



# The White Eagle School of Astrology

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## Some Notes on the Outer Planets

The term ‘outer planets’ is generally used to mean those beyond Saturn, that is, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. As currently used, the term does not include other heavenly bodies whose orbits go outside that of Saturn.

In order to understand the overall collective importance of the outer planets it is necessary to remember the symbolism associated with Saturn. At one time it was the most distant known planet; it remains the most distant that can be seen with the naked eye.

Thus it is associated with edges and boundaries, limitations and extremities beyond which one may not, or cannot, pass. Indeed, esoterically it is often referred to as the ‘ring pass not’. Saturn guards the gates of initiation and will not permit passage through the gates until the pupil is ready.

Thus any planet outside Saturn is beyond the norm, the ordinary, the usual – and also beyond many limitations and restrictions. They are the planets of the extraordinary, the unusual, the unconventional, the unrestricted and the limitless.

In terms of character, emphasis on the outer planets denotes a far from ‘run-of-the-mill’ type. These people act and think differently from the majority and are seldom hamstrung by convention and custom, unless their karma dictates otherwise. Interest in occult and spiritual matters is common, although not inevitable.

There is usually a high degree of perceptiveness, although the nature of it varies according to the individual planet most involved, Uranus being intuitive and good at lateral thinking, Neptune receptive and visionary, Pluto penetrating and all-seeing, if other horoscopic factors concur.

In terms of destiny the life is almost always unusual in some way, even if this is not apparent on the surface. These planets tend to work inwardly, but this does quite often result in outward effects that can be seen. What others would regard as unusual occurrences are more frequent and seem to the person him- or herself quite normal.

Life is often punctuated by major change, whether apparently self-motivated or fateful, of a kind not often seen in the lives of those with more ‘ordinary’ maps. It is sometimes appropriate to describe an outer-planet-dominated life as ‘exciting’, although that word is much overused, and abused. Of course, ‘exciting’ does not necessarily mean comfortable and indeed it seldom does in this context.

Comfort is not the point. New and unusual experience beyond the boundaries of what is normal is what is meant, so such phrases as ‘pushing the boundaries’, ‘outside the box’, ‘out of one’s comfort zone’, are all apt to describe the life experience of someone with much emphasis on those three outer planets. They can be regarded as beacons of spiritual opportunity, bringing exactly that to the soul who has earned some access to what ‘lies beyond Saturn’.

# Uranus

As the first planet outside Saturn's orbit, in many ways Uranus is everything that Saturn isn't. It is unconventional, iconoclastic, extraordinary (in the literal meaning of that word, outside the ordinary), new-age, often outspoken and self-willed.

While Saturn contains and restricts and structures, Uranus breaks out, breaks down, sweeping away the 'old' and making way for the 'new'. Esoterically, the planet is concerned with the will, and particularly with the soul's task of learning to will the Will of God, to work actively to carry out that Will and to 'bear aloft the lamp of truth'. God's truth is for all to see and is not to be restricted to any chosen few. Uranus holds that lamp in the most prominent possible position.

As an external result of this, you almost always know where you are with very Uranian people. Whether or not one 'gets on' with them, one can almost always respect them. They not infrequently have leadership qualities, and in such a context the fact that 'what you see is what you get' means that you always know what they stand for. They are not given to caring what others think of them as a rule, unless the rest of the horoscope suggests otherwise, and simply drive forward in their own way.

Obviously, this can have its drawbacks; souls working strongly under this planet often have to learn deep lessons through the thwarting of self-will, through not being able to have or to do what they want. Acceptance of God's will is the great test. When this happens, the truthfulness and determination are coupled with humility, and great things are possible.

At the mental level Uranus is particularly stimulating, encouraging lateral thinking, an active intuition, and flashes of genius. Science and invention are congenial spheres of work; it is also said to be the astrologer's planet. Many intellectual breakthroughs and scientific discoveries have been made under the influence of Uranus. There is a tendency to a highly strung nervous system, and this can result in impatience. These people do not suffer fools gladly and may sometimes need to learn tact and diplomacy.

Emotionally, Uranus tends to be rather more challenging. It is commonly linked with sudden attractions and repulsions in relationships and with any unconventional relationships, with divorce and other relationship breakdowns, but it can work well in situations where both parties respect the other's need for 'space'. It can bring a vitality and constant renewal to a relationship and is never boring!

There is a temptation to look for constant excitement, which may lead to trouble, but provided that can be suitably controlled, there can be advantages. There is often more genuineness and truth in a Uranian partnership than any other, because the souls concerned never feel the need to conform to the ideas of others about what constitutes a 'good' relationship.

At any level but especially spiritually, the Uranian soul, once having seen truth, pursues it regardless of any trials and tribulations it may have to go through to do so. It will live by it, and often act as an example to others too.

# Neptune

In sharp contrast to Uranus, which is active, forceful and energetic, especially mentally, Neptune's influence on the personality is receptive, emotional and very sensitive. In spiritual work, while Uranus is the occultist, Neptune is the mystic. It is the planet of cosmic consciousness and of 'God's sensitivity', the kind of sensitivity that perceives the slightest happening in the remotest corner of the universe.

The famous Biblical saying 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father' [Matt. 10.29] expresses precisely this. It is this characteristic of Neptune that brings to humanity the most joy and the most difficulty – without sensitivity there is so much we cannot truly appreciate, but with it, life can sometimes seem almost intolerable, so easily hurt and upset is the Neptunian soul until highly evolved.

However, lest we run away with the impression that Neptune is thus a weak or over-gentle influence, it must be said immediately that Neptune is actually very strong. Its strength lies, however, not in the will or in any quest for power, but in its vision. One famous astrological writer once stated that Neptune is about the attempt to realise the kingdom of God upon Earth – almost invariably, the Neptunian soul has a vision of how things could and should be, and often strives to make it come true, in however small a way.

In the young in soul, this can all seem too much, and they are subject to many temptations to try to escape from the harshness of the outer life through such things as drink, drugs, sex, illusory experiences or anything else through which the realities of worldly life can be lost or at least dulled, however temporarily.

However, as the soul grows, rather than simply lamenting the state of the world and wishing for the impossible, it begins to wonder how it can do something to improve the situation: passivity becomes a desire for activity, and at this point a major change takes place.

There are many, many souls with Neptune emphasised who somewhere, somehow, do what they can to 'hasten the coming of the kingdom'. Frequently, this happens through a desire to beautify life in some way – this is why the planet is so often strong in artistic horoscopes. Any of the arts can feature in such a life. It is often found, for example, that in the charts of musicians, especially famous ones, Neptune is on or close to an angle; it is also much connected with art, poetry and drama.

Coupled with the keen sense of beauty is great idealism, awareness of all suffering, compassion and, as the soul grows, an increasing willingness to set self completely aside for the sake of work that helps to put things right. Often these people are found working for charities in all sorts of situations.

Their vision is such that they care little for their own personal comfort and wellbeing, the vision taking them over completely. Of course, in a similar way this happens with the artist, musician, poet as well – one remembers the story of the virtuoso violinist who, accepting a compliment from a well-wisher who had said she would give her life to be able to play like that, said simply, 'I did!'

Sooner or later, the Neptunian inevitably becomes drawn to religious and spiritual matters and it is perhaps here that the planet really comes into its own. It sees beyond ideological and dogmatic differences to that unity which exists behind all religious expressions of faith and belief.

The true Neptunian soul raises the consciousness of all whom it contacts, helping to show them the vision that it can already see, sharing it without restriction or judgment. Again the Bible puts it aptly: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me' [John 12.32]. The Neptunian *knows* that 'all is one', however much that may not seem to be the case.

# Pluto

The 2006 decision by the world's astronomers to downgrade Pluto's status to 'dwarf planet' notwithstanding, astrologers recognise it to be one of the most powerful planetary forces. Indeed, power is an important theme of Pluto, which is often implicated in power issues and in its essence represents Divine Power, just as Uranus represents Divine Will. The power of the Creator is, of course, not to be gainsaid, so that Pluto has become recognised as *the* planet of destiny, of fate, of all those events and changes in our lives that we can seemingly do nothing about.

In terms of destiny, then, Pluto, if strong in a horoscope, tends to chop the life up into distinct chapters. It closes one door and opens another, and there is never any going back: the soul is moved on inexorably, whether it likes it or not. According to aspects and house-position, the planet can signify major outward change such as a move, a new job, retirement, a death or other kind of loss, and/or an inner change such as one of attitude and thought. Whatever happens, adaption to new circumstances is called for.

In terms of character, people with Pluto strong are generally very sensitive and perceptive, but their sensitivity differs from that of Neptune in that where the latter is receptive, the former is of a more active, penetrating nature. The Neptunian can be led astray by fantasy and wishful thinking, whereas it is very hard to 'pull the wool' over the Plutonian's eyes. They tend to see all and to say little, unless the rest of the horoscope dictates otherwise. While this may have its advantages, it is not generally a comfortable condition – they are apt to know more than they want to about many things, or it may lead them to work in which such perception is important as in detection, investigative journalism, medicine, and psychic and spiritual work. Pluto also often draws people to 'big business' and other areas of life where there are opportunities and temptations regarding power, both over the conditions of life and over other people. Pluto can often 'tune in' to the thoughts and feelings of others, particularly *en masse*, and is thus useful to the politician and advertiser and anyone else whose work depends on being in touch with the times.

Pluto's role as symbol of Divine power sometimes on the one hand tempts people to an arrogation of power which can lead to a tendency to 'get one's own way' by force, by Mafia-style domination or simply extreme assertiveness. On the other hand, it can also bring the soul to an understanding of the way in which everyone can participate in co-operation with Divine power in order to achieve results beneficial to humanity (or any other kingdom of life, indeed) in a way which would not be possible working alone, as in many charitable and religious and spiritual groups. Having said that, however, one noticeable characteristic of Pluto people is their need for solitude. They often do need to work apparently alone, their companions in work being geographically far removed, maybe, or at other levels of life. They do not suffer fools gladly and have little time for trivial matters, sometimes having to learn to be more sociable and friendly. They seek remote and quiet places, not because of a love of seclusion (c.f. Pisces/Neptune) but because they need space and clarity of 'atmosphere', as well as sometimes because what they work on is not to be revealed until complete, as with many types of research, for example.

Pluto can perhaps be best understood by study of life's natural cycles, of birth, death and rebirth, the seasons and the myriad ways in which life expresses itself and gradually evolves. All this shows Pluto, symbolic of Divine power, in action in everyday life. We tend to take such things for granted, but they are fundamental and essential to our very being.