

THE GALACTIC CENTRE and THE CENTAURS

by Melanie Reinhart



Sagittarius constellation: centaur points towards the Galactic Centre. (Reinhart, 2011)¹

In the last few decades, all three outer planets plus the Minor Planets ('Centaur's') Chiron and Nessus have passed through late Sagittarius, home of the Galactic Centre. Now it's the turn of Saturn, plus the Centaurs Pholus, Chariklo and Hylonome, picking up the trail and following ... a veritable herd of Centaurs relaying the Olympian flame of Sagittarius!

The Galactic Centre

The current position of the Galactic Centre is $27^{\circ}3'$ of Sagittarius, moving about 1° every 72 years. Any planet located in the last 5° of Sagittarius can be described as 'aligned' with the Galactic Centre, although this term relates only to their position within the 'field' of the Tropical Zodiac, not taking into account the intricacies of true physical positionality, motion and velocity.

This article takes an imaginal and symbolic view of the Galactic Centre and our relationship with it, laced with a few 'factoids' ...



Centre of the Milky Way Galaxy: Chandra X-ray telescope, NASA

A 'factoid' is something "stated as fact, and by virtue of collective acquiescence and repetition is considered to be true, regardless of merit" (Wikipedia). We could say that today's heresy is tomorrow's factoid! So let's hold lightly the 'prevailing views' we might encounter, as in time they will no doubt be superseded. This allows our imagination to come forward, connected as it is to personal experience, to soul, and to our 'locus' on Earth at this time. The imagination can be highly specific without being tied to 'factoids', but to mistake one for the other ... therein lies madness!

The heliocentric world view and its demise

Before Copernicus (19.2.1473 – 24.5.1543), it was believed that the Sun, Moon and planets orbited around the Earth. During the century following his death, the 'Copernican Revolution' gradually established the heliocentric view: the Sun became the centre, with the planets revolving around it. Helios was a Sun-god, and the Sun has long been a symbol of royalty – the King, the ruler, the authority. Its colour and metal are gold, it rules the sign of Leo the lion, king of beasts, and the heraldic lion can be seen on royal insignia world-wide. The equation goes like this: Sun = lion = king = centre = gold = value = individual. The institutions and dogmas which emanate from this view are theocratic and monotheistic, with a single ruler. Louis XIV, 'Le Roi Soleil', the 'Sun King', is an example, as are many of the tyrants ruling various crumbling regimes today.

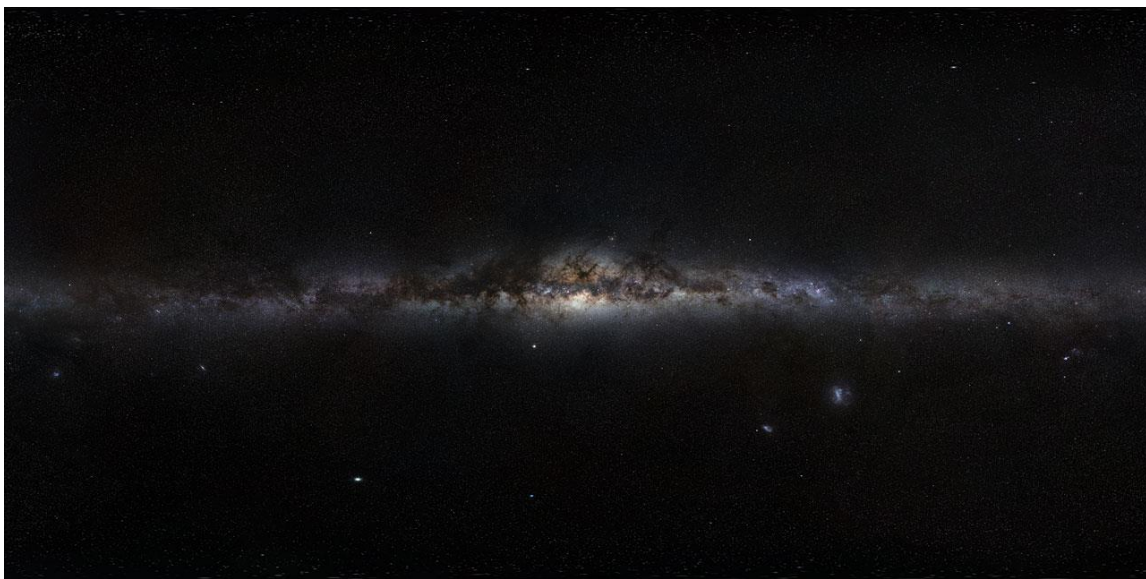
In parallel, we can perhaps consider the discovery of Pluto (1930, just one day before the birthday of Copernicus!) as the herald of another revolution in our understanding of the cosmos – a shift of worldview occurring, the influx of a new level of consciousness. Pluto was formerly the sole 'orbit-crossing' planet in the Solar System, but in 2006 was 'demoted' from planet status. However, the symbolism is perfect. The 'Lord of the Underworld' now resides in the Kuiper Belt, discovered around 1992. This dense ring of matter which surrounds the Solar System is teeming with objects in the process of being discovered, and is thought to be the origin of the Centaurs, a newly-created category of celestial objects which are also 'orbit-crossers'. Pluto is 'King of the Kuiper Belt', which may be likened to the 'Celestial Underworld'.

Pluto's discovery in 1930 was followed by events within the monetary world which had far-reaching effects. Many mythic 'Lords of the Underworld' were also known as 'Lords of Wealth', and Pluto is no exception. The Gold Standard was progressively abandoned in the U.K., Europe and the U.S.A, where by 1934 it was being nationalised – confiscated by the government. Now there is no country whose paper currency is backed by gold. The physical substance, gold, which 'stands for' the Sun no longer 'stands behind' our money. So what does, if anything?² As the heliocentric cosmos is superseded, the Gold Standard is abandoned.

Outer Light and Inner Light

On a somatic level, the Sun rules the heart (via Leo) and the 'solar' plexus – the centre of the body. The Sun is like the nucleus of a cell, and its astrological symbol refers to 'individuality', the sense of 'I' or 'me' at various levels. It represents the 'ego', meaning the 'false self' which consists of personality structures formed of patterns taken on from our ancestry, parents and other authority figures, as well as society in general and mass media in particular.

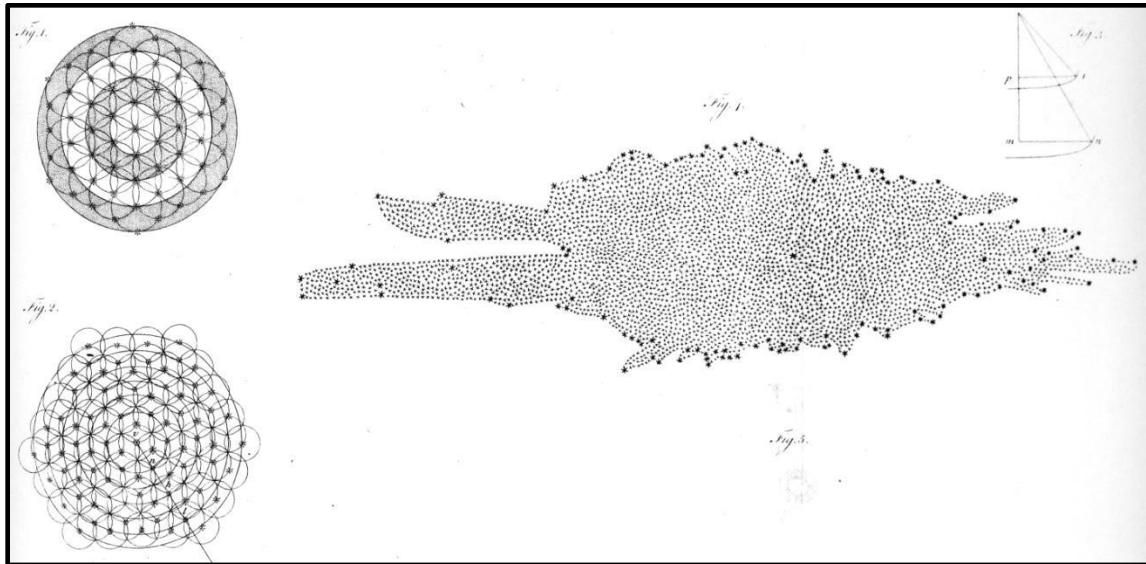
However, the astrological Sun also focalises something deeper and more mysterious – the precious and heartfelt sense of 'centre' which yields an inner radiance, light, joy and purpose. This more mature sense of 'individual self' is often capitalised as 'Self', to indicate dimensions of experience beyond the archaic ego structures. The process of realising this luminous core is referred to by Carl Jung (with Sun in Leo!) as 'individuation'. It opens out into our re-cognition of the multi-dimensional nature of existence, as represented by our orbit around the Galactic Centre, heart of the Milky Way.



Milky Way Panorama. Picture credit: ESO/S. Brunier

In the work of Alice Bailey, the astrological Sun is sometimes described as having a hidden resonance with the planet Uranus. William Herschel discovered Uranus in 1781,

and his notebook, below, shows his amazingly accurate computation of the shape of our galaxy. Drawn on the same page is the ancient and well-known 'Flower of Life' diagram. What was he 'seeing' in his mind's eye? This beautiful geometrical figure is like a prototype or container for many other 'maps of consciousness'. In recent years, there has been a series of discoveries, some highly speculative, concerning the nature of the Galactic Centre – its composition, features, distance from us, precise co-ordinates and so on. However, William Herschel and his sister Caroline must be credited with the 'first approach' which later gave rise to 'Galactocentrism' – the belief that the Sun is at or near the centre of the Galaxy. Heliocentrism by another name?



Herschel's notebook. Picture credit: Linda Hall Library Digital Collection, Kansas City, MO.

In the words of Dane Rudhyar:

Man projects upon the outer world what *he potentially is*, in order to discover and actualise his innate potential of being ... What man perceives in the universe, being a projection of his most characteristic need, is for this reason *a symbol of what man is*.³

Thus, the knowledge that our entire Solar System revolves around a yet greater centre called the 'Galactic Centre' parallels an inner need within humanity to be released from the egoic 'false-self-hood' as represented by the (distorted) heliocentric world view. Trapped in this paradigm, human self-ish-ness engenders a narcissistic way of life fuelled by greed and consumerism – vested interests convince us that we have to get, buy, procure or achieve a multitude of substitutes for the true Self-hood for which we long. However, our true individuality, related to the symbolism of gold, as mentioned above, prompts us to see through these delusions and to rest in the *inner light* of which it partakes, safe in the knowledge that the Self is innate and cannot be bought, sold or achieved.

Hercules and our home galaxy

The mythic origin of our galaxy, the Milky Way, is portrayed in the story of Hercules, a son of Zeus. However, as his mother was Alcmene, a mortal woman, Hercules was much hated by Hera, the first wife of Zeus. It is said that Zeus put Hercules to Hera's breast while she was asleep, so that by drinking her milk Hercules could be assured of immortality. Hera awoke to find a suckling baby, not her own, at her breast. Angered, she withdrew her nipple, and her milk streamed across the sky, forming the 'Milky Way'. The word 'galaxy' comes from the same root as the word 'milky' [Gk. *galaxias*].



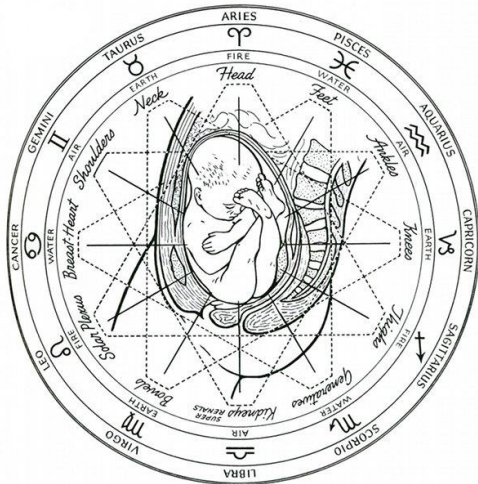
Jacopo Tintoretto *The Origin of the Milky Way* (c.1575), National Gallery, London

Astrologically, when the Galactic Centre zone is activated by transits, Hera's breast is withdrawn, metaphorically speaking. Meaning that the places, people, ideas, notions and events in our life where we have previously projected our own sense of 'Higher Self', or 'Deeper Centre' as a source of nourishment may collapse, let us down, crumble, turn against us, or simply quietly depart. That which promised 'immortality' fails us. Our 'tribal' associations, national or racial identities, while valuable on their own level, are relinquished. *Through these transitions or crises, our consciousness develops.* This may require a great deal of psychological processing, allowing grief and confusion to give way to peace and clarity. Both our physical bodies and subtle bodies may need attention as toxins begin to be eliminated when we travel the 'celestial pathway'.

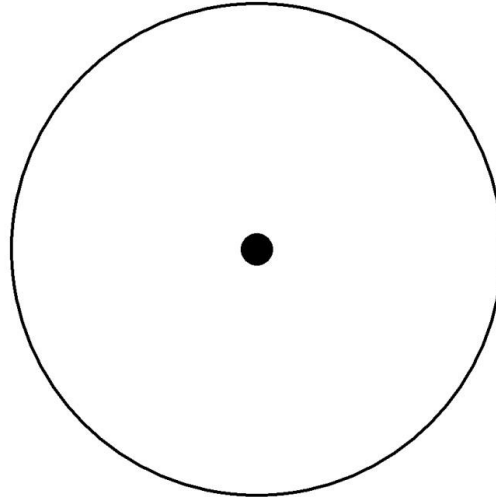
The Zeus factor

Hera is not the 'real mother' of Hercules, and 'must' therefore reject him and the trickery of his father Zeus. Similarly, realisation of the Self, our own 'immortal nature', cannot be forced, and substitutes will not work. However, the Milky Way also represents

the path we travel to the beatitude of this re-cognition. Hercules is famous for his ‘Twelve Labours’, reminding us of the 12-fold zodiac, within which is encoded the never-ending story of the soul’s progressive re-cognition of its origin in Spirit – our ‘Real Mother’.



Polarity Therapy by Randolph Stone,
Vol 1, Bk.1, Diagram No.5



M. Reinhart (2009); Solar Fire v.8

Zeus is associated with astrological Jupiter, ruler of Sagittarius, and traditionally the ‘Great Benefic’. Astronomically, Jupiter is the largest planet in our Solar System, with many moons and an enormous magnetosphere which even covers the orbit of Saturn, as if Jupiter seeks to be a ‘Central Sun’ in his own right and to over-ride the limits and boundaries of Saturn! Indeed, with his philandering and rageful thunderbolts, the mythic figure of Zeus shows many traits which verge on the tyrannical.

However, astrological Jupiter invites us to generate goodwill and learn to receive Grace. Note that Jupiter is exalted in the receptive sign of Cancer, ruled by the Moon, and is dignified in Sagittarius ... but not always! Sagittarian ‘shadow qualities’ include excess, extremism and over-expansion, for which the antidote is the practice of true generosity, in contrast to display, ostentation or ‘playing God’. Generosity, given and received in humility, allows the circulation of beneficence.

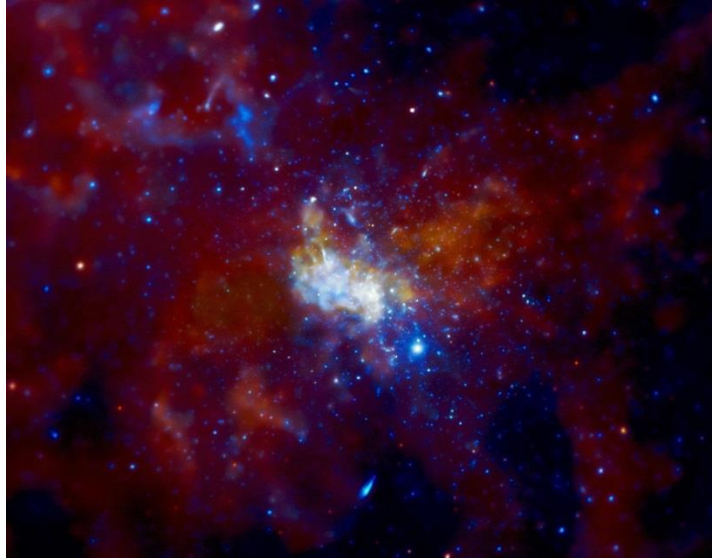
Back to the Galaxy ...

The Milky Way is a ‘barred spiral galaxy’, part of the Virgo super-cluster of galaxies. It is believed to be 13-15 billion years old and to contain 100 billion stars! Our Solar System takes 225-250 million years to complete one orbit around the Galactic Centre, and if the size of our galaxy were reduced to 100 metres, our Solar System would be the size of a grain of sand ...

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Flower
Hold Infinity in the Palm of your Hand
And Eternity in an Hour.

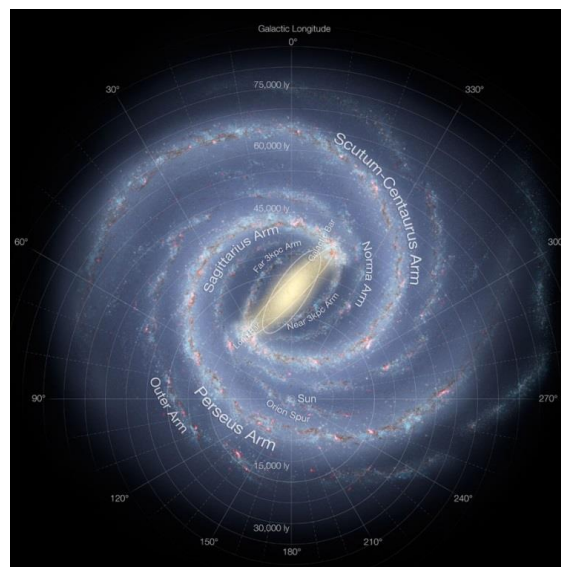
William Blake *Auguries of Innocence* 1803

In the centre of the Galactic Centre is there is a complex radio source called ‘Sagittarius A’; at the centre of Sagittarius A in turn is a bright radio source called (somewhat confusingly) Sagittarius A*. At the centre of the latter is said to be a ‘super-massive black hole’. Indeed, the centres of all galaxies are thought to consist of black holes, giving birth to numerous stars. Does this perhaps supercede the ‘Big Bang’ theory?



Chandra Image of Sagittarius A

Maps of the arms of this spiral vary considerably, but our Solar System is usually placed about two-thirds of the way out (27,000 light years) from the Galactic Centre, between the ‘arms’ of Perseus and Sagittarius. Interestingly, the closest star to us is Alpha Centauri, the ‘front foot of the centaur’. There’s those centaurs again! Centaurus is said to be the constellation in which Chiron was immortalised, but its iconography also suggests the Centaur Pholus, who was wounded in the foot!



Artist's impression of the Milky Way, 2013. Picture credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/NASA/R. Hurt

The Galactic Centre is partly obscured by a very large cloud of non-luminous stellar dust called the 'Dark Rift', stretching from the constellation of Cygnus, through Aquila, Ophiuchus, Sagittarius, to Centaurus. So Chiron was immortalised – at the edge of the Dark Rift! What a wonderful symbolic picture. Perhaps this 'Dark Rift' refers to the 'astral debris' which we encounter on our own healing journey ... the psychological, familial, collective, historical, religious and political thought forms which magnetise and bind us, and from which we must free ourselves in order to liberate our awareness.



Shadow of the Dark Rift, 2011. Picture credit: NASA

Our Solar System weaves in and out of the plane of the galaxy, going above, below and through it. The much-discussed 'alignment' of 2012 referred to the fact(oid) that our Solar System was said to be moving through the galactic plane or 'equator'. However, other sources claim that we are currently about 50 light years above the mid-plane of the galaxy, which we crossed about two million years ago, and moving further away!

The Nodes of the galaxy recently entered 0° Capricorn, the yearly position of the Sun at the 21st December. Opinions vary about the exact date of this Ingress, as this point moves extremely slowly, and stays within a few arc minutes of 0° Capricorn for a period of about 35 years. In astrological terms, 'nodes' are located where a planet or other object crosses the Ecliptic, the plane in which all the planets orbit around the Sun. However, the notion of a 'plane' is not quite accurate, although convenient for depicting 2D diagrams on paper. The Solar System is actually a whirling helix, travelling around the Galactic Centre at a speed of about 220 km per second!

However, factoids, discrepancies and confusions need not spoil our appreciation of the imaginal sense that our entire Solar System, along with everything it symbolises, is peripheral and beholden to a yet greater centre. Which in turn is peripheral to yet another, which is in turn peripheral to another and so on, to an infinity of super-centres and multiverses. Our physical life begins in the womb, where we are central to the surrounding periphery of our mother's womb. This same dynamic – the relationship between centre and periphery – resonates through every dimension of creation.⁴

Awakening ...

When the last 5° of Sagittarius are stimulated by transiting planets, a process of awakening is initiated. The arrow of the centaur points 'beyond what we know', and at the same time refer us symbolically to 'what we have always known' in our inner depths. These intimations have a strong 'felt sense' but are not easily verbalised or quantified. A time of accelerated spiritual development occurs, with its attendant life challenges which may include rapid change, separations, crisis, illness and stress as outmoded ideas are released. Phil Sedgwick likens this to a 'defragging' process of our mental 'hard drives'!

Expect a major 'life-review' of a very particular kind. Density, opaqueness and blockages within the mind the soul are being spun off, as in a centrifuge. This is a perhaps useful image for the Galactic Centre - a centrifuge - where everything is spun away from the dark centre, revealing an empty space.

This 'empty space' is where we are receptive to Grace, and like the black holes said to reside at the core of the galaxy, it generates the substance which will birth the new, individually and collectively. Rudolf Steiner reminds us that,

“He who would create the new
must endure the passing of the old
in full tranquillity.”⁵

The Centaur connection

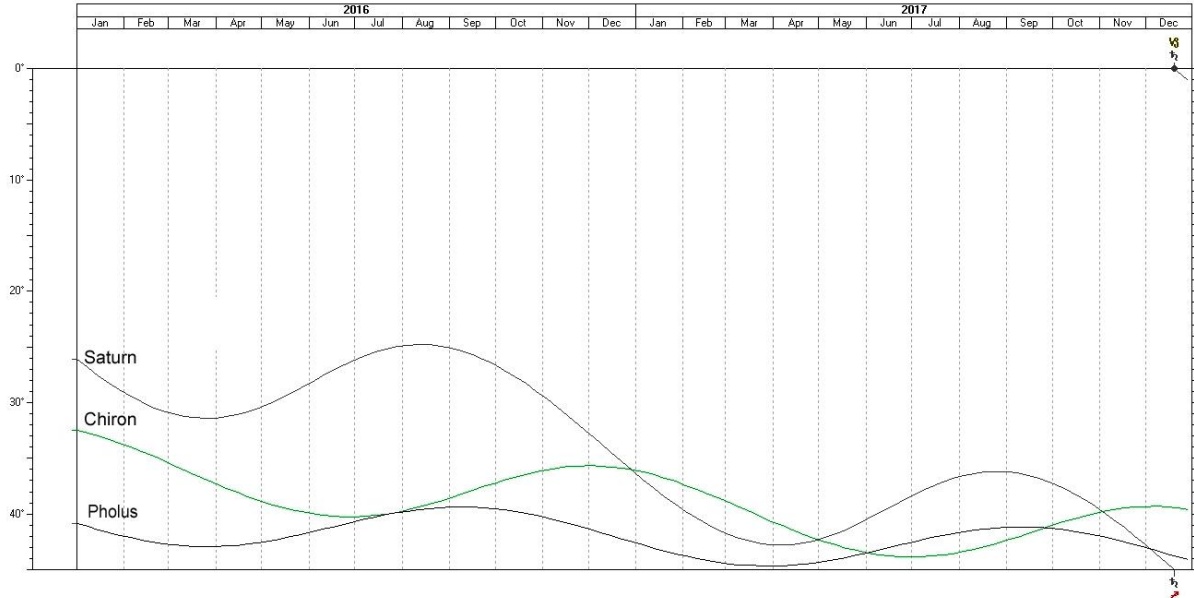
The Centaurs reflect within the psyche the crucial process of purification, healing and integration which accompanies our spiritual awakening. Intense experiences, often signalled by transits from the outer planets, may not be fully integrated at the time so they are stored within the soul, awaiting suitable opportunities to be 'revisited', in order that the process can re-open and unroll further. Transits of the Centaurs are invaluable as they link into these 'in-between' regions of the soul, the internal 'Underworld', where 'incomplete' experiences call for healing. This enables us to contact dimensions of awareness that have a freeing and healing effect. *The result is a healing transition.*

Pholus and Chariklo were exactly conjunct on January 1st 2014, at 22°12' Sagittarius. Their conjunction lasted from early 2012 until mid-2016, with two further exact points in 2014, on July 4th and October 21st, perhaps heralding the current activation of these 'Galactic' themes. From then until the end of 2018, one or more Centaurs pass through the Galactic Centre zone, sometimes as many as three together, namely Pholus, Chariklo and Hylonome.⁶ The latter two are already in the early degrees of Capricorn, but Pholus remains in late Sagittarius until early 2018.

Pholus – 'The Lid Comes Off'

Pholus has an orbit length of 91.85 years and crosses the orbital paths of Neptune, Uranus and Saturn. It refers to prenatal memories, ancestral patterning and healing (specifically up to four generations back), the 'bardic spirit' or poetic capacity for storytelling, inspirational writing and speaking, the oracular utterance, custodianship of something precious (material or spiritual), releasing of toxins which need to be

eliminated, on whatever level. By transit, it signals powerful rushes of energy, circumstance or events which may alter the trajectory of one's life and are accompanied by significant levels of chaos – inner, outer or both. To quote Robert von Heeren 'Small cause, big effect'.⁷



Graph computed with Solar Fire v.8. Reinhart,2016

The graph above (2016-2017) shows the climax of this 'Galactic Activity', with Chiron in Pisces (green line) making a series of squares with both Saturn and Pholus in late Sagittarius. If you are curious, track these intriguing aspects using the date list below and notice what happens in your inner process as well as 'out there' in the world. Stations are included, as they typically mark periods where planetary energy intensifies:

Saturn Sqr	Chiron	29 Dec 2016	21°Sg01' D	21°Pi01' D
Pholus R		28 Mar 2017	29°Sg40' R	
Saturn R		6 Apr 2017	27°Sg47' R	
Saturn Sqr	Chiron	30 Apr 2017	27°Sg18' R	27°Pi18' D
Chiron Sqr	Pholus	1 Jun 2017	28°Pi29' D	28°Sg29' R
Chiron R		1 Jul 2017	28°Pi51' R	
Saturn D		25 Aug 2017	21°Sg10' D	
Pholus D		10 Sep 2017	26°Sg10' D	
Chiron Sqr	Pholus	26 Sep 2017	26°Pi15' R	26°Sg15' D
Saturn Sqr	Chiron	2 Nov 2017	24°Sg47' D	24°Pi47' R
Saturn Cnj	Pholus	4 Dec 2017	28°Sg07' D	28°Sg07' D
Chiron D		5 Dec 2017	24°Pi19' D	
Pholus R		30 Mar 2018	01°Cp20' R	
Saturn R		18 Apr 2018	09°Cp08' R	
Chiron Sqr	Pholus	6 May 2018	00°Ar56' D	00°Cp56' R
Chiron R		5 Jul 2018	02°Ar25' R	
Saturn D		6 Sep 2018	02°Cp32' D	
Pholus D		12 Sep 2018	27°Sg54' D	
Chiron Sqr	Pholus	30 Oct 2018	28°Pi35' R	28°Sg35' D
Chiron D		9 Dec 2018	27°Pi53' D	

We can see many of the current dramas playing out on the ‘world stage’ as also expressing in a very literal way the symbolism of Saturn (SA), Chiron (CH) and Pholus (PH). A few examples follow. ‘Authority’ (SA) is both ‘wounded’ and ‘wounding’ (CH) – with revelations/accusations of abuse and corruption (PH), assassination of political figures (SA). Alternative medicine (CH) under scrutiny, often persecutory (SA). High incidence of iatrogenic illness becoming revealed (CH-PH). Accusations of ‘False News’ (PH) levelled at media outlets (SG) in the UK and the USA – “I don’t lie, but you do”. Righteousness and fundamentalism (SA in SG). Threats/predictions of future (SG) planet-wide epidemics (CH in PI) – with just-as-deadly vaccines to ‘heal’ them (CH in PI). Meanwhile, an ‘invisible epidemic’ (CH in PI) of fear (SA). Travel chaos (PH in SG), extremist actions, persecution on religious grounds, controversies over borders (SA) and migration (SG), ET sightings, and so on, and on ...

Watch the few days leading up to the dates above for surges of Sagittarian ‘madness’ or Chironian ‘wounding and healing’. It’s all ‘coming out’ and truly the ‘lid is off’ (Pholus).

And finally ...

Let’s not get beguiled by ‘world horror’ to the point of forgetting that these celestial processes are also reflections of deep transformations, *inner as well as outer*. Much of what we see ‘out there’ is the result of these powerful energies activating fear-filled ego-defences which have congealed around areas of buried pain, confusion and vulnerability. And the ‘antidote’ for fear is not bravado, but compassion – *we are witnessing generations of historical trauma being revealed and released*. The root of the word ‘apocalypse’ is the Greek word *apokalyptien* meaning ‘to reveal, disclose, uncover’. When darkness is being exposed everywhere, would we, could we, dare to be hidden ‘Revolutionaries of Spirit’ allowing the light to be inwardly revealed and quietly embodied, secretly or otherwise?

“In drinking a cup of tea, I stop the war”

Apocryphal Zen saying, popularised by Paul Reps, author.

ENDNOTES

¹ Permission from 'Starry Night Education': <http://starrynighteducation.com>

² To explore this question: <http://www.wanttoknow.info/bankingfactsinformationcorruption>

³ Dane Rudhyar, *The Galactic Dimension of Astrology - The Sun is Also a Star* (1982). Aurora Press, NM, p. 6-7.

⁴ See Francis J. Mott, *Mythology of the Prenatal Life* (2013). Starwalker Press, London.

⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *The Soul's Awakening* (1994). Temple Lodge, London, p.3.

⁶ See my website for more on the Chiron-Saturn squares, plus ephemeris and more detail about Chariklo and Hylonome.

⁷ For detailed exploration of Pholus, see *Saturn, Chiron and the Centaurs* (2011). Starwalker Press, London.