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Today is September 16, 2006.

More about aspects...

Here we will begin to learn about the various aspects. Planets in aspect to each other modify each other according to the type of aspect. Some astrologers do not adhere strictly to the type of aspect, preferring instead to note that two given planets are simply aspecting each other. If you can learn to take into account the type of aspect, then the chart will have gained another level of depth. I have prepared two reference sections for aspects. One lists the aspects between the planets as either soft or hard and gives a brief interpretation of possible ways in which the planets are modified by each others influence. The other lists the planets by aspect type, showing why a particular aspect is considered to be so, based on either the differences or similarities of the signs involved. Hard aspects in particular keep a person from wallowing too much in one kind of behavior.

Take for example the Moon in Pisces Square Mercury in Sagittarius. The Moon in Pisces can become melancholy and self pitying. The square from Mercury in Sagittarius stimulates another kind of behavior, Sagittarius is at best an optimistic fire sign. This aspect would help to shake the person out of their self pity.

What about Mercury in Leo Square Uranus in Scorpio? Without taking into consideration the signs involved, we can say that Mercury in hard aspect to Uranus may make the person say unusual things. Or perhaps they blurt things out that shock other people. Now, taking the signs into consideration we could add that Mercury in Leo can be rather loud, out-spoken and attention getting in their communications. If they got too much this way then Uranus in Scorpio says, "Don't tell all." "Be mysterious." Let them wonder what I'm thinking " That's the Scorpio traits.

When you begin to integrate aspects into your chart reading, my advice is to keep it as simple as possible. It is perfectly acceptable to delineate the possible interaction between the planets only. Later as you gain experience-see if you can add the depth the takes the signs involved into consideration.

So, there you sit staring at a planet that has at least four or five different aspects. Let's say that planet is Mercury-the thinking/talking/learning planet. One aspect is a trine from Jupiter. The other is a square from Saturn. But, Jupiter and Saturn are so different! There are no contradictions in the chart. What looks like contradictions in the chart are simply reflections of our own contradictory natures. Sometimes you're happy; sometimes you're sad. Sometimes you feel sharp as a tack; sometimes you feel distracted and bored..The above example of Mercury trine Jupiter suggests that this person finds it easy to talk a lot. Say Mercury was in Virgo-the sign of worry and concern. The trine from Jupiter can really exaggerate that tendency. And, with the trine there is little stop the flow. The square from Saturn stimulates focused discipline, forcing this person to knuckle down and pay

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attention when they have something to learn.

Saturn represents logic too. If the worries got too irrational Saturn would step in and say, "Hey, this doesn't make sense." " Look at what you're doing to yourself."

Note: The sextile and the opposition have complementary elements in common. Fire and Air signs are considered to be different, yet complementary.

Earth and Water signs are also different, yet share complementary elements.

My theory is that air feeds fire and earth needs water. These elements in particular seem to complement one another-in the proper amounts. Too much of either can be disastrous for the other.

The Conjunction - Same element/same quality/same gender
Conjunctions represent power. Planets which are conjunct to each other must work together. The fact that they are both in the same sign eliminates the need to blend different elements and qualities and therefore is somewhat easy. However the conjunction is a powerful aspect which makes it difficult for the individual to ignore. Many astrologers put this aspect in the hard aspect category. Others consider it to be a neutral aspect, taking into account the particular planets involved. In this case, a Moon/Venus conjunction might be easier to live with than a conjunction between Saturn and Pluto.

The Semi-sextile - Different element/ different quality/different gender. Note that this aspect like the difficult quincunx aspect has nothing in common as far as element, quality or gender and yet this aspect is often put into the soft aspect category. I feel that this aspect is one that stimulates growth. Since growth requires change and change is not always easy one might say this is a hard aspect. However, since growth is necessary and tends to produce what we call character in an individual, the outcome of this aspect can produce positive results.

The Sextile - Complementary element/different quality/same gender
The sextile is an aspect of opportunity. It does not have the easy flow of the trine, but, is considered to be a "soft" aspect. The individual has no guarantees with a sextile. She cannot sit back and wait for the goods to be delivered. She must put forth some effort when the opportunity presents itself The effect of the sextile is noticeable, but not outstanding.

The Square - Same quality/different element/different gender
Squares stimulate either action, change or both. Squares do not let one rest easy. Something doesn't feel right and the person feels compelled to keep trying another way until the feeling of tension is released. Often the feeling of something not being quite right is literally felt in the stomach. Some squares in a chart are necessary as they challenge one to go for something better. Too many can be overwhelming and a source of much frustration. The person can literally burn out trying to cope with the tension too many squares can produce. A person who is having a difficult time trying to function with a square often carries a feeling of tension which can stimulate behavior that others may find aggravating. The charts of really successful people often have many squares.

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The Trine - Same element/different quality/same gender.

There is very little to stop the flow of a trine. Trines can make one feel lucky and therefore do not stimulate the level of action that a square does. A trine aspect makes it easy for the person to go overboard with respect to whatever planets, signs and houses are involved. This may work to the persons advantage or it may not. If a behavior is not in your best interest, a trine will not make you aware of it the way a square would. On the other hand, there is less tension involved. The person copes with the obstacles in life in a more easy-going way. They seem to know things will work out and often that is exactly what happens.

The Quincunx - Different element/different quality/different gender.

It's awkward to say and even harder to cope with. The other name for a quincunx is inconjunct; not much easier to say. Planets involved in a quincunx have nothing in common as far as the elements, qualities or gender assigned to the signs involved. The keyword adjustment is commonly used for the quincunx. I find the term "no choice" is also a good description for this aspect. What this means is that you must be willing to go with the flow. You must adjust your wishes with the wishes of God or the universe or whatever describes a power mightier than your own. This aspect is like quicksand. The more you struggle the deeper you go. You must do the legwork, but the outcome is in the hands of a higher force. When you give up the ego's need to be in control, great things can happen. This is much easier said than actually done.

The Opposition - Complementary element/same quality/same gender.

With all of these factors in common, why is this always assigned to the hard aspect column? This is an aspect that calls for balance. It suggests that other people have an influence or that we must take into account others needs and motivations. The traits assigned to the signs involved are opposite and yet complementary in nature. For instance, an opposition might ask you to balance your will (Leo) with the will of others (Aquarius). Another example would be the creation of boundaries (Virgo) versus the breakdown of boundaries (Pisces). In the natural zodiac, Aries (self) is opposite Libra (other people). The natural zodiac correspondence between Libra and the seventh house (those who openly oppose you) is where this aspect's biggest challenge is found. As always, taking into consideration the houses involved adds another level of understanding to any aspect. For instance, planets opposite one another in the 2nd and 8th houses might be asking the individual to balance his own ability to earn money (2nd) with using the money if others (8th).

Applying and Separating Aspects

Many astrologers make note of applying versus separating aspects. An applying aspect is one that is forming. That is, the faster moving planet is moving toward an aspect to the slower moving planet.

(See [Planet Motion Table](#)) The planet is within the orb of influence but, has not yet become exact.

A separating aspect is one which has already become exact. It is still within the orb of influence but, the faster moving planet is moving away from the slower planet.

Some feel that an applying aspect carries more weight than a separating aspect. I tend to agree with this concept. When we are

anticipating an important event we tend to feel more anxious. After the impending event is over, there is often a sense of relief.

The [out-of-sign aspects explanation](#) also happens to illustrate a separating square since 94° is already past the 90° exact square mark. If it were 86° , that would be an applying square since it had not yet become exact at 90° .

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Major Aspect Configurations

As you begin to delineate a chart you will often discover that some charts contain one or more major aspect configurations. You may want to include this information in your chart overview as these configurations have a considerable influence on the person's approach to life. Consider the meanings below.

Most astrology software programs will automatically draw the aspect lines, making these easier to spot in the beginning.

The Grand Square (or, Grand Cross)-four planets squaring each other forming a large square pattern on the face of the chart. Contained within the grand square are two oppositions, making this configuration either extremely stressful or a tremendous motivator for success. Probably some of both. Example: a chart with a planet in Aries, a planet in Cancer, A planet in Libra and a planet in Capricorn. The Aries/Libra planets forming one opposition and the Cancer/Capricorn planets forming the other one. A grand square requires the person to put forth great energy in order to overcome the challenges represented by signs and houses involved in the square.

In Cardinal signs-Initiating action is the focus. The life is marked by many changes. A tendency towards self absorption may cause it's own obstacles.

In Fixed signs-The challenge is breaking through old barriers and habit patterns. The material and sensual spheres may be over emphasized.

In Mutable signs-The challenge is finishing what one starts without losing flexibility. The mental sphere may be over emphasized.

The T Square -The t-square is exactly like the above configuration except that one of the signs is missing. Time and again this is described as trying to sit in a chair with three legs. Ironically, the individual becomes the fourth leg by acting out the traits which are missing in the chart.

Example: A t-square involving planets in Libra, Cancer and Capricorn. This individual can be very much like an Aries (the missing leg) at times. The person seems to instinctively fill in the missing traits in order to relieve the stress. The house of the missing leg takes on great importance also. If you had to try to sit in a chair with three legs it would be hard to ignore the comer that had no leg.

The Grand Trine -Three planets making a trine to each other forming a large triangle on the face of the chart. Example: A planet in Taurus, a planet in Virgo and a planet in Capricorn.

A grand trine creates an easy flow. However, there is little to make the person stop and re-evaluate before taking action. It's easy to dive head first into the things represented by the sign and house placements.

Fire signs-Highly active, enthusiastic and often self-involved. The conscience is often secondary to the immediate desires.

Earth signs-Reality can become kind of god. Many actions are motivated by material aims.

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Air signs-The mental realm is paramount. It becomes easy for the person to detach himself from emotional entanglements. Intellectual.
Water signs-Emotional expression becomes paramount. Psychic or highly intuitive impressions are too easily absorbed, overstimulating the individuals already sensitive nature. Imaginative

The Yod - A yod consists of two planets sextile to each other, while a third planet makes a quincunx to both of those. With respect to the third planet, it's sign and house placement as well as the house it rules in the chart, there is often a feeling of no choice. Matters seem to be fated and the more the person struggles to be in control the harder the situation becomes. The person feels as though free will is some kind of theory that doesn't apply to him at all. Spiritually the person is learning how to give up his own desires to those of a higher power. When he does this the life takes on new directions and opportunities undreamed of present themselves. The experience can leave one with a feeling of great humbleness towards the complex workings of universal forces.

Mutual Receptions

A mutual reception is not a major configuration aspect but it is another factor to consider when interpreting the chart. When two planets are in the each others signs a mutual reception has occurred.

Example: - Mars in Gemini and Mercury in Aries. Mars and Mercury are in mutual reception. Note that Mercury rules Gemini and Mars rules Aries. It's as though the planets are wearing each others clothes. The planets involved in a mutual reception work together in a mutual fashion. Like a friend willing to lend a helping hand in time of need. Even if these planets had difficult aspects from other planets or were involved in a challenging aspect between each other, then the mutual reception helps to smooth out the friction.

Chart example: Venus is in Capricorn and Saturn is in Libra. Venus rules Libra and Saturn rules Capricorn

Tip: Re-trace the configurations shown on a chart with a brightly colored pen for easier standout and later reference.

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Minor Aspects

Here is a list of minor aspects. Even though we are focusing on major aspects, many astrologers believe that a very close minor aspect can have as much impact as major aspect with a wider orb. Some consider them when interpreting charts; others do not. Orbs for minor aspects are usually given an orb of no more than 1 to 1 ½ degrees. The minor aspects most commonly used are the semi-square and the sesquiquadrate (also known as sesquiquadrate). I personally feel that the semi-sextile and quincunx should be included in the major aspect category, although, you will often find them considered to be minor aspects.

Name of Aspect	# of degrees / signs apart	Symbol	Orb
Nonagon constraint, limits	40°	N	1°
Semi-square agitating, provoking	45° (1- 1/2 signs)	∟	1°
Septile consequence, reaction, effect	51 - 3/7°	S	1°
Quintile aptitude, skill, proficiency	72°	Q	1°
Sesquiquadrate irritating	135° (4- 1/2 signs)	♁	1°
Biquintile balance, complementary	144°	BQ	1°

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Table of Dignities and Debilities

Some astrologers put more emphasis on dignities and debilities than others. I would suggest that you at least familiarize yourself with the above tables. There may be certain situations when you will want to determine the relative strength of a planet. As with many astrological techniques, this provides another avenue for gaining a better feel for the chart you are working with. When you begin to gain a solid feel for the signs traits, you will be able to easily understand why a planet is exalted in one sign and in it's fall in another and so on.

A planet that is in the sign it rules is said to be dignified. This position allows the planets energies to flow freely.

A planet that is in the sign opposite to the one it rules is said to be in detriment. This position creates an uncomfortable environment for the planet to express itself.

A planet is said to be in it's sign of exaltation when it is placed in a sign that creates a powerful complement for the planets energies.

A planet is said to be in its fall when it is in the sign that is opposite it's exaltation. This is the weakest position for the planet to be in.

A planet is said to be in its fall when it is in the sign that is opposite it's exaltation. This is the weakest position for the planet to be in.

NOTE: If a planet in the sign of it's fall or detriment is placed in it's natural house, or a house which corresponds to it's sign of exaltation, then some of the weakness would be neutralized. The same principle applies also to planets found in their dignity and exaltation. The Sun exalted in Aries would be more challenged in the seventh house (natural house of Libra) or the eleventh house (natural house of Aquarius).

Planet	Dignity	Detriment	Exaltation	Fall
Sun	Leo	Aquarius	Aries	Libra
Moon	Cancer	Capricorn	Taurus	Scorpio
Mercury	Gemini	Sagittarius (Pisces)	Aquarius	Leo
Venus	Taurus	Scorpio (Aries)	Pisces	Virgo
Mars	Aries	Libra (Taurus)	Capricorn	Cancer
Jupiter	Sagittarius	Gemini (Virgo)	Cancer	Capricorn

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Saturn	Capricorn	Cancer (Leo)	Libra	Aries
Uranus	Aquarius	Leo	Scorpio	Taurus
Neptune	Pisces	Virgo	Libra	Aquarius

Pluto has not yet been firmly established as it is the most recent planet discovery.

Signs shown in parentheses show ancient rulerships. Mars was the ancient ruler of Scorpio and therefore is somewhat dignified in Scorpio, and so on.

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Retrograde Planets Meanings

A planet that is retrograde means that the planet was making an apparent backward motion at the time of birth. If a planet was retrograde at the time of birth, then that planet is notated in the natal horoscope with an Rx by the astrologer. Planets never move backwards, hence the term apparent. The Sun and Moon never retrograde. Many people watch the motion of current retrograde planets, especially Mercury.

From an earth view, a planet only appears to move backwards for a given length of time. Refer to the section on Planet Motion for approximate retrograde periods. In the Ephemeris, the day that a planet begins this apparent motion is designated by an **R** or an **Rx**. In order to determine the length of time, run your finger down the planet information column until you find a **D**. On this day the planet resumes it's "direct" motion again. Some astrologers put more emphasis on retrograde planets in the birth chart than others. I have found that they add an important depth to the overall interpretation.

The energy of a retrograde planet is expressed more on an inner level. Sometimes the individual has difficulty expressing the energy outwardly. Some part of that planets energy is held back. Retrograde planets often cause one to stop and reconsider the consequences, so that spontaneous expression is blocked in some way. At other times, the outward behavior becomes exaggerated in an attempt to reconcile the inner doubts. Here are some examples of how retrograde planets may manifest in a persons chart.

[Listing of Mercury and other planet retrogrades for the current year.](#)

Below are some interpretations for retrograde planets found in the natal chart. With discernment, you may use these ideas as a basis for figuring out how the current retrogrades may "act" on the general public.

Mercury Retrograde

- * reconsiders before speaking
- * lots of inner conversation and thoughts
- * expresses self better in writing
- * feels misunderstood

Venus Retrograde

- * reconsiders before expressing love or affection
- * relates awkwardly to others
- * doubts the love others offer
- * can become obsessed in relationships
- * feels let down by the commitment level of others

Mars Retrograde

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- * reconsiders before expressing anger
- * finds competitive situations hard to handle
- * tends to repress and so
- * can become depressed

Jupiter Retrograde

- * has doubts about what they deserve and so ...
- * finds it easy to settle for crumbs
- * feels superior in some way inside
- * abundance is felt on the inside
- * looks inside for answers to religious questions

Saturn Retrograde

- * feels they're never good enough inside
- * indulgent outward behavior may mask inner feelings of inadequacy
- * hides fears

Uranus Retrograde

- * reconsiders outward expressions of rebelliousness * feels different inside
- * outward conformist behavior masks inner feelings of non-conformity or ...
- * goes out of their way to upset others apple carts
- * has a difficult time finding their niche in society

Neptune Retrograde

- * feels guilty inside and so
- * tends to blame themselves when things go wrong
- * super sensitive inside and so
- * puts on a tough skinned mask

Pluto Retrograde

- * keeps their chin up during crisis because
- * they want to keep inner upheavals private
- * they get what they want by acting like they don't care

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