

## The Science Bit

### What's What And Where's Where In Astrology.

#### THE PLANETS

The sun is a star. It stands at the centre of our solar system and the nine planets surrounding the sun are constantly orbiting it taking various amounts of time to do so. Mercury Venus (and Earth) take roughly a year to complete an orbit but the planet Pluto takes two hundred and fifty-six!

When an astrologer like myself makes predictions we place a greater importance on the connections the outer planets make (Uranus, Neptune and Pluto) and the non-personal planets (Jupiter and Saturn). Since these planets are such slow movers they have a more significant effect on the events that shape our lives.

The sun, of course, does not actually move at all. Here on planet Earth we see the sun rising and setting each day but in reality it is us who are moving. Thus the passage of the sun through the circle of the zodiac is similarly an illusion.

The moon is not a planet. It is a satellite belonging to Earth.

But whether a star, a satellite, an asteroid or a bonafide planet, astrologers through the ages have watched the movements of the planetary bodies and gained meaning from them. And although astrology is still viewed as a spurious study by most scientists, its usage and popularity is as strong in the Twentieth Century - if not stronger - than it was three thousand years ago.

## The Sun



When people ask you what sign you are they want to know whether you are an Aries, a Virgo or whatever. Indeed, for most people that is all astrology is about. But the sign the sun was in on the day you were born is only a part of a much bigger picture. Your sun sign is like your nationality. And just as much as we are able to make sweeping generalizations about Italians for instance or Australians and recognize certain collective traits, each of the signs has identifiable characteristics. But whatever our nationality each of us is an individual; and so it is with the sun sign.

The sun takes a year to go through all the signs of the zodiac. And the sun takes a year to go round each and every horoscope.

## The Moon



The moon in astrology represents all things female. The sign the moon was in at the time of your birth reveals who you are deep down. Indeed women are much more like their moon sign than anything else in their charts so, if you want to know what a woman is really all about, find out her moon sign. In a man's chart, the moon is representative of his feelings and it indicates the type of woman he feels intrinsically at home with.

The moon takes approximately twenty-eight days to go through all the signs of the zodiac. Therefore the moon circles your entire horoscope every twenty-eight days. The moon's cycle has a measurable effect on life on earth; not only does the moon affect the tides but also our menstrual cycle is a perfect reflection of the lunar cycle. Post-operative bleeding is heavier at full moon; more babies are born at full moon and there are more suicides at full moon.

## Mercury



Like the Greek god, Hermes, Mercury is the great communicator of the planets. Mercury in astrology represents the way we think and how we communicate our ideas, opinions and feelings. Travel is under the guardianship of Mercury. Therefore someone with Mercury in a key position in a birth chart will have a yen for travel and he or she will gravitate toward careers in teaching, for instance, writing or indeed anything where his agile mind and restless spirit can be best used.

Mercury takes roughly a year to orbit the sun and therefore circle the horoscope. Every so often Mercury and the rest of the planets appear to go backwards. This is a phenomenon called retrograde motion, which is brought about by the relative speeds of the planets as they revolve around the sun. When Mercury goes retrograde communications tend to go completely awry!

## Venus



Venus is not only the most beautiful planet to look at but in astrology it represents beauty, harmony and love. Venus in a woman's chart describes how she expresses her femininity and the way she gives love and affection. In a man's chart Venus reveals the kind of woman he is sexually attracted to and the way he gives love and affection.

Venus takes approximately a year to circle the horoscope. Each time Venus makes contact with a planet or sensitive point in your chart, you can guarantee that day will be beautiful. When someone else's sun, moon or Jupiter for instance is in the same place as your Venus, you like them very much - you may even marry them!

## Mars



Mars was the god of war in mythology and in astrology this planet has a reputation for causing strife. We all have Mars in our charts and this planet gives us our drive, ambition and our sexuality. In a woman's chart Mars reveals the kind of man she wants to go to bed with and Mars in a man's chart describes how he expresses his masculinity and the way he makes love.

Mars takes roughly eighteen months to go through all the signs of the zodiac, When this planet reaches certain points in your own horoscope you will experience more conflict and opposition; you will also be more determined and ambitious. In a romantic relationship, a connection between Mars and Venus in each chart must be there, otherwise there will be no sexual spark.

## Jupiter



Jupiter is an extremely large planet and in astrology Jupiter's gifts are great and good. Where Jupiter is placed in your chart reveals the area of life in which you find success, happiness and abundance. Indeed, people who have Jupiter rising at birth or directly overhead tend to gravitate to positions of power and notoriety; they become public figures and may well achieve a degree of fame. Jupiter bestows luck and urges us to expand our spirit, our knowledge and our perception. But you can have too much of a good thing and the down side to Jupiter is a tendency toward excess and megalomania.

Jupiter takes twelve years to orbit the sun. Therefore it transits a sign of the zodiac each year. Until July 13th 2001 Jupiter will spend its time in the sign of Gemini. From the 13th July 2001 to August 1st 2002, the beneficent Jupiter will transit the sign of Cancer. Thus members of these two signs can expect a bumper bundle of some description between now and August of 2002.

## Saturn



Saturn is not the easiest planetary archetype to live with. This planet is synonymous with hard lessons, effort and responsibility. Wherever Saturn is placed in a birth chart reveals where we have the most to learn and where we will suffer our greatest frustration and heartache. There is a point to Saturn, of course, just as there is a point to difficult experiences - we become better people for them; we grow. People who have Saturn rising or directly overhead at birth tend to want to be in control; they gravitate to positions of authority, even if it takes them a lifetime of struggle to do so.

Saturn takes approximately twenty-nine years to orbit the sun and therefore a birth chart. Each time Saturn returns to its original position, a major stage in life has been reached and astrologers refer to this event as the 'Saturn Return'.

At age twenty-nine we are ready to claim our life as our own; we are no longer experimenting and no longer reflecting other people's expectations of us. Twenty-nine years later (roughly fifty-eight years of age) we get a chance to review how successful we have been on our own terms. The second Saturn-return tends to be much harder on us. Nonetheless, the opportunity to right the wrongs of the past is there and the opportunity to start afresh.

Saturn spends about two and half years in each sign of the zodiac. The period that Saturn transits your sun sign tends to be a testing one and a time when a sense of failure and disappointment is never far away. However, Saturn helps us to make a mark in life and it certainly shows us who we are. Since March of 1999 Saturn has been transiting the sign of Taurus, which is why so many Taureans have had challenging experiences and more than their share of losses, lacks and hurt. And to a certain extent this trend has been evident in the lives of Scorpios, Leos and Aquarians too. The learning curve moves on to Gemini from the 20th April 2001, but never forget Saturn helps us to make our mark in life!

## Uranus



Uranus is the great rebel of the zodiac. This planet was discovered in 1781 and coincided with the Industrial Revolution and indeed the rash of revolutions at that time. Uranus is synonymous with change and upheaval. This planet forces us to look to the new and to break free from situations and people that are stifling our being and our potential. People with Uranus rising at birth or directly overhead, tend to be life's innovators and/or misfits. They dance to a different drum. Sometimes these people are inventors, scientists and fantastic communicators and sometimes they are anarchists and trouble-makers.

Uranus takes eighty-four years to complete a circuit of the birth chart. The most important point tends to be half way - when we are somewhere between thirty-eight and forty-two years of age. This is astrological mid-life crisis time. Marriages break up; people decide to change their career or do something that makes other people believe they have lost their minds. Uranus likes to upset the apple cart!

Uranus spends roughly seven years in a sign and when this planet touches a point in your horoscope, you tend to feel very unsettled. Events have a way of making you feel insecure: nothing seems to last and other people accuse you of not being the same person that you once were. Since April 1995 Uranus has been transiting the sign of Aquarius which is why this has been such an up and down period for Aquarians, Leos, Scorpios and Taureans. Yet these same signs have been able to make huge changes that will benefit them for years to come.

## Neptune



Neptune is the magician of the planets. This planet, like the sea god, Neptune, can be likened to the oceans in all their many moods - sometimes peaceful, sometimes mysterious and sometimes extremely stormy and dangerous. Neptune was discovered in 1846 and coincided with the great Romantic movements in literature and music and with Impressionism. Neptune gives us our desire for things of the spirit and the soul but while the elevated way to experience such states is through discipline and devotion all too often we take the easier but infinitely more destructive route through alcohol and drugs. People who have Neptune rising or directly overhead at birth are the world's artists, mystics, healers and saviours. Yet they can also be some of life's most lost souls.

Neptune takes roughly one hundred and sixty-eight years to orbit the sun so none of us ever has a Neptune Return! When Neptune reaches a planet or point in our chart we become existentially dissatisfied with certain aspects of our life. We tend to lose our sense of direction; we may even lose our jobs, relationships and material assets. If Neptune touches our Venus or our moon we can fall deeply in love. We are never quite the same people after a Neptune transit. Hopefully because we have glimpsed the divine and not because we have lost everything!

Neptune has been transiting Aquarius since January 1998 so yet again it is the Aquarians, Leos, Scorpios and Taureans who have thus far been to hell and back - or the stars and back. By February 2012 Neptune will have provided every member of these same signs with a unique experience of heaven or hell!

## Pluto



Pluto is the mightiest of all the planets. In myth Pluto was the King of the Underworld. His vast realm was full of treasure yet it was also the domain of the dead. The planet Pluto was discovered in 1930 and coincided with the rise of Fascism, the development of atomic power and the birth of psycho-analysis. Pluto in astrology represents the process of death and rebirth. The placing of Pluto in our charts reveals where we will be put through our most transformational experiences. People with Pluto rising at birth or directly overhead have a strong sense of their own destiny; they usually make a profound impact on the world and certainly upon the people with whom they connect. Yet Pluto-dominated charts can also produce some of the most manipulative and cruel individuals. This is an extreme astrological archetype: just as atomic power can be used to help mankind it can also destroy it.

Pluto takes approximately twenty-one years to pass through each sign of the zodiac so a whole generation bears its signature relative to the sign it is in. For instance the Baby-Boomers came in with Pluto in Leo and this group is known as the Me-generation! Since Pluto is such a slow mover when it reaches a point in your own chart it can spend eighteen months or so focusing on it. During these times we are put through a Ring of Fire. We are usually stripped of some aspect of our existence and have to re-build our lives anew. We experience a death and a re-birth.

Pluto has been in the sign of Sagittarius since November 1995 and this planet will not move out until November 2008. Sagittarians are not the only sign to feel Pluto's mighty presence, the Virgos, Pisceans and Geminis are also in the line of fire - or rather, the line of transformation. And so far it is the early members of these signs who have had their lives turned upside down. However, in the process they have found a new way forward.

### **A<sup>sc</sup> The Ascendant or Rising Sign**

Nothing in astrology is ever stagnant. As the earth continually revolves on its axis, so too do all the signs, reference points and planets. At the moment of birth, a sign will be rising over the horizon and this is known as your Ascendant, your rising sign. The Ascendant is effectively the beginning of your chart, the first house of the horoscope. Depending upon the latitude of your place of birth, some signs move more slowly over the horizon, taking some two hours to do so while others move so fast there can be three changes of sign in an hour.

As far as interpretation goes, the Ascendant represents the lens through which the rest of personality shines through - it is the gateway to who we are, the Jungian persona.

Without the time of birth and therefore the establishment of the Ascendant, it is extremely difficult for an astrologer to be accurate about character and destiny.

### **Aspects**

These are the angles formed between the planets and points of the chart i.e. the Mid-heaven and the Ascendant. I consider the aspects to be the most revealing factors of all in astrology. Whether interpreting a natal (birth) chart for an individual, a nation or an event, the aspects provide the 'meat' and 'potatoes', so to speak while the signs add the gravy! While the easy aspects help sweeten the picture, the hard aspects are the business: they are dynamic and always hold sway over the easy angles.

#### **Hard Aspects:**



Conjunction: planets side by side.



Square: planets at right angles to each other - 90 degrees apart.



Opposition: planets at opposite ends of the zodiac - 180 degrees apart.

#### **Easy Aspects:**



Sextile: planets 60 degrees apart.



Trine: planets 120 degrees apart.

### **The Cusp**

The cusp means the beginning - i.e. the cusp of the second house (the beginning of the second house), the cusp of Taurus, etc., the beginning of that sign. Since astrology has become popularized a misnomer has arisen that a person born on the cusp of a sign - i.e. the beginning of Cancer or Leo etc - is a member of both signs and shares the qualities of both signs. Absolute rubbish. The sun is at 29 degrees 59 minutes and 59 seconds of Pisces and a second later will be 0 degrees, 0 minutes and 1 second of Aries! You are either one sign or another; you do not straddle two signs.

Sometimes, a sun sign column will differ as to the dates the sun will be in a particular sign. This is because the arrival of the sun in each of the signs varies slightly from year to year therefore astrologers can only give an approximation.

### **D<sup>sc</sup> The Descendant**

This is the opposite point to the Ascendant. It designates the seventh house of the horoscope and in interpretation, describes your relationships and the effect other people have on your life. Traditional astrology books describe this area as the house of partners and open enemies.

### **The Elements (the triplicities.)**

There are four elements - Fire, Earth, Air and water. Each of the twelve signs belongs to one of the elements.

Fire: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius.

Fire is creative, enthusiastic, passionate, emotional and self-willed.

Earth: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn.

Earth is strong, stable, cautious, practical, sensible and pragmatic.

Air: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius.

Air is communicative, bright, intellectually-oriented, claustrophobic.

Water: Cancer, Scorpios, Pisces.

Water is emotional, sensitive, imaginative and reflective.

## The Houses

In the same way that there are twelve signs of the zodiac, the horoscope is divided into twelve segments known as the houses. The first house begins at the Ascendant and the rest of the houses follow on counter-clockwise. Each house represents a different area of life.

- 1st House: The persona. The physical body.
- 2nd House: Self-worth. Finances.
- 3rd House: Travel and communications.
- 4th House: The roots of life in every sense of the phrase.
- 5th House: Creative endeavours. The heart centre of the chart.
- 6th House: Work. Life structures. Health.
- 7th House: Relationships
- 8th House: Emotional, sexual and financial exchange.
- 9th House: Far horizons. Distant objectives. Higher thoughts.
- 10th House: Career. Role in life.
- 11th House: Team work. Friendship. Shared creative endeavours.
- 12th House: The spiritual centre. The unconscious. The seat of the psyche.

## The Mid-heaven (MC)

This is the highest point of your horoscope and the start of the tenth house. In interpretation, the Mid-heaven represents, goals and life-direction. If the Ascendant is who we are then the Mid-Heaven is who we want to be.

## The Qualities (the quadruplicities.)

There are three qualities, Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable. Each of the signs belongs to one of the qualities.

Cardinal: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn.  
The Cardinal signs are self-motivated and power-oriented.

Fixed: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius.  
The Fixed signs are rooted and resistant to change.

Mutable: Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces.  
The Mutable signs are inconstant and adaptable.

## The Signs of the Zodiac



### ARIES

(Element: fire. Quality: Cardinal. Ruling planet: Mars.)

Assertive, headstrong, ambitious, self-motivated - a very macho sign.



### TAURUS

(Element: earth. Quality: Fixed. Ruling planet: Venus.)

Practical, sensuous, dogmatic, resistant to change. Seeing is believing to Taurus.



### GEMINI

(Element: air. Quality: Mutable. Ruling planet, Mercury.)

Adaptable, mercurial, mind over emotion. Fears commitment. The zodiac's Great Communicator.



### CANCER

(Element: water. Quality: Cardinal. Ruling planet: the moon.)

Sensitive, imaginative, artistic, manipulative. Very self-protective - believes the sideways snipe is the best form of defence.



### LEO

(Element: fire. Quality: Fixed. Ruling planet: the sun.)

Passionate, regal, dominating, proud. The drama queen of the zodiac.



### VIRGO

(Element: earth. Quality: Mutable. Ruling planet: Mercury.)

Painstaking, anal-retentive, discriminating, analytical. Never takes no for an answer (never takes, yes either!).



### LIBRA

(Element: air. Quality: Cardinal. Ruling planet: Venus.)

Fair-minded, indecisive, narcissistic, beauty-loving, stylistically correct. The diplomat of the zodiac.



### SCORPIO

(Element: water. Quality: Fixed. Ruling planet: Pluto.)

Deep, suspicious, enigmatic, loyal to the death, passionate, self-destructive. Not a sign to be underestimated. Ever.



### **SAGITTARIUS**

(Element: Fire. Quality: Fixed. Ruling planet: Jupiter)

Fun, successful, inconsiderate, hedonistic, immoderate. The globe-trotter and freedom-merchant of the zodiac.



### **CAPRICORN**

(Element: Earth. Quality: Cardinal. Ruling planet: Saturn.)

Practical, strategic, power-loving, reliable, domineering. Not a 100-meter sprinter, more the marathon-runner of the zodiac.



### **AQUARIUS**

(Element: Air. Quality: Fixed. Ruling planet: Uranus.)

Far-seeing, altruistic, iconoclastic, intractable - always right. A brilliant advocate, especially when proving black is white.



### **PISCES**

(Element: water. Quality: Mutable. Ruling planet: Neptune.)

Mystical, compassionate, dreamy, sensuous, neurotic. The zodiac's Great Escapist.

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