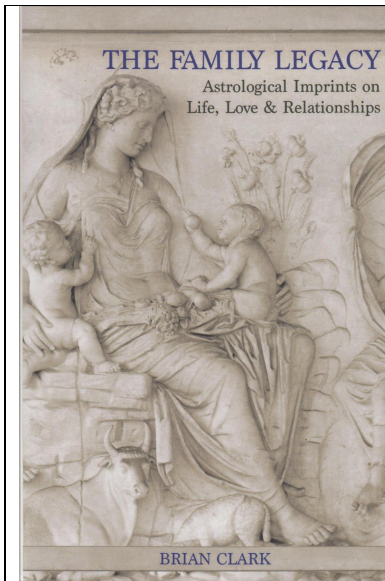


by Mary Plumb, *The Mountain Astrologer*, February/March 2017



The Family Legacy: Astrological Imprints on Life, Love & Relationships by Brian Clark, Astro*Synthesis, P.O. Box 111, Stanley, Tasmania 7331, Australia, 2016. Softcover – 400 pp. – US \$24.99 (ISBN 978-0-9944880-0-8). Available from Amazon.

I concur wholeheartedly with the reviewer quoted on the back cover of Brian Clark's newest book: This work is "truly in a class of its own." *The Family Legacy* explores the "family as a human archetypal experience" using the language of astrology – both subjects dwell in archetypes, whose "vernacular is not words but images and symbols; its dialect is not pronounced but felt and imagined."

Clark's long experience as an astrological counselor and teacher (his comprehensive course, Astro*Synthesis, is now a distance-learning program) is enhanced by his deep familiarity with mythology and human development. His understanding of psychology parallels his astrological acumen; both are informed by years of research and study. He notes themes from psychoanalytic theory, family systems therapy, Jungian psychology, various developmental models of the stages of life, etc., where these are relevant to his point. His astrology is also similarly broadly informed – clues from Ptolemy, Bonatti, and others from astrological history intertwine effortlessly with insights from contemporary writers. Clark's knowledge of mythology is a further enhancement of his work, as he refers to less well-known aspects of myths, e.g., "Ares (Mars) and Aphrodite (Venus) were brother and sister as well as lovers."

For a (bare) outline of the contents, he begins with "A Look Inside the Houses of Family," in which he delineates the water and air houses (as the indicators of the elements of bonding); planets in the 3rd and 4th houses; and the angles and cusps ("Doorways, Borders and Keys"). Part II, *Solar and Family Systems: Exploring the Planets*, includes parental and sibling dynamics; relating personalities in the family to planetary archetypes; and the planets, aspects, and houses. Moon signs within families are explored, along with their methods of attachment and bonding. Part III, *Intrinsic Blueprints and Rites of Passage: Family Time*, covers such motifs as place in the birth order, the only child, boundaries, psychic spells in families, the family life cycle, adult children, plotting the ancestors, and much more. All of these sections offer a plethora of astrological methodology and examples from real life.

Certainly useful to the counseling astrologer, this well-written book also invites you to take your own reflective journey. For instance, have you ever considered the fact that your birth chart reflects the transits to your parents' composite chart?

Here in southern Oregon, we talk of guides on the world-class rivers and rapids. Brian Clark is in that category: a very skilled guide for the interior terrain that ties us together with those in our blood lineage and the others with whom we are close.

by Chris Lorenz, *Dell Horoscope*, April 2017

In traditional astrology, the fourth house is generally considered the main indicator of the family, especially the early parental influences that shaped the childhood-development phase. The third house is association with siblings and the tenth house with the parent who imprinted the child with the standards and expectations of society. Many astrologers steeped in traditional practice also consider the Sun and Moon as symbols for the father and mother, respectively.

Brian Clark has taken these long standing indicators and tremendously expanded the horoscope's range for interpreting family dynamics in *The Family Legacy*, an exceptionally instructive and thought-provoking look at the importance of family in shaping the individual psyche. An additional, powerful theme running through the narrative is how one's early relationship to parents and siblings shape all future relationship patterns, including those in marriage, work, and other social networks.

The Family Legacy shows how each of the planets may personify actual family members or otherwise describe major influences on family life. The personal planets (Mercury, Venus, and Mars) may represent brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, or other family members on the scene. Jupiter and Saturn shape cultural or social influences that affect the family ways, while Chiron may suggest theses of adoption or blended families. The outer planets (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto) show collective, generational influences that shape the family's pattern of behaviour.

Clark's style of teaching closely resembles Liz Greene's, although perhaps leaning more toward modern psychotherapy than mythological themes. Although the text is immensely readable, one senses the author's deep scholarly background in all branches of family psychology. He begins with Sigmund Freud, advances to Carl Jung, and goes into depth with numerous additional pioneers in family psychology, including Alfred Adler, James Hillman, and many lesser known experts in the field, as well as humorist Erma Bombeck.

He weaves into the narrative the thoughts of ancient thinkers, such as Sophocles and Ptolemy, as well as modern astrologers who have also written extensively about the astrology of family, including Liz Greene, Howard Sasportas, Erin Sullivan, Melanie Reinhart and Dane Rudhyar. In short, *The Family Legacy* is astrological scholarship at its best, and yet it is also a compelling story about how the impressionable psyche makes its way in the world.

The material is arranged in three parts, beginning with an expanded look at the house system's association with family. In addition to the fourth house, the eighth and twelfth houses are included as descriptors of family. The eighth house is about the intensity of belonging and how intimacy becomes a factor. The twelfth house is the individual's

connection to the spirits of the ancestors. The fourth, eighth, and twelfth houses show our sense of belonging to a personal, tribal, and collective level of life experience.

A phrase often used in this book is *participation mystique*, which comes from Carl Jung's idea about how the individual may unconsciously play a role that originated in the collective of tribal past. It is part of the hidden side of the family legacy. For example, twelfth-house planets may represent parts of the family that have come before but weren't fully expressed because of social pressure of what is considered acceptable behaviour. The individual with these twelfth-house planets may become a scapegoat or shaman type, unconsciously or creatively living out feelings that have not previously been shared. Part 1 includes an in-depth description, a reference section, on what each of the planets in the fourth house means in terms of family dynamics.

Running parallel to the watery fourth, eighth, and twelfth houses are the air houses associated with our personal relationship patterns. The third house describes our sibling and early peer relationships, the seventh and eleventh houses show how our sibling relationships are later recreated in our partnerships and friendships. While the water houses represent how we experience and integrate a sense of belonging, the air houses show how we forge an independent identity and a sense of being separate. The process begins in the third house, and Clark includes another reference section here on what each of the planets mean when located in the third house.

Part 2 dives deeper into the meaning of the planets by sign, house, and aspect – always with an eye to how they define the family dynamics. The planets are delineated in the water and air houses (ignoring the earth and fire houses), since these are most closely associated with the development of the self from the family legacy. The Moon gets extra attention with two chapters devoted to how it influences our childhood and all future relationships. "The Moon suggests our own personal feeling life," writes the author, "yet it will have been affected by ancestral and familial feelings that have permeated the family atmosphere."

In Part 3, readers are introduced to the importance of birth order, the phases of life from child to senior citizen, and how the outer-planet transits and secondary progressions help time the most critical life passages. A detailed case study of Sigmund Freud's personal psychology is ironically examined vis-à-vis his own Oedipal complex and his unusual relationships with his siblings and parents.

For newcomers to astrology and intermediate students, *The Family Legacy* is an excellent doorway to learning about astrology and making leaps in personal growth. For advanced students, professionals, and teachers, you won't find a better reference on the astrology of family. *The Family Legacy* would make a great "recommended reading" for any astrology class. This one is bound to be a classic and deserves a prominent place on any astrologer's "favourite books" shelf.

by Cate Whelan, the FAA Journal, September 2016

The Family Legacy by Brian Clark is not a book you just read. You have to absorb it slowly, allow it to trickle into your veins. Serendipitously, it arrived on my doorstep exactly as my Progressed Moon was passing over my IC, beginning its journey through my packed Fourth House.

I was delighted to have the opportunity to review this book, because Brian Clark is a renowned for his research and insight in this field. He is an experienced teacher and counsellor as well as a gifted communicator. We in Australia are fortunate to have had the benefit of his influence and inspiration for many years. The book does not disappoint. It is a book that feels beautiful in the hand; satin to the touch and with a weight that indicates the subject is explored deeply but not overwhelmingly. The beautiful cover image is from the façade of the Ara Pacis in Rome, a panel named Tellus, after the Roman Earth mother. It sets the tone for the book.

Brian states in chapter 1: 'The family is a system moving through time. It is the container that holds one's genesis and beginnings. It is where we are deeply rooted, hopefully secure enough in our origins to grow and adapt to life. In a way, a family unit is a microcosm of society, providing continuity throughout life and a place in which to belong.' And this is the way he explores the family, whether through houses, planets, signs, aspects or cycles— he links these to inheritance, to early experiences, to rites of passage, and he examines the family and personal outcomes in a myriad of subtly different ways.

The book is structured into three main parts:

Part 1; Behind the Front Door –the Houses of Family

In this section Brian develops the theme of 'the two fibres of humanness, the sense of belonging and the sense of separateness'. Using the symbolism of Air and Water, he examines in depth patterns of relationship in the Air houses – 3rd, 7th and 11th – and the familial legacy in the following Water houses – 4th, 8th and 12th. As well as delving into the nature of these houses, he looks at planets in the 3rd and 4th houses from the perspective of how they define the family experience – the horizontal relationships of siblings, cousins and early friends, and the vertical relationships within family structures.

Part 2: Solar and Family systems: Exploring the Planets

Here, Brian explores parental and sibling dynamics through house placement and planetary aspects, describing the literal figures in the family landscape as well as the way these energies interact in our own charts – as without, so within. He emphasises the importance of the Moon by devoting two chapters to the lunar experience— the Moon represents our *first love* and hence our template for security and relationship. He reflects on the nature of the Moon in the different signs with insight and empathy, and without judgement, which is refreshing.

Part 3: Intrinsic Family Blueprints and Rites of Passage

What are some of the major things that define our family experience? Birth order and the sibling experience loom large. Various forms of family dysfunction – parenting styles, family secrets, unexpressed anger, forms of abuse and abandonment – are explored through astrology, psychology and mythology. Brian shows us ways of plotting family cycles – family time patterns, planetary themes through families, family life cycles, from both a sociological perspective and through planetary cycles – in fact, family passages from birth to death. Finally, we are introduced to the genogram – a graphic way of showing not only family relatedness but also inherited traits, family traumas and defining events – and absolute gold for anyone studying family patterns.

The Family Legacy is an important study of family dynamics, but it is also an opportunity to learn so much more about our own patterns. We are all products of, and members of a family, of whatever form. By decoding the symbols in the chart, Brian invites us to explore the soul of our family as it has developed over generations, and thus to more deeply understand ourselves.