

The Lunar Nodes



Life Paths and Purpose *Portals and Passageways* Workbook

with Brian Clark

The Lunar Nodes, Life Paths and Purpose

Portals and Passageways

WORKBOOK

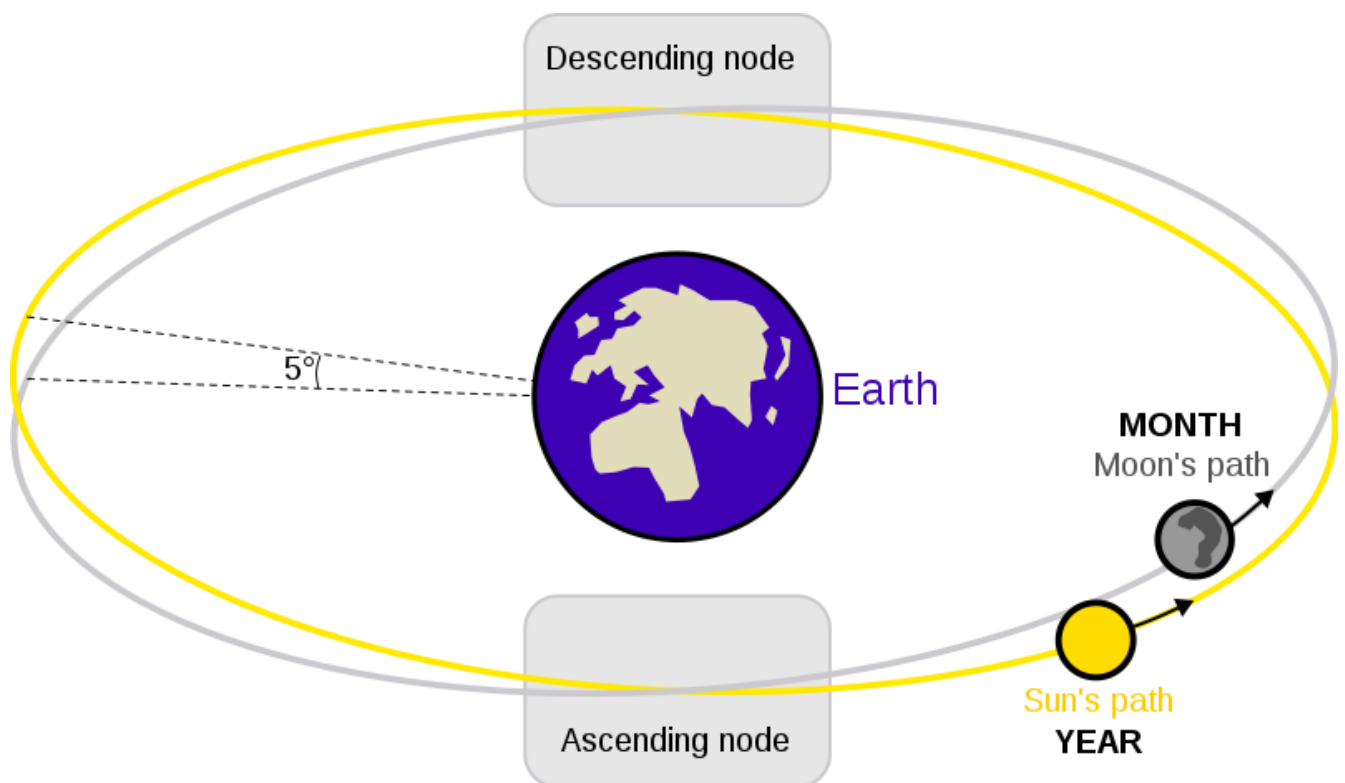
Front Cover: *The Old Tower in the Fields* by Vincent Van Gogh



Following are some notes and exercises from our workshop. Our experiential journey into our nodal stories will meander along this course.

1. The Karmic Way: *Nodal Imprints on the Soul*
2. The North and South Nodes: *The Dragon's Tale*
3. The Nodal Cycle: *Ouroboros and the Knots of Time*
4. Purpose and Vocation: *An Axis of Destiny*
5. Synastry: *Attachments across Lifetimes*
6. Nodal Transitions: *Temporal Times; Spiritual Timelessness*
7. Nodal Narratives: *Embodying the Dragon*

The nodal axis is a moment in time on the perpetual path of the Moon's orbit. Let's begin our nodal journey by reflecting on the orbital path of the Moon and its two portals – the ♁ and the ♂



Trace the path of the Moon around the Earth. Note how it intersects the Sun's path (the ecliptic) at the South Node (the Descending Node) then descends below the ecliptic, rising above it at the North Node (the Ascending Node). The two rings are representative of the paths the luminaries travel from our perspective. As noted the plane of the Moon's orbit is inclined by about five degrees with respect to the ecliptic plane. At the midpoint between the South and North Nodes, it reaches its Southern Bending below the ecliptic. Similarly, as it turns away from the North to its South Node, it is at its Northern Bending above the ecliptic. At the South and North nodal points, there is no latitude as they are crossing the ecliptic.

As you contemplate this orbital motion of the Moon, what comes to mind? Now imagine a line connecting the South and North Nodes. Close your eyes and visualize this connection between your own North and South Nodes. Contemplate this axis as a part of the Moon's perpetual orbit. How might the nodal axis reflect this journey of the Moon? Both nodes form an alliance often signified as the Axis of Destiny, reminding us of the intersections between spirit and incarnation, two points in temporal time bound together in a timeless cycle. Write down your reflections.

The nodes form an axis; they are in a dynamic relationship, part of a continuous and interactive story, moving back and forth between the worlds. Each is bonded to the other. Therefore, place both nodes in the horoscope to honour their mutual relationship, respecting their images as equally important.

In this manual I have included some background theory and techniques, as well as some practical and reflective exercises to prepare for our workshop and authoring of our Nodal story.



*"Enlightenment is an accident," said the North Node,
"Yes", replied the South, "but practice makes us accident prone"*



Quotes



The North Node of the Moon represents an intake of power into the being. In spiritual things it represents development. In mundane things it represents benefits and often profits. The South Node represents an outlet of energy that has come in through the North Node. In many ways it represents letting things go. In other ways it represents releasing energy that has come in through the North Node in a beneficial way. In mundane or practical things, it represents losses.

- Mark Robertson
from a lecture given on 14-10-1977 in Richmond, VA

Often, if not most of the time, the lessons associated with the nodes come through close relationship. The Moon signifies our dependence needs and its nodes mark areas in which these needs are expressed and then are either fulfilled or blocked. Natal, progressed and transiting positions all seem significant, and some of the most cohesive associations between two individuals are signalled by conjunctions of planets or angles in one person's chart with the lunar nodes of the other.

- Zip Dobyns
The Node Book

Rahu and Ketu are the key to unlocking the relationship of the soul with its past life. They have been given the status of planets to emphasise their significance and are known as chayya grahas (shadow planets). They have no substance and are physically non-existent as they are points on the ecliptic, yet their influence is full of potency and spiritual significance. The nodes represent polarities with a mission to churn up our lives in order to bring out the hidden potential and wisdom that has been gathered from the karma of previous lives. In keeping with their shadowy nature they work on a psychological level in both the mundane world and in spiritual life.

- Komilla Sutton
The Lunar Nodes Crisis & Redemption

At the north node, life asks an individual to exert himself in a particular direction indicated by the node's Sign and House position.

- Alexander Rupert
Cycles of Becoming

The Karmic Way: *Nodal Imprints on the Soul*

The Nodes are actually points of soul magnetism, one pulling toward the future and one coming from the past. The process which we call life is to blend these two into a median of happiness for the individual, so that his present incarnation is a symbol of his transition from past to the future.

- Martin Schulman

Karmic Astrology, Volume I: *The Moon's Nodes and Reincarnation*

The modern understanding of the lunar nodes has been greatly influenced by the work of Dane Rudhyar.¹ He proposed that the nodal axis is an image of destiny and individuation, analogous to the interrelationship between human and divine will. Its southern node was likened to past work; its northern pole, the work to be done. As he says:

At the Moon's North Node we see Destiny at work; at the South Node, human will. The lines of nodes show us the directives of Destiny, the purpose of Destiny – and what is back of this purpose, in the past.²

This metaphor of the lunar nodes brings to mind images of the soul's journey; hence this astrological symbol attracts spiritual and esoteric idioms, such as 'the path of life', 'destiny', 'points of soul magnetism' and an 'axis of fate'. This colours the nodal axis with shades of mystery and hues of esotericism. These sites in space where the orbital planes of the luminaries intersect, or allegorically where spirit passes through matter, stir the imagination. Seen through an imaginative eye, the lunar nodes are symbolic of the interplay between the earthly and the spiritual life; maybe why they have become identified with karma, reincarnation and the eternality of soul. In 1975 Martin Schulman's publication of *Karmic Astrology, The Moon's Nodes and Reincarnation* reinforced the link between the Nodes and past lives, which became a nodal template for future astrologers.³ The South Node already had a tradition of signifying negativity, and this was now linked to a past circumstance, most often a past life. Rudhyar was more contemplative; for example, he amplified the South Node in terms of sacrifice, reminding us that "the true meaning of sacrifice is 'making sacred.'"⁴ The nodal axis became endowed with a spiritual mystique.

¹ Rudhyar introduces his ideas in *The Astrology of Personality*, Servire/Wassenaar (Netherlands: 1936), 316 – 323 and continues in *Person-Centered Astrology*, ASI Publishers (New York, NY: 1980), 266- 300. For more information on Dane Rudhyar's conceptualization of the Nodes, see:

<http://www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/astroarticles/moonnodesatbirth.php>

<http://www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/astroarticles/interpretlunarnodes.php>

http://www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/astroarticles/interpretlunarnodes_2.php

² Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Personality*, p. 317.

³ Martin Schulman, *Karmic Astrology Volume 1, The Moon's Nodes and Reincarnation*, Red Wheel Weiser (republished in 1986).

⁴ Dane Rudhyar, *Person-Centered Astrology*, p. 269.

Before we begin our journey, perhaps it best to follow Rudhyar's lead and reflect on the concepts of *Karma*, *Fate*, and *Soul* since these will influence the way we understand and apply the Nodal axis. Take some time to reflect on these concepts, how they entwine with astrological ways of thinking and how they might shape our understanding of the nodes.

Karma and Reincarnation

While karma is a fundamental doctrine of many religions and cultures, it has also become a popular Western concept.⁵ While the word refers to action, work or deed, it is mainly used when referring to the spiritual principle of cause and effect – when our acts and intentions, conscious or unconscious, affect our future and how these actions accumulate to determine our fate. Hence the interconnection between karma and destiny. As a law of moral causation it echoes early ideas of justice and retribution and the Christian belief of reaping what you sow, literalizing one's fortune as the consequence of past actions or deeds.

A powerful attraction, compulsion or repulsion is often referred to as a karmic relationship, as if the energetic field constellated between the couple has endured from another time and place. From an eastern spiritual perspective karma is inseparable from reincarnation. 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 can be expressed in either terms of past lives, psychic hereditary, DNA or the eternal return.⁶ Whether karma is a living reality or a metaphor, what is important to consider is that it embraces the continuous evolution of the soul through time and space, a concept comparable to the symbol of the astrological nodal axis.

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 since the last half of the 20th century has been the nodal axis. Saturn is often referred to as the Lord of Karma, while planets in the 12th house are frequently interpreted as karmic inheritances. In reality the whole horoscope is a dynamic mixture of karma since our birth chart illustrates the totality of who we are; therefore, many images in the horoscope indicate residual and enduring imprints and patterns from the past.

Unlike the planets the Nodal direction is retrograde; therefore, their nature is not directed in the same way planets are. Nor are they material or visible in the sky like planets. Having no substance, being unembodied, they evoke ethereal imagery and comparisons. Hence, as an abstract construct their nature is considered metaphysical. Whereas planets are the symbols of human instinct and archetype, the lunar nodes symbolize another dimension of personal experience. Hence the lunar nodes are often likened to the spiritual journey

⁵ In 1978 Stephen Arroyo released *Astrology, Karma and Transformation* (CRCS Publications, Vancouver, W.A.) which approached astrology from a more conscious and spiritual perspective.

⁶ 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, CW Volume 11, *Psychology and Religion*, 842 – 846.

across time and space or through different lifetimes. When speaking about the Moon's nodes Dane Rudhyar suggested that 'we are dealing with what might be called the karmic way in which the Moon's function operates in a human being.'⁷

Rudhyar suggests the nodal axis amplifies the natal Moon, the astrological personification of our emotional processes and attachments. While the Moon symbolizes our emotional and familial connections, the nodal axis adds an alternative dimension to understanding these attachments through time and space. The lunar nodes encourage attachments to be seen through an ageless and less personal lens. Similar to a Buddhist perspective, the nodes help detach from the emotionality of the Moon, offering a spiritual or sacred perspective into the pain and suffering experienced through personal attachments and incarnation. The Moon holds the deep feeling life. Archetypally, the personal experiences of the Moon can be deeply felt as the heartbreak of a severed attachment, the pain of an emotional wound or the suffering of neglect and isolation. From the nodal perspective, lunar attachments and emotions can be understood from the transpersonal perception of the soul's journey through time. The Moon is differentiated as instinctual, attached, embodied, while the nodal axis is viewed as spiritual, detached, and otherworldly.

The Nodes are cyclical in that they return every 18.6 years. And like all cycles the successes and failures of the old cycle are carried forward into the next. The North Node is energetic and suggests the possibility of growth in both the present and the future, gleaned from the achievements of the past. The South Node is inert, containing the memory and feeling of former failures, yet it also contains the knowing and experience of past realizations which can be extracted to move forward. As the South and North Nodes are part of the same system, we might imagine the movement between both the nodes as a continuing dance through time, not as a task to be completed.

What are your reflections on Karma and Reincarnation? How might this inform the way you approach the meaning of the Nodal axis or astrology overall? What spiritual or metaphysical experiences have led you to this understanding?

Fate and Destiny

In contemporary thought, fate and destiny have always been entwined. Fate comes from the Latin *fatum*, 'to speak'. A *fatum* was something spoken, like a decree or a dictate of the gods. Destiny is derived the Latin *destino* – to determine, appoint or choose. Fate suggests

⁷ Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Transformation*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL: 1980, 71.

something that is decreed or pronounced, predetermined, set or laid down, over which there is not much control. Destiny implies some choice. Interestingly both the 'Destinies and ruthless Fates'⁸ are daughters of Night in Hesiod's *Theogony*. These two concepts are combined cosmologically, but over time philosophy and psychology have attempted to make a distinction between them. Of interest to me is how our concept of fate shifts as it emerges out of the mythological period into the minds of philosophers. Fate herself remains the same, but our experience of her becomes altered as we move from a primordial and instinctual experience of the world to a psychological outlook on life. As philosophical ideas develop, Fate becomes more aligned with the body while freedom sides with the soul which also undergoes many redefinitions.

Fate confronts the individual, indeed humanity, with philosophical questions of whether life is predetermined or flexible, what choices we have, and how we engage with this mystery. Carl Jung pointed out that fate is not subject to personal will. He suggested that those who submit to their fate call it 'the will of God' but those who dispute it are 'more apt to see the devil in it'.⁹ Perhaps those who participate with it deal in destiny, while those who ignore it provoke their fate.

Freedom is intimately woven into the fabric of fate. But freedom is not 'free will' as it is finite. We cannot freely choose our destinies when we are conditioned by genetics, predisposed to afflictions, traumatised, abused, addicted, uneducated. As Jung said: 'Not only is "freedom of the will" an incalculable problem philosophically, it is also a misnomer in the practical sense for we seldom find anybody who is not influenced and indeed dominated by desires, habits, impulses, prejudices, resentments and by every conceivable kind of complex'.¹⁰ Destiny in Jung's thinking comes from freeing the compulsion through reflection on its image. While Fate may not alter in its fundamental nature or timing, perhaps it might change in its expression with the application of consciousness. Inner work may not alter the patterns and designs of our fate, but the level of conscious awareness that we bring to bear upon it allows it to be experienced with a different attitude.

Fate and destiny are the same in death. This is both our fate and our destination and to not accept this fate raises the possibility of tragedy. Our experience of fate shifts as we move away from a purely literal and predictive model to a more participatory and psychological approach to life. When we are able to meet, reflect and take meaning from the experiences that happen to us, are we more likely to be accepting and feel less restricted?

How do you conceptualize Fate? Destiny? Does this have any bearing on your understanding of the Nodal axis? When you reflect on your life, are there any relationships, events, experiences or patterns that you feel are/were fated?

⁸ Hesiod, *Theogony*, translated by Dorothea Wender, Penguin (London:1973), 218.

⁹ C.G. Jung, CW 12, page 30, footnote 16.

¹⁰ C.G. Jung, CW 11: para 143.

Soul

From an ancient perspective soul was the life force that entered the body at birth and left at death. It was the essence of life, carried on the wind and the breath, or born lightly on the wings of a butterfly. The notion of soul first enters Western literature in the Homeric epic the *Iliad* around the 8th Century BCE. By the Classical period, three centuries later, soul has undergone a significant semantic amplification which continued to be cultivated through the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and remains a perpetual focal point of inquiry for all philosophers. The doctrines of all religions and subsequent practices like Theosophy, Anthroposophy and Psychology continually redeveloped the understanding of soul.

In Greek, the closest word to the English soul is *psyche*; in Latin, *anima*.¹¹ Soul was imported into English from the Greek. *Psyche*, as an animating spirit or soul, entered the English language in 1647. By 1910 it became associated with the psychological amalgam of thoughts, emotions and behaviours.¹² *Psyche* characterized a mix of indefinable ideas such as soul, mind and spirit.

Soul has accounted for the eternal aspect of the human being that leaves the body at death, that part of us that needs to be saved from sin, the 'wow' factor in a piece of uplifting music; even food, cities and buildings have been described as having soul. One thing seems common – soul is immaterial and eternal; it is the invisible quality that breathes life into the life or the smouldering ember that ignites a passionate flame. It cannot be manufactured or commoditized, but is present as an ephemeral thought, in reflective moments or in feeling the anguish of being human. It is metaphoric of things that are as dear as life, close to the heart, deeply-felt and infused with meaning. Soul is complex, summoning countless impressions that are difficult to articulate. Through many antonyms like alive, breath, character, chi, consciousness, essence, force, heart, inner life, mind, morality, spirit, virtue,

¹¹ Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 673.

¹² Robert K. Barnhart, ed., *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology*, Harper Collins. New York, NY: 1995, 614.

vocation, warmth and wisdom,¹³ we can endeavour to communicate the mystery of soul through its enduring symbols.

I think of soul as an attitude. Foremost it respects life in all its manifestations, inner and outer. By nature it is paradoxical; it is eternal yet exists only in the present. It is a symbolic perspective that assists in seeing beyond the literal, making meaning of the life experience. It deepens the quality of life; it animates and enchants. Soul is mystery. In astrological work, soul is also enigmatic. Yet, soul conjures up a range of ideas, images, beliefs and feelings. When these collaborate with horoscopic images, astrology becomes ensouled,¹⁴ as if an ancient symbol awaits deciphering and meaningful translation.

Reflect on how your understanding of soul and how it influences your awareness

Reflect on the placement of your North and South Node by sign polarity? How have these two signs played a role in your family or personal relationships? How do you feel these signs influence your character and personality?

Reflect on the placement of your North and South Node by house polarity? How have the environments of these houses influenced your life path?

¹³ *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 903. The entry for ψυχή or psyche lists many definitions including breath, signs of life, spirit, ghost, heart and appetite. See also James Hillman, *Suicide and the Soul*, Second Edition, Spring Publications, New York: 2011, 44 for his amplification of soul.



¹⁴ I am using the word ensoul and ensouled to represent the enchantment and animation of an object or place. By the Greek Classical period, the adjective 'ensouled' [*empsuchos*] emerged to signify being alive. See Hendrik Lorenz, 'Ancient Theories of Soul', *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ancient-soul/>.

The North and South Nodes: *The Dragon's Tale*

How could we forget those old myths which are to be found in the beginnings of every people; the myths of the dragons which are transformed, at the last moment to princesses; perhaps all the dragons of our life are princesses, who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave. Perhaps everything terrifying is at bottom the helplessness that seeks our help.¹⁵

- Rainer Maria Rilke

In *Person-Centred Astrology*, Rudhyar referred to the tradition of symbolizing the lunar nodes as a Dragon; specifically the north node being the Dragon's head; the south node, the Dragon's tail.¹⁶ Hellenistic astrologers sporadically mentioned the lunar nodes¹⁷ as did early Hindu astrologers. By the 4th Century CE, Persian astrologers referred to the nodes as the Dragon's Head and Dragon's Tail;¹⁸ however, how they were used in horoscopy in these early centuries CE is vague. By the 13th Century BCE Guido Bonatti often referencing Abu Ma'shar (8/9th Century CE), referred to these points as the Dragon's Head and Tail, including delineations of the Head and Tail in each sign and house.¹⁹

<p>The North node is also known as:</p>  <p>Caput Draconis The Dragon's Head The Ascending Node Rahu</p>	<p>The South Node is also known as:</p>  <p>Cauda Draconis The Dragon's Tail The Descending Node Ketu</p>
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Vedic astrology developed a strong affinity to the nodes which influenced Western astrology's focus. The serpentine image connected with the nodes was part of Hindu mythology and became assimilated into Vedic astrology through the demons Rahu and

¹⁵ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, translated by Reginald Snell, Sidgwick and Jackson (London: 1945), 39.

¹⁶ Dane Rudhyar, *Person-Centered Astrology*, p. 266.

¹⁷ In the 2nd Century, CE Ptolemy (Tetrabiblos) and Valens (Anthology) mention the Nodes

¹⁸ Demetra George records the first use of these terms in the Persian literature of the 4th Century; see George, *Astrology and the Authentic Self*, 164.

¹⁹ Guido Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy, Volumes 1 & 2*, translated by Benjamin Dykes, Cazimi Press, Golden Valley, MN: 2007.

Ketu. The Vedic myth of the 'Churning of the Milk-Ocean'²⁰ recounts how the dragon-snake Vasuki became associated with the points on the ecliptic known as Rahu and Ketu, the Moon's North and South nodes, the head and tail of the serpent. To Vedic astrologers, the Nodes are as venerated as the planets. This myth also illustrates the phenomena of eclipses, as when the Sun is near either pole of the nodal axis, solar and lunar eclipses occur. There are at least two solar eclipses a year; one near Rahu and one near Ketu. Lunar eclipses may precede or follow the solar eclipse. Rahu and Ketu lie in wait on the ecliptic to swallow the luminaries, furious at the Sun and Moon who instigated their downfall. Hence both Rahu and Ketu were seen as unnatural and imposing images stealing the light of the luminaries; why the Nodes have often been seen as negative, ominous or equated with the polarity of increase-decrease.

Rudhyar likened this image of swallowing to an allegory of the 'undulating motion of life energies'.²¹ He amplified and associated this image of absorbing and releasing to the energetic process of metabolism, which promotes growth and health, as well as eliminates toxic substances. In considering this axis psychologically we might envisage the North Node or Dragon's Head as the invitation to be heroic, to develop an identity in the world and pursue our calling. The North Node points to what can be developed through valuing and cultivating our innate faculties and difficulties. The North Node is where effort and engagement are utilized in the repetitive task of becoming conscious of the self.

The south Node or Dragon's Tail is the container of talents, skills and aptitudes gleaned from the past, lying untapped and undifferentiated. Without recognition or consciousness these abilities remain stagnant, unable to be directed advantageously. The South Node can be likened to an endowment; it is a vital key to unlocking the treasure chest of untapped talents and potentialities that are able to be focused and directed at the North Node.

A Rendezvous with the Dragon

The dragon or serpent symbolizes a range of images from positive to negative. In its negative manifestation the dragon is the enemy of the hero. As an embodiment of ego, the hero is attacked by a gigantic dragon, serpent or monster. As an embodiment of the earth, the dragon attacks the life force challenging the hero to remain spirited. Dragons are autochthonic, indigenous, guarding the treasures of the land and nature, personifying a threshold guardian. In a psychological sense, along our individuation pathway, we must face the demons that guard the spiritual treasures, the sacred soul mysteries. Along the

²⁰ P. Thomas, *Epics, Myths and Legends of India*, D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Ltd., (Bombay: 1961), p. 91.

²¹ Dane Rudhyar, *Person-Centered Astrology*, p. 266.

Nodal axis we are confronted by this symbolic dragon. As it transits through our horoscope, we are also heroically invited to encounter the dragon.

Since the dragon battle is archetypal, we encounter the motif in myth. Long before St. George killed the dragon or the chivalrous knight rescued the distressed damsel from the jaws of the monster, this phantasmagorical motif was embedded in the mythological stratum of most cultures. In Greek myth this motif is common: Heracles battles the Hydra, Perseus beheads the Gorgon, Cadmus fights the dragon sent by Ares. Ancient myths highlighted the heroic rendezvous with the dragon. To overcome the dragon, the hero must reconcile the primordial and regressive forces to draw strength from them. Along the Nodal axis we encounter this symbolic dragon; the tail is like the pull into the lethargy of the past, while the head is striving to gain strength to move towards the desired destination.

Dragon symbolism is astrologically embedded in the nodal axis through their association with the demon serpent Rahu-Ketu of Vedic mythology. As a time-honoured symbol, the dragon stands for our quest for consciousness against the pull of regressive and primal forces. The allegory of Rahu and Ketu, their embodiment of the lunar nodes, and the battle between the gods and the celestial demon appears in the sacred literature of India. For an abridged version of the myth *The Churning of the Milk Ocean*, see my article *The Dragon's Tale* at: https://www.astro.com/astrology/tma_article171108_e.htm

Heads and Tails: The North Node (Rahu) and the South Node (Ketu)

Rahu and Ketu are divine and exist on the same plane as the planetary gods, just as the lunar nodes exist on the ecliptic like the planets. While the serpentine aspect of the Nodes is at odds with the Sun and the Moon, they are an integral part of the same system. Therefore the Nodes present us with the task of understanding this aspect of our fate: what is the inner dragon that tries to devour solar creativity and identity?

Rahu is the head of the dragon; here is where destiny is magnetized through divine intervention. Like the Sun, the desire is to be active and to battle the impulse to regress. Ketu is the tail of the dragon, the southern pole of the axis which is likened to the Moon where instinctive knowledge from our past accumulates. Where the lunar path criss-crosses the ecliptic symbolizes an aperture to spirit, an opening between the world of spirit and the mundane. Its retrograde movement in the horoscope also suggests that the movement of the nodes coerce us into engaging with the deeper aspects underpinning our life experience. Rahu and Ketu present us with the task of understanding what the dragon-serpent represents in us, as it a systemic part of who we are. The archetypal nature of the dragon battle is with the vulnerable, forgotten, unexpressed aspect of our own nature.

Like the head, which is the seat of consciousness and the container of the brain, the North Node is the rational pole and the one disposed towards Heaven. Yet its mythic image is a severed head, disconnected from the body, suggestive of its disassociation with the earth

and incarnation. In its lower manifestation it is the serpent brain, a head without a heart or the unanchored intellect. It is the pole that takes in and devours; yet being severed from the body, it is unable to digest the contents. Often North Node experiences are illuminating and awakening but are unable to be integrated or contained. The head, hungry for another taste, continues its search for illumination. The North Node is a point of intake and any planet conjunct this point becomes ambitious for new experiences. When Rahu swallows the Sun, it passes quickly through his severed throat. There is an insight, a realization, a heroic impulse, but the enlightenment is hard to sustain. Therefore at the north node the realization and passion pass quickly, as it is almost impossible to prolong the participation with this heightened awareness.

The dis-appointment is often followed by a return to the South Node. Ironically it is at the South Node where sustenance and encouragement can be contained. This southern pole of the axis is homeostatic; instinctually at the South Node we return to stability, to familiarity and to the depths of our internality. Like the IC, it is the counter weight that prevents us from capsizing, the ballast on our life journey. The nodal axis can feel like a game of snakes and ladders, as once we have experienced the enlightenment of the North Node we slide back to the fluency of the South Node.

Ketu is the tail of the dragon, the southern pole of the axis which is likened to the Moon and the past. At this node we experience instinctive knowledge developed from our understanding of what went before. The South node is a point of release and any planet conjunct this node seeks release in the service of the self. In its lower expression it is overwhelmed by the past, and here is where the retraction into unconsciousness is most likely. Yet within this familial place are the souvenirs and endowments that also empower and ignite our destiny. For it to be of any use its contents must be emptied, or they ferment and become toxic. By nature Ketu is a riddle, as its contents are potentially helpful and/or toxic, being up to the individual to become aware of the subtleties. It takes a heroic act to dislodge the contents and employ them in the service of individuation. No wonder the hero emerging from the belly of the dragon is a common motif in mythological narratives.

To apply this symbolism in delineation, consider the mythic stratum of the South Node as containing past resources, innate talents, skills and aptitudes that may be untapped and undifferentiated. Without consciousness they remain stagnant, unable to be directed advantageously. Dislodging and distributing, or removing this energy so it assists the North Node is the heroic act. In a way, the South Node represents a portal to untapped talents and potentialities. The South Node's sign qualities and house characteristics illuminate the nodal enigma, while planets conjunct the natal South Node symbolize energies that help dislodge the nodal content. Transits conjoining the South Node often synchronize with an uprooting or disentangling of past beliefs and images that no longer serve our purpose.

The nodes regress through the signs unlike the planets which sequentially move forward through the zodiac. Their retrograde movement alerts us to a different orientation

than the planets. Perhaps the nodes coerce us into engaging with the sacred and psychic aspects of our personal experience. While our life experiences may conspire to split heaven and earth, it is along the nodal axis where the effort to couple the sacred with the personal occurs.



5th Century BCE vase depicting Athena watching Jason emerge from the dragon, Ladon

The Sacred Geometry of the Nodes

The cycle of the lunar nodes is between 18 and 19 years, more precisely 18.6 years. Its cycle retrogrades through the zodiac, highlighting the nature of the lunar nodes as being separate from the archetypal nature of the planets. The Lunar Nodes are intimately connected to the Sun and Moon²² - it is fascinating that the Tarot cards of the Moon and Sun are also numbered 18 and 19.

Each Major Arcana card represents an important passage in the Fool's archetypal journey through his 22 initiations.²³ Following are the Moon and the Sun cards from the Celestial Tarot.²⁴

²² These ages are also repeated by the Metonic and Saros cycles. The Metonic cycle is the 19-year cycle in which New Moons recur. The Saros cycle is 18 years, 10 - 11 days. This cycle was used to predict eclipses that occurred in sequence every 18 years 10 -11 days. There are 19 Saros Series of Eclipses; 19 are north and 19 are south. Each of these cycles that involves the Sun, Moon and Earth is closely aligned with the nodal axis and has a mathematical harmonic.

²³ See Brian Clark, "The Fool with a Thousand Faces", www.astrosynthesis.com.au/articles.

²⁴ Brian Clark and Kay Steventon, *Celestial Tarot*, US Games Systems, Inc: 2005.



**XVIII THE MOON:
The Womb of Pisces**



**XIX THE SUN:
The Radiance of The Sun**

The numbers 18 and 19 create vibrant harmonics which interlink the archetypal images of the Sun and Moon with the Earth. Therefore, the Nodal Cycle harmonically highlights the 18 – 19-year cycles of our lives in many ways. Following are some of the important ways that the numbers 18 and 19 are entwined in this symbolism:

- **The Nodal Cycle takes 18 – 19 years** to complete its retrograde revolution through the zodiac. The 'Node year' is 18.618 years. The Nodes retrograde about one degree of the zodiac in 18 – 19 days. The 'Node Day' is approximately 18.618 days. The Nodes retrograde through one sign of the zodiac between 18 – 19 months
- **The Metonic Cycle is 19 years**, containing 235 lunations which repeat after 19 years
- **The Saros Cycle is 18 years 11 days** or 223 lunations. There are 19 Saros Series of Eclipses; 19 are north and 19 are south

Mathematically we might view it this way.

- An **Eclipse Year is 346.62 days**, which is 365.25 (the number of days in a year) – 18.618 (the node day). Multiply $18.618 \times 18.618 = 346.62$ days
- The **Lunar Year is 354 days**, which is 13 lunar cycles of 27.26 days. Multiply $18.618 \times 19 = 354$ days
- The **Solar Year is 365.25 days** or 12 solar months. Multiply $18.618 \times 19.618 = 365.25$
- The **Lunation Cycle is 29.53 days** long. 13 Lunation cycles or 13×29.53 is equal to 19.618×19.618
- The **Saros Cycle is 18 years 11 days**. Multiply $18.618 \times 18.618 \times 19 = 18$ years 11 days
- The **Metonic Cycle is 19 years**. Multiply $18.618 \times 19.618 \times 19 = 19$ years

*Reflecting on our Natal Lunar Nodes*²⁵

By Sign

The polarity of signs embraced by the North and South Nodes describe important qualities in the interplay between our personal and divine will as well as the vocational expression of our lives. These signs suggest inherent qualities and characteristics important to our process of individuation as they signal virtues, values and resources that seek balance and relationship in the development of meaning and purposefulness.

By House

The house position of the Nodes will illustrate the environmental factors that help to shape and influence an individual's destiny. The North Node's house position directs us to consciously participate in that area of life where both the inner and outer worlds collude in an encounter with our destiny. It is a sphere of life that beckons and invites us into its experiences. Since the North Node is often the place where we momentarily may experience the transcendent and spiritual aspect of the self, its house position maps the place where these experiences might happen. The North Node does not have a cumulative effect; in other words experiences at this place are not sequential, but more arbitrary, and may seem to happen out of the ordinary. The random nature of the North Node may be more to do with its subjective nature and entanglement with the paradoxical world of spirit. Hence the house position of the North Node may suggest the setting where the encounter with the spiritual self occurs. The South Node in the opposite house may describe a familiar place, an area of safety, and a comfort zone which supplies an anchor. However, it is also a place where we can become fixed, caught in the safety zone of our complacency. Therefore it suggests an area we must leave in order to develop and explore our pathway. Therefore another metaphor we could use to define the nodal axis is that it is similar to a tram line: the North Node is the destination, the station where the tram is headed, while the South Node is like the departure point, the station where we embark. The nodal axis is like a track with its well-worn grooves near the South Node.

By Aspect

Planets aspecting the nodal axis demand our attention, especially if they are conjunct either pole. When a planet is conjunct the North Node its archetypal energy pulls us towards our destiny. It invites us to consciously apply this archetype to actualize our life goals. At the South Node a planet may be regressive, holding onto the past or undervaluing your resources. At the South Node it takes a concerted effort to focus the planet in the service of the self. Through disseminating the natural energy stored in the planet, the life direction becomes more apparent.

²⁵ For complete delineations of the Lunar Nodes by sign, house and aspect, see Brian Clark, *Vocation The Astrology of Career, Creativity & Calling* (2016).

Planets that square the nodal axis suggest the need to incorporate this energy into the destiny. A time-honoured way of thinking about this square was that the planet was at its bending, a moment in the cycle when a change of direction occurred. From a traditional point of view, planets at the bendings present critical issues that change the course of one's life. Planets at the nodal bendings mark turning points in emotional situations, changes of attachments, transitions of home and belonging. But from the dragon's point of view they are archetypal challenges that the hero encounters. These planets are vital keys to understanding habitual behaviour, instinctual responses or compulsive patterns that summon us to excavate the depth of the self to find the treasure. In terms of the vocational path this planetary archetype at the bending is a challenge that needs to be consciously integrated and acknowledged. It is key to the changing fortunes of life.

Below are some exercises for your own benefit. Note that with aspects I have used a wide orb of 10 degrees for the conjunction to a node and 8 degrees for the square. While in practice we might not consider such a wide orb to the nodes, it is important to note planets clustered in the nodal region.

Your Nodal Constellation *By Sign*

The sign of my North Node is _____	The sign of my South Node is _____
Qualities, Characteristics, Values and Virtues that I associate with this sign are: _____ _____ _____ _____	Resources, Assets, Supplies and Creativities that I associate with this sign are: _____ _____ _____ _____
As I reflect on my North Node, I feel I am invited to develop and integrate these qualities in my life: _____ _____ _____ _____	As I reflect on my South Node, I feel I am given the opportunity to enable and disseminate these inner reserves: _____ _____ _____ _____

reflect on the Nodes as a qualitative axis, each node informing and infusing the other

Your Nodal Constellation *By House*

My North Node is in the ____ house	My North Node is in the ____ house
This house locates places, people and environments of my life that support my destiny and development. Some images are: _____ _____ _____	This house locates past places, people and patterns that liberate me to follow my destiny and development. Some images are: _____ _____ _____
As I reflect on my North Node, I feel I am destined to be involved in these areas of my life: _____ _____ _____	As I reflect on my South Node, I feel I am able to draw on these past images and experiences to enhance my life path: _____ _____ _____

reflect on the Nodes as an environmental axis, each node helping situate the other

Your Nodal Constellation *By Aspect*

Conjunction (and Opposition) Using an orb of 10 degrees, which planets are conjunct the North Node (opposite the South Node) and conjunct the South Node (opposite the North Node). List the planets in ascending order by proximity of orb (closest orb first)		
Planet ☿ North Node	Orb	Planetary Influence/Archetypal Essence
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Reflect on the influence of these archetypes in the schema of your life</i></p>		
Planet ☿ South Node	Orb	Planetary Influence/Archetypal Essence
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Reflect on the influence of these archetypes in the schema of your life</i></p>		

Square A planets square the Nodal Axis is at the nodal bending. Using an orb of 8 degrees, which planets square the nodal axis. List the planets in ascending order by proximity of orb (closest orb first)

Planet ☐ Nodal Axis	Orb	Planetary Influence/Archetypal Essence
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Reflect on the influence of these archetypes in the schema of your life

In the following table write some keywords that you associate with the planets either conjunct one of the nodes or square to both of them. Research those who have this natal aspect.

Planet	Conjunct the Ω	Conjunct the ☾	Square the Nodal Axis
☉			
☽			
♁			
♂			
♃			
♄			
♅			
♆			
♇			
♈			
♉			
♊			
♋			
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The Nodal Cycle: *Ouroboros and the Knots of Time*



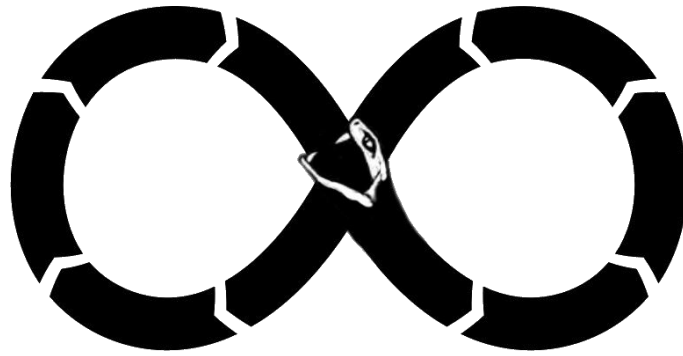
The lunar nodes' axis in the birth chart is at least as significant as any of the planets, and of particular significance in regard to our psychological and spiritual development. The South Node indicates behaviour patterns from the past – most likely early childhood and past lives – which operate compulsively and rigidly and often feel associated with our survival and identity; such patterns may also reveal innate talents and strengths which we utilise frequently. The North Node, on the other hand, points to a new path of growth and expression, a life purpose, or attributes and behaviour patterns which provide us with deep levels of nourishment and open us to experiences of oneness, union and integration.

- Tracey Marks

The Astrology of Self Discovery

The ouroboros or the image of the serpent biting its own tail represents a timeless continuum symbolizing the perpetual cycle and the eternal return. Like the nodes, the ouroboros contrasts two ways of being: a linear as opposed to a spiral path of evolution, and the divergence of Heaven and Earth. It represents the endless cycle of rebirth and continuousness of growth and development. Therefore, the ouroboros is an imaginative parallel to the nodal cycle:

- The Serpent biting its own tail is a cycle of development symbolizing continuity, self-fertilization and the eternal homecoming
- Serpent/Dragons are symbols of the chthonic world. As the circle is a symbol of the celestial world, the ouroboros is the marriage of chthonic and celestial spheres
- Two planes intersect; the secular and the sacred, the chthonic and the heavenly
- The eternal circle, the ceaseless revolution, *samsara*, the wheel of life



The Lunar Nodes take approximately 18.6 months to complete one retrograde revolution through the zodiac. Their cycle maps out four to five distinct periods of the life cycle, approximately every 19 years. The Lunar Nodes remain about 18 to 19 months in one sign, similar to the average time they transit one house of the horoscope.

Nodal Cycle	Ages		Opposition		Conjunction (Return)
1st	Birth – 18.6		Age 9		1st - Age 19
2nd	18.6 – 37		Age 28		2nd - Age 37
3rd	37 – 56		Age 46 - 47		3rd - Age 56
4th	56 – 74		Age 65		4th - Age 74
5th	74 – 93		Age 84		5th - Age 93

There are two orientations that can be used for the lunar nodes, in fact for all planetary nodes: from the point of view of the Sun, the heliocentric position, or from our Earth's perspective, the geocentric position. Though contemporary astrology is mostly concerned with the lunar nodes, all planets have a nodal axis. Using the ecliptic as the reference plane, a planet's nodes are the intersection of their orbital plane with the ecliptic. For purposes of the natal chart the geocentric position of the lunar nodes is mainly used. These nodal positions will always be opposite one another in zodiacal longitude.²⁶

There are two nodes listed in the ephemeris: the **True Node** and the **Mean Node**. The Mean Node is the node's average daily movement, traditionally used by astrologers before computers were able to accurately measure the true nodal position. Once this occurred in the 1980s, then the True Node entered ephemerides.

The True Node's direction is retrograde but because it is now accurately measured, it is also listed for the days when it goes direct. The True Node moves through the zodiac in a serpentine way – it will slither backwards for about four months, then plateau near the same degree for 2 - 3 months, slipping backwards to repeat this movement. The True Node highlights certain degrees of the zodiac more than the Mean Node does.

The following table lists the nodal positions for 19 months - its retrograde travel through one sign of the zodiac, Aries. You can see how the movement of the True Node will plateau and emphasise a degree of the zodiac for 2 – 3 months, every 3 – 4 months.

²⁶ Dane Rudhyar in *Person-Centered Astrology* suggests the lunar nodes are 'geocentric' factors, while the planetary nodes are 'heliocentric' factors, p. 247.

Monthly Positions of the True and Mean Nodes from July 1, 2023 – January 1, 2025

DATE at 0hr GMT	Position of the <u>True</u> North Node	Monthly retrograde travel	Position of the <u>Mean</u> North Node	Difference between the two Nodes
July 1, 2023	18°46'	1°51'	08°37'	1°09'
August 1, 2023	28°31'	3°15'	28°59'	0°28'
September 1, 2023	25°48'	2°43'	27°20'	1°32'
October 1, 2023	24°53'	0°55'	25°45'	0°52'
November 1, 2023	24°50'	0°03'	24°08'	0°42'
December 1, 2023	23°54'	0°56'	22°31'	1°23'
January 1, 2024	21°04'	2°50'	20°53'	0°11'
February 1, 2024	17°51'	3°13'	19°14'	1°23'
March 1, 2024	16°00'	1°51'	17°42'	1°42'
April 1, 2024	15°37'	0°23'	16°03'	0°26'
May 1, 2024	15°20'	0°17'	14°28'	0°52'
June 1, 2024	14°02'	1°18'	12°50'	1°12'
July 1, 2024	11°29'	2°33'	11°14'	0°15'
August 1, 2024	8°39'	2°50'	9°36'	0°57'
September 1, 2024	6°49'	1°50'	7°57'	1°08'
October 1, 2024	6°38'	0°11'	6°22'	0°16'
November 1, 2024	6°25'	0°13'	4°44'	1°41'
December 1, 2024	4°30'	1°55'	3°08'	1°22'
January 1, 2025	0°52'	3°38'	1°30'	0°38'
<p>The True Node's movement can also be direct. Its speed varies per day. Every 4 - 5 months it plateaus at a particular degree of the zodiac for 2 - 3 months</p>		<p>The Mean Node retrogrades through the zodiac at an average of 3 minutes per day</p>		
<p>Using the True North Node emphasizes the transits to certain degrees of the zodiac. Its movement is like a serpent slithering through the zodiac, reminiscent of the ouroboros/dragon serpent</p>		<p>The Mean Node has a rhythmic and harmonic movement: 1 cycle of the Nodes = 18.6 years 1 sign of the zodiac = 18.6 months 1 degree of the zodiac = 18.6 days</p>		

Which node should I use?

There are two different geocentric nodal positions listed in the ephemeris and on most computer programs: the **true** node and/or the **mean** node. Which one do we use? That question is difficult to answer, so perhaps it is best to describe the differences. The Mean Node is the average position based on the overall cycle, while the True Node is the actual zodiacal position.

The Mean Node is the daily average of the 18.6 years cycle of the nodes as it retrogrades through the zodiac. The Mean Node has a harmonic that makes it easy to remember its movement through the zodiac:

- The cycle of the nodes through the zodiac takes approximately 18 - 19 years
- The transit of the nodes through one sign takes approximately 18 - 19 months
- The nodes travelling one degree takes approximately 18 - 19 days
- Annually the nodes move approximately 18 - 19 degrees

To answer the question of which node to use, I consider it in this way: when researching the cycle from the point of view of the life cycle, that is the generic cycle of the nodes, I use the Mean Node. But when looking at the natal chart and specific transits, I use the True Node. If you use the Solar Fire program, you have the choice to choose either one – under Preferences, click on Settings and under Calculations, you will be asked for your preference for either the True Node or the Mean Node.



The lunar nodes are the points where the orbital planes of the Earth around the Sun, and the Moon around the Earth intersect. When a New or Full Moon occurs near either node the Earth is on the same plane (latitude) making the phenomena of solar and lunar eclipses possible. Eclipses accompany the nodal cycle; therefore, the nodal axis heralds the eclipse season as it nears the zodiacal territory of the Sun. Of interest, the symmetry of the Sun and Moon is visible in two other cycles: the Saros and the Metonic cycles.

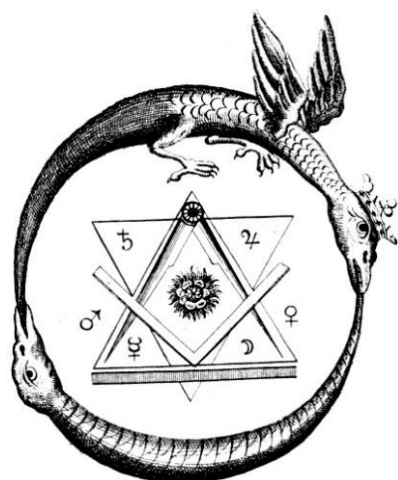
The Saros Cycle

The word *saros*, derived from the Greek, means repetition and describes the repetitive nature of eclipse cycles. The concept of the Saros Cycles was first known to the Babylonians. By the 4th Century BCE, a Greek astronomer ‘discovered’ that an eclipse returns after 223 lunations (18 years 10/11 days). It was not until the 10th Century CE when this phenomenon became named as the Saros Cycle.

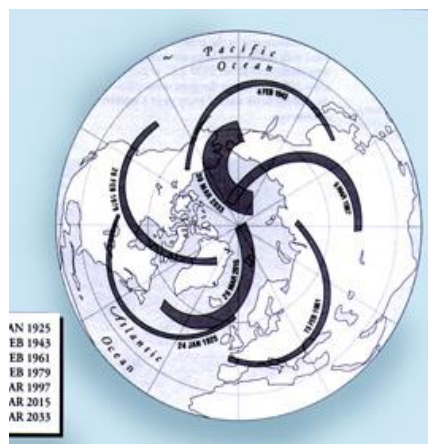
Eclipses occur at predictable times and are visible at predictable places. Each one belongs to a family of eclipses, which have a beginning (the North or South Pole), a middle (the Equator) and an end (the opposite Pole from where it began). In other words, each eclipse belongs to a group or series of eclipses, which has a predictable cycle. Each family of eclipses is named as a particular Saros series (1 - 19) and each group has a beginning eclipse which occurs either at the North or South Pole (hence N or S). The next eclipse in the series will occur approximately 120 degrees west of the previous one. As well it will occur closer to the equator. As the eclipses move closer to the equator, they are closer in zodiacal longitude to the lunar nodes becoming total eclipses. The closer the eclipse is to the equator, the more obscured or total it will be.

The symbolism of the serpent dragon is embedded in the Saros pattern, as each eclipse series spirals around the Earth forming a celestial ouroboros. Imagine the first eclipse in a Saros series starting at the pole and over the course of its life slowly winding its way around the globe like a serpent. This cross-cultural image of the ouroboros - a serpent encircling the world egg – is mirrored in our heavens through the Saros cycle. Like the nodal cycle, the Saros cycle of eclipses is akin to dragon symbolism.

Ouroboros: The Winged Dragon and the Serpent Encircling the Great Mysteries



Ouroboros: The Saros eclipse patterns encircling the globe, starting at the North pole



Ouroboros: A Serpent Encircling the World Egg



Astronomers have named 38 eclipse families or 38 Saros series of eclipses. 19 of these eclipse groups have commenced at the North Pole, the other 19 at the South Pole. The average length of each series is 1,280 years and each series will include about 70 – 72 eclipses. Each eclipse in the series occurs 18 years, 10 - 11 days later; therefore, the zodiacal longitude of the eclipse moves forward about 10 - 11 degrees. For instance, the eclipse of **October 14, 2023** is at **21♌08**. The next eclipse in this series 18 years 11 days later on **October 25, 2041** is at **2♍01**, nearly 11 degrees later in the zodiac. The repetitive nature of the 18-year eclipse cycle becomes noteworthy in light of the Nodal returns that take place every 18 -19 years.

The Metonic Cycle

The Metonic Cycle was named after Meton, a Greek astronomer who demonstrated that New Moons occur 19 years apart. This repetitive nature of new moons is an important cycle for astrologers to note. If a new moon is eclipsed there is also a 78% chance the New Moon will be eclipsed exactly 19 years later, yielding an eclipse repeating at the same degree of the zodiac 19 years apart. For instance, the New Moon of **October 14, 2023** at **21♌08** is eclipsed. The next New Moon in the Metonic cycle 19 years later occurs **on October 14, 2042** at **20♌52**. This New Moon is also a Solar Eclipse.

Of course, the eclipses that repeat in the Metonic cycle are not in the same Saros series, as Saros eclipses repeat 18 years 10 - 11 days later. Eclipses that recur in the Metonic cycle repeat on the same degree, which is an important consideration for astrologers. The Metonic cycle has 12 more lunations than the Saros Cycle.

The orb for the New Moon repeating in the Metonic Cycle is generally within one day and one degree. This is an important consideration in astrological work as the predictable cycle links eclipses that repeat at the same degree. The number of lunar placements in solar return horoscopes is limited to 19. Since the Sun is fixed in the solar

return horoscope, the Moon returns to a similar zodiacal longitude every nineteen years to begin the pattern again.²⁷

Eclipses

The dragon, being a chthonic symbol, devours the light of conscious life just as incarnation consumes life force and spirit. Rahu and Ketu wait on the ecliptic to swallow the Sun, creating eclipses that bring darkness into the day realm. To understand their separate natures let's imagine how Rahu and Ketu might consume the Sun.

When Ketu swallows the Sun, the heroic impulse becomes lodged in the serpent's belly or the tail of the dragon. To be released it must be expelled. From a symbolic perspective disseminating the South Node qualities and purging its inferiorities quicken consciousness. This common motif depicts the hero emerging from the jaws of the serpent or from the belly of the whale, like Jonah or the dragon disgorging Jason (see previous image). At the South Node there is accumulated wisdom that needs to be disseminated.

When Rahu swallows the Sun, it passes quickly through his severed neck. There is an insight, a realisation, a heroic impulse, but it is hard to hold onto or sustain. Therefore, at the North Node there is realisation and passion, but it may pass quickly or feel difficult to prolong. The dis-appointment is often followed by the urge to regress; however, this regression may be necessary to find the sustenance and encouragement at the South Node.

Solar eclipses happen at least twice a year. In the annual course of the Sun's journey, it will be swallowed by the demons Rahu and Ketu highlighting the periods when the dragon may be encountered. This is the period when we enter into the shadow lands, when darkness permeates the day, and where we may encounter the dragon. Therefore, the North and South Node transits are pointers to where the head and tail of the dragon might attempt to swallow the heroic identity. The house position of the Nodes become important to track during its cycle as it is in these spheres where the encounter with the dragon is located, casting its shadow across this area of the chart. In 2023-24 the Nodes regress through the axis of Aries and Libra. Note the accompanying eclipses in this sign polarity.

Date of Solar Eclipse	Zodiacal Degree of Solar Eclipse	North Nodal Position at Eclipse	South Nodal Position at Eclipse
20 - 04 - 23	29♌50	4♋00	4♍00
14 - 10 - 23	21♌08	24♌52	24♍52
8 - 04 - 24	19♌24	15♌37	15♍37
2 - 10 - 24	10♌04	6♌38	6♍38
29 - 03 - 25	9♌00	27♋25	27♎25

The Knots of Time

The ouroboros or dragon-serpent swallowing its own tail embodies the recurrent nature of the cosmos and underpins the nature of all cycles. It represents the alpha, the beginning or the head, and the omega, the ending or the tail, yet both occur at the same time/place. The knot of time represents chronological time fashioned into an endless cycle. When two ends

²⁷ See Brian Clark, *Dynamic Solar Returns*, Astro*Synthesis –

<https://www.astrosynthesis.com.au/astrology-e-booklets/>

of a piece of linear rope become knotted together, the line becomes a circle, with the knot being both the start and the finish of the endless loop. The ouroboros symbolizes the beginning and ending of the sacred circle. Head and tail are one and mark the nodal point where time ends and begins concurrently. Astrologically, this is the powerful concept that strengthens the conjunction, the aspect where a cycle returns to begin again.

Time, as we have been exploring, is not only chronological or literal. The nodal cycle embraces other qualities of time. As the nodes are like portals to other dimensions, they breach temporal time permitting divine forces to enter into the material realm. These are times of being called, of breakthrough, realization, or when forces greater than ourselves inspire or pilot us. The nodes are points in temporal times where the sacred intersects the secular. Hence I have often seen this timing in charts cast for meeting a significant other, or when our life path is altered or challenged, or when there is an entrance or exit into the family, or at times of a spiritual emergency, psychological trauma or insight. Nodal patterning often occurs when we are called to free our self expressiveness, originality and purposefulness for the benefit of the self and the systems and communities to which we belong.

Let's begin by studying our own nodal returns in the light of the **life cycle**. My experience has been that the 19-year cycle of timing is most evocative, but let's honour its 18 – 19-cycle. Reflect on these phases of your life - what stands out for you? To put this time period in perspective, it will be helpful to consider the other planetary cycles at this time.

Age	Age Span	Other Cycles
19	18 - 19	<i>Second Jupiter opposition</i>
37	36 – 38	<i>Third Jupiter Return; Second Waxing Saturn Square</i>
56	54 - 57	<i>Second Progressed Moon Return Waning Uranus Trine; Waxing Neptune Trine</i>
74	72 - 76	<i>Sixth Jupiter Return Third Saturn Opposition; Third Waning Progressed Moon Square</i>

Age	Age Span	Reflections
19	18 - 19	
37	36 – 38	
56	54 - 57	
74	72 - 76	

Also consider the times near the age of the oppositions, 9, 28, 46 – 47, 65 and 84.

Now let's look at the **accompanying eclipses to the transits of the nodes** as they transit through Aries/Libra over the next 19 months from 18 July 2023 to 12 January 2025. Five solar eclipses occur in this polarity. What house polarity/polarities will the nodes transit and what might the eclipses in these house polarities bring to awareness?

Date of Solar Eclipse	Zodiacal Degree of Solar Eclipse	House Polarity	House Themes and Dynamics
20 Apr 23	29♈50		
14 Oct 23	21♏08		
8 Apr 24	19♈24		
2 Oct 24	10♏04		
29 Mar 25	9♈00		

Look back to the transit of the nodes through the Taurus/Scorpio axis and the houses that were highlighted during this time? Note any planets in these houses and how they may have been illuminated or eclipsed? Consider on these passages and journal your reflections.

When the otherworld breaches our world

We have been exploring the intersection between the worlds of spirit and the worlds of matter, often brought into focus through the symbolism of the nodal axis – when the knots of time are unravelled to reveal our connection to a greater presence and essence. Look back through your life when the extraordinary happened, when Destiny crossed your path, when someone entered your life that changed its course

Once you have reflected on one or some of these times, if possible reconstruct the approximate date and time and then construct a chart. Focus on the nodal axis – write down what is brought to mind

Purpose and Vocation

An Axis of Destiny

The north node refers to whatever builds the personality, bringing to it new material. The south node refers to any material whatsoever (physical, emotional-psychic, mental) which the organism no longer needs, whether it be that the substance cannot be used and is in a decaying or poisonous condition, or that it is the positive and creative expression of the natural function of the body-mind organism.

- Dane Rudhyar
Person-Centered Astrology

We have envisaged the North Node as the invitation to be heroic and pursue our life path. The North Node is developed through valuing and cultivating our innate faculties. The South Node is the container of experiences gleaned from the past that can be drawn out in service of your vocation. Without perception or application, these abilities remain stagnant, unable to be directed advantageously. The heroic act is consciousness, which dislodges and distributes the energy at the South Node so it can be of service. In releasing and circulating this energy, the potentiality at the North Node ripens. When we are mindful of the South Node, destiny is petitioned and vocation becomes more apparent. The South Node is a vital key to unlocking the treasure chest of untapped talents and potentialities that are able to be focused and directed at the North Node.

An Axis of Destiny

The northern pole of the Moon's nodal axis is frequently aligned with the Sun, as its similar inclination is to become conscious of one's vocation. At this node both desire and destiny are magnetized through forward striving and movement. Therefore the labours of the North Node need to be mindful and conscious. North Node experiences are illuminating and awakening, but unable to be developed without conscious intent, mentorship and divine intervention. Without the awareness and will to continue to develop the North Node, the individual may regress to the instinctual comfort of the South Node.

The axis's southern pole can be likened to the Moon and the past. Like the serpent's tail, the South Node is a relic, often seen to be of little use, but ironically brimming with wisdom. Having been severed from the body the tail holds what has been digested from the past, yet, to be of any use its contents must be disgorged or they ferment and become toxic. By nature the South Node is a homeopathic riddle, as its contents are potentially helpful yet at the same time may be toxic.

We could also reflect on the North Node as a summons to participate and cooperate in our life journey. The North Node is where effort must be exerted to learn what needs to be developed and made conscious. For vocational purposes we could view the North Node

as a symbol of what demands to be anchored and directed in the world. Unlike the South Node it is not instinctive and therefore needs to be recognized before it can be applied.

Both are innate qualities needing to be disseminated and used freely in pursuit of our destiny. It is providence, a gift of inherited qualities from the past that can be used as resources for the future. It symbolizes what must be utilized in the conscious attempt to fulfill one's purposefulness. The South Node acts as a dissemination point for what is becoming conscious at the North Node. In a way the South Node brings to mind the need to contribute this energy to the familial and social realms, the world at large. Since this energy is instinctual, it is not necessarily always consciously directed or purposefully used.

An Axis of Vocation

The polarity of signs embraced by the North and South Nodes describe important qualities in the vocational expression of our lives. The house position of the Nodes will illustrate the environmental factors that shape and influence our destiny. The North Node's house position directs us to consciously participate in this area of life where inner and outer worlds collude with our destiny. The North Node does not have a cumulative effect; in other words experiences at this place are not sequential, but more arbitrary. Due to its subjectivity and entanglement with the paradoxical world of spirit, revelations at the North Node seem to happen out of the ordinary. The house position of the North Node suggests the setting where the encounter with the spiritual self may occur.

The South Node in the opposite house describes a familiar place, an area of safety, and a comfort zone which supplies an anchor. However, it is also a place where we can become caught in the safety zone of our complacency. It suggests an area we must leave in order to develop and explore our pathway in life.

Combining both factors of sign and house establish a more individual profile of the essence needing to be recognized and developed to actualize an individual's potential pathway. While the Nodes in a sign polarity will have a similar expression when placed in the natural house polarity associated with these signs, it is important to remember that the signs suggest qualities embedded in the character. Therefore the sign position of the nodes will speak to an essential aspect of the individual's destiny that is experienced as part of themselves. The house position of the Nodes illustrates environmental factors that impact an individual's path.

Planets aspecting the nodal axis demand our attention, especially if they are conjunct either pole. When a planet is conjunct the North Node its archetypal energy pulls us towards our calling. It invites us to consciously apply this archetype to actualize our life goals. At the South Node a planet may be regressive, holding onto the past or undervaluing the resources in your life. At the South Node it takes a concerted effort to focus the planet in the service of the self. Through disseminating the natural energy stored in the planet, the life direction becomes more apparent.

Planets that square the nodal axis suggest the need to incorporate this energy into the destiny. A time-honoured way of thinking about this square was that the planet was at its bending, a moment in the cycle when a change of direction occurred. From a traditional point of view, planets at the bendings present critical issues that change the course of one's life. Planets at the nodal bendings mark turning points in emotional situations, changes of attachments, transitions of home and belonging. These planets are vital keys to understanding habitual behaviour, instinctual responses and compulsive patterns and summon us to excavate the depth of the self to find the treasure. In terms of the vocational path this planetary archetype at the bending is a challenge that needs to be consciously integrated and acknowledged. It is key to the changing fortunes of life.

Nodal Imprints on our Vocation

The nodal polarity is an evocative image when analysing vocation as the course of one's life. Since vocation is linked to one's calling and purpose, the North and South Nodes are significant images in the pursuit of fulfilment.

We have considered the sign and house polarity of the nodes, but now consider these images in the context of vocation.

What sign is your North Node? What qualities await development and ripening in your career path? What needs attention and mindfulness? What sign is your South Node? What qualities can be drawn out to assist your vocation? What values and instincts could be tapped purposely and productively?

What house is your North Node in? What sphere of your life calls you? Where do you feel you can be part of a greater picture and pattern? What house is your South Node? Where do you feel instinctually safe or where might you give up or feel caught in a past cycle? Where do you feel familiar enough to be able to contribute?

What planets rule the North and South Node? What role might they play in your vocation? What planets aspect the nodes? How might you access these planets in service of the Self and your course in life?

Synastry: *Attachments across Lifetimes*

*One of the most powerful links between two charts occurs when the Nodal axis of one person lines up along one of the angles of another. This is likely to be a link of great intensity, whether comfortable or not, and one which resonates deeply, over a long period. It is as if your life is joined to that person's life, whether you like it or not.*²⁸

Melanie Reinhart
Incarnation

While the whole chart needs to be considered in context of any relational analysis, when examining relationships in terms of karmic patterning, the Lunar nodes play a critical role. Family relationships would be included in this category as we have little conscious control over our choice of family members. When considering adult relationships where we feel there was little or no choice would also be characterized as karmic. For these kinds of relationships, I always consult the Nodal axis and the mutual aspects being made between the two charts.

We call it destiny, chaos or chance, fate or fortune, when two people arrive at the same crossroads at the same time. In relationship astrology we can use the expression 'nodal point' to characterize the intersection between two individuals in time and space. This first moment when potential partners cross paths and recognize their connection is powerful. Our first experience of crossroads in this temporal life is birth when we cross the threshold into this life. The first person we encounter in this transition is mother. Therefore, in terms of family synastry and patterning, the lunar nodes often tell a story through time.

What is the degree of the nodal axis of your parents and siblings? What are the nodal contacts between your chart and your mother's? Now compare the other family member's charts with yours to ascertain any significant nodal contacts. If you do not have times of birth use Noon to cast the chart – list the nodal contacts that are prominent. Reflect on your reactions, images and thoughts about these interactions.

²⁸ Melanie Reinhart, *Incarnation*, CPA Press Volume 8, London: 1997, p. 176-7.
The Lunar Nodes © Brian Clark

Nodal Intersections

Our word 'node' has various meanings; one of its definitions suggests a point of intersection. Astronomically this describes where two planes crisscross, an indispensable astrological image that can often reveal 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, highly evocative for the art of Synastry.

There are other nodal points in the horoscope referred to by other names, but all are key intersections of cosmic planes. The angles of the horoscope form two zodiacal points where the ecliptic crosses one of the great astronomical circles: the Ascendant – 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 – IC axis is found where the meridian encounters the ecliptic and where the relationship with the parents and the world is focused. The Vertex – 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 form other crossroads of the horoscope. Where the lunar nodes intersect with these axes reveals a compelling connection.

In Carl Jung's autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* he suggested that our soul mates are already inherently part of us, so when we reconnect there is a remembering. The Nodal axis helps us to remember.

Similarly, 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.²⁹

When two adults are engaged on a new path, involved in a new direction or reborn together, their connection is often paralleled in the heavens by the Lunar nodes. These points where two cosmic planes intersect are analogous of personal crossroads in time and space. This nodal point of relationship can be memorialized as a meeting chart, but this crossroads will also be apparent through the chart comparison, as there will be connections between the two charts constellated around the nodal points. The Lunar Nodes in the meeting chart, the chart comparison and the composite chart confirm the dynamic intersection of souls .

In ancient tradition it was often believed that souls congregated at the crossroad. Hecate was the mistress of the crossroads, the custodian of the disembodied souls that congregated at the juncture between this world and the otherworld. But living souls are also brought to a crossroads in time and space when their path intersects with significant others. Modern astrology has a variety of lenses to amplify these compelling relationships. But

²⁹ Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, Pantheon Books, New York, NY: 1973, 5.

whether the approach is archetypal, evolutionary, psychological or spiritual, it is the astrologer's way of thinking and their own personal experience of relationships that influence 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 a twin flame. Whatever it is, astrology reveals the link through its symbols. Beyond any expression or concept is the astrological image, which is the key to unlocking the mystery.

What is the degree of the nodal axis of your partner? Your close friends? What are the nodal contacts between your chart and your partner's and close friends? Compare these charts with yours to ascertain any significant nodal contacts. Analyse the nodal contacts that are prominent - what are your reactions, images and thoughts about these interactions? Are there any patterns that reveal themselves?

When did you meet your partner or significant other? Create a horoscope for this time of meeting - where is the nodal axis in this chart and how does it interact with each of your charts? This is the transiting node at time of meeting.

Reflect on your nodal axis in terms of images, patterns and processes that are constellated in terms of your close encounters, bonds and agreements with others

Nodal Transitions: *Temporal Times: Spiritual Timelessness*

Transits over your South Node will throw you back into an old familiar area , and it may be a chance to rework your South Node in a different way from how you have done it before.

Howard Sasportas
Direction and Desting in the Birth Chart

Previously we have considered the generic transits of the nodes highlighting the ages of oppositions and returns. Contemplate these nodal times of life to try and discover a working hypothesis that might help you express these phases of life. For instance do you think about these times as a calling to your vocation or an invitation to your individuation process, perhaps an initiation into spiritual awareness, or a redirection towards a more authentic life or deeper aspect of yourself. Find your own ideas, images and words to express the nodal returns and oppositions.

How might you express these phases from your own understanding and experience:

Let's explore the more personal transits of the nodes as they retrograde through the houses of our horoscope. The transiting North Node points to an environmental area where more conscious understanding and development may be taking place. This is an area of intake and assimilation, where development and growth in understanding the role this setting has on the life schema. The transiting South Node highlights issues and concerns of the past that either need to be resolved or disseminated. The house placement offers images of where this may need to take place, where instinctive responses as well as experiences and insights from the past can activate the growth indicated in the opposite house. Following are some keys to understanding the transit of the nodes through the houses. Imagine the cycle begins with the North Node at the Ascendant. Since the North Node retrogrades through the zodiac, the first house it transits will be the 12th. At the same time the South Node transits the 6th. One way to imagine this is to consider the South Node as the task of release and dissemination while the North Node has the mission to develop and grow in this transitional area. Where are the transiting nodes in your horoscope and what is becoming more apparent in your self-understanding through working with the nodal transitions?

The transiting ♁ / ♃	The North Node's Mission	The South Node's Task
♁ in 12 th · ♃ in 6 th	Understanding - to delve deeply into understanding the hidden motives and compulsions that drive us; to make peace with the past.	Routine - to utilise daily rituals and routines to develop coherence. Work and health are an important role in the wider schema of our lives
♁ in 11 th · ♃ in 5 th	Communal Participation - to find a place in our circle of friends and colleagues where we know and feel that we belong to a wider community.	Creative Self Expression - to unleash our innate creativity and self-expression to be able to fully participate in life's parade.
♁ in 10 th · ♃ in 4 th	Footprints on the Path - to continue to forge our role in the world and strive to heed the call to vocation.	Belonging/Settling - to be secure and settled enough to support our ventures and ways in the world.
♁ in 9 th · ♃ in 3 rd	Searching for the Truth - to quest for meaning, search for understanding, & explore beyond familial boundaries	Becoming Mindful - to let go of detail and rational considerations to feel free enough to travel and explore
♁ in 8 th · ♃ in 2 nd	Honouring the Depth of Self - to become involved in speaking the truth, be honest about feelings and vigilant about our integrity	Reaping Past Rewards - to free up our resources and talents to be able to securely commit to trustworthy engagements
♁ in 7 th · ♃ in 1 st	Respecting Relationships - to feel an equal and active part of all our relationships. To allow ourselves to be partnered	Relinquishing the focus on Self - to let go of the focus on the self and move in the direction of feeling connected and partnered with others
♁ in 6 th · ♃ in 12 th	A Health Regimen - to concentrate on our daily routines and work rituals, to sustain our spiritual wellbeing and bodily health	Secure in the Divine - to be confident in letting life flow, knowing divine help and guidance is at hand
♁ in 5 th · ♃ in 11 th	Aspiration and Applause - to audition and create in the ways that align with our creativity and self-expression	The Support of Friends and Loved Ones - letting ourselves gracefully receive the love and attention from others
♁ in 4 th · ♃ in 10 th	Building A Nest - to give attention to securing ourselves emotionally by focusing on what is familial, such as home and family	Acknowledgement - to recognize the work that we do well which adds to the development of our maturity and authority in the world

<p>♁ in 3rd . ♃ in 9th</p>	<p>Expression and Communication - to focus on developing our ideas, communicating our feelings and presenting our beliefs</p>	<p>Educating Others - to share our innate wisdom with others, disseminate our beliefs and support the integrity of human values</p>
<p>♁ in 2nd . ♃ in 8th</p>	<p>Banking our Resources - to strive to value and appreciate who we are by building a healthy sense of self-esteem, personal values and assets</p>	<p>Intimacy and Involvement - to recognize & celebrate the emotional resources of life. To pay tribute to your emotional connections</p>
<p>♁ in 1st . ♃ in 7th</p>	<p>Self Focus – to shine the light on the self, to encourage independence, individual space and personal freedom</p>	<p>Social and Relating Skills - to become conscious of social and relational skills. To be independent and free from others’ expectations</p>

Now consider what the solar eclipses may be unearthing or eclipsing when they fall in these houses. Reflect on the past eclipses and what they have brought to light in your life.

Eclipses falling	The Solar Eclipses in these houses might highlight themes of
In 12 th – 6 th house polarity	<i>Chaos and Order</i> , spirituality, daily rituals and work, health and wellbeing, concerns over domestic situations and spiritual focus
In 11 th – 5 th house polarity	<i>Community and Creativity</i> , friends, acquaintances, children, self-expression and involvement in group work
In 10 th – 4 th house polarity	<i>Public and Private</i> , vocation, public standing. security, home and family, responsibilities, the balance of career and emotional stability
In 9 th – 3 rd house polarity	<i>Words and Visions</i> , education, travel, my neighbourhood, siblings, changing beliefs, a focus on learning, shift of ideas and development of a life philosophy
In 8 th – 2 nd house polarity	<i>Mine and Ours</i> , intimate sharing, mutual finances, personal worth, deep feelings, losses and gains, assets, shared resources, values
In 7 th – 1 st house polarity	<i>Self and Other</i> , equality, rivalry, partnerships and relationships, balancing independence and interdependence

Reflect on your current nodal transit – what house polarity themes are apparent?

Transits to the Nodal Axis

Using your ephemeris track the transits of the slower moving planets to the nodal axis, as suggested in the following table. If you are over 50, Chiron may have repeated some of these aspects so reflect on the connectivity of these two times. Depending on which cycle of Saturn or Jupiter you are experiencing, you may have multiple transiting periods to the nodal axis. Again reflect on these periods to see if any themes arise connecting these times. Consider the motifs that comes to mind as you connect the time periods.

Using a one-degree orb, when did these planets aspect your nodal axis?

Transiting Planet	Age when ♂ the ♋	Age when ♂ the ♌	Age when ♀ the ♋	What comes to mind
♀				
♃				
♄				
♅				
♅ 2 nd cycle				
♆				
♆ 2 nd cycle				
♆ 3 rd cycle				
♇				
♇ 2 nd cycle				
♇ 3 rd cycle				
♇ 4 th cycle				
♇ 5 th cycle				

Insights? Comments?

Nodal Narratives: *Embodying the Dragon*



William Blake

The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun, ca. 1805

The Nodes of the moon represent eternal karmic issues as they manifest within the temporal time frame of a particular incarnation

Demetra George
Finding our Way through the Dark

As we approach our final session let's return to re-storying the great dragon through the storylines of our personal experience with the nodes and their movement through time.

Everywhen

The time of the Dreaming in Australian Aboriginal culture is perhaps better portrayed by the concept of Everywhen, as this construct encompasses the indigenous understanding that temporal time comprises both past and future. Everwhen is the fullness of time, the eternal moment, always, the experience of continuous existence. From the Aboriginal viewpoint Everywhen suggests we carry our own depth of being and silence, and this is timeless, simultaneously not fixed in the past, but part of the future. Indigenous knowing is alive in every moment, not assigned to the primordial past. This concept is also embedded in astrological philosophy, yet often is overshadowed by a linear narrative as if the past has been and the future is to come. The nodal axis confronts us with our understanding and ideas of temporal time, destiny and evolution.

Dragons and Serpents

For Aboriginal people the Rainbow Serpent is not relegated to the past or a time of creation, but is a living image and awesome source of power that shapes the modern-day world. In Vedic myth we met Vasuki, the king of serpents, and Rahu and Ketu, the dragon's head and tail, enemies of the Sun and Moon. Vritra, a powerful Asura in Hinduism was portrayed as a giant snake or a three-headed dragon, a demon of drought. In other Asian cultures the dragon can symbolize good luck and fortune or even power and spirituality. In the West dragons guard the treasure, challenge the heroes and are often seen as destructive.

Dragons and dragon slaying are cross-cultural motifs in comparative mythologies and this image of the dragon or serpent is also thematic to the lunar nodes. As a time-honoured symbol, perhaps the dragon stands for our quest for consciousness against the pull of the regressive and primal forces. As such it represents a positive symbol for the nodal axis which is the quest for the union of spirit and soul in our lives. This union, the eternal homecoming, was often depicted as the ouroboros, the dragon swallowing its own tail. The dragon aligns with the earth; its incarnate danger weighs down the life force and challenges the hero to remain spirited. Auto-chthonic, dragons guard the treasures of the land and the hero fights the dragon to occupy the land.

In a psychological sense the ego faces the demons that guard the spiritual treasures and the soul mysteries. Imaginatively, our nodal axis reflects some of this mystery. In a developmental way, this suggests the dragon-battle is with our own destructive forces. But in killing the dragon, we become enmeshed in the conflict between light and dark. Along the Nodal axis we are confronted by this symbolic dragon, invited to participate in a spiritual and impersonal image of incarnate life. How might we tell the story of our own dragon battle?

Re-storying of our Nodal Tale

In respect of our Lunar Nodes, how might we begin to tell our never-ending story? What are the timelines and the song lines of this axis? What mystery, majesty, and destiny accompany this narrative? How do you embody your nodal axis and how might you illustrate your nodal story.....

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