

THE
HADES
MOON

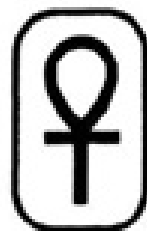
PLUTO IN
ASPECT
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For Howard

in the hope that it was
worth more than half a chapter.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION: THE DARK MOON

CHAPTER 1. BY THE LIGHT OF THE SLIGHTLY TARNISHED MOON

- Three Luminaries and the Earth
- The Lunar Effect
- The Pluto Effect
- The Hades Moon Effect
- Pluto Transits and the Hades Moon

CHAPTER 2. THE MYTHIC MOON

- A Model of Consciousness
- The Place Where Astrology and Myth Unite
- The Pluto-Hades Myth
- The Pluto-Hades Archetype
- The Dark Lover

CHAPTER 3. THE DEVOURING MOON

- Archetypal Expectations
- The Maternal Matrix
- Maternal Bondage
- Enmeshed Family Patterns

CHAPTER 4. THE REJECTING MOON

- Rejection, Abandonment . . . and Alienation
- The Hades Moon and Adoption
- Genetic Sexual Attraction
- Healing the Family Tree

CHAPTER 5. THE RAGING MOON

- The Harvest of the Dead
- A Dreamer Cast Out from Sunlight
- Death in a Wider Arena
- The Lady of the Bloodbath
- Projection
- Lancing the Boil

CHAPTER 6. THE KARMIC MOON

- Connecting to the Past

Reworking the Past

Attuning to a Joint Karmic Purpose

The Priestess of the Moon

CHAPTER 7. THE CATHARTIC MOON

Purging the Past

The Vale of Soulmaking

The Descent into the Underworld

Murder Most Foul?

In the Pit

Creating with Soul

Searching for Spirit

Walking in the Valley of the Shadow of Evil

CHAPTER 8. THE SACRED MOON

Pitfalls of the Psychic Path

Psychic Vampirism

The Dying and Resurrected God

Healing the Earth

The Initiation of the Moon

The Medial Moon

CHAPTER 9. THE RENASCENT MOON

Rebirth and Transformation

Rebirthing the Mothering Relationship

Finding the Warrior Within

The Last Transition?

CHAPTER 10. AFTERLIGHT

The Hades Moon through the Signs

Pluto through Cancer to Capricorn

Pluto in the Houses

APPENDIX. THE PLUTO MOON DIALOGUE

ENDNOTES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INDEX

FIGURES

- Figure 1. Moon words
- Figure 2. The Pluto Cycle
- Figure 3. Pluto words
- Figure 4. Moon-Pluto words
- Figure 5. Death of Princess Diana
- Figure 6. A hard gift
- Figure 7. Trusting the process
- Figure 8. A model of consciousness
- Figure 9. The fickle finger of fate
- Figure 10. Enmeshed family patterns
- Figure 11. Moon, Pluto, Aquarius and Leo cards
- Figure 12. Genetic sexual attraction
- Figure 13. Healing the family tree
- Figure 14. Reworking the past
- Figure 15. The Karmic Kite
- Figure 16. Catharsis
- Figure 17. The angel's wings

CHARTS

- Chart 1. Ronald
- Chart 2. Branwell Bronte
- Chart 3. Emily Bronte
- Chart 4. Charlotte Bronte
- Chart 5. Anne Bronte
- Chart 6. Maria Bronte
- Chart 7. Patrick Bronte
- Chart 8. Emily Bronte's death
- Chart 9. Thomas Hamilton
- Chart 10. John Lennon
- Chart 11. Edward
- Chart 12. Wilfred Owen
- Chart 13. Roz
- Chart 14. Roz' death
- Chart 15. Conan Doyle
- Chart 16. Jim Morrison
- Chart 17. The Dracula dream

The dark moon leads to the underworld, but it also makes transformation possible.

—Demetra George ¹

EVERY THREE DAYS or so, as it wends its way around the zodiac, the cyclical, receptive Moon makes a major contact with the planet Pluto, Lord of the Underworld: known in Greek myth as Hades, “The Invisible One.” The celestial bodies make contact for only a few hours each time, but the effect is extremely powerful. This dark chthonic contact between Pluto and the Moon is the Hades Moon. The resulting subterranean convulsions, mirrored in our inner psyche, have been captured in myth and imagination since time began. It is a particularly graphic illustration of the hermetic principle “as above, so below: as within, so without.” Our psyches resonate with the movements of the planets, our consciousness vibrates to the archetypal energies of the ancient gods with whom they are linked. Our inner and outer realities are tied to the tides that flow in deepest space, in the collective unconscious, and in the innermost particles of our being. We are the planets.

The Hades Moon story is an eternal saga of birth, death, and rebirth; abandonment and rejection; catharsis and crisis; hubris and nemesis; karma, transformation and new life. It is the eternal saga of suffocating, symbiotic and incestuous matriarchal patterns intertwining down the generations to suck life from the blood-kin. This dark Moon underlies eternal mysteries and taboos. It drives the great dramas of life. No other planetary contact has such a depth of trauma, compulsion, and alienation. No other aspect has quite the same metamorphic and healing potential. Understanding Moon-Pluto contacts means opening to the possibility of renewal and regeneration, not just on a personal level—but for the planet and humankind as a whole.

Seven generations, half a century of personal initiation, and twenty years experience as a karmic astrologer lie behind this book. I have a tight square from Pluto to the Moon, intensified by the Scorpio placement of the Moon and accentuated by Pluto on the Ascendant. With a family history of Moon-Pluto aspects going back five generations and forward into the next two, and seemingly endless karma carried over from other lives, I was compelled into the Plutonian underworld of emotional trauma and covert power struggles. I had to connect the instinctual fears of a paranoid Moon with the alienated, deeply enigmatic Pluto energy, and somehow find the power to transform the archaic patterns held within its depths. To encompass the destructive patterns of other lives, with their toxic emotional residue, within the healing potential of this cathartic aspect. Healing in this context does not mean “curing” or “getting rid of,” nor “making better.” The healing lay in acceptance of this dark side of myself. I needed to recognize loss and endings as part of the cyclical experience of life. I had to plug into the positive, regenerative aspect of Pluto to activate my own creative lunar energies. It was a life or death struggle, and I made the journey to the purifying flames of Pluto's realm many times. But each time I emerged stronger, with new insights. Each time a small piece of my inner self was transmuted, and gradually I began to recognize the purpose behind the aspect. Pluto is, after all, the Bringer into Consciousness as well as Lord of the Dead.

Although I had been working with astrology for some time, my first real insight into the effect of the Hades Moon came almost twenty years ago when I had a consultation with Howard Sasportas. Looking back, and after having had the privilege of knowing Howard well for many years, it still amuses me to remember Howard pussy-footing around for twenty minutes while trying to hone in on this particular part of the chart. Anyone who knew Howard will know that, direct and to the point.

Aries that he was, he rarely ever skirted issues. But, as he said after the consultation: “For all knew here was some little housewife from Essex coming with no knowledge of all this power, and all the karma she had to take hold of.” When he finally did point to that Pluto on the Ascendant with its square to the Moon and tentatively said: “This often indicates mothering karma and maybe death around childbirth,” and I responded quite casually with: “Oh yes, I know I died in childbirth last time around,” his face was comical to behold.

I told him that, at the birth of my daughter in this present life, I had had a near death experience which I was somewhere on the ceiling watching myself as I struggled in the cold and clinical environment of a teaching hospital to give birth. I was also watching myself in a very different scene on a straw-filled pallet on a cold earth floor with an old crone trying to deliver the baby. Around me were several children. We were desperately poor and I just could not stand it, and opted out. Many years later, just before I met Howard in fact, someone said to me accusingly: “You were my mother but you died and left me.” And he went on to relate exactly that same scene. In the near death experience, the guide who was with me said: “You opted out before, you are opting out now. You will have to come back yet again. So, you have a choice, to go or to stay and see it through.” I stayed, reluctantly, not really knowing what I was taking on. Within six months my husband was dead and I had to bring up my daughter alone. In our consultation, Howard had touched on the issues of loss, rejection, and abandonment that so often accompany the Hades Moon.

When Howard spoke about the Pluto-Moon connection with the Devouring Mother, and the mothering karma that passed down the generations, a great deal clicked into place. Suddenly my childhood made sense. At the time I was not consciously aware that all my female relatives as far back as I could trace had strong, stressful Pluto-Moon contacts. But I knew it made sense of the family history. For some time after the consultation I consoled myself with the thought: “Well, what do you expect with a pattern like that.” I went into therapy to deal with “my mother problem” and my poor mother was blamed for a great deal until one day I suddenly had the dreadful insight: I, too, was a Pluto-Moon mother, as my daughter would no doubt testify. It was one of those life-changing moments, a true albeit painful revelation. This was the point where I had to stop blaming my parents and take responsibility for my own life: a decision that brought tremendous changes. My Hades Moon did not go away, but the eruptions of my unconscious were channelled into constructive pathways rather than being left to blast the unfortunate person who happened to inadvertently trigger them. Over time, I learned to know my dark places very well indeed.

Howard's first question when I told him about my own past life “seeing” was: “Can you read past lives for other people? Pluto Moon is usually naturally psychic,” and I said yes, both from a psychic tuning in, and the fact that I always saw past life patterns in the chart. As a result, I found myself talking to one of Howard's groups about my chart and reincarnation experiences. I discovered that I had been practicing karmic astrology without knowing what it was! Soon, I was teaching with Howard on the subject and it was Howard who urged me to write my first book.² When he was facing his own rather more permanent transition into Pluto's realm, I told him I was gathering material for the present book. His response was to wonder whether I would have enough material. Even I have been surprised by just how much emerged from the Underworld. I have felt Pluto at work in the strange synchronicities and experiences that underlie so many of my Hades Moon contacts. Aware that nemesis so often follows hubris, that most ancient of offenses to the gods, I hesitate to say that I know *all* about it yet. One thing I have learned, there is always another layer to strip away with Pluto.

When Howard first talked to me in that first consultation about power and its connection with Pluto/Scorpio Christine Hartley, who had been my mentor and teacher for reincarnation work, was trying to get me to train with her in magical work but I had a great resistance to this. Howard threw up

his hands and said: “You can't do this. Here's someone trying to give you all this power, and you are refusing.” I could, and it was many more years before another pupil of Christine's, who did not want to do reincarnation but learned the Western Mystery Tradition and its magical working from her, came to see me. How we laughed when we realized how that cunning old lady had taught us both the same techniques, but called them different names (she did, after all, have Sun-Pluto conjunct the Midheaven in Gemini aspecting a Virgo Moon). Recognizing and taking hold of my power has been a major issue for me. It certainly frightened me in those days, and the intensity of Pluto on the Ascendant repelled many people before I felt at home with it. It has also generated many conflicts and “magical battles” in my life. But now, I use it in my work and feel comfortable with Pluto and my own inner darkness from which I draw my creative and healing energy.

After such a visceral contact with the Hades Moon, I suppose it is not surprising that I should attract numerous clients with Moon-Pluto contacts. I have learned so much from them. All re-enact the same patterns and undergo the same descent into the Underworld. Some return transformed, others compulsively recreate the struggle to be born anew. Those making the journey have said: “Please write about this, we need to know.” I have done so not with the object of in any way apportioning blame but in an effort to understand and integrate, and then move on. Nor am I suggesting that it is only the Hades Moon which lies behind these experiences, I am aware that other aspects are involved and I have taken only one small part of the chart. But it is in the Hades Moon that the essence is distilled, this is where we venture into the Underworld and confront these issues face to face. Other aspects support, or sabotage, the process.

I believe that we choose our charts, and that we are born with precisely the aspects we need for our soul's growth. I am aware that, from the perspective of earthly incarnation, we cannot always objectively understand just why we chose this life path. Incarnation often feels more like a punishment or a task way beyond our capabilities, especially where Pluto is concerned. But many years of regressing people to the “between life state” convinced me that we do take on not only our karmic inheritance but also the ancestral patterns that we need to complete our experience. So, my question is: Why did I need a Moon-Pluto connection? My concern: what can I—and others—learn from it? How can we incorporate that understanding into our lives? How can we heal our past and be truly whole?

I have found that, in writing, answers come. This book had been gestating for at least seventeen years and yet writing it was like completing a detective novel when you don't know who did it until the last page. In true Plutonian fashion, the book arrived in pieces. Half was written more than thirteen years ago. Case material and reminders emerged with timely but often mysterious synchronicity from a source. My favorite gift from the cosmos was receiving the *Natural Death Handbook*, when I had ordered *Testament*, on the day I was to do a Pluto death ritual. Synchronicity happened all through the writing of this book. I began to feel that the Lord of the Underworld was all around me if only I could penetrate his helmet of invisibility.

And, of course, he is very close to me. With fifteen years of Pluto transits ahead, including Pluto now on my natal Sun and then conjuncting Mercury in opposition to Uranus, and transiting Uranus about to oppose natal Pluto, it seemed an appropriate moment to cast more light into a dark Hades place. As I have come to value my own dark places, I wanted to sink down into the collective chasm of the Hades Moon, taking with me the inner light of understanding, but content for it to be the dim luminosity of insight and intuition rather than the blinding ray of the analytical mind. I wanted to explore the poetic spaces of my inner being, and the terrors and nightmares of my soul. In other words, to take advantage of the crack between two worlds, what Clarissa Pinkola Estes calls “the place where visitations, miracles, imaginations, inspirations, and healings of all natures occur.”³ I wanted

venture into Hades once again, and return enlightened.

Not surprisingly, I found myself living this out literally. A sudden, serious illness took me into the weekend of hell that was the stretched-to-breaking-point British National Health Service at its most pressured. The overworked medical staff were conspicuous by their absence. Like the invisible Plutons they may have been aware of what was going on, but it certainly was not apparent to me. I felt abandoned, rejected, alienated. I was in Tartarus. My partner, a doctor, was himself ill and unable to visit me. There was no one to notice how rapidly my disease was progressing. No one, except my daughter, to hear how ill I was. Patient's Charter notwithstanding, I was left unfed and untreated, and finally dumped on a surgical ward "to recuperate." Mustering the remnants of my power, and knowing that if I did not leave soon I would die, I discharged myself.

Transferring to a private hospital was like entering the Elysian Fields, but enormous amount of fear surfaced in my body. It was not fear of death (that would have been a welcome release). It was far older and more atavistic than that. The experience had activated childhood and past life issues. Wave after wave of overwhelming emotions and physical panic swept through me. At a cellular level I felt as though I was letting go of the terror of the ages. My rational mind was switched off. All I could do was go with those feelings into the center of my being, washing up eventually on the shore of acceptance. I was indeed in Pluto's realm—exactly where I was supposed to be. With the usual timeliness, I had found a publisher and was committed to delivering a manuscript. So, my way of healing was to finish writing this book. Inevitably, I suppose, this being Pluto we are dealing with, I came to a point where the book was getting deeper and deeper, longer and longer. I still had not touched on half the topics I had planned. Delivery was late. Birth was stalled. I was compulsive and entrenched in the Underworld. Eventually, an astrologer friend said: "Face it Judy, with your chart you are spending your whole life exploring Plutonian issues. You cannot possibly cover them all in one book. It is time to stop and let go. Let what you have said be enough." I stopped. This book is the result.

I do not want this to be a theoretical book, so the story of the Hades Moon is told through people's experiences. These experiences are ubiquitous and universal, participated in by all those who have an intimate acquaintance with Hades. To gain the most from the book, you need to read with openness and empathy, putting aside your rational mind. This is not a subject to "make sense of" from an intellectual perspective. Immerse yourself, join me, my friends and clients, on a journey into the Underworld. Share this exploration of myth and inner space for it can lead to an intuitive knowing of what it is to have a Hades Moon.

CHAPTER 1

BY THE LIGHT OF THE SLIGHTLY TRANISHED MOON

Pluto in any aspect to a personal planet means that there is an increase of consciousness due, a re-birth of sorts, with respect to that part of oneself symbolized by the other planet.

— Stephen Arroyo¹

AN ASTROLOGICAL CHART is a map of the solar system seen from the perspective of Earth. The luminaries appear to be rotating around the center of the chart, the unmarked and unnamed Earth and its Underworld; with enigmatic Pluto lurking in the depths of space, inner and outer. The macrocosm is seen through a finely focused lens, the microcosm of the individual whose chart is being considered. So, the natal chart is a map of individual consciousness manifesting out of the sea of the collective unconscious which surrounds it, a consciousness colored and shaped by the relationships of its disparate parts.

THREE LUMINARIES AND THE EARTH

From the Earth, the Sun and the Moon *seem* to be the same size. Both were a source of awe and numinous power for our ancestors, but the Moon was worshipped long before the Sun. Linked with fertility and death, the Moon was primarily seen as “feminine” and most of the deities connected with it are female, although ancient Egypt had its full complement of lunar gods—and solar goddesses. The Moon is a cyclic deity. Like the tides, she ebbs and flows. She has her new, young face, and her ancient, timeless form.

Time is different on the Moon. There the brightness of “day” and the darkness of “night” each last for fourteen days—half a Moon cycle. The Sun presents a ubiquitously bright face to Earth, but the rhythmic Moon shows a face which seemingly changes, waxing and waning mysteriously from dark crescent to full, and then returning to the dark. This is because the Moon is actually presenting the same face to Earth all the time and its light is reflected from the Sun. As Earth from time to time intervenes between Moon and Sun, we see a changing face.

These two luminaries and Earth have a special relationship to each other. Although the Moon is rotating around Earth, its gravitational center is the Sun; so Earth and Moon are “twin souls” orbiting around a mutual attraction—the Sun. Similarly, the planet Pluto and its Moon, Charon, are twin bodies circulating around the Sun. Charon, like Earth’s Moon, does not orbit Pluto’s gravitational center directly. The two dance in a complex relationship around a mutual point of gravity, far removed from the self-conscious Sun.

Symbolically, Earth can be seen as representing physical incarnation and material life. Its deeper, instinctual energies are an archaic, ingrained, collective level of earthy consciousness (the Plutonic Underworld); while the Sun is the pull to Spirit and Self, a differentiation into individuality and separate awareness. It is the life-giver, a source of power and indicator of destiny. The receptive Moon acts as a bridge and mediator between the two. No one can look at the Sun directly without being blinded. So, the reflective Moon vitalizes and fertilizes Earth by stepping down the Sun’s light. It the

destroys and annihilates consciousness by shutting off that bright light so that the forces of the instinctual Underworld can rise up for a time and engulf the Earth. This rhythmic cycle holds the balance for the polarities embodied in the apparent duality of earthly existence: sex and gender; light and dark, day and night; god and goddess; life and death; left and right brain functions, etc.

Pluto's orbit is highly elliptical, bringing it in from the outer reaches of our solar system to pass within the orbit of Neptune. The unconscious breaks through, it penetrates the watery bounds of the Neptunian illusion, as we shall see. Pluto, too, is a giver of light, a luminary. He lights up the deeper recesses of our being, a dark place which is Hades, his mythological underworld home. His ferryman Charon, conveys us into the center of our Self, the place of initiation and pure truth. There is nowhere to hide, and no need for concealment. Pluto offers us the riches of truly knowing our whole Self.

THE LUNAR EFFECT

The Moon is said to govern the body. The lunar tides affect the fluid in our bodies. Men, just as much as women, experience surges and fluctuations in the flow of hormones, blood, and lymph. Our bodies are over 70 percent water so it is no wonder they respond so intimately to the pull of the Moon. The Moon carries the messengers of the lunar emotional self, mediating between the physical and subtle bodies of our earthly incarnation.

We could look on the Moon as the Neoplatonist Soul of the World, which mediated between the spiritual realm of the gods and the sensory, material realm of mortal beings. We could also look on the Moon as Jung's collective unconscious in which dwell the psychological principles known as archetypes—the gods who interact with human existence. The collective unconscious is the repository for all past experience. It is the storehouse of racial memory and the ingrained patterns that motivate all human behavior. It is the genetic code of human evolution. These are lunar attributes. However, the identification with the collective unconscious may be more appropriate to Pluto, while the Moon is on a more personal, and accessible, level of the unconscious (see figure 8, page 32).

THE NEW MOON HANGS PREGNANT WITH THE OLD

Our earliest ancestors had no clocks, but they did have a reliable marker of the passage of time—the Moon. They observed that the Moon was continually changing, and yet uniformly followed a rhythmic cycle of unfoldment and withdrawal. This is the great paradox of the Moon. It faithfully records the Great Round, and reflects the cycle of life from conception to death in its appearance and disappearance. The magical, otherworldly light that bleaches the color from the landscape signals the time to emerge from the Underworld. Its withdrawal into darkness is the moment of entry into the netherworld. It relentlessly signposts the passage of the seasons, and of procreation. Thirty-five thousand years ago, notches were cut into bone to mark the lunar phases: the calendar had come into being. Such calendars kept track of women's menstruation, indicating the fertile New Moon of ovulation and conception, and the "Full Moon moment" of birth. They ticked off the ten lunar months needed for gestation and parturition.

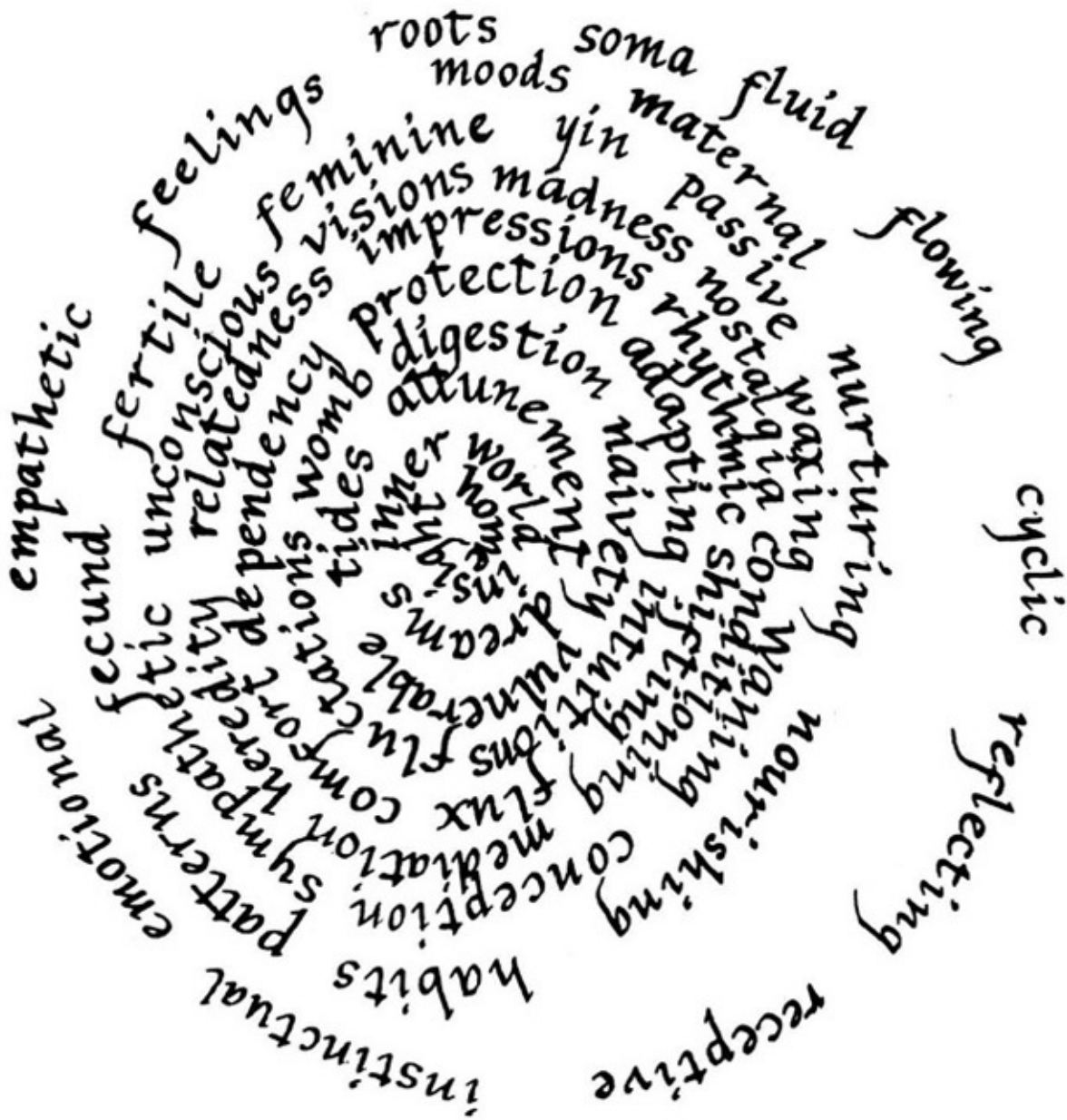


Figure 1. Moon words.

When the light of the Moon is potent and unimpeded, the menstrual cycle usually follows the flowering of the Moon—that female matrix out of which everything is born and to which everything must return as it dies. At each stage, all the other stages, both those that have gone before and those that are to come, are held in seed form, ready to unfold. At New Moon, if we look really hard, we can just make out the dark form of the germinal Full Moon. As the Moon waxes, it swells gravid with potential until the Full Moon is delivered and the Old Moon emerges. In her bright phase, the Moon gives life. In her dark phase, the Moon sheds blood and is the destructive power of nature and consequent death. Together, the two phases are the cycle of life.

In modern times we live in a light-polluted environment and, for most of us in the Western world, the full power of the Moon is experienced rarely. But go to a less populated place and you will immediately be aware of exactly where the Moon is in her cycle. At the three-day Dark of the Moon, nothing is visible, blackness prevails. The goddess has withdrawn her face from the world. In Greek mythology, Demeter is grieving for Persephone. In Egyptian understanding, Isis seeks Osiris. The world is plunged into mourning. This is the time of greatest mystery, the Hecate time for divination and prophecy, for magic and healing, for retiring to the menstrual hut to dream dreams. Then slowly by degrees, the mystical light is once more seen in the heavens, growing organically as the waxing

Moon gestates her own light. This crescent Moon is receptive, bowl-shaped, waiting to be fertilized or ravished. This is virginal Persephone awaiting her initiation into womanhood.

The Full Moon shines down pitilessly, exposing everything that moves. It is the moment for the yet unmanifested to come into consciousness. This Moon seems to hang pregnant with promise, subtle threat, and indeed the ancients revered the Moon as a triple-faced, fecund deity who fertilized and presided over, the passages of life. Demeter is but one of many Moon goddesses who have absolute power over life, death, and fertility. Then, with surprising suddenness, the Moon vanishes back into the darkness. When the Moon is coming up to Full there is a day or two of wondering: is it yet? Is it time? No such confusion accompanies the shadowy Waning Moon. Suddenly, a slice of light is gone. Quickly it shrinks to the crescent and then descends into full night, the realm of Hecate. Magic and mystery are once more abroad in the world and the Gates to Hades are open wide.

The mythologically expressed lunar cycle can also, therefore, be seen as loss, quest and resurrection; as gestation, fruition, and decay. The dark of the Moon is a time for introspection, moving into oneself and having visions, for purifying and releasing old patterns, for allowing the past to break down into fertile compost so that something new can emerge, the moment of transformation and renewal. The New Moon is the time to plan fresh projects, to prepare for bringing that vision of the future into the light, to conceive new patterns and receive fresh inspiration. The Full Moon is the creative time, the period when we can manifest and make known who we are, living out our renewal and resurrection. It is the moment of interacting with, and being energetic in, the world—birthing our creations. This is the time when we are outwardly most active and vital in who we are. Then fruition is reached and, with the decaying Waning Moon, we are ready to eliminate, to cleanse and clear the detritus of our experience. This is the moment of letting go and starting anew, the time when we accompany the Sumerian goddess Innana into the underworld to meet her dark sister Ereshkigal. The cycle of introversion and extroversion, receptivity and activity, change and unfoldment begins again. The Moon also signifies inheritance from the past. Looked at from the karmic perspective, the phase of the Moon at which we were born might also hold a clue as to how long we have been dealing with the karmic issues in our chart, notwithstanding that the aspects between inner and outer planets also show this clearly. Fixed squares, for example, are karmic issues that have been around for many lifetimes, whereas cardinal squares are “karma in the making.” Trines are issues that we have more or less “got right” and are now being tested to see if we really have grasped the lesson. However, the New Moon might be embarking on the experience for the first time, or on a new way of dealing with it. The Full Moon could well be focusing on an issue, seeing it clearly for the first time, perhaps although the issue itself had been around for some time. By the time we get to the last quarter, the issue is old and we are ready to let go. As Liz Greene says: “A balsamic Moon has begun to unload its parcel of experience, and there is a melancholy, sacrificial, almost weary quality to this lunar phase.”

LUNAR ENERGY

The Moon cannot be outgrown or transcended, but if its underlying needs are understood, it can be transformed. It describes our innate response to life and we will explore its manifestations in much greater detail through this book. The archetypal Moon is expressed through myriad goddesses and inner processes as befits an energy which is inherently present from conception to death (see chapter 2). It is our basic security needs, expressed from the first moment a baby reaches out for food and sustenance, and throughout the whole of life to the last dying breath. It is our need-iness and our vulnerability, our roots and our continuity.

The Moon has always had close links with the womb. Both waxed and waned, swelled and thinned

gave birth. But, to the ancient Greeks the womb also had an affinity with irrational emotion. It was believed that the womb went wandering, giving rise to hysteria and other disturbances. And, of course, through the ages the Full Moon has been indissolubly linked to madness and mayhem. The lunar energy carries this aspect of “out of control” emotion, irrational and feeling-dominated behavior. Most men tend to project this side of the planet onto women in general, although pre-menstrual women and those in mid-life have borne the brunt of the collective attitude to menarche and menopause. Another side of the Plutonian planetary energy which has been projected, and one which women suffered much persecution over, is the fey, intuitive, “witch” who was so feared by the medieval church and others, a fear that still lingers today.

Lunar energy is about fluctuation, feelings, mood, and emotion. It is an in-articulate energy and can rarely openly express what it needs, or the source of its emotions. It is an autonomous, organic life process, controlling the body, taking in nourishment, assimilating experience, and following ingrained patterns from the past. Our automatic reaction to a preprogrammed response. It is our heredity, our family, and tribal awareness, and the emotional baggage we carry with us. However, the Moon is also where we need to adapt, not through struggle but by surrendering to the inevitable process of death, decay, and new life. This process is facilitated by an attunement to Pluto. Familiarity with his realm lends comfort to the destruction and re-creation process. Adaptation proceeds at a greater pace when spurred on by Plutonian necessity. If we view the Moon as Gatekeeper to the Unconscious, a doorway through which the transpersonal energies of the outer planets must pass, we can see that an attunement to Pluto would indeed compel one toward transformation, no matter how much the psyche might, at the individual level, resist. So, the Moon focuses the Plutonian urge to transform, its fickle light shows us the pathway into the unconscious.

PURVEYOR OF THE MOTHER ARCHETYPE

Above all else, the Moon carries the archetype of Mother, the primal matter from whom all emerge, on whom all life depends. This is not the personal mother, although she may reflect it. Nor does the actual mother need to have an identical Moon placement to reflect this archetype back to her child. It is what, at the deepest level of being, Mother signifies in all her aspects. It is how Mother is perceived, what is expected of a mother, and how the person (male or female) with a certain Moon placement will behave in a nurturing role. This is the Terrible Mother, who holds the power of life and death, the Nurturing Mother who succours the needy, and the Primordial Mother who is the source of life itself. So, the sign placement of the Moon, and its aspects, describes the archetypal image of Mother that the child carries; it describes what the person needs and anticipates from Mother.

The Great Mother shows her faces through Persephone, Demeter, Hecate, and the other, much older, goddesses whom we will encounter as we journey through the Underworld of the Hades Moon. She has awesome, numinous power and is worshipped for her death-dealing face just as much as for her life-giving power. The human child is, of course, dependent on mother for an inordinately long time, and is aware that if she cuts off nurturing, death could well result. This death may be physical but it may equally well be emotional or intellectual. Without love and care, children become apathetic and do not thrive. Left too long in this state, they shut down, functioning only through the autonomous lunar body processes.

It is this death-dealing aspect of the lunar energy, the devouring shadow, with which we all are, at some level, familiar. This is the stuff of nightmares, a shade which haunts the edges of our awareness. It is the blood-sucking vampirism of unsatisfied need, and the hopelessness of the unnurtured. The Moon is the untamed, savage face of instinct, an instinct that will kill to protect its young, or murder

them to survive. So, an over-protective mother is just one side of the shadow-Moon. An irrational fear of annihilation and death that takes no prisoners and gives no quarter is another. “Mother Russia,” the Berlin wall, American imperialism and its paranoid, fear-driven fight against communism stem directly from the Moon’s overwhelming need to preserve at all costs the security of what is known and familiar.

Hitler’s rise to power coincided with the discovery of Pluto. His collective-shadow 8th-house Gemini-Pluto oratory mesmerizing the inconjunct 3rd house Capricorn Moon into complicity illustrates society’s need, and also the individual’s wish, to project all the rage and insecurity onto an enemy who is “out there,” as the rise of a new bogeyman, Saddam Hussein, so soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall nearly confirmed. And, of course, the Gulf War was really about greed, power, and manipulation of the world’s fuel sources but was masked by a spurious caring for the invaded and oppressed Kuwait—typical of the collective shadow-lunar energies at work—liberally seeded by Pluto in Scorpio sextiling the New Moon in Capricorn the day before the war. Just before midnight (GMT) on the eve of the war saw a solar eclipse in Capricorn. Authoritarian Capricorn is a sign that may demand a scapegoat for the collective “evil,” and the Gulf War had much collective karma behind it. A solar eclipse is a time when the light of personal consciousness (the Sun) is blotted out and the unconscious and collective forces of the Moon are able to surface. In Capricorn, cosmic consciousness pours down upon Earth. This can be an explosive time, when repressed energies erupt, especially when fueled by Pluto.

The shadow-Moon is treacherous and deceitful, as witnessed by the treatment of the Kurds who were encouraged by the West to rise up against Saddam, only to be abandoned and left to their fate when their usefulness was over. It is the blotting out of a race, the Marsh Arabs who were exterminated by Saddam while the rest of the world closed their collective eyes. This is the Terrible Mother projected out into the world. However, it is in personal interaction that the shadow-Moon perhaps takes its greatest toll, as we shall see in chapters 3 and 4.

Unresolved parental and emotional issues are carried by the shadow-Moon, as are the frustrations and resentments that pass on down the generations. The shadow-Moon’s heredity is dark and devious, embittered and emotionally voracious. This is the inwardly raging and claustrophobic mother who demands nurturing from her children, who looks to them to feed her lunar needs. This is the mother who is overly identified with her family, ruthless in destroying anything she perceives as a threat to her unique position of power; or the mother who emotionally annihilates a child who attempts to break away. “Emotional brutalization”³ is practiced by such mothers under the guise of “concern” or “love.” This is a side of the negative lunar energy that we will meet again and again. In such a family, the child may well become the “heroic redeemer” for the mother, who will live out all her unmet potential through the child. It may well end in a ritualized sacrifice of the child on the pyre of the mother’s overwhelming ego.

When matriarchy rules, the child may well be idealized, becoming the center of the woman’s world: a chosen child. “Nurturing” is all important, and the child remains locked in a narcissistic, omnipotent egocentricity. In such a case, the child is the Sun around which the Moon mother endlessly revolves, locked in a love duel that cries out for drastic intervention. Mythical Pluto must arise out of the Underworld to snatch innocent Persephone from her (or his) suffocating parent. We will explore many more facets of the devouring mother and her child as we penetrate the Hades Moon.



To which particular facet of the lunar energy (and the archetypes attached to that) we are attuned will depend on many factors. But clues can be gleaned from the placement of the Moon in the birthchart.

its aspects, and the phase of the Moon in which we were born. Aspects, or the lack of them, are important indications of family and emotional interconnectedness. The phase of the Moon under which someone is born may indicate the child's place in the family. The New Moon could indicate the "baby of the family," no matter how the birth order may fall. This child may always remain a baby in the parents' eyes, and is given little autonomy, remaining at the innocent Persephone or eternal puella stage long after physical maturity. At the Full Moon motherhood is glorified—or idealized—and the Demeter mother's influence may well be lifelong and well-nigh impossible to break. On the other hand, mother and child may be "at arms length," united in an eternal dance of symbiotic antipathy. With the falling away of the Waning Moon, the child may well experience isolation and alienation. This is the child who does not fit into the family or who is rejected for some reason, the one who is connected in intimate terms with that guardian of the dark places, Hecate.

Someone with an unaspected Moon may be totally feeling-controlled, especially if the Moon is in a water sign, or cut off from all emotion, projecting it out onto another, particularly when the Moon is in an air sign. When the Moon is waxing from New toward Full, the maiden kore or Persephone archetype can easily surface (see chapter 2). Close to the Full Moon, the mature mother, Demeter, takes over, and as the Moon passes into Dark, the crone Hecate emerges from the Underworld. Whether it will be the positive or shadow side of the Moon that manifests may be determined by the aspects, although this is not always the case, and different facets may be stimulated by passing transits. The so-called easy, flowing aspects, such as trines or sextiles, can indicate a comfortable Moon, while the challenging squares, oppositions or inconjuncts and, in this case specifically, the conjunction, tend to hook into the shadowier side of the lunar archetypes. Aspects from Saturn usually indicate a great difficulty and inhibition around expressing the Moon. A Uranus contact is typically an unpredictable, erratic expression; a Neptune connection an elusive, idealized one. However, it is in the murky depths of the Hades Moon alliance that the most potent archetype, that of the devouring mother, emerges.

THE LUNAR INFLUENCE

The sign and house placement of the Moon shows us the area of life in which our instincts will function most strongly, an ingrained pattern of behavior that we have carried with us for many lifetimes. It is our personal unconscious. The Moon also indicates our response to emotion: whether we are totally overwhelmed by it, theoretically in control of it, motivated by it, or whether we tend to repress it and live "in our head." The Moon is also an indication of what will nourish us, the kind of experiences we need in order to feel "well fed," the emotional sustenance we will instinctively seek out.

Sometimes it feels like there is a strange otherworldly influence on us: this is the effect of the lunar light, and of the karmic residue we carry. The Moon brings in powerful influences from our past whenever that might be. Our Moon sign is, in my experience, a much more ingrained energy than our Sun, which we are still developing. So, the Moon is where we retreat to when challenged; it is comfortable and known, whereas the Sun still has some mystery for us. However, if the Moon energy is used unconsciously, it can pull us into destructive patterns of behavior. On the other hand, conscious use of the Moon is life-enhancing and fertile.

If we consciously choose to descend into the instinctual darkness of our lunar self, we can reconnect to our ancient wisdom. Within this darkness the detritus of outgrown consciousness can make fertile compost for the growth of new awareness, provided that the cyclical light of the Moon is allowed to shine when appropriate. Compost without light and air becomes a stinking, crawling

morass of decay. Regularly aerated, it becomes a rich and nourishing source of goodness. It is important to recognize when light is required and when it is inappropriate. Attunement to our inner cycles will indicate the time for inward reflection, the moment when the old has to die, the period of dormancy, and the springing into new life. The unconscious, unaware Moon energies manifest as a compulsive pull back into the past, the consciously expressed lunar energies nurture the growth of oneself and others.

As we have seen, the Moon placement, and its aspects, also describes how we are attuned to the Mother archetype; it illustrates the inner picture of “Mother” that we carry with us, whether it is the “good mother” or the “devouring mother” that is strongest within us. It tells us the kind of nurturing we need, the lunar food we crave; and what we expect to receive: the two may differ widely—especially when Pluto is in aspect to the Moon.

THE PLUTO EFFECT

At best the image of Pluto is of dark and mysterious fate; at worst he conjures up visions of sinister shadows and threatening disintegration.

— Karen Hilverson⁴

THE PLUTO CYCLE

Pluto’s orbit is one of the most elliptical, and its eccentric journey penetrates within Neptune’s sphere. Pluto spends widely differing lengths of time in each sign, taking roughly 31 years to travel through Taurus and yet only 12 years to move through Scorpio, its natural home (see figure 2, page 10). Metaphorically speaking, certain signs are much better able to process Pluto’s effect and therefore offer less resistance to its passage. Entrenched Taurus resists at all costs the Plutonian disintegration and consequent transformation. Scorpio positively revels in it. The Underworld is Scorpio’s natural domain.

Pluto’s sign placement in the natal chart is, of course, a generational one, something we share with everyone born during the same period. In Pluto’s longer sojourns, it may also be a placement shared by parent and child. Pluto’s house placement is more personal. It shows us where we are plugged into the collective energies, where we make contact with the unconscious. Liz Greene sees it as our fate. We can also view it as our karma: the credits and deficits of our past catching up with us. A lunar connection with Pluto emphasizes the compulsive pull to the past that is so often a part of the Hades Moon experience. But it also highlights the potential for transformation, its very intensity somehow propelling into the new way of being. The house in which Pluto resides points us to an area of life in which the Hades Moon influence will strongly manifest. This is the place where we will meet our karma around Plutonian issues: power struggles and domination, alienation and isolation, birth and death, nurture and separation, corruption and pollution on all levels. But it is also where we find our inner riches, the treasure trove of our other lives. It pinpoints challenges but also signposts a crucial transformation to be made. (See figure 3, page 11.)

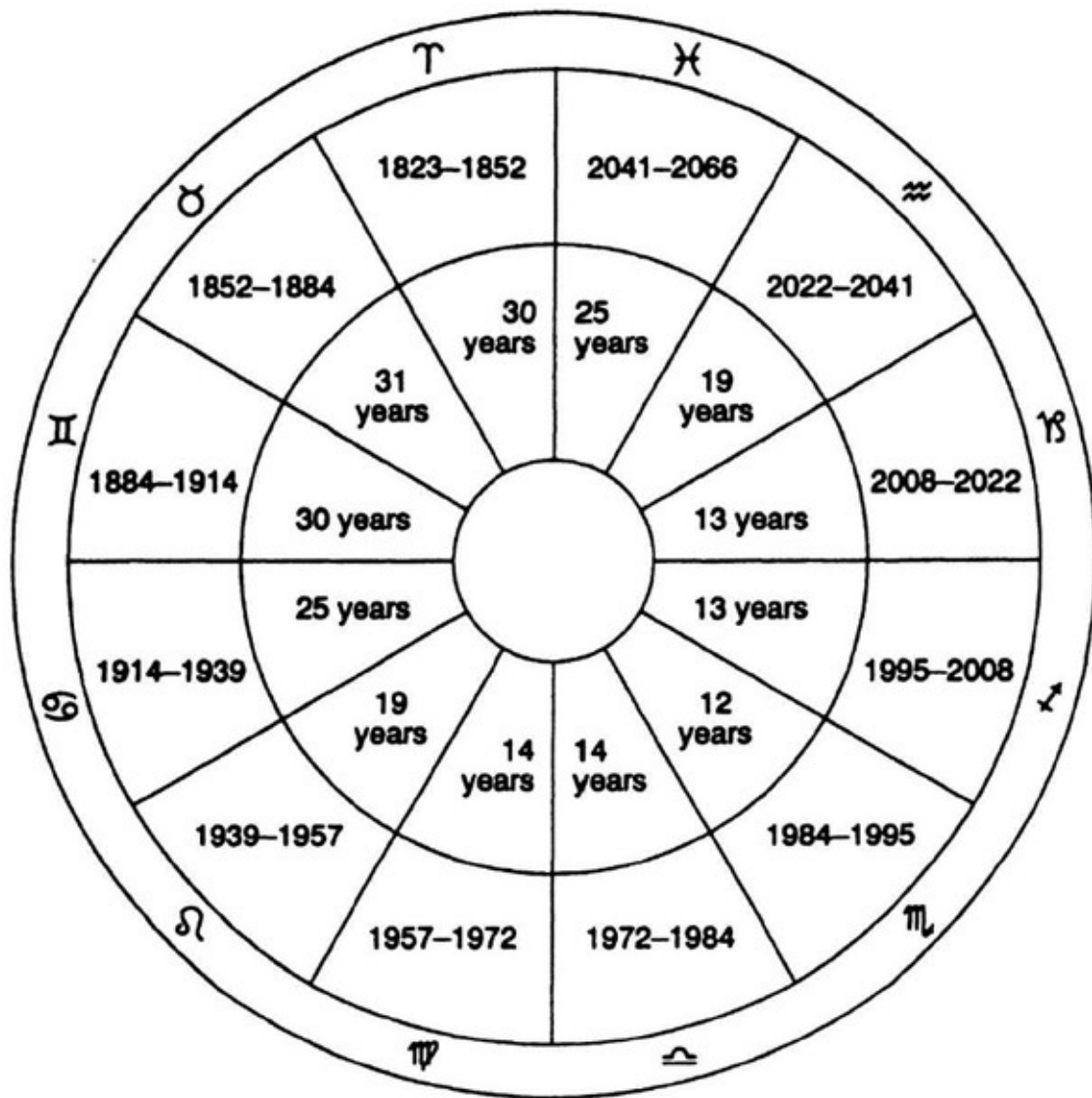


Figure 2. The Pluto Cycle. (Adapted from Haydn Paul's *Phoenix Rising*, Element Books, Shaftesbury, England, 1998, p.130.)

Pluto transits have both a personal and a collective effect. This is a subversive planet and its movement through the signs shows where it conflicts with the entrenched attitudes of a sign. It indicates where toxic energies must be eliminated and drives transformed. Pluto pinpoints our obsessions, and shows where we may well take ourselves too seriously, so can highlight our need to lighten up. Pluto also has the function of bringing the shadow side out into the light of conscious awareness. And, finally, Pluto is where we face loss and death.



Figure 3. Pluto words.

Pluto transits are periods of soul growth, although symbolic death and descent into the Underworld is often the first stage in moving “up” the evolutionary ladder. Pluto brings about profound change and regeneration from a cellular level up. By transit, during the average lifetime, Pluto will pass through between a third and a half of the chart, depending where it is in its cycle. Its effect when aspecting natal planet is, therefore, long-lasting and profound. It can be felt for at least two years, and often more. During that two-year period Pluto may well pass over the aspected planet’s natal position three times due to the, apparent, backward effect of retrogradation.

Pluto’s position by sign (natal or transiting) shows how the sign energies will interact with Pluto and affect the collective energies of humankind, and how these will be expressed socially. It shows the particular Plutonian themes to which the individual will be attuned. It signifies a generational impulse toward manifesting the energies of that sign. If the manifestation is not conscious, and Pluto is, after all, a trans personal planet so conscious recognition is rare, then the shadow side of the sign may well emerge. By house placement (natal or transiting), it shows how those collective energies will be personalized by the individual, and where the energies will be expressed through a particular area of life. It shows where we carry karma around the Plutonian energies as expressed through that house and the reparation we may be called upon to make. It pinpoints the area of life in which critical

transformation could occur, and often points to explosive endings or beginnings, especially in the later phases. Pluto identifies crucial areas of challenge, areas in which the person appears to be driven toward disintegration of the old, or is subject to compulsive acting out of ingrained patterns. This is the point of greatest potential, the meeting place of the Underworld and the transformatory energies of the Lord of Enlightenment.

PLUTO AND ALCHEMY

Are you willing to be sponged out, erased, cancelled, made nothing?

Dipped into oblivion?

If not, you will never really change.

—D. H. Lawrence⁵

Experiencing Pluto in our life is an alchemical process. In alchemy, raw primal matter was concocted, putrefied, placed in a retort, heated, condensed and otherwise processed in an effort to find purified “gold.” This process is symbolic of our search to find the Plutonian riches at the center of our most basic experiences. If we transcend this process, rise up out of the *prima materia* of our lives, skate on the surface and refuse to journey into the alchemical retort which is Hades, then we lose the opportunity to create new energy in our lives.

For the alchemists, putrefaction was an essential preamble to the process. The base materials were faecal, malodorous, and Plutonic. In keeping with a Plutonian process, what went into the retort was more redolent of garbage than of gold. This is the stage of life where Ereshkigal has hung Inanna on the meat hook to become rotten meat (see page 23). The transits of Pluto show where our psychic garbage can become our *prima materia*, the basic ingredient of life. As Pluto moves around the heavens (and the natal chart), it brings into consciousness all that has festered, putrefied. It forces us to recognize where the psychic faecal matter has become stuck, blocking the flow of energy. This is the point where transformation can begin, a transformation that has to start at the cellular level and spread out from there. As Thomas Moore has pointed out, in the view of many alchemists (and psychotherapists) if you do not already have a mess, you are at a disadvantage and need to get one. Pluto reminds us that we do all have “a mess.” It brings out our *prima materia* from the shadows. It connects us to our “shit,” the base material for psychotherapy and other such Plutonian processes.

As the alchemical process proceeds, our past experience becomes the breeding ground for insight and experience. At times the process has to wait, suspended, while secret fermentation takes place. The bubbles of forgotten memory rise into consciousness. Things get heated up: it is hot in Hades. Both passion and anger bring things to the boil. Our experience is condensed, solidified, intensified so that we can feel its essence. Often the cells of our body respond with symptoms of disease—viruses and other Plutonian conditions that normally lurk and fester in our hidden places make themselves known as our body detoxifies. The emotional blocks and stuck feelings we are carrying loose disintegrate, and the debris is carried into the retort. It is vaporized, blowing away our fantasies and illusions, and revealing the core. It discloses a space where something new can incubate. Slowly the purification proceeds until the nugget of gold is unveiled—the transformed self.

FROM INCARNATION TO INITIATION: PLUTO THROUGH CANCER TO CAPRICORN

In esoteric astrology, Cancer (mass consciousness) is seen as the point of incarnation into matter, the

place of suffering. Suffering is the pain we, and all humankind feel, as a result of unresolved fear, guilt, and ignorance. This is ignorance of our “divine” roots, of our collective oneness. The suffering comes through our separation from our real selves and lack of knowledge of our integral wholeness. It also arises out of the collective karma generated in the past, karma for which no one person is responsible, but which nevertheless has an extremely powerful effect as we shall see. Suffering is the shadow side of the Capricorn scapegoat, Cancer’s opposite sign. Incarnation is where we undergo the lessons necessary for our soul’s growth, especially on the emotional level.

Emotion is a Cancerian concomitant. Cancer is ruled by the sentient Moon, and is the feminine energy of the goddess made manifest as the Great Mother. This is where matter is birthed, given form, and mothered. Here the nurturing of home and family are all important. Here the emotional lessons commence. In Cancer the consciousness of self is established and begins to move out to make a mark on the world. Cancer is also a social sign, and someone with a strong Cancer Moon will often act as a social worker to the world and its troubles. It is in Cancer that the Plutonian energy can ground itself as social change, or may reveal itself through familial conflict, at the same time stirring up uncertainty about just how secure this change will be.

Cancer is still on the personal evolutionary cycle, although the collective level is stirring. The sign is nationalistic, and possessive, and we will look at its connections with World War I and II in chapter 5. Appropriately enough, Pluto was in Cancer when the planet was first discovered in 1930, although its existence was being postulated as early as 1905 (when Pluto was in Gemini) by Percival Lowell. Typically, Lowell died in 1916 without having proved that this secretive planet was anything more than an arcane supposition. It was left to his successor, Clyde Tombaugh, to make a clear sighting in 1930 and provide firm astronomical data.

Surrender, death, and a journey into the Underworld are crucial for Initiation to take place. In the signs following Cancer the descent is made, the unconscious is explored in all its manifestations as the urge for transformation unfolds. This reaches its nadir in Scorpio, Pluto’s sign, the point where personal power must be mastered. Scorpio is a sign where occult understanding is reached; maybe because Scorpio is so at home in the depths, this is also the sign that can reach the heights of spiritual consciousness. In esoteric astrology, Scorpio is the sign of discipleship, the point where the decision is made to return to the spiritual “Father” (or Mother). According to Hadyn Paul, Scorpio can be seen as a symbolic gate through which Avatars enter the Earth plane, avatars being “mouthpieces of collective wisdom and evolutionary agents.”⁷

As Pluto travels through Sagittarius, which represents the path ahead, it opens up a vision of what might be when we connect to Pluto’s highest energies, and when we can ground collective power productively. In far-sighted Sagittarius, the energies of higher consciousness must unite with the instinctual realm: the centaur has his feet in the mud and his arrow aimed at the sky. Matter must be infused with vision. The soul must recognize its divine roots. By the time it reaches Capricorn (cosmic consciousness), the impulse has been firmly grounded in convention. Indeed, it may well be time for a new impetus toward change to emerge, one that is based on what is needed for the good of society as a whole, rather than that of the individuals who control it. Capricorn is a lesson in collective power. So Capricorn is the start of another evolutionary cycle.

In esoteric astrology, Capricorn is the sign of initiation, the polar opposite of the descent into matter (Cancer). It is on the Capricornian mountaintop that we can reach up and touch the highest energies. This is the ascent into spiritual consciousness, the point where we become the co-creator of our world, having broken free from the grip of attachment to material form. This is where humankind must once again take up their spiritual heritage; where Pluto can be metamorphosed and high consciousness be incorporated into consciousness as a whole. However, Capricorn is also where v

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