.

The politician archetype, however, is much less well explored in astrology. Currently, in practice, both East and West, politicians have a bad press, seen as power-hungry, possibly subject to corruption, in whatever degree, offering more than they can fulfil and inevitably constrained by the larger political systems within which they operate. They have families, new babies and hobbies, but all are subjected to the demands of a somewhat workaholic life, subordinating ordinary human concerns to those of the wider collective, however they perceive it. Where ordinary human values are discounted, they can shoot out of control, basing decisions on political dogma and theory which can be just as constraining as religious dogma poorly applied. The individual is most often subjected to the mass decision; whether or not the result enhances human life is often debateable.

Whereas the priest archetype can superficially be seen as all Jupiter, the politician archetype may be seen as all negative Saturn. Neither is entirely true. What mainly gets forgotten is the core of the archetype itself. In Kabbalah, the prominent politician is seen as the Man of Destiny,⁷ chosen to lead his people into

the Promised Land of material peace and plenty. There human life is sustained and enhanced beyond the survival level so that civilisation can advance to the point where it is able to encourage the development of greater vision and insight into man's needs and the deepest recesses of the human condition, both individual and collective. Once the basic needs for survival are met, then man is in a better position to explore his own inner worlds, from the mundane to the divine, to use Kabbalistic terminology. It is difficult to do that if you are starving, ill, poorly educated and worrying about where the next week's rent is coming from, to paraphrase John Locke's famous dictum.

Such was the vision behind Plato's philosopher-kings. Such was, mythology tells us, the vision and condition of the world when Saturn reigned supreme, before his incarceration in Tartaros by Zeus. It operates from the political end of the priest-politician continuum. While in the West it has taken a millennium of wars to split off the religious from the political, in Tibet that process has taken just fifty years. It has resulted in the exile of a Dalai Lama who is conscious of the tensions between the two, but just as conscious of how he might build bridges between them. So, what do kabbalah and astrology indicate that he is likely to do?

The Dalai Lama

The mythology of the discovery of the divine child by the magi has been well told in relation to the Dalai Lama and not only within the Tibetan community. Scorsese's recent film, *Kundun*, underscores the point, adding to it the subsequent story of the young Dalai Lama leading his people into exile, much as Abraham took his people down into Egypt. In Kabbalah, Egypt represents the descent into materiality and the loss of memory of man's spiritual origins. Happily, this did not happen to the Dalai Lama; his previous twenty years of spiritual and philosophical training in Tibet ensured that he had a steady basis of experience and faith on which to place the meaning of his exile.


He does, though, continually refer to the return to his Promised Land, that mountain-locked country, Tibet, which is placed at the headwaters of Asia's largest and most prized rivers. Whoever controls Asia's water inevitably controls Asia's future life: a Buddhist inspired government with a respect for the interconnectedness of all life might, in the long run, prove a better guardian than a Chinese Communist government inspired by a very material dialecticism. We are reminded of the biblical story of the four rivers which flow from Eden. Kabbalistically, each of them is a source which waters a particular part of the psyche.

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"Long after my books have turned yellow and been forgotten, when new myths shape our world with new astrologers to describe and enliven them, this university will stand as a testimony to the contemporary astrological renaissance each of us has been helping to create."

— Steven Forrest, Chairman of Kepler Advisory Council —

Where the soul is cut off from its source, deep mourning ensues and the Dalai Lama, with Saturn in Pisces 9th placed in opposition to the Moon/Neptune conjunction, is no stranger to mourning and suffering the depression which springs from the separation from his Motherland.

There is no concept of the soul in Buddhist philosophy, but the human condition constantly refers to that point of confluence between experience of the outer world, our psychological make-up and that sense of otherness which unites us all. This stage in the development of consciousness we in the West call the soul. Often the soulfulness expressed in mourning and depression is a recognition of the separation we suffer when we cannot have material life fit our inner, idealised picture of it. With Saturn placed in the conscious, other-directed 9th house, the Dalai Lama is well placed to understand his people's suffering through the medium of his own Piscean experience of it. Here is the priest who suffers with his people.

Crucial to an understanding of suffering as part of the Dalai Lama's life is the kite configuration in his birthchart, with the Moon-Neptune opposition to Saturn, slung between the 9th Piscean and 3rd Virgoan houses, though the cusps of both those houses, Aquarius and Leo, ensure that the Dalai Lama retains a sense of both individual and collective spiritual and intellectual development. It is no surprise to find that he is a monk of the Gelug order, the most purely philosophical in Tibetan Buddhism. The kite draws in the Sun on the Cancerian Ascendant, but just in the 12th house, and Jupiter in Scorpio 5th. All of these represent the placement of the priest; equally, with the addition of the Cancer/Capricorn Asc./Desc. axis, all of them represent the politician. Together, they speak of exile and mourning, interconnected-

ness and joy and, hopefully, the understanding that exile can act as the hothouse for spiritual maturity.

Isobel Hickey once described the Saturn-Neptune aspects as the signature of the practical idealist. In the Dalai Lama's chart, this is enhanced by the opposition's house placement and sign - the involvement of Pisces and Virgo, both mystical signs, within the 9th and 3rd houses and their placements on the cusps of the 10th and 4th houses. His experience of physical (Saturn), psychological (Moon) and spiritual (Neptune) suffering are carried over very acutely into the roots of his being (Virgo 4th house) and into his spiritual aspirations for himself and his perception of world (Pisces 10th house). With Pisces on the MC, he cannot avoid the archetype of the priest-politician being projected into the world, even though his Cancerian Sun, just entering the 12th house, might want to pull him back into periods of retreat and quiet meditation. Three planets in Earth and a Capricorn Descendant ensure that he has enough practicality to want to put precepts into practice.

There is, however, a three-way pull in the chart. Practical idealism is strongly emphasised; so is the need for retreat where he makes sense of the data he so carefully and energetically gathers (Mercury in Gemini 12th trine Mars in Libra 4th). But Saturn in 9th house Pisces further indicates that this is a man who longs to travel, physically, emotionally and spiritually. For him it is not an escape, but a necessity. Meeting up with foreign cultures broadens the base of his own understanding of politics, people and spiritual systems, at the same time that he delivers both his political and spiritual messages to the world. It is part of his nature to express a deeply emotional benevolence towards humankind and individuals (Jupiter in Scorpio 5th, trine Saturn, trine Sun, sextile

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Moon-Neptune) while on his travels and openly imparting his messages. In many parts of the world, the Dalai Lama is much loved and venerated in return.

This is not so in China, where he is hated and feared. Chinese Communism, with its strong need to clamp down on religious expression in Tibet, on that "opium of the masses", as Marx put it, views the Dalai Lama as a threat to the new, enlightened, secular order it has imposed on the Tibetans. For the dogmatists among the Chinese, the Tibetan religious leader's return to his native land would mean a return to the feudal, politico-religious system which existed before his exile. This is the fear of the shadow side of Saturn in 9th house Pisces, though it is not the reality. Tibet, the Dalai Lama and China have moved on and modernised far too far in the last forty years for that to happen.

China also picks up the personal shadow side of the Dalai Lama's chart in relation to his Piscean Saturn; at one level, that massive country is the projection of his own fears of the religious life.

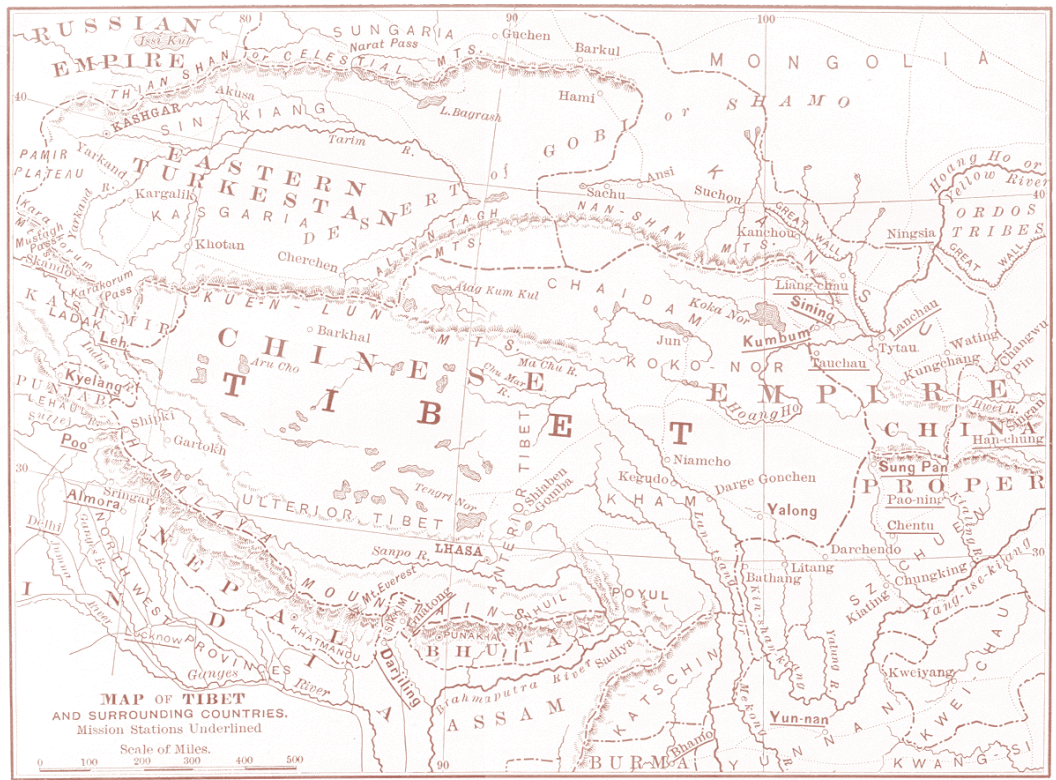
Whether or not the Dalai Lama has struggled with this consciously is not known, but he has publicly stated that there are times when he would like to retire. One of the difficulties with the Tibetan system of mind training is that the children are chosen and dedicated at a very young age to the religious life. In one sense, they have little choice in the matter, though the Buddhist precepts of reincarnation, rebirth and karma would suggest that they do, though at a level beyond material life. Kabbalists would agree with those precepts. In both traditions, self-realized masters choose to come back to the world to help and aid suffering humanity in its struggle to free itself from the wheel of rebirth.

Nevertheless, child lamas go through the same developmental patterns as all children; they are trained to develop their latent conscious awareness and this takes time. The higher Tibetan lamas are well aware of the need to train future religious leaders from a very young age because they had failed with the sixth Dalai Lama. Due to the politics operating between Tibetan monastic orders at the time, he was not chosen to fill his post until the age of eighteen, after which time he became a poet as well as something of a womaniser. He died in mysterious circumstances at a very young age, though not until after his initiation as religious leader. All subsequent Dalai Lamas started their training at a much younger age.



There are indications in the present Dalai Lama's chart, and in his life, that he, too, had to struggle with some quite difficult personal characteristics in his early years of training. The son of an angry and powerful father (Sun square Mars, square Pluto), he also showed open displays of anger in his younger days. This was the child who beat up his older brother on the journey from Taktser to Lhasa just before his initiation as religious leader of Tibet. This was the young man who gave his younger brother a severe bawling out and a box on the ears when, on a delegation to China, the boy had pulled fish live from a fishpond and watched them flop about on the grass, gasping for air. This was the man who let it be known in no uncertain terms that he was mightily displeased when his older brothers disrobed as lamas and married. The indications are that he has learned, through the tests imposed by Buddhist mind-training, to harness his somewhat wild energy and put it at the disposal of his curious mind and into his service of the spiritual needs of others (Mars trine Mercury, bi-quintile Saturn).

He has Pluto in the 1st house, in Cancer, never an easy placement for anyone, less so in a spiritual leader when it squares his Mars. He may be well aware of the issues of political power as an outspringing of the strength of his emotions, his strong will and his sexuality. Celibacy is a pre-condition of life in the Gelug order to which the Dalai Lama belongs, but there is a way that sexual libido can be channelled in Buddhist training. The Dalai Lama is familiar with the teachings relating to the higher tantras in the Kalachakra mode of training. Some tantric trainings very deliberately call on the life force inherent in the sexual libido to support spiritual development. This can be worked through via a series of very detailed inner visualisations of the appropriate deities and transmuted.



MISSIONARY MAP OF TIBET. (Dotted lines indicate trade routes.)
 The Scandinavian Alliance Mission has also Tibetan Missionaries in Ghoom India, in Baksadnar, Bhutan, and in Guntak, Sikkim.

Map of Tibet
 1897
 University of California at
 Berkeley

ed into a further refinement of consciousness and awareness; no physical consort need be involved.

In some respects, this training is similar to the Kabbalistic notion of the unification of the Shekhinah, the Presence of God, with the Godhead, as outlined in The Song of Solomon. We have no way of knowing whether the Dalai Lama has personally worked with the tantric tradition in this form, nor need we. What is observable is that this is a man with an extremely incisive mind, whose aspects to Mars indicate that he has the capacity for awareness of the positive and negative issues connected with political power and who can, after a struggle, give form and structure to his strong emotions in directing where that power is to be applied. Strength of will and its application are second nature to both the priest and the politician within him. That much we do know from his current words and deeds.

Four planets in Water and the Moon-Neptune opposition to Saturn indicate that he probably struggled with the separation from his mother in his early years. He has said that he felt very lonely in the first monastery to which he was sent. His older brother reports that he cried for days when he first entered into the monastic life and, later, often cried after his parents returned home from their infrequent visits to him and his brothers. The Dalai Lama has also said that, as a grown man, he was hurt to discover that he was not his mother's favourite son. His first suffering

of exile and loss, his separation from his mother, is echoed in his later suffering in exile from Tibet. This is a Dalai Lama who has experienced at first hand one of the tenets that underpin Buddhism – the suffering of all sentient beings.

Yet he was the driving force behind recreating Tibetan communities, both religious and secular, in India and, later, elsewhere. Tied emotionally to his Motherland and strong sense of tradition, his powerfully creative Jupiter in the 5th and the trine between Uranus and Venus, with Uranus also trining his Moon-Neptune, indicate a man who can explore new ways of implementing those very spiritual values from which he sprung, the pressure of exile forcing him to adapt and innovate.

Both traditionalist and moderniser, priest and politician, deeply emotional and strongly intellectual, practical and an idealist, we have yet to see the Dalai Lama emerge as a fully-fledged mystic. My Kabbalistic nose tells me that he is still in practice, but he is not telling the outside world. My astrological instincts guide me to the transit of Uranus over his Saturn in 2005 and 2006, the transit of Saturn over his Moon-Neptune in 2007 and 2008 and the transit of Uranus over his MC in 2009 and 2010, by which time he will be seventy-five. Poignantly, by then, fifty of those years he will have spent in exile from his native land. Hopefully, he will have reached an inner reconciliation with himself to the point where all dualism, that inner sense of exile, the “going down into Egypt”, ceases.

Editor adds:

I had a profound sense of the tightrope we astrologers walk in editing Freda's article - my quest for precise Virgoan certainty in astrological data foundered, no doubt an inscrutable manifestation of the Dalai Lama's Piscean Saturn (conjunct my Sun) opposing his Moon-Neptune in Virgo. In routinely checking the details, I discovered many different charts in existence for him. Freda suggested a dawn chart, that had 12° Cancer rising, at Taktser, Tibet. In support of this chart, she quotes Mary Craig, in *Kundun: A Biography of the Family of the Dalai Lama*,¹ "he came into the world by the light on a single mustard-oil lamp, at daybreak on the fifth day of the fifth month of Wood Hog Year (6th July 1935)". But on my computer, my usually reliable astrology software offered a chart with 4° Libra rising, with a timezone that was obviously incorrect, and a different spelling of his birthplace - Takster. To establish which spelling was correct, I looked up my atlas - only to find that the coordinates for his place of birth, no matter how it was spelled, pointed to somewhere outside Tibet, in Szechuan, China, with no Takster or Taktser to be seen. A usually reliable Internet astrological database had the Dalai Lama's chart - giving the same place, spelled Taktser, but set to noon, giving 26° Libra rising - and that chart was used by someone else on the Internet, for a character study. Looking up available biographies of the holy man, I was struck by the different spellings of the place he was born; but all agreed that he was born in North-Eastern Tibet. My usual tools for finding a placename failed me; my huge atlas computer programme, on which I had spent so much money, had never heard of Taktser or any other variants on that theme - but then, it hadn't heard of Tibet, either.

So I started hunting for Taktser in earnest; but I failed to find it, anywhere. I learned that Tibetan is an alphabet-based language, like English, and that Tibetans were forced to learn character-based Chinese after the invasion. So I learned that there were Chinese (pinyin) versions of each placename, a concept familiar to me as an Irishman. Eventually, on an official Chinese map of Tibet, I found Taktse - the Chinese version being Daxi xian or Dagze. This Taktse wasn't a "little village in North-Eastern Tibet" as his biographies went - this was a small county town, 20kms east of the capital, Lhasa. I was able to ascertain that the population in the county was 23,500 (1.6% of which are ethnic Chinese) - but I was not able to confirm whether this was the birthplace of the holy man or not. It wasn't as if I could call or email the tourist office there; I would have if I could have. But then I thought that any English translations of Chinese words would be mere approximations - especially

bearing in mind Oriental tendencies to confuse the English sounds "L" and "R". So, armed with this contradictory information, I wrote to the doyenne of astrological research, Lois Rodden², to demonstrate my prowess that I had spotted a flaw in the available data on a major world figure, and informed her of my "discovery" of Taktse. She was initially impressed, but I soon discovered that my research was not so mould-breaking as I had thought. Although Lois confirmed that there was much existing confusion, and offered yet another spelling of the village, calling it Tengster, the latitude and longitude she had on file were approximately the same as all the others - *outside the current borders of Tibet*. It hadn't occurred to me that the borders of Tibet had changed since 1936; it took Freda herself to bring me back to Earth with a gentle bump, describing in convincing detail where exactly the village is: "Taktser... is in what was then the far East of Tibet, and is a small village in the province of Amdo about 15 km from the nearest town of Siling, or Sining as it is sometimes called. That part of Amdo was in Tibet at the time of the DL's birth, but may now be part of the Chinese province of Kansu, of which Langchow is the chief city." This placing of the village, and mention of its province, Amdo, matches Lois' information. So, we have definitely established the place - and Sining can be seen in the old map opposite.

Then we are faced with the question of the time of birth. The advantage of Lois' system is that she keeps records of each piece of research contributed to her - so her archives become not only useful as a record of facts and figures, but also a unique history of those who have shown an interest in a particular personality over the years. There are various times given - and the reason why dawn is a questionable time, even though the Dalai Lama's mother says that he was born "early in the morning, before sunrise", is that, by Eastern tradition, holy men are *always* born at daybreak. The obvious inference is that to suggest otherwise may be to impugn his holy status, even if coming from the lips of a loving mother. The Dalai Lama himself has been quoted, probably incorrectly, as saying "just before noon", although his office has given a time of "between 5:30 and 6:30am".

So, we are left with confusion. Virgoan research at its most thorough has failed to provide us with the security of a firm canvas upon which we can paint a satisfying Piscean picture of soul, a screen upon which we can project what we are looking for, especially in someone whose life seems to embody the characteristics that we hold as most spiritual and admirable. At any time, a breeze of hard facts can whip the canvas away from our easel, and we are left with merely a suggestion of the palette.



1 Kundun : A Biography of the Family of the Dalai Lama
Mary Craig, 1997, Harper Collins, Fount Imprint, pp. 57-58

2 Lois Rodden's Astrodatbank is at
www.astrodatbank.com

The Portent

Richard Leigh

For Sacha, who more accurately divines the woivres connecting Russia with Ireland

Storytelling, myth, fable, fairytale - all are means by which a spiritual experience or numinous quality may be imparted. Artistic expression is one of the purest forms of communicating the essence of that which connects us all. Let **Richard Leigh** reach the parts other articles don't, in this short story.

Richard Leigh has this to say about himself: "I'm an official expatriate, have lived here for 26 years, never felt very American. B.A. Tufts University, M.A. University of Chicago, Ph.D. State University of New York at Stony Brook in Comparative Literature. Co-author of such books as *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, *The Messianic Legacy*, *The Temple and the Lodge*. *Secret Germany*, *The Elixir and the Stone*, but all of this is spurious distraction from what really matters. I consider myself primarily a writer of fiction - novels and short stories. Have also written on mythic logic in relation to Northern Ireland. Co-founder and Trustee of Pushkin Prizes in Ireland. Background in comparative literature, history, psychology, philosophy, comparative religions, comparative mythology, esoterica. Secondary vocation as practical joker and founder of the Vancouver Foundation of Lycanthropic Children."

Where does reality lie? In the greatest enchantment you have ever experienced.

- Hugo von Hoffmannsthal

In dreams begins responsibility.

- W. B. Yeats

One

A wolf's deranged frenzy hurled to the stars, a skein of ghostly shrillness woven into wind like white hair streaming wild; and again, he realised, blinking into the humid darkness, again he had dreamed of the island. Sunk though it was into the soil, the hut quaked and shuddered beneath the surly pummelling of the wind, and the timbered walls creaked, and fingers of icy air probed between chinks in the logs. The frigid breath of Strivog circulated through the brittle dwelling - a misty silver-white vapour stirring the odours into a haze of bear fat and bear skins, wolf and deer pelts, peat smoke and sleep. In the hearth - an oval recess scooped from the damp turf floor - crumbling blocks of peat smouldered with red-eyed menace, quivering honeycombs of angrily caged flame.

Again he had dreamed of the island, he realised, his gaze colliding with clotted shadows. In the corner opposite, the woman was little more than a black coalescence, only her head protruding from her rug of bear fur, her face extinguished by the disarray of her hair. Beside her, however, the youth's face glimmered with a wan, almost luminous lustre - a random spatter of milk, or semen, suspended in the womb of the night. But neither youth nor woman, tangible though they were, impinged on him as vividly as the island.

Three times he had dreamed of it - three times since the wandering Moon began her last pilgrimage through her phases. Three times he had dreamed of its mystery, set like a jewel in a scalloped serenity of sea. Three times he had dreamed of scrolled white waves washing a grey-

green rock-ribbed coast, a nap of mossed green forest inland, diamond-dewed meadows draped in the folds of the hills. And three times he had dreamed of the shadow impending from across the water, ominously, inexorably, ineluctably - a sombre sinister shadow drawing relentlessly nearer, casting its pall over mountains and valleys, spilling its foreboding stain over the earth, dissecting the island into quarters.

In the hut's humid chill, he propped himself on his elbow, his dream-filmed gaze aspiring west. West, towards where the steppe's frozen grasses bristled against brooding forest-shagged wilderland. Towards where the people of the one-eyed god hanged captives from rune-scarred oaks, and suckled the soil with the blood of sacrificed mares. Towards where the one-eyed god himself raged tumultuous on the storm, accompanied, as he swept through whirling cloudwrack, by ravens and wolves and wild winged warrior women and spectral hosts of horsemen. And beyond even the one-eyed god's domains, towards where, it was said, the legions of the Empire to the south extended the dominion of their eagles, and the Sun swooned into the sea.

For him, there was only one island. He had never seen it, of course. No man, to his knowledge, ever had. And yet it existed, in the song, the saga, the poetry which comprised the inherited history of his race - a history flung like a torch down the cascade of generations, the cascade of dead leaves and years. And, more important still, it existed in his consciousness and that of his people - a reality as unimpugnable as the gods themselves.

Had he indeed dreamed of it - of Buyan, the island and its holy city? Buyan, where the healing life-giving river gushed from Alatau, the magic white stone? Buyan, where the jewel-eyed serpent presided over feminine mysteries, beneath boughs of silver laden with apples of gold? Buyan, where the Sun, plumed in funereal flame, vanished beneath the rim of the world, attended by gentle Zarya, the evening star?

When he dragged himself to his feet, fatigue seeped sluggishly through his limbs, as though his blood, turned viscous, had begun to stiffen and congeal. Yes, he was tired, he recognised, but a feverish wakefulness precluded all prospect of sleep. Silently, lest he trouble his wife or son, he tugged his felt boots over his ankles, swathed himself in his fur cloak, tiptoed to the west wall of the hut. Here, he unpinned the curtain of skins draped across the entrance and emerged into the night, where the wind smote the skin of his face like a branding-iron.

His breath formed a fume of silver on the air, and the snow-crust crunched with his steps. Through the menacing immensity of black sky, the ancient bestiary of the constellations wheeled in stately procession about the polestar. Beneath their pitiless pageant, the white fangs of the snowscape glittered with brittle and futile splendour. In the luminous pearl-silver snow-light, the huts huddled together, abject as cowed beasts within the perimeter of the palisade, whose tawny wood stakes were trellised with fretwork of frost. Beyond, the steppe yawned from horizon to horizon, a limitless white emptiness, a savage void of scintillant radiance under the bleached whiteness of a burned-out Moon. Laden with crystal fruit, a copse of pointed pines printed arrow-shaped shadows on the snow; and the wind hurtled headlong and endless out of the distance, driving volleys of stinging diamond pellets before it, searing the nostrils with fine needles of ice.

Was Buyan threatened? As soothsayer of the clan, he was enjoined to interpret his dream. As soothsayer of the clan, he was also enjoined to recount it - to report, with the advent of each new Moon, the messages vouchsafed by the gods. For dreams, of course, proceeded from the gods - from one or another of them. From Svarog, lord of the sky, father of all things. From Dazhvog, driver of the Sun's effulgent chariot and regent of the zodiac's twelve kingdoms. From Strivog, who exhaled winter on the land. From Peroun, who prophesied in thunder. Most of all, from Mati-Syra-Zemlya, the great moist mother, supreme arbiter, oracle and witness, whose green hair was the summer's rippling rye.

Dared he to presume to interpret his dream? Dared he recount it to the assembled elders? Dared he assume the responsibility it entailed? For though dreams proceeded from the gods, they could coalesce only in men - in the fragile goblet of the skull, the fleshed flower of the heart, the slippery pulp of the entrails. And without the appointed men, the formless remained unformed, the dream remained undreamed.

Seven winters ago, his father, the clan's soothsayer before him, had dreamed of fallow fields - of fields that devoured the seed-corn, drank the bounty of spring rain, yet yielded only bones. The meaning was sufficiently evident, if the responsibility attending it was not. One afternoon, however, the old man explained the crisis to the assembled elders. Explained that the dream must be denied a receptacle. That it must not again be recounted, not be further fashioned and fixed by words. That what the gods had boded must not be embodied. And at nightfall, he sought a sequestered quarter of the palisade, wedged a haft between two stakes, and spitted himself on a spear.

And yet famine festered that year all the same - a famine more merciless than any the clan had known. As if, by some unfathomable process, the old man's act had inadvertently invoked it. As if the dream had had to be dreamed and - lacking a man to accommodate it - had erupted into the world...

Two

For five successive nights, sleep assumed the character of an adversary. For five successive nights, he and his sleep were inimical, circling each other warily as two wrestlers. Yet when he inevitably succumbed to it, it proved a magnanimous victor, granting him the sanctuary of oblivion. He would wake with gratitude; and in the ritual round of diurnal duties, the image of the island waned in his mind, growing insubstantial and vaporous as morning mist above a stream. Only now and again did he dread the advent of the new Moon, when, by established rite, he would recite the record of his dreams to the elders.

In the forest beyond the palisade, pronged antlers careened through the undergrowth, a glissade of arrows hissed sibilant as rending silk, a stag fell to the hunters of the clan; and that he might read the riddles of its still steaming entrails, the soothsayer was summoned. Muffled in his mantle of skins, he embarked for the site of the triumph, wading knee-deep through siftings of powdery snow. In the absence of wind and darkness, the surrounding vastness was less mysterious if no less hostile, glinting dully beneath a lustreless metallic sky. A few furry flakes silted bleakly down the dead air, lazy as feathers falling. Along a verge of trees, the tracks of bear and wolf were discernible, a runic calligraphy inscribed in the white parchment of the steppe.

Beneath boughs sheathed and shimmering nacreous with ice, the chill grey light was oppressive, but the entrails omened well. They foretold a precocious spring. They foretold a prodigal harvest from the great moist mother.

Most auspicious of all, they foretold a respite from the Hunnish host who, with every thaw for a generation, had harried the settlements of the steppe. In the entrails, the soothsayer descried portents of a battle far to the west; and unless they lied, the hordes of crazed ochre-skinned horsemen would career to ruin against the people of the one-eyed god.

Reassured by the prospect, he pronounced his blessing on the hunters and prepared to officiate the ensuing obligatory rite - the fire of homage, whereby the stag's heart, together with its entrails, would be offered to the Provider and Preserver, the beneficent White God. The beast's carcass was dragged aside, trailing watery pink runnels. Where it had lain, a sticky pool seeped into the snow, shrill scarlet with ragged rust-coloured edges. A pyre was constructed, of twigs and branches, soaked moss and bark. Red-gold in the sullen gloom, a slender forked serpent's tongue of flame flickered upwards, licked tentatively, withdrew, darted forth again. Amid veering smoke, the damp wood sputtered and cracked, blossomed into a blaze. On its periphery, the snow began to liquefy, turning grey, then transparent, disclosing brown grass plastered to the soil. Brown grass, a litter of pine cones and needles, a cross formed by two dead boughs - wet, black, rimed with frost like mossed silver. Beneath them, the soothsayer discerned something coiled in a semi-circle - something brittle and filmy, with an ornate geometric pattern, illuminated by the ruddy efflorescence of the flame. A serpent's skin, he realised suddenly - a wafer-thin desiccated husk, long abandoned, frozen and preserved beneath the snow. Now it was dissolving, crumbling to translucent grey-silver flakes in the suddenly aggressive heat. And though he had often seen serpent skins before, a dark prescience, like a shadow of bat's wings, flitted though the soothsayer's soul.

Three

Jubilation welled within the walls of the palisade. A welter of feet had stamped the snow to grey mire, and banners of festive flame flapped against the zinc-hued twilight, and voices - morose a few hours previous - were animated, even boisterous, in expectation of the first fresh meat for days. While the women revelled in preparation of the communal meal, the hunters, as though intoxicated by shed blood, swaggered triumphantly about them, vaunting each other's prowess with bow or spear. In the huts, cringing against the immensity of land and sky, the aroma of roasting flesh wrung hungry howls from emaciated infants.

In the assembly house - a long low log structure with dishevelled thatch - the soothsayer performed the function imposed on him by the

occasion. Having gathered the youths about him, he proceeded to discourse on the requisites for thanksgiving, on the imperatives of reverence, on the diverse natures of the gods. For him, the sentences were familiar enough, following each other with the rhythmic fluidity of practised gestures - the ancient recitative, worn smooth by his father's voice before him, on Bylevog and Cernevog, the White and the Black, whose everlasting warfare congealed to a grey stalemate seemingly manifest in the very air. But as he spoke, he was painfully conscious of his son's face, a thirsty petal uplifted to him among the others. It rendered him unwontedly wary of his words - which, he recognised, were plummeting like stones down the well of the boy's soul. For an instant, their gazes intersected, brushed briefly as the wings of birds in flight. And the soothsayer, confronted by the dream-scarred depths of his son's eyes, quailed before the curse inflicted on him and his family. An icy tremor scuttled fleetingly up his spine, drew his nape taut, plucked at his scalp with tiny skeletal claws.

Four

Replete with food and drink, he dozed more readily than usual that evening, and dreamed more vividly. Of days and nights reeling away in a dizzying dance of light and shadow. Of time itself transmuted to wind and gusting like derelict autumn leaves. Of the earth shuddering beneath an ominous myriad-hoofed thunder. Of steel clanging gong-like against steel, and screams torn by the roots from hacked throats, and lurid comet-tails of blood trailing smears of wet scarlet across the stars. Of a sodden mid-slicked field beyond a city - a fantastic city, whose bulbous onion domes, minarets and spires floated with the ethereal grace of swans on a diaphanous sky. Of a man striding brusquely through the mire, clad in raiment rich and iridescent as a rainbow, the raiment of some exalted chieftain, perhaps even a king - for there was, the soothsayer realised, a spiked iron crown entangled in the iron-grey hair. A glorious and imposing figure, with a horseman's bow-legged gait and eyes wild as storm scud. With gaunt grey filigree beard and a face of granite impassivity, reflecting confidence, arrogance, defiance, impatience with fools - an imperious adamantine face accustomed to command, to combat, to victory. The countenance of a conqueror. And the accoutrements of a conqueror as well. A massive menacing broadsword, its haft inlaid with precious gems. A costly emblazoned breastplate, chased with heraldic arabesques in silver and gold. And an amulet, in the shape of a jewel-encrusted cross, suspended on a golden chain. A resplendent apparition - and yet the soothsayer, in his dream, sensed obscurely that this man had betrayed something sacred.

On the reed-fretted fringe of the field, a jagged whiteness jutted from the mud - the pale gutted carcass of a horse, bones polished ghastly and luminous, the intricate scaffolding of the ribs like a boat under construction. Long, narrow, fierce-snouted, the skull dangled crookedly from the vertebrae, with sneering jaws, an opaque mystery in the hollow eyes. Before this grisly wreckage, the regal figure paused, prodding with booted and spurred foot. After a moment's meditation, he shrugged, his beard wreathing a rueful and sardonic half-smile. As he turned away, however, his heel crushed a corner of the skull to powder and something arched upwards, flame-swift and sudden, from the vacant eye-socket - a vengeful serpent which fastened itself with fanged ferocity to his leg. Limbs flailing and thrashing, face congealed with terror, the man cavorted backwards, dignity subsumed in a grotesque convulsive jig. A frenzied bellow burst from the frantically writhing lips, gouging the tranced stillness, rending the membrane of the dream, yanking the soothsayer stark upright on his pallet as if a hand had jerked him by the hair.

In the dank chill of the hut he sat rigid, his heart hammering time to fragments, to a fine dust of nothingness. Only gradually did his vision contract to the darkness pressing against him, the woman's fur-swathed form in the corner opposite, the pallid blotch of his son's face. Outside, veils of wind-whipped snow swirled amid palisade, sky and stars. In the hearth, glowering embers of peat maintained their incandescent vigil. They had virtually expired before the soothsayer lay back on his pallet. But when sleep at last claimed him again, he dreamed of the island.

Not from above this time, nor from a distance. This time, his feet trod its rock-strewn strand, while the sea surged majestically behind him, scintillas of sunlight mirrored on the breasts of the waves. As he threaded through the dew-gemmed grass, the finest of drizzles whispered in the foliage, sifted in shimmering needles between new-leafed boughs. A tang of mushrooms and ripe strawberries wove itself into the scent of sap-filled wildwood, and lilies-of-the-valley brandished beneath the osiers the white challenge of their innocence. Against vistas of eloquent azure, larks darted gorged with morning, dropping their song like silver beads. As the soothsayer emerged from the forest, the radiance was almost audible - a music of light inscribed upon his soul.

Sequence and chronology disintegrated, transition dissolved. There was a serpent, jewel-eyed and silver-scaled, oozing sinuous and somnolent between silver-grey birches. There was a rivulet lispings through a glade, sunlight braided on its surface in strands of liquid gold; and willows,

sibilant in the breeze, trailed their tresses on the water. Perhaps serpent and stream were the same? No - and yet each somehow nurtured the other, fused with the other to form an endless circular continuity. Both issued from beneath a fern-fringed stone - a stone of such ethereal sparkling whiteness that its brilliance, amid the latticed greenery, provoked a gasp.

There was also - and the soothsayer sensed he had expected her - a woman who, with spectral silence, coalesced out of the very substance of the dream. Tall, stately and serene, she swayed over rivulet and serpent, her slender back arched in a bow. With a luminous scythe, she sheared the pliant tips of the ferns festooning the white stone, and her own movements were those of bending grasses. Her honey-hued hair, her petal-soft skin were accentuated by the fiery scarlet of her gown - a garment whose vibrant intensity of colour made her appear sheathed in a rose. When she raised her head, her gentle gravity, her tender and demure sweetness, enfolded her palpably as a fragrance, a manifest emanation of her soul; and the soothsayer, meeting her gaze, felt he might drown in the liquid mist-deeps of her eyes - pensive blue-grey eyes to which wide dark pupils imparted a haunted depth. From above, low-stirring linden leaves caressed her face - delicately articulated cheekbones, a brow like an armorial shield, features pure and sculptural, with something of a sword about them, and something of a marble mask. As she approached, her footsteps seemed to pave the world with light, and her smile was gracious as the sky's azure. Not a scythe in her hand, the soothsayer observed, but something else, something of more resonant import. When she slipped it into her hair, it formed a diadem with two elegantly curved horns - the horns of the crescent Moon. And thereby the soothsayer recognised Zarya, the shy evening star, to whose arms the Sun at night confided himself. Drowsily docile, a tawny golden beast with feline eyes and matted mane padded beside her, at intervals flicking its tail.

Abashed though he was by her beauty, the soothsayer struggled to shape a question - a question which, later, he could not recall, but which somehow expressed his myriad uncertainties. "I requested my beloved to dream you," she replied, harp-strings vibrating in her words.

And only then, glancing towards the strand behind him, did he realise that no shadow impended from over the sea.

Five

He awoke with an eerie intimation, a sense of having dreamed his entire life; and though the dawn was suffused with an afterglow of gen-

tle gravity, of tender and demure sweetness, he writhed on his pallet, perplexed. No shadow had tainted the island, had swooped upon it from the sea; no pall had dimmed its radiance, clouded its sylvan tranquillity. And yet, thrice before, he had witnessed a shadow looming relentlessly nearer, darkening mountains and valleys, dissecting the island into quarters. Were those former visions now abrogated, the perils they portended disarmed? Or were the perils still imminent, still destined to occur? Had the shadow already perhaps descended, already actualised itself, and only been rendered indiscernible by proximity? Had the new dream perhaps unscrolled in the stain of invisible shadow? Instinctively, the soothsayer felt otherwise. On the island, in the glade, with the woman, there had been no foreboding. Nevertheless, there had been a serpent, fused with a river, seeping with silvery torpor between silvery trees. And earlier that night, on the precincts of some phantasmal city, a serpent had proved fatal to a chieftain, perhaps even a king - a man, he sensed with indubitable certainty, who had betrayed something sacred.

For six days he pondered, groping blindly through the labyrinth of contradictions. For six days, he confined himself to his hut, sifting the disparate fragments like beads in his mind, struggling to string them in a coherent skein. For six days, he laboured in the ordeal of interpretation - of imposing order and meaning, of subordinating the unknowable to man. And as he did so, the exultation of his dream receded, the fiery red-gold shrivelled to ash-grey, substance withered to concept. On the basis of concept, he at last concluded that some danger still brooded over Buyan.

And thus he interpreted the matter when, on the seventh day, he betook himself to the council of the elders, and made the requisite obeisance before them, and, in accordance with the hallowed rite, recounted the month's repertoire of dreams. He did so only with reluctance and misgiving. But yes, he confessed when they pressed him, his considered conclusion was that something did indeed threaten Buyan.

Seated on the log ledge hewn out of the wall, the elders, shaggy in capes and cowls of wolf-skin, exchanged furtive glances of alarm. The soothsayer was dismissed, that they might study the problem in solitude, amongst themselves. When they again summoned him to their presence, they justified the decision they had made. The sovereign stung by the serpent had not troubled them unduly, they explained. That was an affair confined to the realm of men - to be accepted submissively or, perhaps, with the aid of the gods, to be forestalled. Buyan, however, was of more serious consequence - for without Buyan, all things would be homeless or bereft.

Buyan was the haven of the Sun - the refuge where, exhausted by his diurnal pilgrimage, he was restored by Zarya and enabled to rise anew. Buyan was also the haven of souls - the landfall of the dead where, since Svarog first spawned time, the people of all clans had departed, to bask in an idyll of unextinguished spring. Buyan thus affected the entire order of creation, the immutable laws whereby the world sustained itself - the rhythmic cycle of the seasons, of day and night, life and death. And any threat to Buyan's performance threatened the essential fabric of reality, the fragile edifice of existence. A threat of such magnitude must be averted - and the soothsayer's father had established the appropriate precedent. There were certain dreams which must be denied an abode.

The soothsayer understood and bowed his head in acquiescence when one of the elders, rising from the bench, solemnly proffered him a spear.

Six

At noon the following day, the menaced Sun hung in suspended effulgence above the palisade - as though it had paused, hesitant, before daring to resume its journey. Unfurled limitless beneath it, the snow-bleached steppe blazed with myriad facets of dazzle, blinding granules of light that kindled an ache behind the eyes. From the serrated margin of the forest, frigid shafts wafted in gusts, dry and sharp as crystal. In the council hut, the soothsayer's son, with a cornered expression in his gaze, cringed beneath the injunctions imposed by the elders - to keep a memorised record of his dreams, to wrest from them their elusive interpretation, to recount them dutifully at the advent of each new Moon.

In the forest, where black strips of shadow stippled the diamond-strewn crust of snow, the soothsayer died slowly. He had entered the woods at daybirth, had wedged the spear's haft in the crook of a tree, had confided his prayers to the gods. Now, at last, as the rim of the Sun seared the zenith of the sky, the jagged-toothed pain ravaging his body subsided, the ragged spasms of his gasps grew less laboured, the silvery fume of his breath thinned spectrally and then ceased. The threat was not to Buyan, he realised suddenly, with a certainty like a rush of blood to his head. But as the terror of comprehension convulsed him, his dimming gaze veered across the pool of warm wet scarlet drenching the snow, welling from the rent in his breast. Then, his eyes glazed, and the icy sky impaled his skull, and the inner rhythm surged forth to join the outer, and all the constellated dreams of his life spilled away to drift among the clouds.

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Seven

Two thousand miles to the west, a nacreous dream of dawn seeped stealthily into the sky, diffused a ghostly pallor on the sea. From a gaunt cliff overlooking the shore, a bard studied the weltering grey waves, which hurled themselves, white-plumed, against the sand. Beyond, mist mantled the water with wreaths of seething silver, through which, at intervals, a chant was audible - sonorous liturgical syllables, intoned to the muffled toll of a bell. A crossbow-winged gull caromed inland on the wind, blaring its raucous herald's cry. And the black prow of a boat cleft the mist, as though precipitated out of a dream.

To the east, streaks of blood smeared the horizon, leaking from some shattered vessel across the sky. Sunlight lanced through serried skeins of scarlet and the mist parted, tore asunder, drifted away in cobwebbed tatters and shreds. From the cliff, the approaching craft was now distinctly visible, its prow ploughing a snowy scrollwork of foam. In the bows, a grim grey-bearded figure loomed starkly upright, black cassock whipped flapping behind him, like a bat's wings. With both hands, he brandished aloft his talisman of suffering - a gaunt crucifix which cast an impending shadow before it, gliding relentlessly nearer on the tide. As the keel of the boat rasped the rock-strewn strand, the figure stepped sternly forwards, to embark on his crusade against serpents.



Recollecting our Soul

Erin Sullivan

“Exactly what is it that we are missing?” asks **Erin Sullivan**, in the face of the rising numbers of clients enquiring about their spiritual path. A good question; even better, Erin attempts to answer it, in this erudite and thought-provoking article.



Erin Sullivan is Canadian born and has been a consultant astrologer and teacher since the late 1960s. She has lectured worldwide and led workshops and symposia on many aspects of human development using mythology, psychology and the rich language of astrology. Her work took her to London, England in 1989, since when she has been a tutor for the CPA, and the Series Editor for Penguin's *Arkana Contemporary Astrology* Series. She is an adjunct faculty member for the Central American Institute of Prehistoric and Traditional Cultures at Belize. Erin is the author of: *Saturn in Transit*, *Retrograde Planets*, and *Dynasty: The Astrology of Family Dynamics*. *Venus and Jupiter and Where in the World?* has been published by the CPA Press. Erin may be contacted for consultations, information on books, studies etc. by email: erins@azstamet.com or visit her website: www.ErinSullivan.com.

What is it about the ethos of today that brings clients to an astrologer asking about their spiritual path? So many people are concerned that their spirituality and sense of soul are not being satisfied or lived out in their daily activities.

The history of astrology's evolution, and the emerging practice of it as an individual tool, have become revealing social barometers. The primary concerns of the individual are always reflective, to some degree, of the greater insecurities in the collective. Aside from the most recent development in astrology's long history - clients and astrologers using astrology for self-development, and as a guide to a greater understanding of their inner life - the primary concerns are reassuringly human: relationships, financial security, career, health (which is more a body/mind concern these days), the safety of their families and, of course, their unfolding futures.

That most of today's clients are deeply concerned about their spiritual path suggests that the distress is pandemic, and a loss of connectedness with the divine has become conscious. That clients hope to find the answer in their horoscope, or, at least, through interpretations of their horoscope, confirms that the ancient signs and symbols continue to offer links to their contemporary situation.

The separation of nature (soul) and culture (mind) is not just a twentieth century event, but was an ancient concern - and, though the issue didn't arise in the consulting rooms of astrologers circa 500 BCE, it was a powerful worry for the western philosophers that seemed to emerge from nowhere into early Athenian culture.

As far back as 600 BCE, there was already an awareness that somehow a gulf had formed between natural law - *nomos* - and cultural law - *physis* - and, based upon that awareness, a philosophical dialectic ensued. The very fact that the concept of a division existed - that there was a

"consciousness" at all - lies at the contemporary concern for all that is desacralized and secularized. Ancient poets feared for this split; their awareness of it signalled its truth.

The sacred and the profane

Exactly what is it that we are missing? What is the astrologer's client saying when she wants to know what her spiritual purpose is, and is she living it out? Is it a sense of loss of centre? Is it a true feeling of lack of purpose or inspiration in life? Is it even real? Could it be part of a more sinister suggestion that the gods have fled, and humanity is now being hoisted upon its own petard? Or is it a cultural imposition, a slow, degradation of unity in consciousness? I can't hope to fulfil these age-old questions in this article, but perhaps shed a bit of light on them as they arise in the astrological consultation.

The question of spirituality and contemporary soul is a vast, complicated and yet, paradoxically, a terribly simple issue. In *The Sacred and The Profane*, Mircea Eliade addresses the problem of religious experience and its apparent loss through human evolution and the social secularization of soulful things. He writes about the split, defining the experiential differences between the sacred and the profane as: "The sacred always manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from 'natural' realities... Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as... an *hierophany* - [thus] something sacred shows itself to us." ¹

Soul - sacred and profane

So, a religious experience can be differentiated from a mundane experience by the quality of feeling tone it engenders. From the Latin word *numen*, comes the adjective numinous. *Numen* means "god or goddess; divine will; divine command; divine authority; divinity; divine majesty"; and, secondarily, it means "oracle" - all of which impart a feeling of something wholly "other", of something outside ordinary experience. *Numen*, then, is not human nor is it cosmic, but evokes a profound sense of "otherness".

We find *numen* alive when we know something by other than rational means - when an epiphany reveals a truth. Because we are so wordy today, and tend to compartmentalize everything (a manifestation of the *nomos/physis* split) and rationalize everything, the mechanized world thinks that this experience is invalid, or, at best, fanciful and imaginative.

However, the loss of connection to the sacred does not eliminate our human need for religious experience. For those who do not have a religious framework - a church, a temple, a synagogue, a sect, a doctrine - religious behaviours still abound. The loss of the sacred as an integrated aspect of life itself results in secondary types of expression that are rooted in a religious core. Superstition, nostalgia, sentimentality, obsessive adherence to self-defined "laws", ritual acknowledgments such as the handshake and other cultural (secular) greetings, behaviours and shibboleths pass from one state of being to another.

Fast forwarding to the year 2001, where the division of nature and culture has arrived at a truly alarming global condition, it only makes sense that we all feel concerned about the loss of soul in daily life on an individual basis.

Astrology's role in healing the split

Astrology in itself is a synthesis of the mind/body split; it is the experience of the unity of heaven and earth. Alone, it stands as the metaphor of the undivided self - where both inner and outer worlds meet and where body and soul reside together, untrammelled by the evolution of time and civilization.

Since the earliest days, astrologers have remained steadfast in their belief that the relationships of the planets and the heavenly bodies are connected to the workings of the world. The world, and astrology along with it, have flourished tremendously since the first known horoscope, and so, today, astrology is more complex, more accurate and more integrated into the mainstream than it was two-and-a-half millennia ago. But that is a statement of its truth. Astrology would never have survived and undergone the requisite changes in tandem - indeed, ahead of, in my view - with scientific and creative social innovation, had astrology itself not been an immutable truth.

Since the beginning of our known history, astrology has undergone peaks and troughs, purges and reclamations, it has survived proclamations and edicts and intellectual scoffing; the attempt to place the astrologer at the periphery of the intellectual universe has only succeeded in part. This may have been a blessing in disguise - apartheid may separate but they cannot sever, indeed, certain cultures flourish in isolation and in rare atmospheres. Astrology is one of those cultures.

Because astrology incorporates both the technical and the symbolic, we can accept a two-fold philosophy of this soul/body split. One is the mechanistic time-based concept that science has advanced to subsume soul, thus we can blame it on René Descartes or Newton and his "single vision", as the poet William Blake called it, and/or we can adopt a metaphysical idea that we may have forgotten our soul in the overwhelming busy-ness of contemporary society. I think both are true, so let's look at an ancient idea of recollecting our soul in the midst of life.

I. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. pp. 10 - 11. *passim*. Mircea Eliade, Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, London/NY, 1959

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Anamnesis - recollection of the soul

The astrological Neptune recalls the ancient myth of Er, in the tenth book of Plato's *Republic*.² In this tale, Er dies, and comes back to tell the story of his soul's transition from body-death to soul-incarnation. It is a long and detailed journey, but for this purpose we'll focus on it briefly: after many experiences, and the appointment with the Moirae (the three Fates: spinner, weaver and cutter of life's thread) Er's soul reaches and crosses the Plain of Oblivion, which is like Tucson in the summer, hot as the proverbial Hell, then arrives at the River Lethe. Er is warned not to drink too deeply from Lethe, but to only slake his thirst, for "...they (the souls) were all required to drink a certain amount of water, but some were too stupid to look after themselves properly and drank more than the required amount."³

*L*ethe - forgetfulness - is the Greek root of our word lethal; it is lethal to the soul's memory to drink too much of its waters, because we will then have greater difficulty recollecting our soul's life-purpose, once it is reincarnated. It is assumed that the soul has chosen its new body-life, and thus will need to recall why it chose that body-life if it is to be a "successful" life.

Healing the inner split: the astrologer's role

*W*hen we are concerned about our spiritual path not being integrated into our daily life, it is an indication that we have been deeply influenced and contaminated by the collective loss of soul memory. But how else can the col-

lective become healed or transformed if the individuals within it each do not take up the aegis for change? The feeling of being soulfully detached from physical life is, at best, depressing and sad, and, at worst, a spiritual emergency.

*I*f this is the case then, as with all diagnoses, it is a sign that resolution is already in process, deep within the individual and collective psyche. These are days of spiritual emergency - witness the vast numbers of books in the last decade alone on the subject of soul, loss of soul, desecralization of society, reclaiming spirit, and healing the wounds of culture.

*I*t seems we have lost innate ways to recall easily our soul's purpose, and its integrity in our mundane path. William Blake, born in 1757, worried differently: (but similarly to Yeats, a hundred years later) "...The Last Judgement is an overwhelming of bad art and science. Mental things are alone real; what is called corporeal, nobody knows of its dwelling place: it is in fallacy, and its existence an imposture. Where is the existence out of mind or thought? Where is it but in the mind of a fool?"⁴ Harsh words, but relevant to our topic.

Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold⁵

*W*e are living what the ancients predicted, and poets and artists have wept over - we are deep in the chaos of loss of center. Historically, sacred sites were created with the centre as the literal core of the world, the *anima/axis mundi*, and from that central point, life radiated outward. Sacred spaces and locations

2 *Republic* Plato p 371, para 614a, Tr. Robin Waterfield Oxford University Press Classics 1994

3 *Ibid. op. cit.* p 379 para. 621b

4 From *A Vision of the Last Judgement* William Blake para. 130. composed in 1810. Selected Poetry and Prose. Ed. David Punter. Routledge. London. 1988

5 *The Second Coming*, W.B. Yeats, line 3, composed 1921 fr. *The Collected Yeats*, Papermac edition, MacMillan Publishers London/Basingstoke 1982

were the centre for tribes, cultures and, eventually, cities and countries, and this is analogous to the "centre" of the individual being the core of spirituality and psychic wholeness. We might consider ourselves as a microcosm wherein all our parts and components are a replication of the world itself.

The symbols and signs in each horoscope embody the totality of the human experience - each of us is an expressive part of that greater whole. The fact that a personal horoscope is biased, and has only a small representation of this whole, means that we are designed to act out in a particular fashion, with personality and ego - but they do not restrict us.

The natal horoscope is both centre and circumference - it is both the core of Self and circumference of worldly experience. You are the centre, the zodiac is the circumference of your world, and the planets are your assigned tasks, your way of being in this world. The soul is not separated from any of this, it is infused, and thus can be recollected through all aspects of living - in your own way.

This view does not preclude specific choices in spiritual paths, or religious expression - but it helps come to terms with one or many that are uniquely "familiar" and helpful to each individual. Finding that space or path is the life-work of recollecting the soul's purpose.

The *temenos* - both sacred and profane

Reflection on the soul's purpose requires a sense of safety, a sheltered place in which the reflection can be seen. Ideally, the chart reading should create a place for this reflection. A sacred space is called a *temenos*, and the *temenos* that can be created in the consulting room, or on the telephone with a client, is not defined by walls and doors. It exists outside the realm of matter, and thus, between the astrologer and client him/herself, in some mysterious ritual. In the course of discussion, invoking the symbols and signs in the horoscope, it is possible that *numen* arise, and truths emerge.⁶ There is however, no rote formula for this experience, which makes archetypal and psychological astrology very difficult to teach - it is only learned.

The issue of centrality as the core of spirituality is resolved in the natal horoscope. All spiritual icons or sites in the ancient world were depicted as the "centre of the world" from which all life emerged. This is replicated in the horoscope as a spiritual mandala, as well as a mundane map, all radiating out from the Self-centre. With the sacred, there is a sense of absolute reality; the profane is organised by compartmentalised, segmented reality.

The natal horoscope is a graphic depiction of a symbolically specific personal mnemonic. The individual is in the centre with the array of planets around, all contained within the confines of the zodiac. We have here a perfect picture of self/centre circumscribed by the zodiac/archetypes and the planets all around acting as agents for the Self's archetypal purpose.

In the session

A client calls for a consultation and among the important concerns is a feeling of non-participation in a spiritual relationship. The degree of the *feeling* of lack of spiritual connectedness is important to determine. Often it will have originated in a split from the ordained religion of the family. The reasons for this disconnection will be personal and also to do with the decline of numinosity in the religion itself. There are many occasions on which the individual needs to go back to the origins, the roots of the religion to discover if there is any remnant within it that might offer understanding, if not belief.

People who come out of old, established orthodox religions such as the Roman Catholic church, Judaism, Islam and all related sects, are those who have the most difficult time in this culture because the god is detached, punitive and separate from the world and its activities. The advent of the sky-gods was long ago, and is mythologically associated with Zeus, who arrived from the "North" bringing thunderbolts and war. . . demolishing the Earth religions within a couple of centuries.

Sky gods are not merciful, nor are they mutable - they find the life-forms on earth inferior and imperfect - mortal, in other words. Spirituality has little to do with dogma or what the Greeks called *doxa* - opinion. There are "right opinions" - *ortho-doxa*, then, there are "other opinions" - *hetero-doxa*. And, so are people along with it. Seeking out soul through astrological symbols means wading through the orthodoxies of astrology to find the *sophia* - the wisdom, the truth - after all, astrology is also a system. All systems and orthodoxies evolve with the times, as they always have and will continue to do.

Extricating one's own personal path from the organized defined paths is the work at hand.

Sky gods and Earth matters

Traditionally, the planet Jupiter is associated with religion and beliefs along with the 9th house and, archetypally, the sign of Sagittarius. Jupiter was the "old" ruler of the 12th house and Pisces, but was succeeded by Neptune in 1846, having been assigned matters of spirituality. Now, Jupiter remains on as the holder of dogma, and

6 *The Moment of Astrology.* Geoffrey Cornelius, 1st Edition, Arkana, CAS. 1992



*Dante Drinking the Waters
of Lethe*
Jean Delville

the knowledge of religions, but Neptune more aptly acts as a symbol for the ineffable and transcendent which underlie the soulful longing for the experience of the divine. As the River Lethe was in the myth of Er, Neptune is the amnesia of the soul, and the degree of amnesia one has, is the degree of soulful distress found underlying the horoscopic symbol.

It is not enough only to analyse Neptune and Jupiter and their realms in the natal horoscope, because they are not the whole. We need to understand the human elements as well as the divine. The split between soul and body needs to be healed through the archetypes in the horoscope which includes all planets, signs, aspects and house positions.

If we were to call Neptune “spirituality”, then we would be committing the Cartesian sin - singling out a particle, acknowledging its separateness, and declaring it independent of the whole. Spiritual soul is *not* separate from matter, thus, we need to explore how it is integrated, not how to “find” it somewhere out there, then catch it and put it inside.

We need to find spiritual integrity as it is, within the whole of the self. The spiritual path is just part of life's journey, without burning bushes, thunderbolts or heavenly stairways leading to biblical skies.

Thus, a point of origin on the quest for spirituality through the horoscope might begin with the way Neptune is configured, and secondarily how Jupiter figures into the chart, thence to all the other arrayed planets and their interrelationships. Neptune's placement is the “Lethan” point of oblivion to previous soul experiences, and its involvement with the rest of the planetary array says much about the degree to which recall of soul-life is possible.

Some individuals with the Sun, Mercury, Venus and the Moon in aspect to Neptune have powerful longings to return to the blissful, undifferentiated state of pure soul. I find that these people are the ones who are most terribly disappointed with the mundane aspect of life, but by that very characteristic simply must find soulfulness in their ordinariness and in the plod of daily work and life routines.

From the tomb of the womb

Full circle, from the tomb of the womb to the womb of the tomb, we come: an ambiguous, enigmatical incursion into a world of solid matter that is soon to melt from us, like the substance of a dream.⁷

Joseph Campbell.

From this viewpoint, Neptune in the horoscope is the River Lethe - it is the point of passage from soul to womb to body, hence it holds memory of our archetypal past, our intrauterine experience and the shock of birth.

Whatever our own personal "enigmatical incursion" is, our soul is both enveloped in and surrounding that path. Hence, soul is within and without, and our capacity to recall our soul's intent may or may not be overwhelmingly conscious. It takes work to bring the soul's intent into consciousness. Socrates called the process of a philosophic life *anamnesis*, which simply means recollection - or, more literally, against forgetfulness.

The myriad methods of *anamnesis* are all quite valid - there is only one spiritual truth, but it may manifest in as many ways as there are people to recollect and express it. A highly configured or prominent placement of Neptune in the chart amplifies the desire, the longing for reconnection to the divine, and the planets or angles that are involved with Neptune are the agencies for recollection.

This requires more work on anamnesis than a "relaxed" Neptune, or one that isn't assigned huge or personal tasks in the natal chart. As I suggested earlier, the more contacts Neptune has from the personal planets, the more likely the person is to have drunk too deeply - hence, the overwhelming desire to go back to that place of ouroboric unity with the divine, and find it.

Because birth itself is shocking and painful, and Neptune holds the memory of birth-trauma in its point in the chart, it means that penetrating the bodily/psychic pain of the birth - the loss of the divine unity - is also part of 12th house work.

Twelfth house planets are implicated in the loss of soul-memory, too, thus the tendency is for individuals to go to inordinate lengths to recollect their soul's purpose - usually by focussing on the agency of the planet(s) that are in the 12th house.⁸

But, by focusing consciously or unconsciously on the Neptune/12th house condition, we are not recollecting; we are responding to the forgetfulness, but not recalling the soul's purpose.

Anima mundi - soulful life on earth

This is all in aid of finding our life-path on the planet and experiencing the infusion of soul simultaneously. Ideally, the world soul and the human soul are entwined... and as we sleep, eat, work, argue, play, falter, arise, and simply live, we are fulfilling the soul's path; conversely, our life-path will also define our soul's intent. Discomfort with soul path results in a somatic condition, where the 12th house soul-call is not heard, and it then polarizes into the body and becomes a symptom, symbolized in the 6th house.

Symptoms are often related to soul-sickness; discomfort, disease and illness may become a means of soul-retrieval. To blame an individual for his or her own illness, however, is simply not on, because we are now in a time of endemic global symptoms which enter individuals regardless of their psychological and spiritual health. Some of us are victims of the collective loss of soul (for example, HIV, immuno-deficiency illnesses, and most cancers are related to the loss of systemic ecological balance on the planet). However, within this global codicil on illnesses, each of us will manifest the collective ills in our own personal way.

Now, back to soul-searching. Because the horoscope is a unique array of planetary agencies, all demanding participation in the psyche, we need to consider our life-path as part of the soul-path. Therefore, there is no more spiritual value in arranging meals-on-wheels for shut-ins than selling real estate. Nor is there less spiritual value in merchant banking than there is working for the disenfranchised. But, there could be - it depends on the underlying motive, the intent of the work.

Altruism, at best, helps others just a bit more than one's own self - at worst it is just another vehicle for the ego. So, one cannot measure soul by activities. When talking about a chart with a client, I tend to try to uncover the degree to which the person finds excitement, passion, interest and value in their life-work, whether it is child-rearing, managing a shopping centre or serving as an analyst or therapist. If there is a fairly even balance between the stressors of "the work" and the imagination and goodwill that the work generates, I would tend to consider the person as spiritually sound.

7 *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* p12 Joseph Campbell Bollingen Series XVII. 1949.
8 *Dynasty: The Astrology of Family Dynamics*. pp 170 - 180 Erin Sullivan 1st Edition, Arkana, CAS. 1992. To be re-issued by Samuel Weiser, March 2001

Some astrological signatures for pondering

This doesn't mean that the horoscope doesn't indicate how the individual can more effectively process the world-split and their own split. In part, we look at the planet Neptune and the condition of the 12th house for the "calling", or the obligation to the collective from a personal viewpoint. People with a strong Neptune need to be aware that they can be so overly desirous of spirituality that they can accept substitutes for soul - drugs, stimulation, distractions, sleep, compulsive relationships and so on, thereby fulfilling the *amnesia*, the forgetful part of the path. They might think spirituality is found in the seeking of it. It is not, it is found in the doing.

And the doing is found in the totality of the horoscope - not one single unit of it.

I mentioned Jupiter as an agency for religious expression of soulful longing - and, thus, it should be considered in relation to other natal planets. A strongly configured or singleton retrograde Jupiter signals the astrologer that there are a lot of notions about how spirituality should be expressed. Ideally, a "good" Jupiter is a free-thinking, unbiased philosophy, but that is hard to achieve when social, cultural and familial wisdom is overwhelming. Jupiter's role in seeking earthly methods of containing the divine is not to be underrated!

Squares and oppositions to Jupiter are a flag that there may be a lot of ideology attached to spiritual longing, and the anxiety about not being spiritual can block or stifle the creative spirit towards true soul recollection. This individual needs to talk through and understand his or her need to contain spiritual longings in an ideological vessel, replete with dogma and concepts. That is normal - what might *not* be healthy, however, is the underlying motive for the particular vehicle - be it a cult, science or religion.

In this way, delving into the motive - the psychic underlying cause - behind the particular conscious choice of spiritual vehicle will help tease out which is the "real" spiritual thrust, and which is the mind overwhelming the soul with its ideas. In other words, the point is to differentiate between what is numinous experience and what is worldly concept.

Our Earthy parts find a great sense of soul and peace doing things of the world - practical, helpful, organized activities promote a sense living a calm, soulful life. Our Earth-ruled houses, as well as the natural Earth

houses, are areas in which we can find great satisfaction - Saturn, Venus (the Taurean Venus) and Virgoan Mercury are the main Earth planets, but Saturn has a major role, being the *only single ruling Earth planet*, so its task is to embody all things.

The airy Mercurial parts of our charts symbolically point to reaching spirit through movement, action, relationship and sharing. Finding inspirational reading, teachings and exemplars/models are important in achieving a sense of peace-in-the-world, just as much as the inner search. Being "out there" and dynamic with personality are also dimensions of soul-work. The houses that we have air ruling, as well as the three natural air houses, hint as to where we will find the most intellectually and spiritually stimulating material. The Gemini Mercury, Uranus and the socialised Venus (Libra ruled) are the planets to look to for understanding the social, extraverted path to recollecting soul-purpose.

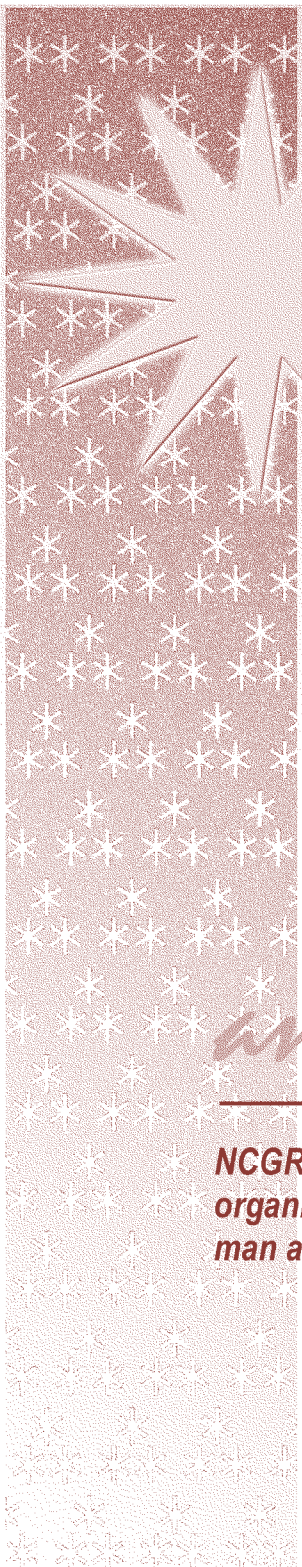
The most interior and spiritually restless signs and symbols are found in the watery regions of the chart. It is there we swim from one pond to another, and suffer empathic global anxiety - *Weltschmerz* - world pain. Paradoxically, the greatest solace and soulful gratification comes through the water houses and houses ruled by water signs (and planets therein). Planets such as the Moon, Neptune and Pluto fall into this deep, soulful interior search, along with the 4th, 8th and 12th houses. There reside our dreaming and imagination, the soul and its deep recesses. Soulful things like music, poetry and rhythmic movements, rituals and prayers are yet another link to our memory.

It is in the fiery parts of us, the animated and questing houses, where inspiration simply must be externally activated - here, and in the houses that are ruled by fire signs and contain planets like our Sun, Mars and Jupiter, soul-work becomes active, extraverted and playful - experimental too. Wildness and will, power and stamina, courage and innovation are vital agents in the quest for soul - there is nothing about soul that says one cannot seek it loudly or actively!

When our parts are at one, there is a sense of smoothness, calm and peace, as if all parts are running well together. Spiritual peace is not a quantity of power, but a quality of power. And, from this place, there appears to be no single way, but a myriad of ways - indeed, if we really are "all one", then it stands to reason that the "one is all", as well.



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The Hierophant

Juliet Sharman-Burke

Juliet Sharman-Burke here introduces us to the Hierophant or High Priest in the Tarot, and explains why she chose Chiron to represent him in the *Mythic Tarot*.

Juliet Sharman-Burke has been practising astrology and Tarot for the past twenty years. She has been teaching and supervising for the Centre for Psychological Astrology since its inception in June 1983, and also runs the Centre's administration. She is also a qualified analytic psychotherapist with a private practice in London. Juliet is the author of *The Complete Book of Tarot*, *The Mythic Tarot Workbook*, and *Understanding Tarot*, and is co-author of *The Mythic Tarot* and *The Mythic Journey* with Liz Greene. She has also written *The Barefoot Book of Stories from the Stars*, a book for children. *The Astrologer, the Counsellor and the Priest*, with Liz Greene, and *The Family Inheritance: Parental Images in the Horoscope*, have both been published by the CPA Press.

There is a great deal of disagreement about the origins and purpose of the Tarot. A.E. Waite, designer of the famous Rider Waite deck, states that "The chief point regarding the history of the Tarot cards, whether used as pretexts for fortune telling or as symbols of philosophical interpretation, is that such history does not in fact exist."

Was the Tarot originally designed as game or a fortune telling device, or did it hold a spiritual significance? As its true origins are as yet unproven, we are left with 78 cards, 22 of which contain such diverse imagery as Death, The Devil, The Hanged Man and The Tower alongside The Lovers, The Empress, Temperance and The World. If the Tarot was only a game, why were images of archetypal importance included? If it were a fortune-telling device what sort of fortunes were being told? Antoine Court de Gebelin, an eighteenth century Tarot expert, suggests there is evidence that the cards may have evolved from images which adorned the walls of the temple of Thoth in ancient Egypt. The images represented the major forces (the 22 Major Arcana) which governed the patterns of a person's life, and anyone wishing to consult the gods about their lives would throw a loose bundle of rods (which presumably transmuted into the numerical Minor Arcana) at random, in the direction of these large pictures. The priests of the temple would interpret the pattern of the fallen rods, noticing which image was highlighted by the number and formation of rods that fell pointing to it, and in this way would attempt to interpret "the words of the gods". Out of this custom grew the practice of carrying the images around in card form, and as Court de Gebelin, author of *Le Monde Primitif Analysé et Comparé avec le Monde Moderne* (Paris 1781) (*The Ancient World Analysed and Compared with the Modern World*), put it, they were "the unbound leaves of the sacred book of Thoth *Hermes Trismegistus*". There is much discussion about the historical accuracy of Count de Gebelin's "discoveries" regarding the Tarot's origins; nevertheless it is an interesting and, I feel, appropriate approach that rather than being a mere "fortune-telling" device, the cards can be used as a way of communicating with the gods.

In the Tarot, the card which relates most to spirituality and the urge to connect with a greater dimension is the Hierophant or High Priest. The divinatory meaning of The Hierophant in a Tarot reading suggests that the seeker will want to turn his or her attention away from the material world, and signifies a desire for a deeper understanding of philosophical or spiritual matters. The Hierophant points to an urgent wish to find real purpose or meaning in life. This may manifest in the search for a spiritual mentor, or a religious framework, or an ideology which might act as a guide in this pursuit. The ancient word for priest is *pontifex* which means "builder of bridges" so the priest acts as a bridge between the gods and men. The Hierophant in the Tarot is an image of such an intermediary.

The traditional decks use the image of a priest or pope blessing two kneeling men. Such imagery generally depicts him in priestly or papal robes wearing a triple-tiered crown, which symbolises his wisdom in the physical, emotional and mental spheres of human existence. His hand is often held up with two fingers pointing sky-ward and two fingers folded down towards the earth symbolising his link between the heavens and earth.

The traditional image of the Hierophant dressed as pope does connect him in many people's minds with the Christian church, although his essence is far broader, and he is not easily described by any one set of religious beliefs. For this reason, when designing *The Mythic Tarot*, it seemed that the wise centaur Chiron might be an appropriate image for The Hierophant, as he was a teacher and spiritual guide to the young men of noble houses in ancient Greece.

Chiron does not symbolise any orthodox religion; the wise centaur was in charge of teaching spiritual values and respect for divine law to the young princes which they needed to understand before moving on to learning the art of rulership.. The Hierophant represents the urge that all humans feel to a greater or lesser extent, which is to find some spiritual purpose in life. He symbolises the force behind each of us forming within ourselves terms on which to base our religious beliefs or philosophical values. Each of us

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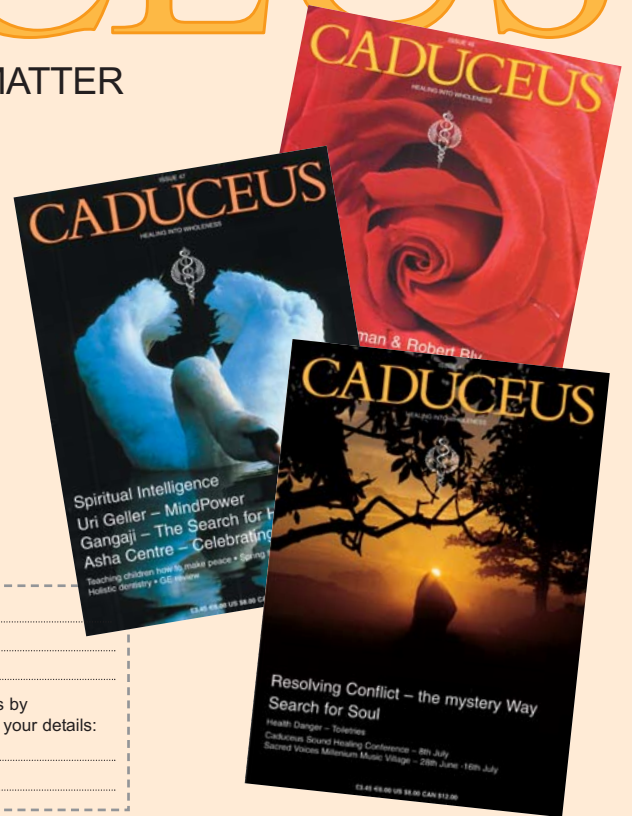
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needs to test out teachings and doctrines for ourselves, and The Hierophant stands for this energy and desire to find a personal spiritual truth. This can be a lonely quest as it is one we must necessarily do on our own.

Chiron in astrology is the planet which has come to symbolise much of the human disappointment we experience when we discover that the world contains pain and hurt, much of which seems unfair. In myth Chiron was wounded by accident. His friend Herakles dropped by for a visit, bringing with him a quiver of arrows which he had poisoned by dipping them in the monstrous Hydra's toxic blood. One of these poisoned arrows grazed Chiron's thigh, his animal part, quite by chance. Chiron, being half-animal and half-divine, was badly wounded and in terrible pain; yet he could not die because his divine part did not permit this option. The animal part had to suffer a wound for which there was no cure, inflicted randomly and undeservedly, which made it more difficult to come to terms with.

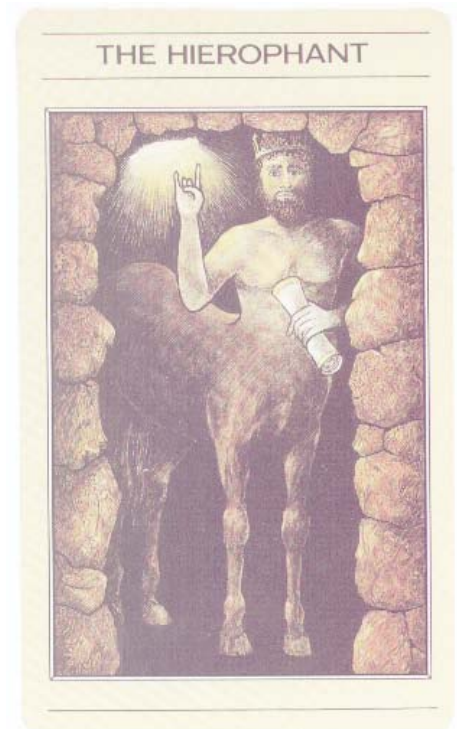
Thus, Chiron became an image of the Wounded Healer, the one who through his own pain can understand and appreciate the pain of others. Only when we have felt pain ourselves can we appreciate and sym-

pathise with another's plight from a place of true compassion. The positive side for humanity was that Chiron committed himself ever more earnestly to his study of healing and herbal lore in search of a cure; but, although he managed to heal and help many others, he could never heal himself.

A true priest is open to the world's pain because he, being human, suffers like everyone else. Chiron seems an apt image for a priest, as he is half god and half horse, and so partakes of both the instincts and the spirit and as such contains a duality which is similar to the human condition. We, too, are neither all-animal nor all-divine but an uneasy mixture of both, and we must painfully learn to live with both. Out of this mixture comes Chiron's wisdom, which partakes of both the knowledge of God and the knowledge of natural law.

The Hierophant in the Tarot is an image of someone who can aid this process of finding meaning and understanding, or it can refer to a part of ourselves which seeks out answers through private study and reflection. Both paths are valid and often both apply. The name Hierophant means "the revealer of sacred things" which is his function in our psyches.

The Mythic Tarot





The Evening of the Deluge
Joseph Mallord William Turner c. 1843
Tate London