



**Soulful Encounters:**  
*Crossroads and Crossed Paths*  
a weekend seminar with Brian Clark

*in preparation*

During our seminar together we will be exploring significant crossroads of life through astrological and mythological images. These moments include the time when and the place where you first encountered significant others in your life. Whether these encounters were momentary or enduring, supportive or obstructive, physical or spiritual, it is of value to reflect on these significant influences and what brought you to this crossroads. Choose a significant meeting (or several), one you feel changed your direction - progress your chart to this time and also familiarize yourself with the transits and their impact on your horoscope at this time. And if you are aware of the time, then construct a chart for this meeting. While this will be the meeting chart, it will also serve as the transits to your chart for this moment.

If you are using another's horoscope, please seek permission from your adult friends or partners when using their horoscope.

Following are some introductory notes and also at the end are instructions on how to generate the slower-moving transits to the angles and nodes, as well as the Nodal transits of the angles, which are relevant in assessing times when we may be more open to crossroads and significant encounters. Print out these reports and make notes for yourself of the passages in your life at this time. Be mindful of other transits at these times as well, especially to the inner planets. These reports, as well as the following notes, are intended as an introductory reflection on the nature, impact and consequence of our encounters at the crossroads.

## **Karma**

Modern astrology uses a variety of lenses to amplify compelling relationships. But whether the approach is archetypal, evolutionary, psychological or spiritual, it is the astrologer's way of thinking and their personal experience in relationships that influences how the horoscope is approached, interpreted and expressed. Depending on the astrologer's worldview, powerful attractions might be framed as the result of unconscious projections, familial patterning, karmic patterns, reincarnation, recognizing a soul mate or twin flame; whatever it is, astrology can reflect on the connection through its symbols. Bonds that evoke memories, fascination, longing, fixation and intense feelings might be referred to as karmic relationships, while the term soul mate could be referring to a relationship that is mutually comforting, supportive and nurturing. A psychic connection may suggest an attachment between the two souls or the unconscious impact of the relationship.

Synchronicity is also used to express a moment of significant meeting, when there is a mutual recognition or sense that this was meant to be. However I am inclined to believe that synchronicity occurs within the context of an attachment and/or a connection, not necessarily an association to a literal person, but also when there is a connection to something important within ourselves. When something significant is mutually stirred between two individuals it can seem synchronous; however the connection is already there, albeit unconsciously. Therefore with synchronistic events and meetings or familiarity at the crossroads, it is of interest to reflect on what aspects of the self are being awakened. Carl Jung who was the proponent of synchronicity expressed in his autobiography a similar sentiment:

Other people are established inalienably in my memories only if their names were entered in the scrolls of my destiny from the beginning, so that encountering them was at the same time a kind of recollection.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond any expression or concept is the astrological image, which is the key to unlocking the mystery.

A fundamental doctrine in Hinduism and Buddhism, karma has become a popular concept in Western thought.<sup>2</sup> While the word means action, work or deed, it is mostly used when referring to the spiritual principle of cause and effect, where our intentions and actions affect our future. Actions from the past and present accrue to determine our fate. As a law of moral causation it echoes the early Greek ideas of justice and retribution as well as the Christian belief of reaping what you sow; but if karma is reduced to just a cause and effect hypothesis, it will no longer engage the soul.

The law of karma is not bound by time and space and extends through these dimensions. Being timeless and spaceless; a powerful attraction or repulsion is often referred to as karmic, as it feels as if the two people involved have pre-existed in another time and place. From an eastern spiritual perspective karma is inseparable from reincarnation. In western or psychological thinking it is akin to the psychic principle of hereditary. In all systems it has an affinity with fate and destiny; therefore it is an essential thesis for all astrologers to embrace in their own way. Dependent on the astrologer's belief system, karma could be expressed in either terms of past lives, psychic hereditary or the eternal return.<sup>3</sup> Whether karma is a living reality or a metaphor, what is most important is to name the underlying astrological archetype/s that are bound up with it, as the core of these archetypes are free from cultural and philosophical overtones.

In context of relationships karma implies a psychic connection, an intense longing, the recognition of something incomplete or the desire to be completed by the other. A karmic relationship suggests that each individual has been impacted by the other's thoughts, emotions and actions. Two life paths intersect to alter the relationship and each other. From a psychological point of view the couple are pulled towards each other by powerful and mysterious forces emanating from the unconscious. Astrology can help define the basis of this karmic connection through the examination of the natal chart and its comparison to the other's horoscope.

Certain dimensions of the horoscope lend themselves to considering karmic imprints on our lives. Probably the standout astrological image for karmic implications in the birth chart is the nodal axis, which has been used to define past lives since the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Saturn is often referred to as the Lord of Karma, while planets in the 12<sup>th</sup> house are also frequently interpreted as karmic inheritances from the past. In reality the whole horoscope is a dynamic fusion of karmic imprints, as the horoscope illustrates the totality of who we are. Many images in the horoscope indicate residual and enduring imprints and patterns from the past. Similarly, in relationship

astrology the whole chart needs to be considered in terms of karmic patterning. No one feature of the horoscope will provide a full understanding of the mystery of attraction; however some astrological symbols, more than others, play a critical role in considering karmic relationships.

When focusing on karmic relationships, angles and axes of the horoscope are a high priority, but there are two that are very revealing: the Moon and North and South Nodes as well as the Vertex and Anti-Vertex axis. Both these axes are points in space created when their orbit or great circle intersects the ecliptic; therefore they are not archetypal like the planetary gods, but represent a direction or course of life. All four axes (Ascendant and Descendant, the MC and IC, the Moon and Nodes as well as the Vertex and Anti-Vertex) intersect the ecliptic indicating crossroads in the heavens; in the horoscope they symbolize crossed paths or crossroads. In terms of karmic relationships the Moon and Nodes and the Vertex locate memorable encounters with others.

Some reflective questions:

- What is your comprehension and working assumptions about karma
- Do you unequivocally believe in past lives or are you in two minds or uncertain about this
- What is your understanding of soul mates
- Do you believe we are destined to meet the "right" people
- Do you believe in "love at first sight"
- Are certain people "meant to be together"

## Karmic Relationships and Astrological Images

### *The Lunar Nodes*

The Lunar Nodes are not planets, but points in space where the orbit of the Sun and Moon intersect. Unlike the planets their direction through the zodiac is retrograde. Therefore their nature is not bound by time or space in the same way the planets are. Nor are they material or visible in the sky like planets. As an abstract construct in the heavens we can consider them to be metaphysical by nature. Whereas planets are symbolic of human instinct, the lunar nodes signify another dimension of personal experience. The lunar nodes can be likened to a spiritual journey across time and space or through different lifetimes. Speaking about the Moon and nodes, Dane Rudhyar said that "we are dealing with what might be called the karmic way in which the Moon and function operates in a human being." The nature of these nodes lends itself to the notion of karma, as they evoke images of timeless experience contained by their southern and northern poles.

While the Moon symbolizes our emotional and familial connections, the nodal axis adds another layer to understanding these attachments over time and through space. The lunar nodes encourage attachments to be seen through a less personal lens, from the perspective of a spiritual or sacred passage. Similar to a Buddhist perspective, the nodes help us to detach from the emotionality of the Moon, offering metaphysical insights into the pain and suffering experienced through our attachments. The Moon is the soul's vessel that holds the deep feeling life; lunar experiences are acutely felt: the heartbreak of a severed attachment, the pain of an emotional wound or the suffering of neglect and isolation. From a karmic perspective, the Nodes situate personal pain in the transpersonal perspective of the soul's journey through time. The Moon is instinctual while her nodal axis is spiritual.

The sign and house polarity of the nodal axis are important as they symbolize crossroads, significant meetings and life paths that intersect. As an axis of "destiny" the nodal axis is often reflective of relationships that are significant in helping us find direction, purpose and fulfilment in our lives. The word karmic is used in context of the nodal axis to summarize the feelings of

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familiarity or foreignness, the attraction or repulsion and the overwhelming sense that the relationship was meant to be. The spiritual quality of the relationship is stirred when the nodes are involved; hence the feelings evoked in the encounter are often described in numinous terms like mystical or magical, something other than here and now.

### ***Eclipsing the Other***

The Moon's nodal axis is intimately tied to the cycle of solar eclipses. When the Sun and Moon are near the nodal axis the Sun, Moon and Earth are aligned; hence at a New Moon or Full Moon, a solar or lunar eclipse can occur. Solar eclipses will always happen at least twice a year. When the lunar nodes are entwined with the Sun or Moon in the horoscope, then the cycle of eclipses may also be of interest in the dynamics of the couple's relationship.

Reflect on your Nodes astrologically

- What is degree/sign and house of your Nodal Axis
- Are there any planets conjunct or square your North or South Node
- Does your North or South Node makes significant aspects to your parents' siblings' friends' or partners' charts
- Are the transiting Nodes impacting your natal chart at present
- Are there major transits to your Nodal axis at present

### ***Cosmic Connections: The Vertex***

Another angle of the horoscope, the Vertex, belongs to modern astrology as it did not enter astrological tradition until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>6</sup> It was proposed by L. Edward Johndro, a Canadian astrologer, who began likening its opposite angle, the Anti-Vertex, to an 'Electric Ascendant'.<sup>7</sup> His astrological colleague, Charles Jayne, began experimenting with this point and reported the Vertex to be responsive to solar arc directions. Both agreed that the Vertex was fated and represented issues beyond our control; therefore the Vertex entered astrological thinking strongly imprinted with being a point of compulsion and fate. Falling in the Western hemisphere of the horoscope it was naturally aligned with relationship and compromise and having the mystique of something fated or out of control. The Vertex began life symbolizing compelling relationships and strong attachments.

The Vertex - Anti-Vertex is the third angle of the horoscope and in a way stretches us into a three dimensional view of the self. It is not vertical like the MC ó IC, nor is it horizontal like the Ascendant ó Descendant axis. The Vertex is found in the Western part of the horoscope and is formed by the intersection of the Prime Vertical with the ecliptic,<sup>8</sup> representing another dimension of self and other. Because it is formed by the junction of fast-moving circles, the Vertex is time sensitive; therefore dependant on an accurate time of birth. Its angularity is not as defined as the traditional angles, being more mysterious, indefinite and less observable. It signifies what is unable to be directly observed on the horizon of experience. The visible Descendant symbolizes the partner's qualities and characteristics. Being perceptible, the relational patterns that constellate around the Descendant are symbolic of configurations able to reach consciousness unlike those arranged at the Vertex, which by nature is unseen and unknown. In relationship astrology a revealing exercise is to contrast the sign on the Descendant with the sign on the Vertex, imagining the qualities of the Descendant sign are more known while those of the Vertex are not.

This angle adds a third dimension to the nature of our interrelationships offering a different perspective on our significant encounters, the concealed agendas in relationship and compelling rendezvous of our lives. Considering the Vertex ó Anti-Vertex axis is similar to putting on 3-D glasses to view the horoscope. All of a sudden something that seemed at arm's length is now right

in front of you; what was in the background has come to the foreground. Subtleties are now more obvious. The Vertex has been described as fateful encounters, cosmic appointments and ‘run-ins that seem beyond our control’<sup>9</sup> The Anti-Vertex located in the eastern side of the chart complements its polar partner revealing a layer of self not visible at first glance, a hidden birth mark, an alter ego, an autonomous voice. In tandem with the Vertex, this axis often reveals untapped resources that support and sustain the personality in the tasks of life, especially work and relationship.

Modern astrology does not always refer to the Vertex, but my experience of it in the context of relationship astrology is very synchronous with karmic relationships. It symbolizes where there may be a compelling or blind aspect in relationship. The Vertex symbolizes veiled agendas or unconscious collusions, not visible until the relationship has excavated deeper emotional territory. The agenda of the Vertex is often contrary to the conscious contract of the relationship; therefore the astrological imagery of the Vertex helps to articulate hidden agendas. The Vertex is an image of what we struggle to complete, as well as what keeps us bound to the relationship, or a form of it, until it erupts through the ego defences to be confronted. Below are some keywords for this axis of the horoscope which we will explore more deeply in the seminar:

Images and Symbols of the Vertex	Images and Symbols of the Anti -Vertex
hidden agendas in relationships, hence what is often seen as karmic or fated connections	unseen qualities of our personality that are powerful allies when presenting ourselves to the world
unbreakable bonds and the unconscious contracts in relationships	creative aspects of our individuality that may be overshadowed
issues and affairs beyond our control	anchoring aspects of our character
deep-seated, compelling and inescapable themes in relationship	unacknowledged traits and qualities that may not be consciously utilized
other-worldly; sensitivity to subtle realities	an alternate power or energy source
relationships and experiences that change our life perspective	a hidden aspect of the self that may change the way we relate to others and the world at large

Include the Vertex in the print out of your chart

- What is the degree/sign and house of your Vertex
- Is the Vertex in a different sign to the Descendant; if so contemplate the different qualities of each
- Are there any planets conjoining or opposing your Vertex
- Do any of your significant relationships have planets or points that conjoin or oppose your Vertex

### ***Familiarity and Mystery***

In English our word *familiarity* suggests a close association or something that has become well known over time. In referring to relationship it is akin to a family footing or intimacy; being close, dear, even private and trusted. Its root is in the Latin *familialis* which is also the source of *family*; therefore feeling familiar with a workmate, partner, colleague or companion suggests a more intimate tie, one that has its origins in the past. Familiarity implies a spirit of connection.

When used as a noun, a familiar referred to a spirit or daimon. Accounts of familiars varied throughout European folklore, witchcraft and shamanism. The familiar spirit often revealed itself in animal form; hence it was intimately connected with the instinctual life as well as the anima or soul. Being closely attached to the individual, the familiar or animal spirit was given a name and recognized as a companion. Imaginary playmates are familiar aspects of childhood. While these experiences may be clinically rationalized and explained or passed off as a childlike fantasy, nonetheless, these experiences are an encounter with familiar spirits that guide us into the later terrain of relationships.

In a way the familiar is like an alter ego, another dimension of the self that is reawakened through the agency of another. There are many ways to reflect on the familiar. One way might be to imagine it as a daimon, a personal spirit that is magnetised by the force of love. When reawakened its force is palpable, both physically and psychologically. Emotions are stirred. What remains after the encounter are the felt experience of familiarity and the recognition of a deep connection. When projected onto an individual, the feeling is as if we have known the other from the past.

When an individual experiences a deeply felt response to another it feels eternal, having endured across time and space. In a contemporary context we might suggest this soul-sense of familiarity is the basis of adult attachment. And like all attachments it has an affinity with the past, home and security. Psychologically an encounter with the beloved, a soul mate or the desired lover can awaken an unremembered past which can become contextualized as something that happened before, from an earlier period. Encountering a soul mate is a kind of recollection, a resonance with something deeply known. Close attachment rekindles the instinct to return home; therefore when there is an intimate bond, emotional closeness, sexual harmony or like-minded friends there is also a sensation of homecoming and safety, like being cradled in the secure arms of another. The lunar archetype resonates with adult attachments that rekindle a karmic sense of familiarity.

Our word mystery implies something that is complex to understand or explain, similar to an enigma, secret or conundrum. There are many similar Greek roots such as *mysterion* which refers to a secret rite or doctrine, *mystes* or one who has been initiated and *myein* meaning to close. These underlying images of the word refer to mystery initiations where initiates would often close their mouths and eyes in order to experience a divine revelation. The most famous mysteries of the ancient world were the Eleusinian Mysteries which personified Persephone's initiatory journey into the Underworld after she had been abducted by Pluto. Once initiated in the mysteries, one was no longer fearful of death.

In relationship astrology Pluto embodies a compelling and transforming encounter, one that is magnetic and engaging. When Pluto enters into the arena of relating, it symbolizes an inevitable journey into a deep and intimate connection. The Pluto archetype of mystery also reflects karmic relationships<sup>10</sup>; therefore both the Moon and Pluto are important to consider in these relationships.

### ***Sentimentality: Lunar Loves***

The astrological Moon is sensitive and responsive to the atmosphere of feeling so that any underlying anxiety, tension or sentiment is often registered and remembered. Sentiment suggests what one feels about something; however in contemporary times, when feeling intelligence is no longer valued, the word has come to suggest exaggerated, nostalgic or self-indulgent feelings of sadness or kindness. The Moon is sentimental and its reactions are meaningful even if they cannot be explained rationally or expressed logically.

The Moon is a vessel for the feeling life. Over time it becomes a strongbox full of all the sensations, feelings, tastes, sights, smells and sounds we have experienced and reacted to but not remembered.

As the fastest moving of all the planetary archetypes, the Moon is the most personal. It completes its first revolution of the zodiac in just 27.3 days; at that time we have experienced the Moon in every astrological variant possible, initiating us into our lunar temperament, a deep symbol of what stays habitual and instinctual in us. It is the recorder of our earliest feeling impressions. When extended back through time, the Moon symbolizes past feelings. The past, whether that is the personal, familial, ancestral or cultural past, is embedded in the Moon.

Memory is a feature of the Moon but it is feeling memory; therefore memories are awoken through a song on the radio, a smell, a dream or aches and pains. These memories are neither linear nor logical, but powerful impressions of something from before; therefore the rational mind attempts to find a logical hypothesis to contextualize the familiar feeling in time and space. In relationship astrology the Moon is the comfort and shelter one feels in relationship, but also it is the sense of familiarity and the past. Therefore when the Moon is a strong aspect of a relationship, it can feel karmic.

In relationships that are intimate, familial, tempestuous and filled with feeling, it is common to find the Moon conjunct the partner's angles, conjunct or opposite the Sun or another inner planet.

### ***The Passions of Pluto***

Although the presence of Pluto had been suspected for some time, it was not officially discovered until 1930.<sup>11</sup> Named for the god of the underworld, Pluto entered the astrological pantheon between the two World Wars, shortly after the collapse of Wall Street, prohibition and the rise of dictatorships, all synchronous symbols of Pluto breaching the surface. As the god of death his archetype confronts astrologers to find meaning and insight into the depths of his underworld terrain.

In 1970 when Isabel Hickey published her popular text *Astrology a Cosmic Science* she did not include Pluto as she felt more research was needed. Three years later she released her booklet *Pluto or Minerva: The Choice is Yours* where she delineated Pluto astrologically as the invisible energy which is unknown on the surface but which works ceaselessly in the depths of our being. Buried beneath the surface its lowest aspect can erupt in violence. But she also described the highest aspect of Pluto which transforms the person from within. They are purged and regenerated and never again in the same state of consciousness<sup>12</sup>

Isabel's spiritual perceptions and belief in reincarnation viewed Pluto from an evolutionary perspective. A choice was available in how we dealt with our beasts of desire, passion, temptation or ambition, whether they were used as a force for light or dark. In the 1990's Jeffrey Wolf Green developed an approach called Evolutionary Astrology, which focuses on the soul's growth through its various incarnations. One of the focal points of this work is Pluto and its correlation to the soul as well as its karmic implications in relationship.<sup>13</sup> As a planetary archetype Pluto constellates intrigue, power, challenges and catharsis. It is astrologically aligned with both the soul and karma in the sense of its mystery initiations and purification processes. In relationship astrology it serves as a symbol of passion, desire and the confrontation with the taboos and trials of a soulful relationship.

One of the marks of Pluto is its intensity of feeling. It loves and hates deeply. Characteristic of all or nothing, there is an attraction/repulsion dynamic that operates when feeling threatened or jealous. Its position and aspects in the natal chart help to identify what will be brought into the sphere of relationship. When highlighted in the relationship sectors or in aspect to inner planets, we are alert for the passionate personality to emerge through relating.

Reflect on the Moon and Pluto in your horoscope in terms of deeper process of memory, attachment, connection, soul and feeling

## Mythic Crossroads

From an ancient perspective, the image of crossroads was invested with meaningfulness as it located a portal between the worlds, where spirits, souls or ghosts often lingered waiting for contact with embodied others. Crossroads were often regarded as in-between or *betwixt* and *between* a place neither here nor there. Therefore they were associated with thresholds and the state of liminality, from the Latin word *limen* which means *‘a threshold’*

At the crossroads, on the threshold, the traveller, participant or initiate was in the process of transition. In this process the participant no longer identified with the status and persona they had before they arrived at the crossroads, neither had they begun the transition to the self that awaited them at the end of their passage across the threshold. These moments in between, when something is afoot and not yet complete, can be periods of disquiet, unease and waiting as the personal identity, beliefs and routines are rearranged. They can also be times of expectation and emotional uncertainty. Liminality is a time of intersection when different paths of life cross. Crossroads locate these junctions in space experienced through events and encounters, often meetings with significant others. At the crossroads three paths come upon each other; the past and the future which intersect with the present path.

In Greek myths the crossroads were places of important encounters. Jason met Hera at the crossroads when he left Chiron's cave and descended down Mt. Pelion to claim his inheritance. And Oedipus unwittingly met and killed his father where the three roads meet, on the outskirts of Delphi. Embedded in the folklore of crossroads is the image of meeting the god, a significant other or partner.

In Latin *trivia* literally means three ways and was representative of the places where three roads meet. Trivia enters the English language from *trivialis* *‘that which is in, or belongs at the crossroads’* but by 20<sup>th</sup> century parlance, intersections were common places, pedestrian so to speak, and to be found everywhere; hence trivia came to be associated with what was commonplace, basic, simple and insignificant. Ironically, the goddess of the crossroads Hecate was known in Roman myth by her epithet *Trivia*, a stark reminder that by the modern age the mysteries at the crossroads were no longer sacred and we had forgotten to honour the Goddess of the Crossroads.

This is noticeable in modern writing on the subject of crossroads. The following extract is from a social psychologist who explores encounters at crossroads from a cognitive perspective:

There is an element of fortuity in people's lives. The role of fortuitous determinants in causal structures remains ever dormant in psychological theorizing even though it is often a critical factor in the paths lives take. People are often brought together through a fortuitous constellation of events that set in motion reciprocal interplays of influences that shape the course of their lives. Indeed, some of the most important determinants of life paths often arise through the most trivial of circumstances. In these instances, seemingly minor events have important and enduring impact on the course that lives take.<sup>14</sup>

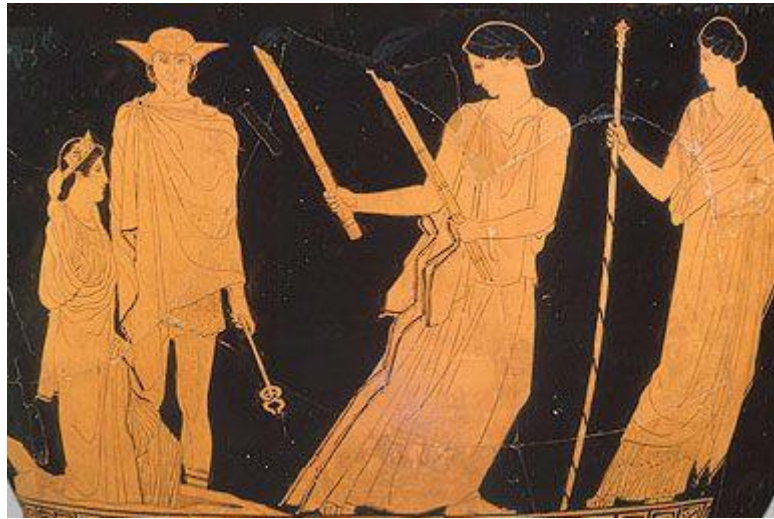
The author continues talking about how active people have more opportunities to encounter fortuity and that through action we can create more chances, aligning will and conscious intent with fortune; an opinion that devalues the mysteries and greater forces that underpin the *‘fortuitous’* constellation of events encountered at the crossroads.

Astrology and Mythology keep the evocative image of the crossroads alive.



## Hecate

In this painting from a red-figured 5<sup>th</sup> C BCE vase Hecate is depicted with another god of the threshold, Hermes, as well as Persephone and Demeter with whom she is strongly identified. Each goddess is linked to the three faces or phases of the Moon: the New/Crescent is Persephone; the Full is Demeter and the Dark of the Moon is Hecate, the time the ancients new to appease the goddess of the crossroads, as during the dark night of the New Moon there was a crossroads of Time when departed souls would congregate at the crossroads waiting for the petitioner's offering of food for Hecate.



*Persephone, Hermes, Hecate and Demeter*

From an ancient perspective the dark at the New Moon was the time for Hecate's suppers, when food was taken to the crossroads to appease the mistress of the night and her dead. It was here at the crossroads of both the earthly and heavenly routes that the restless dead congregated seeking sustenance from the living. Offering the suppers to the restless dead and Hecate Trivia, the Night goddess of the crossroads guaranteed that the dead would be pacified and their mistress would keep them in check. The timing reflects a belief that souls were especially likely to be abroad on the night of the New Moon<sup>15</sup>

## Hermes

We meet Hermes in the first epics of Western literature: Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In Book 24 of each epic, there is a colourful description of Hermes as guide and leader of souls. In the *Iliad* he is the escort for the Trojan patriarch Priam into the dangerous camp of the enemy, while in the *Odyssey* Hermes is the guide into the underworld of the disembodied souls of Penelope's suitors.<sup>16</sup> Hermes is the guide for souls who are crossing boundaries. Early motifs of Hermes's myth have him born at dawn; by midday he was playing the lyre, and by evening had stolen his brother's cattle and returned to the nursery. Hermes is not only cunning, but imagistic, a magician, thief, road scholar as well as the one who hovers over the threshold of dawn and dusk, the only times he may be visible.

Hermes also retrieves those whose soul longs to emerge out of the underworld. Zeus calls on Hermes in his role as courier to the underworld when Demeter demands the return of her daughter Persephone. It is Hermes who can lead Persephone out of the darkness of the nether region back up

into the light of the gods. Hermes leads Pandora, a newly created soul, to her fate. Here Hermes mediates a cataclysmic transition, a transitional experience that has repercussions for many.



And as depicted in sculpture and art, Hermes lifts Psyche up from the underworld to Heaven where he gives her the cup which contains the potion of immortality.

Hermes meets us at the thresholds of death and again at the ascending gate. He waits at the gates, on the edge of darkness and as light emerges. The threshold may be a crucial juncture in life, an initiatory phase, like adolescence, midlife or seniority or the awakening to a new and creative passage of life. Or the threshold may be encountered in the darkness of sleep when Hermes is the shepherd of dreams. Or the threshold is reached when loss and grief obliterates any defences to the point where they disappear beneath the horizon of consciousness and the individual psychologically enters into transition. Hermes is at the crossroads.

As Hermes was an intermediary, an in-between god, one who only showed himself on thresholds, he was aptly named, since in the heavens he only revealed himself at the shifting times of dawn or dusk. He was an escort to the underworld, known as the *psychopomp*.<sup>17</sup> As the sender or transporter, he became known as the guide of souls, leading them in and out of Hades. Even though Hermes is the conductor of souls and is given the role of guide to the underworld, he is not a god of death as Hades is. Hermes is associated with transitions, in between states, liminality and threshold crossings. Hermes is not a god of the Netherworld or afterlife, but is given the power to visit it.

While Hecate is the goddess of the crossroads, Hermes is a god of the roads; each one significant in boundary crossings, unforeseen connections and encounters at the crossroads.

## The Moon and Mercury

We can link the mythological deities of Hecate and Hermes with the Moon and Mercury, both planets that oversee transitions and connections. Both also have associations to memory; the Moon being unconscious memory and Mercury the ability to link this with the present. Each one links and associates: the Moon is emotional while Mercury is both imaginative and logical. Therefore when

an encounter arouses unconscious memory and this is re-membered and re-cognized in some fashion, the Moon and Mercury may be highlighted. We might think of these two astrological archetypes as the astrological custodians of the crossroads.

## The Astrology of Crossroads

During the weekend we will explore this theme of crossroads in terms of astrological imagery. There are no precedents that I know of, nor are there traditional rulers or positions; therefore we can feel unrestricted by conventions and beliefs.

### 1. Nodal points of the horoscope

Our word *node* has many meanings; one suggests a point of intersection. Astronomically this describes where two planes crisscross, often referencing where a planet's orbital plane crosses the ecliptic, the zodiacal plane of the Earth's orbit. For instance where the plane of the Moon's orbital path crosses the ecliptic is the North and South Nodes of the Moon, an indispensable astrological image that reveals karmic intersections, soulful encounters and crossed paths. Allegorically this nodal axis represents a crossroads of Heaven and Earth, Soul and Spirit, Sun and Moon; therefore the lunar nodes have come to symbolize critical junctures, rendezvous and turning points in both spiritual and mundane terms.

There are other nodal points in the horoscope which are referred to by other names, but all key intersections of cosmic planes. The angles of the horoscope form two zodiacal points where the ecliptic crosses one of the great astronomical circles. For instance the Ascendant ó Descendant axis occurs where the horizon meets the ecliptic, an axis which points to the meeting of the self with a significant other. The MC ó IC axis is found where the meridian encounters the ecliptic and where the relationship with the parents and the world is focused. The Vertex ó Anti-Vertex is the plane where the Prime Vertical crosses the Ecliptic and where we engage with deeper, yet predominantly concealed, aspects of the self that can appear as alter egos or other selves.

These three axes plus the lunar nodes form the crossroads of the horoscope. Where they intersect with others' planets or points reveals a compelling connection. Therefore we will examine:

- a. The Ascendant ó Descendant axis
- b. The MC ó IC axis
- c. The Vertex ó Anti-Vertex
- d. The Nodal axis

### 2. Transits to these four axes

### 3. The transits of the Nodal Axis through the horoscope

### 4. The Moon and Mercury

As mentioned, the Moon and Mercury are custodians of the crossroads and we will look at these natally and cyclically to reveal the nature of our important transitions

### 5. Other astrological images: the Meeting Chart, Synastry contacts

## Generating Reports using Solar Fire:

1. Outer Planets Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime
2. Nodal Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime
3. Outer Planets Transits to the Nodal axis for a Lifetime

### 1. Outer Planets Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime

We will calculate the outer planets transits to the Ascendant-Descendant, MC-IC and Vertex-Anti-Vertex axes for a Uranus cycle of 84 years. These transits will highlight times in the life when we may be at a crossroads in our direction, attachments, relationships or career, or when time is breached and a directional shift on our life path occurs.

## Outer Planets Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime

*to calculate when Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and Chiron are exactly conjunct the angles*

1. Open your chart
2. On the top menu choose Dynamic. Click on Transits & Progressions and a box called Dynamic Reports Selection appears which includes many other sections
3. Make sure your chart is highlighted under **Dynamic Radix Chart**
4. Under **Period of Report** choose the Start Date as your birth date and the period as 84 years
5. Under **Location** choose Natal
6. Under **Event Selection** choose only Transits to Radix
7. Under **Point Selection** click on Transits. Another window called Transiting Points will come up. Choose the Satout.trp file. (if there is no file called Satout you can create one by clicking on the Create button). Click on the Edit button and under Selected points choose only Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and Chiron (by clicking on the planet it will move from selected to unselected points and vice versa). Choose Save and then Select.
8. Click on Radix and choose a file called Angles (if there is no file called Angles you can create one by clicking on the Create button). Now click on Edit and choose Ascendant, Midheaven, Vertex, Descendant, Imum Coeli and Anti-Vertex. Click on Save and then Select
9. Under **Aspect Selection** click on Transits. Another window called Transiting Aspect Set will appear. Choose the Harm01.asp file (this should only include the conjunction). Click Select
10. Then click on the button Save Selections and the box Save Dynamic Selections appears. Type in Transits to the Angles and click OK to save for other reports
11. Finally, click View and the Dynamic Events Report will generate your Outer Planets Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime

Saturn will cross an angle once or three times while the other planets will cross three or five times. Remember this report is generating the *exact* dates so look at least 6 6 9 months either side of the date for the orb and the ongoing process of the transit

## 2. Nodal Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime

We will calculate the Nodal transits to the angles of the horoscope for a Uranus cycle of 84 years. These transits will highlight times in the life when there may be an important crossroads or where two strands, directions or themes of life intersect to bring new meaning and reverence to life.

### **Nodal Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime**

*to calculate when the transiting Nodal Axis is conjunct the angles of the horoscope*

1. Open your chart
2. On the top menu choose Dynamic. Click on Transits & Progressions and a box called Dynamic Reports Selection appears which includes many other sections
3. Make sure your chart is highlighted under **Dynamic Radix Chart**
4. Under **Period of Report** choose the Start Date as your birth date and the period as 84 years
5. Under **Location** choose Natal
6. Under **Event Selection** choose only Transits to Radix
7. Under **Point Selection** click on Transits. Another window called Transiting Points will come up. Choose the Moon Nodes.trp file. (if there is no file called Moon Nodes you can create one by clicking on the Create button). Click on the Edit button and under Selected points choose only North Node (by clicking on the planet it will move from selected to unselected points and vice versa). Choose Save and then Select.
8. Click on Radix and choose a file called Angles. Now click on Edit and choose Ascendant, Midheaven, Vertex, Descendant, Imum Coeli and Anti-Vertex. Click on Save and then Select
9. Under **Aspect Selection** click on Transits. Another window called Transiting Aspect Set will appear. Choose the Harm01.asp file (this should only include the conjunction). Click Select
10. Then click on the button Save Selections and the box Save Dynamic Selections appears. Type in Nodal Transits to the Angles and click OK to save for other reports
11. Finally, click View and the Dynamic Events Report will generate your Nodal Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime

The report is generating only the transits of the North Node so remember that the South Node will be transiting the opposite angle. Since these are *exact* dates I would use an orb of time of about 10 ó 15 days either side of the date.

### 3. Outer Planets Transits to the Nodal axis for a Lifetime

We will calculate the outer planets transits to the Nodal axis for a Uranus cycle of 84 years. These transits will highlight times in the life when there may be an important crossroads in time and space or when time and space opens up to reveal a new path, opportunity or attachment. These may also be times of severance and endings as well as connections and beginnings.

#### **Outer Planets Transits to the Nodal axis for a Lifetime**

*to calculate when Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and Chiron are exactly conjunct the Nodal Axis*

1. Open your chart
2. On the top menu choose Dynamic. Click on Transits & Progressions and a box called Dynamic Reports Selection appears which includes many other sections
3. Make sure your chart is highlighted under **Dynamic Radix Chart**
4. Under **Period of Report** choose the Start Date as your birth date and the period as 84 years
5. Under **Location** choose Natal
6. Under **Event Selection** choose only Transits to Radix
7. Under **Point Selection** click on Transits. Another window called Transiting Points will come up. Choose the Satout.trp file. Click on the Edit button and under Selected points choose only Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and Chiron (by clicking on the planet it will move from selected to unselected points and vice versa). Choose Save and then Select.
8. Click on Radix. You will need to create a new file called Moonø Nodes.pts. Click on the Create button and in the new window type -Moonø Nodesø under File Name. The new file will appear. Now click on Edit and choose North Node and South Node under Selected Points. Click on Save and then Select
9. Under **Aspect Selection** click on Transits. Another window called Transiting Aspect Set will appear. Choose the Harm01.asp file (this should only include the conjunction). Click Select
10. Then click on the button Save Selections and the box Save Dynamic Selections appears. Type in Outer Planets Transits to Nodes and click OK to save for other reports
11. Finally, click View and the Dynamic Events Report will generate your Nodal Transits to the Angles for a Lifetime

The report only is generating the exact dates so please remember the outer planets are a process and this process will occur over the period of the conjunctions- for Saturn this may be up to a year; for the outer planets this could extend to two years.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, Pantheon Books, New York, NY: 1973, 5.
- <sup>2</sup> In 1978 Stephen Arroyo released his groundbreaking book *Astrology, Karma and Transformation*, CRCS Publications, Vancouver, WA, which approached astrology from a more conscious and spiritual perspective.
- <sup>3</sup> When referring to karma, Carl Jung used the term psychic hereditary which included things like our predisposition to disease, character traits, special gifts as well as the universal dispositions of the mind or archetypes. See Carl Jung, *Collected Works Volume 11, Psychology and Religion*, § 842 ó 846.
- <sup>4</sup> For instance in 1975 Martin Schulman founded Karmic Astrology and published volume 1 of his series on this in his book called *The Moon's Nodes and Reincarnation*, which had a strong impact on the way the lunar nodes were seen as indicators of past lives. In 1987 he released his astrological book *Karmic Relationships*.
- <sup>5</sup> Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Transformation*, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL: 1980, 71.
- <sup>6</sup> Vertex is derived from the Latin *vertere*, meaning to turn. It has many antonyms which congregate around the image of the highest point or apex, such as the crown of the head, a pinnacle or mountaintop. Other words that have this Latin root are vertebrae and vertical, denoting a spinal structure, and also vertigo and versatile, which suggest many things spinning around.
- <sup>7</sup> L. Edward Johndro was an engineer, as well as an astrologer, who equated astrology with an electromagnetic field of influence; hence why he coined the term Electric Ascendant.
- <sup>8</sup> The Prime Vertical is one of the Great Circles which pass through the zenith, the point directly above the observer, the nadir, the point directly below the observer, and the east and west points of the horizon.
- <sup>9</sup> Janet Booth, "The Vertex, Cosmic Appointments", *The Mountain Astrologer*, June/July 2003.
- <sup>10</sup> See Jeffrey Wolf Green, *Pluto the Evolutionary Journey of the Soul*, Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN: 1985.
- <sup>11</sup> Pluto's official discovery date is February 18, 1930, discovered by Clyde Tombaugh. Fifteen years earlier Percival Lowell captured two faint images of Pluto when searching for this unknown planet dubbed "Planet X". An 11-year old school girl proposed the name Pluto for the new planet, which was unanimously chosen by the members of the Lowell observatory. The other suggestions were Minerva and Cronus. Astrologers had also speculated on its discovery; see <http://www.astrolearn.com/articles/astrologers-on-pluto-1897-1931/>. In 2006 Pluto was reclassified as a minor planet.
- <sup>12</sup> Isabel Hickey, *Astrology, A Cosmic Science*, CRCS Publications, Sebastopol, CA: 1992, 283. When this edition of the book was published, *Pluto or Minerva* was included as Part Two.
- <sup>13</sup> See <http://schoolofevolutionaryastrology.com/school/>.
- <sup>14</sup> Bandura, Albert. "Social Cognitive Theory of Personality" from Lawrence Pervin & Olivier Johns (eds.), *The Handbook of Personality, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Theory and Research*, The Guildford Press, New York, NY: 1999, 159.
- <sup>15</sup> Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA: 2013, 61.
- <sup>16</sup> For a fuller description of Hermes as leader of Souls, see Chapter 7 from my manuscript *Chaos to Cosmos* available from Astro\*synthesis; see <http://www.astrosynthesis.com.au/student-astrology-ebooklets>
- <sup>17</sup> The word *psychopomp* is Greek, from *psyche* referring to soul or souls and *pempo* to send off, to guide; therefore the *psychopomp* is the guide to the psyche (soul) or the guide and leader of souls.