

# SIBLING DYNAMICS

## *The Astrology of Brothers and Sisters*

### Rivalry, Loyalty and Solidarity

It is easy to imagine an elder child triumphantly exclaiming to her younger sib 'anything you can do, I can do better!' Nor is it difficult to remember your younger sib's eagerness to do you into the parent when they perceived you were doing something you could get punished for. Taunting your sister and brother or being teased and roughed up is a common feature on the landscape of childhood. Competitiveness and antagonism seem a natural component of every sibling relationship: remember Cinderella's maltreatment by her step sisters!

It was Sigmund Freud who diagnosed sibling rivalry, being acutely aware of the hostilities that occurred in the nursery between sibs. Freud was well versed in these feelings having felt strong jealousy when displaced by the arrival of his younger brother. When brother Julius died much of the complex feelings kindled by his arrival were transferred onto the next sibling born into the family - his sister Anna. More recently the chick flick *In Her Shoes* focused on sisterly hostility and charted the course of their relationship from the sister's estrangement through to their reconciliation. Long before Freud and Hollywood observed the hostile feelings between siblings the ancients had their own versions immortalised in their myths. To the Hebrews, Cain and Abel's competitive and hostile relationship began in utero, while to the Romans it was Romulus who killed his twin Remus in order to triumph and gain governorship of the new city. The Greeks even poeticised sibling rivalry in one of their ancient hymns, The Homeric Hymn to Hermes. It was the ancient Greeks who demonstrated that sibling rivalry can be transmuted into companionship, detailing the young Hermes journey from his seminal feelings of envy to his sense of equality.

Myth also portrayed sibling loyalty, sacrifice and solidarity. In her home of Thebes Antigone risked her own life in order to give her brother a proper burial. Without being adequately buried she knew her brother would roam endlessly as a shade, troubled at not being able to reach his final resting place and a peaceful afterlife. Acting against the laws of the city she buried her brother but faced the fatal consequences of her actions. Philomela also risked her life to rescue her sister Procne from the husband who had betrayed both sisters. Hansel and Gretel is one of many fairytales that demonstrate the solidarity of siblings. Folk tales of siblings appear in numerous cultures reminding us of the universal importance of this relationship. But it is the mythic story of the twins Castor and Pollux that have eternally demonstrated the closeness of the sibling bond

through their heavenly representation in the zodiacal sign Gemini. Its inclusion in the zodiac, the wheel of life, suggest that the image of the 'twin' other, as symbolised by a sister of a brother, is an archetypal experience and one inherent in the human being at birth. Castor and Pollux's relationship became not only a symbol of fraternal solidarity, but also an emblem for the archetypal sibling relationship.

For astrologers it is apparent why the ancient Hebrew and Roman mythology depicted rival twins and why the Greeks used Hermes as the mythic younger brother who struggled with envious feelings. Twins are the trademark of Gemini, the sign of the sibling, symbolising the experience of siblinghood. Mercury, the Roman counterpart of Hermes, as the ruler of Gemini is the archetype that has the greatest affinity with the sibling. The house associated with both Gemini and Mercury is the 3<sup>rd</sup> house where the early feelings aroused in the sibling relationship are embedded. Mercury, Gemini, the 3<sup>rd</sup> house and its fraternal houses of equal relationship, the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> houses, are the templates where sibling patterns and images of brothers and sisters are impressed. Sibling patterns and dynamics are revealed in the horoscope through planets in the sign of Gemini or the third house as well as planets in aspect to Mercury.



## Gemini: The Missing Other

Castor and Pollux, the two bright stars in the constellation of Gemini, are eternal reminders of the sibling bond, a relationship so important to the ancients that their story was written into the heavens. Both Castor and Pollux were known as great warriors and honoured heroes in their homeland of Sparta. However, Castor and Pollux had different destinies. While they were conceived on the same night to Leda, the Queen of Sparta, they had different fathers. Castor was fathered by the king while Pollux was the son of a god. The twins grew up together and were inseparable until fate revealed the course of their destinies. Castor, the mortal twin, was killed by a spear and his destiny was to die whereas Pollux, who had the gift of immortality, was destined never to die. Fate had revealed the necessity for them to be separated.

Pollux experienced an unbearable grief at being separated from his brother. His feelings of loss were so intense that he cannot bear to be separated from his brother. In his despair, he petitioned Zeus to allow him to relinquish his immortality and join his brother in death. In a rare bequest, Zeus granted Pollux, his divine son, this wish. However Castor and Pollux were destined never to be together in the same way again, as now the twins must alternate between two worlds. While one twin was in Heaven the other would be in the Underworld. When it came time to changes, one twin would rise out of the dark and ascend towards Heaven while the other twin descended into the twilight of the nether world, forever separated by the horizon of their fate. Embedded in Gemini is the constant reminder of the missing partner and the primal loss of the twin-other.

Gemini behaviour is often typified as scattered, nervous and non-committal. However, what underlies this behaviour is the mythic pattern of the frantic search for something they feel separated from. In essence, all Gemini placements contain an image of a birth twin or an other that feels lost or missing. Yet what is missing is unconscious, driving the individual forward to quest and question for the lost other. Gemini in the horoscope carries the earliest images of togetherness and separateness.

Gemini is an early experience in the zodiac – it is the first sign in the trinity of air, and the first mutable and dual sign. It is the first representation in the zodiac of the consciousness of duality, separation and opposition. Gemini, occurring early in the zodiac, is a metaphor for a primal stage in psychological development. The ability to understand, reflect or analyse has not yet been developed and a secure sense of emotional attachment has not yet been internalised, which occurs in the next sign of Cancer. Gemini, as a symbol of the developmental process, is too young to consciously hold the impact of Pollux's profound loss. Hence the impact and feeling of the loss is repressed,

forgotten in the underworld realm. Potent feelings of grief, abandonment and separation are interred and rendered unconscious. Hence it is not surprising that planets, especially the Moon, in Gemini often equates with a deep sense of loss or grief around a sibling. When these feelings surface they are experienced as restlessness and emptiness, anxiety that something is missing or lost, or an incompleteness that beckons us to continue searching. Underlying many Geminian placements is a feeling of profound loss which cannot be explained rationally; it becomes embodied in the nervous system, stimulating anxiety and lack of focus.

Gemini's initial experience of otherness also gives form to an eternal quest to reconnect with the twin other. Quite commonly this 'missing' feeling is projected out on to the world, especially the compatible world of equal others. This feeling of connection to the missing half is often idealised as the soul mate (Libra) or the bonds of fraternal or sororal love (Aquarius). Planets in Gemini will experience their otherness through the sibling relationship and planetary placements in the sign reveal patterns and episodes in the sibling relationship as well as its impact on our adult relationships.



### The Third House: Sibship

The third house symbolises our primary encounters with others who shared our environment, mainly the sibling/s, but other neighbourhood friends and primary schoolmates. While the third house suggests that siblings are equal, a hierarchy is created by the ordinal positions of the siblings. Each child in the system has its place and the order of our birth in the system is part of our fate. As siblings we each have our own unique orientation to the family defined by birth position and personal experience of the family atmosphere. In this system each sibling is an individual striving

for equality. Age difference, physical size, intellectual capability, social adaptability and parental influence may create inequality amongst the siblings; however, feelings of acceptance and support for each another promotes a sense of equality. Here in the social laboratory of the sibling system we develop the confidence to feel equal to others in our adult life. Even though there may be differences in status, salaries, skills, education and achievements our feelings of acceptance and uniformity are first nurtured and formed in the sibling system. For this reason the third house is critical, as it suggests how we experience peer relationships and the impact it has upon subsequent associations. We first test the response from the world through the reaction of our sibs using them as a mirror to how we are received. With our brothers and sisters we learn to negotiate, co-operate and compete. As our first peers our siblings subtly teach us how to make friends and enemies, how to give in without feeling defeated and how to feel acknowledged and recognised without demanding attention. Here in the third house we first learn to be part of a system.

The third house is the experimental ground for relating. Habitual behaviour in relating finds its origins in the third house. Expectations we have of relationships, patterns we repeat with partners or even our choice of mate is more influenced by the sibling/s, and the third house, than we realise. The sign on the cusp of the house, its ruler and the planets in the third house illustrate the primary bond between ourselves and a sibling, and the potential pattern that is brought into adult relationships. These astrological statements clearly outline the patterns inherent in the sibling bond and the qualities of ourselves we may be prone to project onto our brothers and sisters.

Planets in the third house have reached the IC, the lowest and darkest point on the ecliptic and are now beginning to rise. Their descent has terminated and third house planets have turned, starting their ascent when they are fixed into our birth horoscope. The ascent towards the horizon symbolises the third house planets' urge for consciousness and individuality and this rising momentum will be imprinted upon the third house planets. Planets in the third suggest an encounter with the archetype of relationship experienced first in the sibling system. Looking at the early themes of relationship with our sibs may inform us of patterns carried through into our adult relationships.

### Mercury: The Sibling Story

Fleet-footed Mercury was the counterpart of the Greek Hermes, the patron of the sibling. As the youngest son Hermes was determined to claim a place amongst the other Olympians. Being a younger son of Zeus Hermes saw his older brother, Apollo, as the obstacle to gaining favour from his powerful father. From the day of his birth he was conscious of his ambition to become one of

the immortals, outlining his plan to his mother on how he would become as well recognised as his older brother. Hermes was not even one day old and his intense competition with his brother was evident. This pattern seems to be part of the sibling legacy – to struggle for equality with and against the sibling.

Hermes entered a family where older sibs already dominated their parent's attention. This sibling position is often likely to constellate envy, as the younger feels a power imbalance with the elder sibling/s. On the other hand an elder sibling, displaced by a rival who steals the love they have known, is more prone to feel jealous. Envy and jealousy are normal human emotions constellated in the family when a new sibling arrives. With the arrival there is a rival! The extent to which these emotions become complexes depends upon the atmosphere of the family, the parental maturity in identifying the children's' feelings, as well as their parents and ancestor's sibling experiences. Astrologically, the houses of family patterning and fate, the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, supply images and clues to how this process has been handled.

Hermes, the younger son, orients himself towards the sibling Apollo, not the father Zeus, in his quest for equality. By stealing the cattle that are sacred to his older brother Hermes attempts to be noticed. Envious of his brother's possessions he is very aware of those resources most important to Apollo. With siblings we learn to share power and resources. One of the initiations of the sibling system is learning to belong in a group, to live communally and share the familial resources and power. In functional sibling relationships, the power imbalance due to age, physical size, intelligence or parental influence is eventually replaced by a spirit of co-operation, exchange and fraternal or sororal love. The sibling system is a microcosm of social structures in the world and it is here we learn for ourselves how to find an equal place in the world. Hermes, while he always will be in second position to his elder brother, none the less finds his a place of equality. Astrologically this archetype is Mercury and aspects to the planet in our horoscope often suggest patterns in the sibling relationship and reveal sibling stories.

Apollo and Hermes give us the archetypal story of brotherly rivalry transmuted into fraternal love. While they are both sons of a powerful father, Zeus assigns them enough autonomy to address one another as equals. He creates the atmosphere for the potential rivals to become equals. They commence their relationship with competition, rivalry, theft, rage and lies, but end up in an exchange of valuable aspects of themselves. Envy and jealousy have found their complementary sides of power and love through their sibling relationship.

The sibling experience is influenced by the planets that aspect Mercury. As a messenger, Mercury often allows full expression to the planet that it aspects. The aspecting planet's energetic essence will colour the sibling relationship, often quite literally. Therefore aspects to Mercury often disclose a sibling story that has helped characterise who we are. Traditional astrology categorises aspects by their degree of ease or difficulty. In reality this is not so easy, for the harmony or difficulty of an aspect is influenced by a disparate group of factors ranging from the family atmosphere to an individual's level of consciousness. Astrologically, the inherent nature of the planets involved in the aspect is important, whether they are antagonistic, supportive or ambivalent. Perhaps we could suggest that the traditionally 'easy' aspects of the trine and sextile offer us more choice of expression. The tension of the aspect is lowered and therefore there is less chance that the energy will become a complex. However, this is dependent on many variables. While more difficult aspects of the square and quincunx unite psychologically incompatible elements, their difficult union may have been eased in a supportive and understanding family atmosphere. Each aspect must be personalised.

## Planets in Gemini, the Third House and in Aspect to Mercury

Astrologically images of the sibling, our relationships with brothers and sisters, and their impact on the formation of our character are evident in the horoscope. As witnesses to our childhood siblings share the familial history and impress upon us some of our earliest attitudes, values and beliefs. The sibling is an archetypal image and part of each child's soul and fate. Only children find their siblings in cousins, playmates or day care to cast the archetype upon. Our horoscope has many images to explore and following are some outlines of sibling patterns and qualities that are consistent with planets in the sign of Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> house and planets in aspect to Mercury.

### ☉ The Sun

#### **The Sun in Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

The Sun in Gemini or the third house suggests identification with the sibling/s, highlighting the role of the first or favoured one. At the Sun symbolises the father it suggests that he may be a close confidant or ally, combining his roles as a mentor/parent with a friend/equal. Or it could also suggest that in father's absence you became the father figure to your siblings.

Favouritism may have been an issue in the sibling system and father's 'favourite' may have been seen to be acknowledged and encouraged more than the others. The Sun may have cast its shadow

over the sibling system, splitting the system into those who were favoured by father and those not. A girl who was father's favourite may feel in a precarious position caught between her brother's jealousy and her father's adoration. In adult life this may rearrange itself as feeling caught between her partner and son. This position suggests the individual may have been the sibling in the system who was most father-identified or the one most easily triangulated with father against the others, including mother. We may have a very different view of father from the rest of our sibs and are the one most sensitive to colluding with him. Or we may be the one who 'looks just like father', but on a more subtle level, the one who has inherited more paternal ancestral complexes or treasures.

If the Sun is projected onto a brother or sister we may feel that they are more creative and dynamic or more confident and more popular than we are. Initially the tendency may be to adore the sibling but as the projection fades and is gradually withdrawn we may feel estranged and separate from them. With the Sun in this position the sibling is potentially either the measuring stick or the road block for our emerging identity, playing the role of either a rival or a hero. Ultimately, we strongly identify with others, but may pass through stages of feeling unacknowledged or not appreciated before we are able to claim an equal and authoritative position in our relationships.

### ☿ – ☉      **The Sun in Aspect to Mercury**

In a geocentric horoscope Mercury can only be separated from the Sun by a maximum of 28 degrees, therefore its only major aspect to the Sun is a conjunction. There are two types of conjunction between Mercury and the Sun. The superior conjunction happens when Mercury is direct and on the far side of the Sun from the Earth's vantage point. The inferior conjunction occurs when Mercury is retrograde and between the Earth and the Sun. Mercury in its retrograde phase suggests an intensification of the sibling issues. With Mercury and the Sun conjunct, a fusion or *confusion* between the sibling, generally brother and father may occur. Like Hermes and Apollo, there may be a fraternal contest for father's approval and recognition.

### ☾      **The Moon**

#### **The Moon in Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

The Moon in Gemini or the third house locates the nurturing and mothering instinct in the sphere of the sibling, suggesting that a sibling may have provided a care-taking role or that you were placed in this role. The early sibling relationships would have a direct impact on feelings of safety and security, and be an important bond that shaped our sense of emotional security. Because of this emotional impact there could be a strong attachment to the sibling if the sibling was the good mother, or conversely, a sense of alienation if they were neglectful and critical. Given the Moon's

propensity for closeness, separation from the sibling could have been difficult. Early separations like going to school or being taken care of by others may have been traumatic if you were not adequately prepared.

The Moon in Gemini or the third suggests an image of an older sister, one who may have shared in our upbringing, and one to whom we may still have a strong attachment. Whether there was a literal elder sister or not, we may have sought this sister–mother figure in our environment. Alternatively Mother became the sister preferring to be a friend rather than a parent. An early pattern of enmeshment between the sibling and mother may be reflected in our adult relationships as confusion between equality and dependence. A young boy with Moon in the third who has a sister may continue to expect ‘women’ to take care of him in his adult relationships. While he is very comfortable with sisters and the world of women, he may be habitually drawn to women who are mothers rather than partners. An important aspect which needs to be learned in the sibling system is not only how to communicate one’s needs but how to fulfil them independently. Without this initiation we may still try to make our adult relationships symbiotic and dependant.

The Moon in the third could point to the sibling who was closest to mother, mother-identified, and given the role of taking care of mother. Therefore this could be the sibling most at risk during the ‘leaving home’ stage, feeling great difficulty separating. The sibling story is woven around the image of mother and sister and includes the inheritance from mother and her siblings. Since the Moon rules the emotional realm this suggests there is usually a high level of feeling concerning the needs and care of a sibling.

### ☿ – ♃      **The Moon in Aspect to Mercury**

Themes of caring and nurturing between siblings are important when Mercury aspects the Moon, often pointing to an older, protective sibling, or a younger sibling we took care of. Communication of the feelings becomes important, and in the more positive aspects the siblings have been able to mutually communicate their love and concern for each other. Our siblings influence all patterns of communication, sharing ideas and learning. We may still remember the emotional impact of our siblings’ lying, name-calling or gossiping. With this aspect we would interpret the silence between our siblings to try to comprehend the feelings trapped beneath the lack of communication. This could crystallise into a pattern of articulating our friends or partner’s feelings. The ability to express feelings is an important aspect of relationship, first learned in association with our siblings.

## ♿ Mercury

### **Mercury in Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

Mercury is the natural ruler of Gemini and the third house having an affinity with this territory and the sibling relationship. It is an image of the younger or middle sibling that feels both the needs to catch up to older sibs as well as to be the interpreter for the familial dynamics. Mercury is less attached to either parent than the Sun or Moon would be. Its role is the messenger, the go-between, and in the third it takes the role as mediator and guide in the sibling system. Mercury was not the only messenger god; he often shared this capacity with the goddess, Iris, but she delivered the message intact whereas Mercury often rearranged it to suit his purposes. The sibling may have played the role of messenger, being disconnected enough from the family dynamics to be able to reveal what was going on. In the myth of Hermes and Apollo, Hermes' envy of his elder brother prompted him to steal resources from him. These actions helped win recognition from their father, Zeus, the prevailing authority. In the third house, Mercury's task is to translate the envy or jealousy of sibling rivalry into a productive and satisfying solution.

With Mercury here, communication and interchange of ideas with the sibling was an important foundation for the ability to share our ideas and converse as equals. A difficult placement of Mercury could point to a feeling of intellectual inferiority with the sib which still affects our confidence today. Issues of learning, education, communication and conversation are derivative of the sibling experience. Mercury has an affinity with the sibling system which promotes the ability to be able to translate and decode both overt and covert messages between siblings, a skill taken into the adult world.

## ♀ Venus

### **Venus in Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

Venus in Gemini or the third house suggests an encounter with the sister archetype. For a man, the image of sister becomes a potent feminine or anima image for him. If he has a literal sister, she will have played an important transitional role in carrying this internal soul image for him. The sister may have helped form his image of a partner more than he might like to admit, and he may unconsciously find her image again in his adult relationships. Without a sister, the man would still seek this image of sister in his adult relationships, searching for a companion and playmate as well as a partner.

A woman with Venus in the third she may be unwittingly drawn into competition with her sisters. In Homeric tradition, Aphrodite (Venus) was half-sister and rival to Persephone, Athena and Artemis. Zeus decreed that Aphrodite had to share her lover, Adonis, with Persephone. Aphrodite charmed Paris so that he would choose her rather than Athena in the competition for the fairest goddess. And with Artemis, Aphrodite clashed over the young boy, Hippolytus. The mythic themes of sisterhood may be drawn up to consciousness through a clash of values or a similar love object. It is also through the sibling relationship that social skills are developed. Sister could be an influence on our values, what we find attractive and how comfortable we feel in social circles.

With Venus in the third or Gemini we look towards our sibs of either sex for experimentation with the process of relating and sexuality. The sibling system may be where we first recognised that the feelings of loving and valuing another could be different from the way we felt towards our parents or other adults. We could project our own sense of worth or value on to our sibs, seeing them as more attractive or social, a sibling providing a mirror for our developing sense of creativity and sexuality. It is through our earlier relationships with siblings or friends that we developed our tastes, what we find attractive and the social skills which influence us today. In later years, those with Venus in the third may yearn for a warm and supportive relationship with their siblings.

### ♃ – ♀      **Venus in Aspect to Mercury**

Venus and Mercury are also contained within a confined arc of 76 degrees and their major aspects to each other are the conjunction and the sextile. These planets in aspect may point to feminine themes in the sibling system, and how the sibling was influenced by the feminine attitudes in the family, which may have been carried by a sister. For instance with Mercury and Venus conjunct the sister may be the representative of the familial attitudes towards the ancestral feminine. This aspect perhaps describes the influence of the familial attitudes towards the feminine on the siblings. Themes of value, self-esteem, sharing and equality are also important.

### ♂      **Mars**

Mars has an affinity with the image of the elder brother, the warrior, the competitor, and in the third these images may be brought into consciousness via the sibling.

Clients and students with Mars in Gemini or the third house have often told me stories of their experiences of aggression and even brutality from the sibling – being pushed down stairs, tied up,

abandoned, even of being rushed to hospital after being forced to drink from a perfume bottle!. Because these situations occur when both sibs are young, and not adequately supervised, the family often makes a farce of the situation, deflecting the rivalry. Students, describing their experiences in class, often laugh along with their classmates when regaling them with a sibling story that is volatile and violent. With sibs we learn to defend and stand our ground, and with Mars in the third our aggressive and survival instincts are brought to consciousness, generally by a sib's taunting and goading. In many cases, sibling violence is not even reported to the parent and the secret brutality leads to alienation from the sibling. With Mars here we may first experience the aggressive instincts with a sibling. Some sibling fighting may be over territorial rights to the parent.

Mars also constellates the sexual instincts, and these too may be tested out with the sibling in various ways. Siblings may want to test their sexual or physical virility with each other. The sibling system may be where we first experienced aggression, competitive feelings and anger. How these feelings were consciously managed will impact on our adult relationships, for unresolved sexual or hostile feelings towards the sib will certainly be constellated in our adult relationships. For a woman, this placement of Mars suggests that a brother image is part of her internal masculine realm and a literal brother would be an appropriate hook for the externalisation of this animus. Mars often seeks role models and strives to emulate them, and in the third we may have chosen a sibling as one of our role models.

With Mars here, the sibling system is an important training ground for taming the aggressive and sexual instincts. Mars is the first planet outside the orbit of the Earth, a planet that is outside the Earth's system. When Mars is in the third house or Gemini, we learn in the laboratory of childhood how to become independent and retain our individuality within a system.

### ♃ – ♂      **Mars in Aspect to Mercury**

Mercury's aspects to Mars suggest that independence, competition and adventure may have been experienced with our siblings. A model of a champion or someone to emulate could be projected on to a sibling. On the one hand, this aspect suggests an image of a supportive and encouraging brother figure; on the other, it could point to a bullying and dominating sibling. The more difficult aspects may stress rivalry, unhealthy competition and perhaps brutality. Attention may have been centred on the biggest and strongest who wielded power in an aggressive manner. Either way, the sibling plays the role of initiator, prompting independence and the pursuit of individual goals.

## ♃ Jupiter

### **Jupiter in Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

Jupiter searches for a wider view of the horizon by questing beyond the familial; experiences with siblings prepare us for different beliefs, ways of life and cross-cultural awareness. Learning from our siblings and being open to their guidance and life experiences may be a valuable part of our education and socialisation. In adult years, siblings and their families may continue to expose us to new ideas and adventures. Quite literally, I have often seen this placement representing many siblings; however, I suggest the statement of Jupiter in Gemini or the third house talks more of the wide panoramic exposure that the sibling may provide. The sibling system could be cross cultural in that it may have included step- or half-siblings, or we may have met regularly with cousins or others who introduced us to different ideas and beliefs. We may have had the opportunity to travel and explore new places with our sibs, giving us an early appreciation of other ways of daily life, beliefs and ideologies.

Jupiter is a planet of socialisation, and therefore siblings' social progress, their choice of studies, extra-curricular activities, etc. were important to us. They may have become a benchmark that we judged our own progress against. A sibling may also have been our guide to a wider social world, introducing us to new horizons of belief and culture. However, siblings could also be experienced as rigid and unwavering from their beliefs and with who we are at odds. One of the sibs may play the role of Zeus in the sibling system, claiming dominion over the others and constellating a 'larger than life' figure. The early experience with our sibling-peers gives awareness of the need to feel spiritually compatible with our adult partners and friends. In later years we may find that although we may be physically, spiritually or morally distant from our siblings, the urge to reconnect is a catalyst for the examination of our own beliefs.

### **♃ - ♀ Jupiter in Aspect to Mercury**

Jupiter-Mercury contacts suggest a broad exchange of ideas and ideals with a sister or brother who may have been our teacher or guide. The sibling is a socialising agent who may lead us beyond the family's beliefs and morals. We may have shared a variety of experiences with our siblings, or been inspired by their quest for meaning in life. The dark face of this image could be an arrogant or inflated sibling who is prejudiced, dictatorial and overbearing. Within the sibling system we may have experienced a wide set of experiences that helped formulate our philosophy on life.

## ‡ Saturn

### **Saturn in Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

When Saturn is in Gemini or the third house, the themes of authority, duty and responsibility may have been constellated for the first time with the sibling/s. I have witnessed Saturn in the third consistently with only and eldest children who feel they have been placed in positions of control and responsibility too early. While there are many reasons for this, a common theme is often the sibling who has to fill a void left by an irresponsible parent. Often this placement also suggests wide age spacing between the sibs, so that they grow up virtually as only children, or for some other reason are not part of the sibling system. For an only child, this placement talks of the world of equals being overshadowed by the world of the adult. For eldest children, it suggests they were responsible for their younger siblings, setting the example of upholding parental law, often while their younger sibs broke the rules. There could be difficulty sharing or delegating as a result of sibling experiences. Issues around the division of labour may have caused resentment, as the individual may have felt he had a greater share of the chores than the others. Even without being an elder child Saturn confers a sense of the lawmaker upon the individual who may feel obliged to discipline or direct his siblings. There could also be a tussle for the top position in the sibling system, feeling that the parent's approval was gained at the expense of feeling connected to the other siblings.

Another manifestation of this position could be the feeling of rejection by our sibs, or feeling completely alone and separate from them. We may feel the need to become self-reliant and not have to depend upon the siblings for support, encouragement or comradeship. It may become imperative to detach, withdraw or take care of ourselves on our own, contributing to an isolationist tendency. This pattern could be the foundation of feeling self-reliant in our adult relationships, not easily able to depend upon others.

In adult years, Saturn in the third house or Gemini could also be demanding, as we again feel it is our responsibility to bring the siblings together. Issues around family gatherings, rituals or special occasions polarise the siblings again into their childhood roles. One of the greatest tests concerns responsibility and decision making for an elderly parent. With Saturn here, we learn to be responsible, but not at the expense of our own individuality. It is in the sibling system that we first learn how to delegate, discern and let go of control in appropriate ways. Learning to differentiate who is responsible and set the appropriate boundaries becomes an important lesson for Saturn in this position.

♄ - ♿

### **Saturn in Aspect to Mercury**

Saturn often symbolises an older or only sibling. In aspect to Mercury it may speak of the duty and responsibility we associate with the sibling and therefore the other equals we relate to. Within the sibling system we may develop autonomy, setting appropriate boundaries between our siblings and ourselves. This aspect could lead to the formation of stable and enduring relationships. However, it also suggests that there may be feelings of aloneness or separateness from the other siblings, the boundaries now becoming barriers that separate us from the others. This aspect also suggests the sibling may have been in the role of teacher, authority or parent to the other sibs. Negatively, the image of the depressed, patronising or rejecting sibling could be constellated.

♄ Chiron

### **Chiron in Gemini or the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

While Chiron is not classified as a planet, its archetypal imagery is too important to leave out of our planetary pantheon. Chiron, like the three older Olympian brothers, Hades, Poseidon and Zeus, was a son of Chronus and therefore was their half-brother and part of the Olympian family. Chiron was not awarded the same status as his half-siblings, an interesting image for Chiron in the third house or Gemini. Here is the sibling who is exiled from the system or not granted the same status. As a sibling image Chiron, represents the adopted sibling, the step-sibling, and the sibling not wholly part of the system.

When Chiron is in Gemini or the third house, it points to a potential wounding that has occurred through our siblings, or the image that the sibling himself is wounded, handicapped or exiled. Chiron is the wound that is inflicted unintentionally; with Chiron in the third, this wound may have been caused by our sibling/s. This generally is not physical, although it may be; it is usually experienced through name calling or other forms of verbal abuse or wounding. The third house is where we experience the power of the word. With Chiron in the third, the poisonous arrows that are the wounding agents could be the sibling's verbal abuse. A child being branded stupid, ugly or illegitimate by his siblings can receive a lifelong wound. Chiron in the third or Gemini is also highly sensitive to the feeling effect that flows beneath what is said; so the wound can also be inflicted by the dishonesty and trickery of the sibling.

The wound could also be that we feel exiled from our siblings, completely separate and not a part of the same system they belong to. I have often witnessed that this placement suggests a loss of a sibling in the family, and the individual with Chiron in the third is often the one who carries the

unresolved grief, which is that sibling's wounding experience. Chiron in the third seems to be a dominant placement for those who have a handicapped sib. Ambivalence accompanies this aspect: there is a love of the sibling, but also a feeling that they missed out owing to the enormous attention focused on the handicapped sibling. The wound is opened through the relationship with the handicapped sibling. The sibling experience is where the individual forges their sense of separateness and learns to feel comfortable being marginal.

### ♄ - ☿      **Chiron in Aspect to Mercury**

Chiron in aspect to Mercury brings the themes of mentoring, wounding and healing into the realm of the sibling. This may imply that the sibling fostered our spiritual development, encouraging the heroic spirit. However, it equally suggests the sibling as an agent of wounding. With this aspect we may feel alienated or separated from our siblings, as if exiled from our community of peers. Literally, this image could suggest a sibling that is physically or mentally handicapped, an adopted sibling or the separation from the sibling through death or a schism in the family. Early patterns from the sibling system may be re-enacted later in adult relationships by drawing the wounded other into our orbit, constellating the primal polarity of wounding and healing again in relationships. Unexpectedly, our partners and friends may once again draw the sibling wound to the surface.

### ♃ ♃ ♃      **The Outer Planets**

The outer planets are in the sign of Gemini for a long period of time therefore will describe the development of human awareness in this sphere. Gemini the sign of the sibling also rules the process of communication and transportation, learning skills, the development of language, ideas and consciousness, therefore as the planets go through this sphere we should see developments in these areas. Pluto was in Gemini from 1882-1912 when the airplane, the automobile, the telephone and the phonograph reshaped the communication and transportation fields. Neptune the archetype of spiritual searching was in Gemini from 1887-1902 inspiring Spiritualism, Theosophy and Christian Science to disseminate their new ideals. Uranus was in Gemini from 1942-49 and during this passage the electronic computer, long playing records and the transistor reshaped the communications industry. The sibling relationship became paramount as the Second World War interrupted the continuity of family life. Gemini, as the sign of the sibling, suggests that as the outer planets traverse this zodiacal landscape, brotherhood and sisterhood would become more of a global issue.

The outer planets describe experiences beyond the personal, and when placed in the third house suggest that the sibling may have magnetised images, feelings and experiences beyond our capacity to understand or integrate them. These outer planets in the personal house of the sibling may stir deeper, mythic and archetypal experiences which we can only begin to address in our adult years. With either of these planets in the third we are drawn into a larger and more collective story with our siblings. Since these energies seem to be larger than we are, we may tend more to project them on to the sibling. Here we must acknowledge that the sibling–other has been the personal spokesperson for an impersonal archetype.

♅ Uranus

### **Uranus in the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

Uranus in the third house may suggest a sense of abandonment, separation or distance from the sibling. This archetype often suggests separation and splitting, therefore in the third, this may have applied to the sibling system. Uranus is disengaged and this may have characterised the nature of the sibling system. The sibs may have been highly differentiated, so much so that they may have nothing in common. They may have been separated for a variety of familial reasons including divorce, relocation, education or even the unexpected death of another sibling. Uranus' nature is sudden and unexpected, so this could characterise our relationship with a sibling, never knowing what to expect in the relationship. One day we may be welcomed into her circle of friends and the next firmly rejected. This image suggests that the sibling is highly individualised, and, with the best-case scenario, we feel an individual within a system and that our sibling is also our friend. More often there may be a feeling of disconnection or alienation from the sibling. Uranus' sense of separation can be so severe that once the bond is severed it cannot be reclaimed. Therefore, with Uranus in the third, we could have experienced a sense of irreconcilable differences which led to an irrevocable separation from the sibling; or our feelings towards the relationship are frozen, remaining in contact, yet being virtually unreachable. It may be with a sibling that we first experience Uranus' ability to sever, detach, stand apart and split off from the feelings.

Within the sibling system we may have been the one to rebel or take a stance contrary to that of the others. We may have found our individuality by rebelling against the others. This early pattern of independence and individuality in relationship to our sibs will influence our attitudes towards relationships, continuing to seek out the different, the unusual and the unique in our partners and friends.



## Uranus in Aspect to Mercury

Uranus brings its sense of individuality and freedom to the sibling system when it aspects Mercury. With siblings, and later friends and partners, we seek a sense of freedom, adventure and experimentation. The sibling may have been our first image of independence and individuality, acting as a freedom fighter and rebel. However, the sibling may also have been distant, aloof or cold. In its negative manifestation we have the image of the sibling who may have been disengaged from us, non-committal, even cruel. With these planets in aspect, we seek our individuality within the group and perhaps have to forge our own sense of independence first with the sibling.

## ♆ Neptune

### Neptune in the 3<sup>rd</sup> House

Neptune's urge to sacrifice may be a pattern lived out with our brothers or sisters, when placed in the third house. We may be the one to take the blame for actions perpetrated by our siblings or allow them to set us up, even use us. Neptune's urge to merge is so strong that we may discard our sense of self in order to experience this sublime union. We may feel that we are not giving up that much to the sibling when the self is fragile anyway. However, a pattern may be created that continues into our adult relationships. Ultimately, this sacrifice comes at a high price as it weakens our sense of independence. Quite literally, we may have had to sacrifice our education or our dreams for another sibling.

There may be a lack of boundary between ourselves and our sibs, so we may be highly sensitive to their psychic life. One of the most difficult Neptunian patterns in family life is to know intuitively what is going on, but to have this continually denied by the other members of the family. We begin to mistrust our intuition and feel that we are fantasising too much or making things up! In this scenario, Neptune in the third becomes the classic 'identified patient' in the sibling system, manifesting the anxieties and the disease repressed by the other members of the system. In the third, the sibling could play the role of the liar, the deceptive one, the odd one out. Enmeshment with siblings is high and we are often unable to distinguish what the truth is. We may get caught up in the web of the sibling's deceit or addictions. Neptune in the third is a potent image of a primitive yearning to surrender oneself to the other, disappearing through fusing oneself with that person.

My experience of Neptune in the third is that it often describes a missing sibling, one who has disappeared or become estranged, leaving a void in our lives that we try to replace with friends. Equally, the missing sibling may be idealised so that the feelings of loss are numbed and defended

by the idealisation. Since the third house is the first of the houses of relationship, it is quite likely that the image of the missing sibling surfaces in our later relationships where we once again address the issues of sacrifice and invisibility in relation to our partners and friends. We are vulnerable to recreating a fused relationship and losing ourselves in it.

### ♆ – ♃      **Neptune in Aspect to Mercury**

Creativity, magic and enchantment are part of Neptune's domain. In aspect to Mercury we wanted to share this imaginal and fantastic realm with the sibling. However, we may also have idealised the sibling as a refuge from the difficulties of growing up, fusing together to avoid the pain. On the one hand, this aspect may suggest the compassionate and devoted sibling; on the other, it suggests the deceptive or addictive one. We may have first learned to sacrifice our sense of identity in our relationship with the sibling, surrendering our self in either the idealisation or the protection of the sibling. This could suggest a sibling who was ill or troubled and rendered us invisible. We urged to be close and share the wonder of the internal world with the sibling but may, ironically, have felt estranged, so that the sibling relationship constantly carried an un-lived potential.

### ♇      **Pluto**

#### **Pluto in the 3<sup>rd</sup> House**

When Pluto is in the third house the underworld domain may be brought into consciousness through an experience in the sibling system. Often this may be through the loss of or an estrangement with a sibling that remains a profound grief that continues to permeate life. The loss of the sibling may not be a conscious memory or literal event, yet this image may still be part of our psychic terrain. While there may be no awareness of a death in the family, we sense the shadow of loss in the ancestral system. This may happen when a child is a replacement child, or when the family atmosphere is clouded by the unresolved grief of the parents.

The Underworld could also be constellated through the experience of feeling dominated and controlled by the sibling. The sibling may have been manipulative, wielding power, confronting us with feelings of powerlessness and loss of control. Pluto's placement in the horoscope could locate one of the entrances to our underworld. Here in the third house, it is through our early relationship with our siblings that we are exposed to the underside of life, confronted with dark and dangerous feelings.

Within the sibling system we may have been coerced into keeping a secret or be privy to a secret we still feel obliged to keep. If the secret has gathered intense feelings of shame and guilt, it becomes a complex that keeps the participants bound together in an unholy alliance.

Pluto represents an innate aloneness, which we come to understand later in life as part of the human condition. As children this is difficult, since it feels threatening to our survival and our sense of well-being. With Pluto in the third, we may have felt alone in the sibling system which also felt painful and terrifying. Pluto constellates both extremes of the feeling spectrum and in the third we may have experienced either a deep sense of betrayal with a sibling or a deep sense of union and trust. It is in the sibling system where we may need to look first to understand our feelings of mistrust, suspicion and control, and we may need to return here to heal a primal sense of betrayal before we feel able to trust in an adult context.

#### ♇ – ♿      **Pluto in Aspect to Mercury**

Pluto's domain is the nether world and its aspects to Mercury imply that the sibling may be the vehicle that exposes this world to us. This could suggest the sharing of a deep and indelible bond with the sibling, a sense of intimacy and trust. However, the other polarity brings us in contact with feelings of betrayal and emotional control with the sibling. The sharing of resources, power and love are important issues in the sibling system which, when not exchanged equally, may ignite into an explosive situation. Secrets are part of Pluto's territory, and in aspect to Mercury these secrets involve the siblings. Pluto's encounter with death may also be part of this aspect, encountering a sense of loss or grief through the sibling. In the sibling system we first encounter the confrontation with honesty, trust and the powerful impact of feelings.

