

Q: 'What are the planets doing today ?'

This is a question that greets my attention on a fairly regular basis.

The natural Aspergers' response would be to reply, 'They are orbiting'.

However, I have observed that when I provide this very accurate reply to the person's specific question, it is frowned upon or met as if I am somehow being awkward; withholding secret astro-information ...

The truth is though, that orbiting the Sun is all that the planets are doing today.

What that means for a human being ...?

now, that is a completely different question.

Does the questioner really want to know what the planets are doing ? or, does the questioner actually want to know what today's planetary positions signify, or mean, for them ?

and, to answer it in a way that my current thinking understands it, I first need to clarify a couple of things:

1.

Astrology is not a science.

Scientific method involves observing phenomena, producing a hypothesis regarding the origin or causality of that phenomena and then testing the hypothesis by repeating the conditions and seeing if the results from the causality are the same.

Astrology cannot be tested with scientific method. For one thing human beings do not live long enough for the cosmological pattern to repeat itself in its exact form; therefore, the conditions cannot be repeated.

In addition, another things that impossible to replicate is both the mood of the astrologer and questioner, and the moment of time in which the question is asked.

Have you noticed that, as you grow older, your values change ?

Something that is important to a 15 year old may not be important to the same individual when they are 55 years old. So, when a human mind looks at an astrological pattern and pieces of information stream into the astrologer's eyes from the symbols, which are converted into thousands of possibilities of varying probability streaming through the astrologer's consciousness, every second, the pieces of information which captivate the astrologer's attention will vary according to what is of value to that astrologer in that moment; therefore, this has a very low probability of ever being repeated again, which means it falls short of scientific method and a great disservice is done to both astrology and science if one attempts to understand astrology through the lens of Newtonian mechanics - ie. magic rays or linear energies of influence ...

I would recommend the position of Cornelius and Curry; astrology is an art, a divination, a magic even, but it is not a science (recommend; Cornelius, the Moment of Astrology).

2.

Astrology is an art form that is location-specific.

Astrology is the art of drawing meaning from symbols. The symbols of astrology describe human behaviour, via the planets, the internal and external landscape of our environment via the houses. The manner in which phenomena may express itself, or manifest, is symbolised by the signs of the Zodiac. Astrologers also pay attention to the angular relationships between the planets, or parts of the psyche, and these angular relationships are called aspects. Aspects is the name given to particular alignments that are constantly forming and breaking as planets orbit the Sun. A personal astrological birth chart, the Natal Chart, is like a photograph, a snap-shot of the planetary positions at that time, as seen from

that place.

If two things are involved with one another - it is a relationship:

one-two



When three or more things are involved with each other on the same plane - it is an alignment ...

one-two-observer



When three or more things are involved with each other on different planes - it is a matrix:

one

observer

two

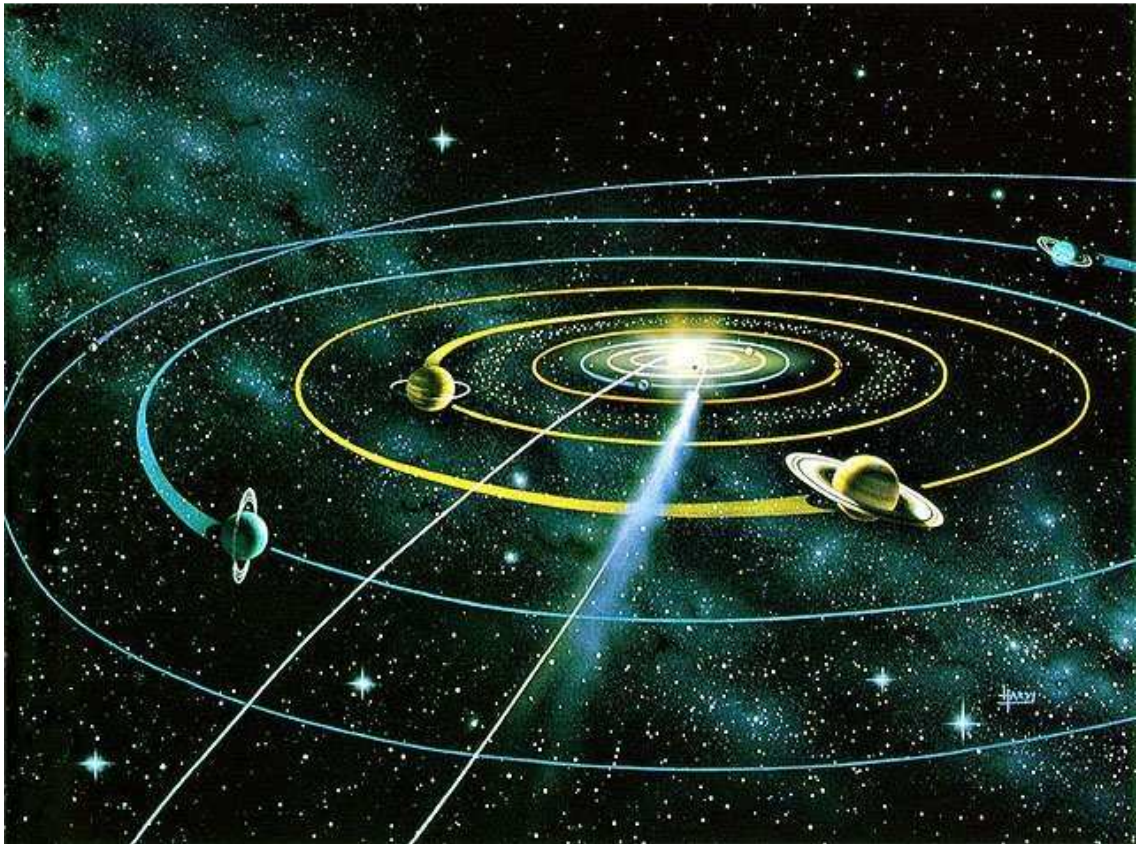
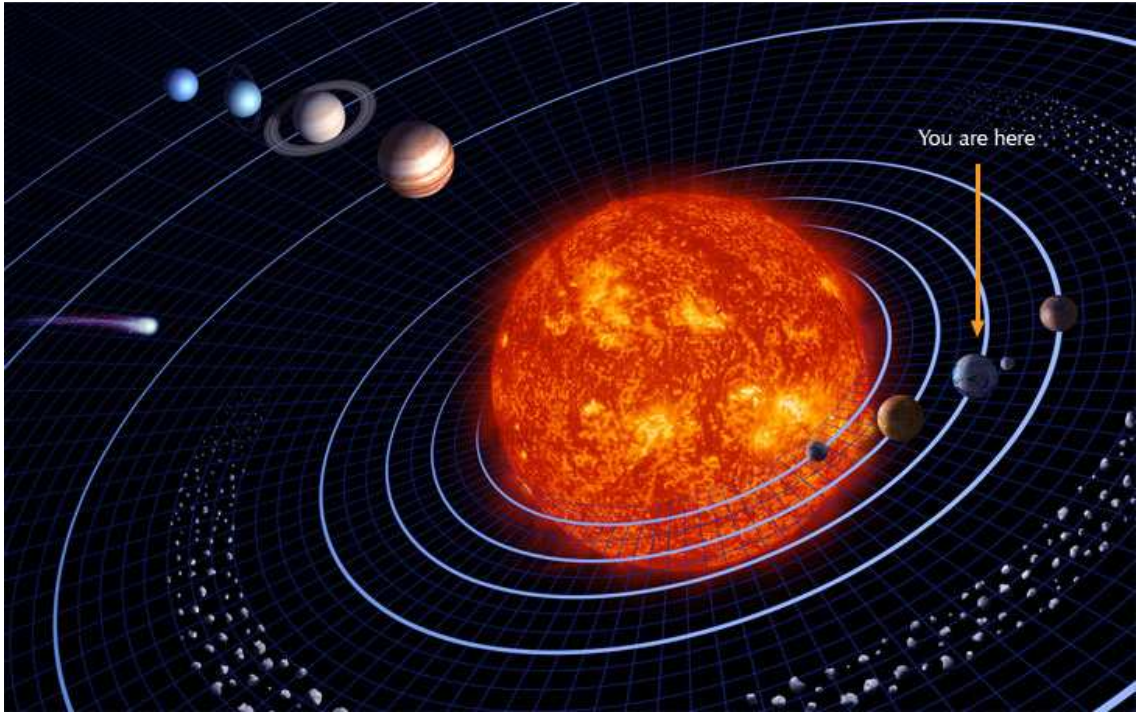


The planets of our solar system orbit the Sun in the same plane:

Sun-Mercury-Venus-Earth-Mars-Jupiter-Saturn-Uranus-Neptune-Pluto

(yes, I did include the newly reclassified, dwarf planet: Pluto)

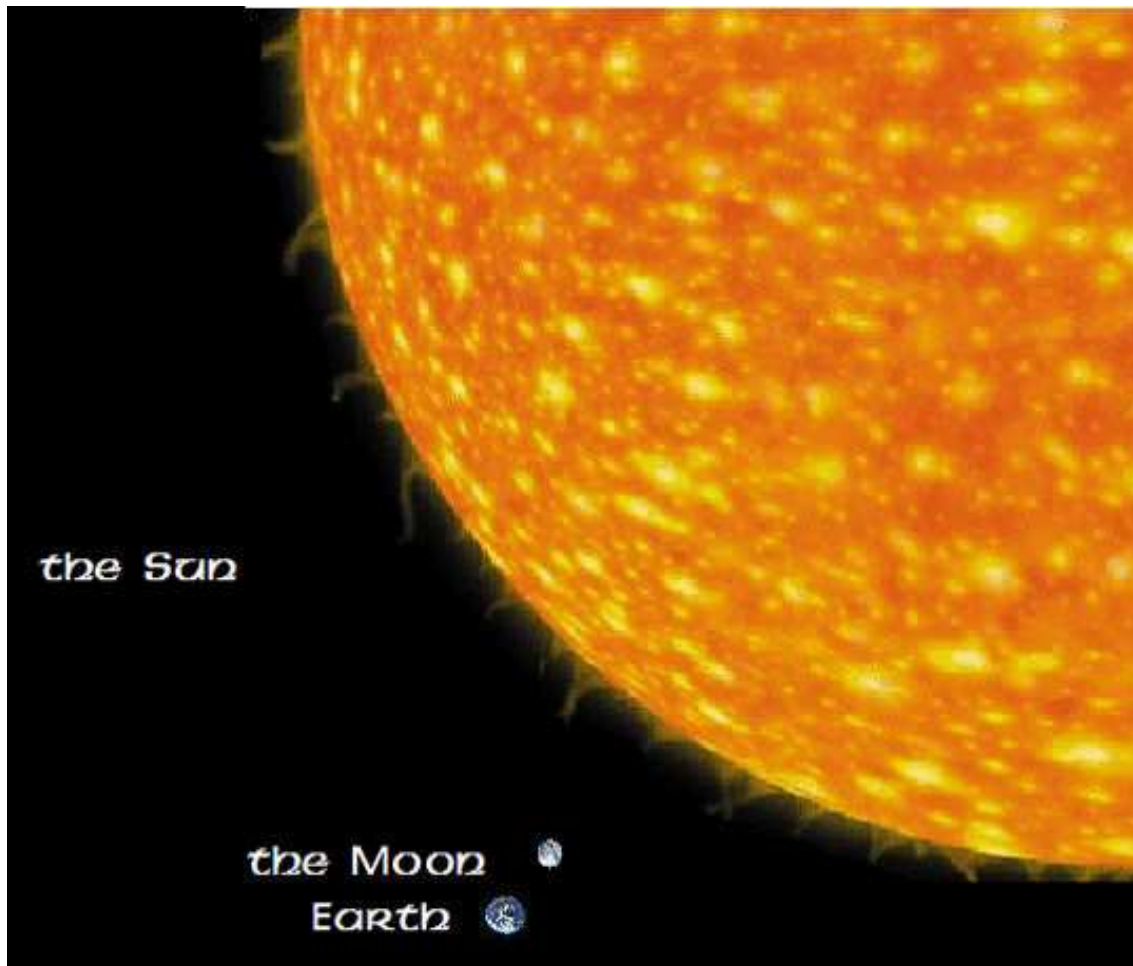


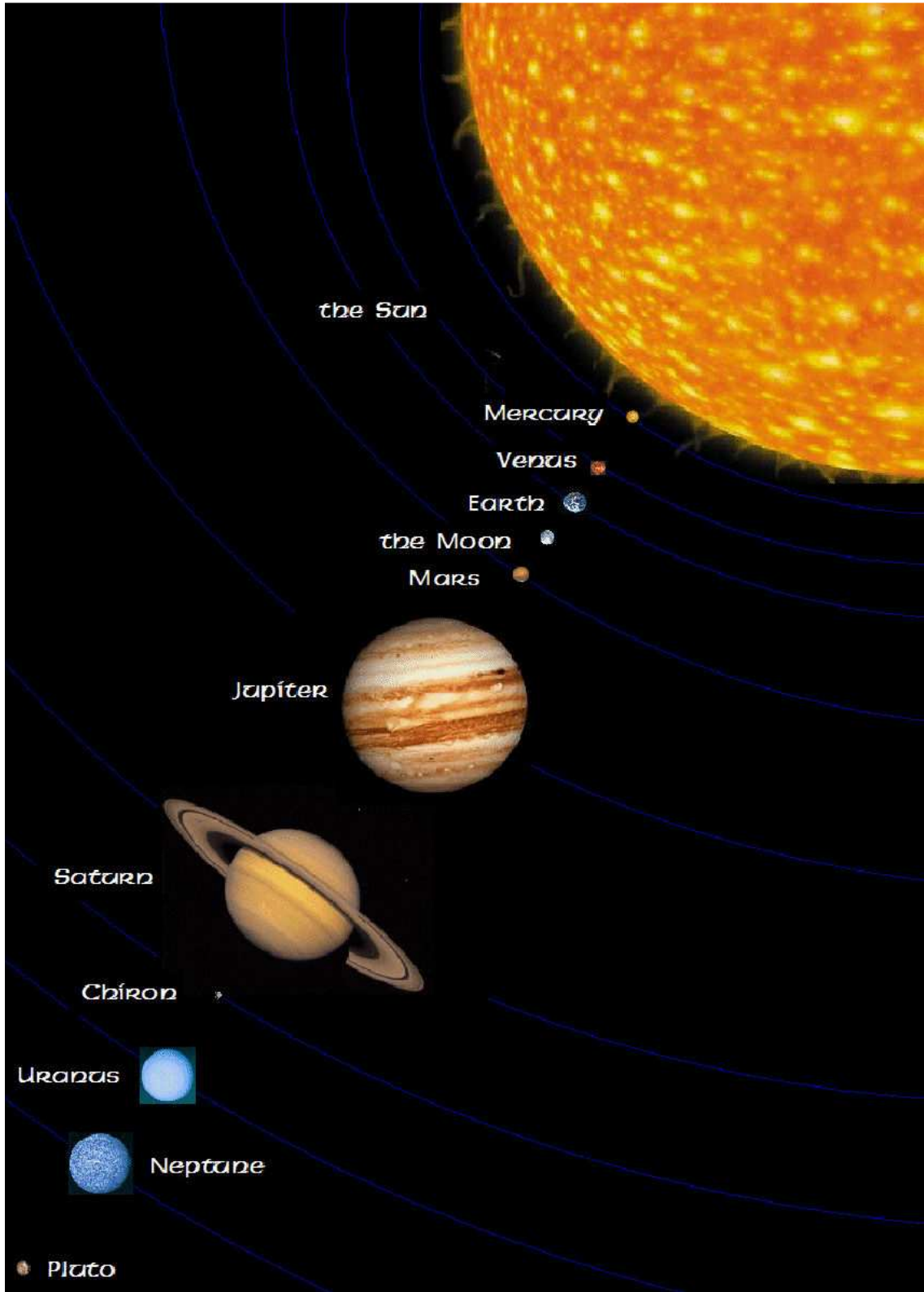


'Conjunction' is the name given to alignments in which two celestial bodies appear to occupy the same portion of space. From the view point of observation, it would seem this way; like an eclipse. However, the observer cannot see the vast distance between the two objects; they just look as if they are lumped together.

orientation a)

one-two-observer





orientation b)

one  
I  
two  
I  
observer



from the view point of observation in orientation b), object one is behind object two. From the viewpoint of orientation a) objects one, two and the observer all occupy completely different spatial positions.

Aspects then, only seem to form alignments from the perspective of the Place of

Observation.

So, the original question, 'what are the planets doing today?', may also invite the reply, 'doing to where?' ...

and, given what we've already found, we really need to know, 'Doing to whom and where?'.

3.

The meaning of meaning; personal and collective perspectives.

Astrology, then, is personal; my eyes are the point of observation and each of us is standing in a different place, so the cosmos seems different to each of us. We are also all experiencing different moods, different values, different levels of knowledge, different beliefs, different life histories and experiences, so even if two people were embracing beneath a star-lit sky and saw a shooting star, it may not mean the same thing to each person.

Q:

What does astrology mean ?

A:

Whatever meaning the interpreter divines.

Q:

Are there set, standard, meanings for astrological things; like Sun signs, or Moon signs, for example ?

A:

Not quite. Each of these things, Sun and Moon signs, are comprised from a language of symbols, not literal descriptions.

A description is specific; the yellow flower, the green lizard. A symbol carries many possibilities, like having a box of possible descriptions, so each Sun and Moon sign holds many possibilities. When the astrologer looks at a person's chart, the combinations and relationships between the various parts suggests which possibilities are most likely to come to the fore; not definitely, but most likely. The astrologer's instincts or intuition, coupled with their level of knowledge of the human condition and coloured by their own mood, values, life experiences and astrological expertise, will divine an interpretation relative to that moment. Ask again in a different moment and a different interpretation may come to the fore.

Q:

But what about planets like Mercury going retrograde (apparent backward motion) - doesn't everyone have communication problems then, don't the planets affect everybody everyday ?

A:

Well, no ...

not quite.

If one asks about the planets in a, 'What are they doing today - and what does that mean for everybody ?', style question, one is asking from the viewpoint that we are all one big lump of consciousness and we all experience the same things in the same ways at the same time ...

We may all be riding the tide of a human wave, but we are still individual droplets all the same. Look at the sea; when a wave breaks upon the shore, it is comprised of many droplets; some of the droplets are riding the top of the wave and some are underneath, either being pressured downwards or supporting the wave, depending on how you look at it.

Ahhhaaa ...

Depending on how you look at it ...

All the droplets in the breaking wave are experiencing the wave from different positions, with slightly different timings in their spatial rhythms. Each position may also be viewed optimistically or pessimistically, so even if you could describe their position in a Newtonian sense (this is here/that is there) the meaning of that position will be interpreted subjectively.

Also ...

if we think of the question, 'What are the planets doing today ?', from the viewpoint of attempting to somehow gauge the atmospheric astral conditions of

the day, like a cosmological weather forecast, we encounter still more things that allude to the personal within the collective frame.

For the last 5 years I have been playing with weather forecasting with astrology - and getting some very interesting results. In 2005, amid all the rain of that year, I sent an email around my contacts saying that the summer of 2006 would be so hot that people would compare it to the great heat of 1976. At the height of the heat, I sent an email around telling people that contrary to expectations, 2007 and 2008 will be experienced as colder than usual. In October 2008 I sent an email saying that the autumn would be squawlish and that from the 27th of December until the 4th of February it would be very very cold indeed. From the 4th of February it would still be cold and that the year will not warm properly until after the Spring Equinox; we are in for a hot May and all this is a prelude before the drought of 2011 ...

and, all this is from the viewpoint of someone in England.

I send these forecasts to everyone, with details of how the interpretations are derived, so people can then play with it themselves; they are not attempts at global forecasting, nor even for somewhere close, like Scotland. I have never been to the Mediterranean so it would be impossible for me to interpret astrological phenomena in the light of that climate; how it feels, how it behaves ...

Is snow good or bad ?

Is rain good or bad ?

Is thunder good or bad ?

it all depends on where you are and in what time you are in. When we are 6, snow may be brilliant. When we are 86 snow may be a problem.

If we are on a picnic with someone delightful, rain may be welcomed or not. If we are obliged to go on a picnic with grumpy relatives, rain may be the last straw for an awful day turned worse.

Thunder may scare us witless or clear the air ...

I know people who love the cold

I know people who detest the cold.

So, even if I am able to accurately say, 'today will be cold' - what on Earth does that mean and what does it signify for my happiness ?

When students discuss Mercury retrograde I always refer them to see what alignments, or aspects, the retrograding Mercury is making to the various factors in their personal chart. To say Mercury is retrograde is akin to saying there are showers today. What that means for who we are today can only be understood in context.

In my opinion ...

Please remember, this entire note is not a set of facts; it is all just how things seems to me.

Whenever anyone asks, 'What are the planets doing today ?', all of the above comes to mind and I go into a light state, or is that a deeper state, of pandemonium.

If we consider life from a quantum perspective 'What are the planets doing ?', becomes, 'What emergent patterns may I find if I look at the positions of the planets today and how these relate to the landscape of my personal chart'.

Or, one may travel a purely divinatory route and seek the Horary answer; 'What is happening in my life today ?', and draw a chart for the moment and place that the question is asked, and to then answer it in compliance with Horary rules.

I hope this note illuminates something of the complexity of astrology in a clear way. Please remember, I am always happy to chat and answer any questions, though, my somewhat pressing need to get on and write the Msc papers is beginning to become urgent.

For reading, I would recommend:

Planets in Transit, Robert Hand

Geoffrey Cornelius, The Moment of Astrology

Howard Sasportas, The Twelve Houses

Martin Shulman, the 4 part set of Karmic Astrology

Bernadette Brady, Astrology a Place in Chaos

in kindness

David