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Liz Greene:

The Horoscope in Manifestation

A psychological approach to transits and progressions

This article is extracted from a seminar given on 8 June, 1996 at Regents College, London as part of the Spring Term of the seminar programme of the [Centre for Psychological Astrology](#).

The nature of prediction

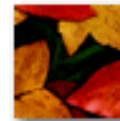
How do we interpret transits and progressions from a psychological perspective? I would like to begin by saying that, although the internal nature of our exploration should be clear to any astrological student with a psychological approach, I am not in any way denying the value and long tradition of predictive work in astrology. But the two are not mutually exclusive. 'Psychological' does not mean only 'inner'. Too many of us have had experience of accurate prognostications of a specific and concrete kind to pretend that the planets are not related to the outer as well as the inner world, or that it is impossible to predict certain kinds of events in certain situations.

Many years ago I gave a seminar for the Wrekin Trust, which was then transcribed, edited and turned into a book called *The Outer Planets and Their Cycles*. In passing, while examining the birth chart of the Soviet Union, I made a prediction about its future. It was really a kind of throwaway, as I did not have much knowledge at the time about the subtleties of mundane astrology. My rather naive prediction was based on the fact that Pluto would creep up to conjunct the Soviet Union's natal Sun in seven years' time. I had observed that every time a powerful transit hit this natal Sun in Scorpio, the Soviet leadership changed. In mundane terms, this is a fairly obvious and simple conclusion,

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since the Sun in a national chart reflects, amongst other things, the nation's leadership.

The reason I expected a collapse rather than yet another typical struggle for the leadership was because Pluto is rather more all-encompassing than the other outer planets. It tends to wipe everything clean, and nothing remains of the original form or structure. There were other transits - for example, the Uranus-Neptune-Saturn conjunction in the first decanate of Capricorn, approaching the Soviet Union's Venus in the 4th house - that suggested that this imminent collapse was going to be like a marriage breakup. It would be a disintegration from within rather than from without, and all the various satellite countries would start asking for a divorce. This was how I read it at the time, and there was no indication in 1982 of the events to come. A new leader was certainly on the cards; but a total collapse was unthinkable. In the subsequent seven years, therefore, I didn't think about it. Then everything came to pass as predicted. There are many situations, both mundane and personal, in which astrologers can make accurate prognostications.

However, focusing solely on the predictive side of astrology is like a medical doctor focusing solely on a bodily symptom, rather than considering the whole individual and the interrelationship of body and psyche. Over the years, I have come to believe that a great deal of what we assume to be fated, in terms of transits and progressions, is not fate at all - it is our unconscious complexes at work. As individuals and as a collective, we unwittingly contribute to, create, or are drawn into situations which enact internal issues - either because we have been avoiding these issues in the past, or because they are simply ripe and the kairos, the right moment, has arrived.

It would be very foolish to imagine that all life situations are the individual's creation, because many are not. One cannot say that six million individual Jews had particular transiting or progressed aspects which meant that they would be taken away to the concentration camps. It is sheer lunacy to suggest such a thing, as well as an avoidance of our unconscious collusion when such acts of brutality occur on a mass level. There are collective movements and upheavals, as well as 'natural' disasters such as floods and earthquakes, which may supersede individual choice, complexes, and will. There may be other, deeper spiritual factors as well, about which I am not in any position to comment.

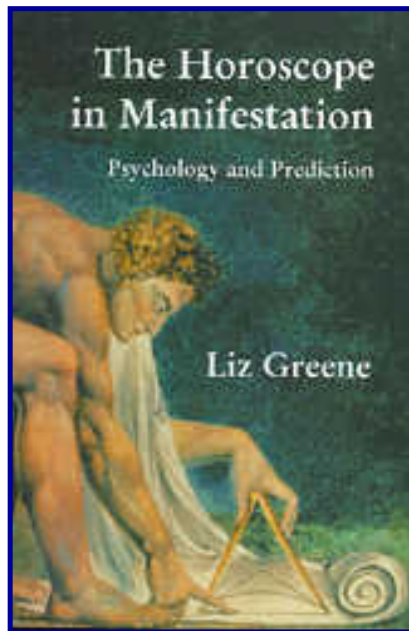
Many people in the astrological world believe in karma. I am not a disbeliever. But I feel it is a lot more complicated than what someone once called the 'ding-dong theory' - one was nice or naughty in one's last life and therefore one is rewarded or punished in this one. As morality is such a deeply subjective and relative thing, I find little value in such simplistic approaches to the realm of the spirit. But there may well be something that continues through and beyond a single mortal incarnation, which accrues 'substance' according to the choices made in each lifetime, and which acts as a magnet for the kind of experiences we attract. This may be a factor above and beyond one lifetime's efforts at consciousness. There may also be factors in the family inheritance over which we have no control. However unfair it may seem, we are the inheritors of family conflicts and complexes that have crystallised over many generations, and these often act as a kind of fate. If such conflicts have remained largely unresolved, we may lack the mobility to choose or avoid certain events, and any individual undoubtedly possesses greater freedom of choice if there is not a heavy backlog of accrued psychological inheritance.

Thus there are many factors other than individual consciousness which determine how transits and progressions are going to be expressed. Nevertheless, a great deal

of what we assume to be predictable may not be predictable at all, once individual consciousness has begun to expand the levels at which we experience reality. For this reason I believe we need to try to live as though we have the freedom to work with our transits and progressions on a psychological level. We may then have room to transform or alter future events, or deal more creatively with anything that is our own creation due to the workings of unconscious complexes. As for those things about which we truly have no choice, we will find out soon enough, and can hopefully learn to accept and live with our necessity in a more tranquil spirit.



One of my main objectives in exploring this theme is to suggest that we may have more freedom than we think, on levels of which we might not initially be aware. If we can learn to work with the planetary movements with more insight and less of a literal, 'Uranus is going over whatnot and therefore such-and-such will happen' approach, we might discover what Pico della Mirandola meant when he said that human beings are co-creators with God. Literal-mindedness doesn't do us justice as astrologers. It can also be downright destructive, because there is, of course, such a thing as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because our perceptions are invariably distorted by our individual complexes, we are inclined to interpret transits and progressions not according to what they might mean, but according to what our complexes tell us they will 'do' to us. Even the most orthodox 'traditional' astrologer is not really able to be objective when it comes to predicting events. We cannot even be certain what an 'event' really is, since so much depends on how and when the person registers what has happened. Our assumptions about the future are just as heavily coloured by our own psyches as our assumptions about the present.



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suffering when it may not be at all necessary to do so.

A psychological approach to transits and progressions is more challenging than a literal one, because it involves taking responsibility for what is symbolised by the configurations in one's birth chart. It also necessitates learning to work with traditional predictive techniques on more than one level. It doesn't mean that there is no value in trying to get a sense of how a planetary movement is likely to come out on a material level. It is as foolish to ignore this dimension of life as it is to ignore the psyche. If one has the progressed Sun square a 2nd house Neptune while transiting Saturn is conjuncting that natal Neptune, it may not be a good idea to go into a business partnership with someone whose background and credentials one knows little about. The concrete application of astrological principles can be of great value to us. But without the background of psychological understanding preceding any literal interpretation, I think we may, much of the time, create our own fate, manifest our own predictions, and generate considerable

Levels of expression

1. Meaning or teleology

Now I would like to examine the different levels on which transits and progressions are likely to be expressed. There are three main levels on which planetary movements seem to operate. Some of you may think of more than three. But as a general overview, I have found this division quite useful. The first level is the one which is likely to be of greatest concern to the spiritually inclined astrologer - the deeper meaning of a particular transit or progressed aspect. By 'meaning', I am referring to its teleology - its ultimate purpose in terms of the evolution of the personality, the soul, or both. Those of us who have a religious or spiritual bent assume that the cosmos has some kind of purpose, and that there is meaning in the experiences which occur in an individual life. Events therefore have a hidden design, a teaching function, and if we can grow because of what happens to us, we are fulfilling some greater spiritual or evolutionary design.

Whether such a cosmic design really exists is an arguable issue. However certain we might be about the objective existence of such a deeper pattern - which is another way of saying that God, or the gods, exist - none of us is in a position to prove it. We may, in fact, project a highly personal perception of meaning onto an utterly arbitrary and unconnected universe. But even if this were the case, a great many people experience life as containing an innate meaning and purpose, and this conviction, whether projection or not, can be life-sustaining. It is psychologically and spiritually creative even if it is not 'true' in any scientific sense.

When we view transits and progressions from this perspective, we ask ourselves, 'What am I meant to be learning from this conjunction of transiting Saturn to my Sun? What is this progression of Venus square natal Pluto meant to be teaching me? What can I discover while transiting Uranus is opposition my Moon? What is the positive potential of this progressed Mars sextile Chiron?' This approach is an extremely important dimension of any transit or progressed aspect. Although I have used the term 'spiritual', it is as psychological as an exploration of parental complexes, because we are considering the planetary movements in terms of the evolution of the psyche. We might see this view as belonging to transpersonal or archetypal psychology, rather than reductive psychology. But it is psychological nevertheless. Without this perspective we are treating astrology, and ourselves, as merely mechanical.

Some astrologers focus almost entirely on this level, and consider other levels too negative or materialistic. They will look at transiting Pluto over natal Chiron, or



progressed Venus square Saturn, and they will talk primarily about what is on offer in terms of growth. Let's say transiting Saturn is coming up to oppose one's natal Sun in the 5th house. If we approach this transit from a teleological perspective, we may talk about a developing sense of who one is as an individual. Out of this transit one could get a stronger sense of identity, a clearer sense of purpose, and a realisation of one's creative talents. The challenges of the material world might hurt, but they can ultimately result in a deeper commitment to a particular vocational direction. Any events which occur, however difficult, are 'meant' to make one more aware of oneself.

The teleological approach on its own is often sufficient with nice transits and progressions, like transiting Jupiter trine the Moon, or progressed Sun sextile Uranus. When we experience harmonious planetary movements,

we tend to 'plug into' a sense of cosmic purpose and goodness, and such interpretations fit how we feel at the time. The meaning and the emotional response at the time of the transit or progressed aspect seem to be in accord. When less attractive planetary movements come along, one can still interpret them in terms of potential. Often such an approach can be wonderfully healing in the midst of turmoil, stress and pain.

We may see a veritable planetary nightmare coming along, and we need to ask ourselves what potential for growth might be hidden beneath all the stress. It is very important that we keep this in mind, and are able to communicate it. But we may also need to remember that, however profound and positive the meaning, the individual experiencing such transits and progressions may not be in any condition to listen to evolutionary possibilities. For many people, particularly those who have been accustomed to viewing reality from a purely material or extroverted perspective, the deeper meaning and potential of a difficult transit or progressed aspect may not be accessible until long afterwards. While they are going through it, they may be aware of, and able to hear about, nothing except their conflict and pain.

2. Emotional stuff

Transits and progressed aspects also involve an emotional level of expression. This too is psychological, but it is more concerned with the individual's responses, both on the feeling level and in terms of the unconscious complexes which are being activated. The past as well as the present is usually involved. Our emotional responses at the time of a transit or progressed aspect are extremely complicated, and a lot depends on how much self-understanding we have achieved, how strong the ego is, what kind of containment we can bring to the feelings which are activated, and how much we know about our parental complexes.

Past experiences are almost invariably activated by any important transit or progression, especially if a similar transit or progression has occurred in the past, and we need to consider what sort of memories and associations we have accrued under successive planetary movements to a particular natal placement. Also, an experience which may be ultimately positive and productive in meaning may, by its very nature,

require suffering as part of its process. All these factors lie on the emotional level, and because of this, the emotional response to a transit may be wildly different from its teleology.

There may appear to be absolutely no relationship between the meaning of a transit or progressed aspect and how one actually feels and behaves at the time. The astrologer, not to mention the client, can get extremely confused by this. I have seen wonderful transits of Jupiter come along which feel anything but wonderful at the time. We tend to sit and wait hopefully for Jupiter, thinking, 'Oh, how splendid, something fantastic is going to come my way when Jupiter conjuncts my Sun.' Something wonderful may indeed happen from the teleological perspective, but what happens in actual life may be an emotional nightmare.

If one is a very earthy person, for example, with lots of planets in Taurus and a strong Saturn and a powerful need for structure and stability, and one has been faithfully married for twenty-three years and has three children, two cars, a safe job, and a mortgage on a large house, and progressed Venus arrives on natal Jupiter in the 5th house, what ensues may be anything but wonderful on the emotional and material level. We astrologers may know that the opening up of the heart which such a progression reflects may ultimately be just what the person needs. But meanwhile, what is he going to tell his wife? And can he afford to pay the court costs?

Much depends on how one has been living one's life, and whether one is in touch with all the different configurations in one's birth chart. It is unlikely that any of us can claim we are totally in touch with everything within ourselves, so it is a question of the degree of unconsciousness. If a person has married early for security or social reasons, and the potential excesses of a 5th house Jupiter have been ruthlessly suppressed, such a progressed aspect may unleash a great deal of conflict and suffering. The person may fall in love with someone other than his or her spouse, and must then face the consequences. Sometimes it is the spouse who acts out the renegade Jupiter. It is not uncommon to see this kind of apparently vicarious experience in the charts of clients, or in one's own charts. One sits waiting for Prince or Princess Charming to arrive when transiting Uranus goes over natal Venus, and one's partner runs off instead. Why are we so reluctant to understand how powerfully the unconscious psyche affects the manner in which a transit or progression is expressed?

Sometimes there may be an experience of great depression with an apparently happy transit. I have seen this very often when the so-called Benefics are involved. Jupiter arrives on one's natal Sun, or progressed Sun conjuncts Venus, and the astrologer assumes that a time of happiness and fulfilment has arrived. Instead, the person plunges into a black hole. Conflicts may be activated by a happy experience, reflecting deep-rooted feelings of guilt linked with the parents. Or it may be that Jupiter makes us aware of un-lived potentials, which can exacerbate feelings of failure. If we are so cemented into a rigid structure that we have cut off all the bridges to future possibilities, we may ask ourselves, 'What is the point of life?' Jupiter can be connected with deep depression because the gap between our potentials and our present situation may be revealed in a blinding moment of painful truth, and this gap may make us feel ashamed of how we have been wasting our lives.



So the emotional response to a transit or progressed aspect may be very different from its meaning. We need to be able to communicate with a client who is in the

throes of an emotional state which bears little resemblance to what we understand as the teleology of the transit or progression. We may be so full of what a particular planetary movement means that we forget that the person may not feel that way at all. He or she may be very frightened by what is happening, even if on a teleological level it is going to be transformative. We may know that the end result will be positive, but the client may not feel it. And if we cannot relate to the immediate emotional situation of the client, and explore any personal psychological issues which could help him or her to find a way through to the deeper meaning, then all our enlightened interpretations will wind up sounding like a load of waffle.

One level without the other is incomplete. It is extremely important to understand how people feel under difficult transits. Many transits are very painful, and it is stupid and short-sighted to pretend that they are not, or that one 'ought' to feel optimistic. If somebody with progressed Venus square natal Chiron is sitting there saying, 'I'm miserable!' we cannot very well respond by saying, 'Nonsense, you should be feeling positive and enthusiastic, because this is a time of healing.' We can certainly talk about healing, but we also need to empathise with the sense of isolation, inferiority and unfair treatment which the person is likely to be experiencing, so that we can make intelligent comments about why he or she is feeling this way. We may also need to talk about the past, especially those times when Chiron was activated by other important transits or progressed aspects. The emotions which accompany profound inner change are often extremely uncomfortable.

In some ways it is the most complex of the three levels of expression, because we are confronted with the mystery of individual consciousness. Emotional reality is the glue binding the level of meaning with the level of manifestation, and it is also the area in which we have some opportunity to exercise individual freedom of choice. By the time a psychological issue is so solidified that it must be expressed in concrete form, we can only plan for the future, but we cannot undo what has been knit into the reality of the present. This is really the ground which Jung and Hillman call the soul, and it is the mediator between spirit and matter.



The person with transiting Saturn opposition natal Sun, who has, in terms of teleology, such a superb opportunity for a greater sense of personal identity, may be deeply depressed and insecure. He or she may feel like a failure, and all the achievements of the past may seem worthless. Parental issues may rise to the surface, particularly those connected with the father and the father-complex. The challenges of this transit may not be perceived as challenges, but as victimisation. Questions about the basis of personal identity may have to be raised, and many attitudes and assumptions about life may need to be cleared away before a healthier world-view can grow in their place. The relationship with the masculine - within oneself and with the men in one's life - may have to undergo a complete re-evaluation. There are a lot of things that people can feel under the transit of Saturn opposition the Sun that are not very pleasant, and when people feel bad, they want to know that the astrologer can recognise their unhappiness and help them to understand its basis. The more spiritually inclined astrologer may need some experience of psychotherapy to work on this level.

3. Materialisation

The third level of transits and progressions is the level of materialisation. It is in this

sphere that many, although not all, older astrological approaches have their focus. Working on this level, the astrologer is primarily concerned with what will happen in the material world under a particular transit or progressed aspect. This may seem a simple approach, but it is actually extremely complex. There are many issues, inner and outer, that may affect whether a planetary movement will materialise on a concrete level, and in what way. One important factor is the individual's complexes, which have a tendency to materialise if they are highly charged and dissociated from ego-consciousness. If there is such a thing as karma, that may also be a factor; and the family inheritance, genetic and psychological, is also relevant. And we should not neglect the importance of the environment, especially the prevailing social attitudes and world-view, because the individual is always circumscribed, to a greater or lesser extent, by the collective of which he or she is a part.

There may also be a destiny in every life - something that the soul or Self may wish to accomplish in a particular lifetime. In Greek philosophical thought there were two kinds of fate affecting the individual, erinyes and daimon. The former might roughly be equated with ancestral inheritance, and the latter with the soul's destiny or purpose. And there may be a collective fate as well - entire nations or peoples may have a specific destiny in terms of human evolution, and a specific ancestral inheritance. As individuals we are sometimes caught in movements that are bigger than we are, because we are part of a larger humanity which is itself attuned to planetary cycles. Therefore we share in the vicissitudes of this larger humanity, and may have to cope with the psychological baggage we inherit from our racial, religious, social and national background.

These are philosophical questions about which each of you will have your own individual beliefs and convictions. I am mentioning them because they may be factors in the materialisation of transits and progressions. Of all these areas I have touched on, the only one where we can be really effective as individuals is the sphere of our unconscious complexes. Our ability to recognise, contain, work with and transform these may ultimately affect the collective of which we are a part. It may even affect our 'karma'. Behind the prediction of any event there is always an individual or a group of individuals. In the end we are forced back into our own gardens to contemplate what is growing there, if we wish to understand why and what kind of events are likely to happen to us.

When does an event occur?

There is another important issue about the materialisation of transits and progressions and the prediction of events. The moment we consider what is going to 'happen', we enter the fraught area of what constitutes an event, and we are in very mysterious terrain. I will give you an example of how complicated it can be.

Recently I had a second session with a client who first came to see me several years ago. I had heard nothing from her in the intervening years. I noticed that transiting Pluto was now approaching her 4th house Chiron in 5° Sagittarius. It transpired that, a few years earlier, her father had died. My client told me that when he died, it hadn't meant anything to her. It was apparently a non-event. She had not had a close relationship with him. She believed that she felt little for him, and therefore when he died it was as though nothing had happened, because he had never been there to start with. This is how she put it. We had discussed her relationship with her father during our first session, and her perceptions had not changed since then. I am not inclined to view Chiron's placement as an area of life where the individual feels nothing. But my client was convinced that this was so, and that was where the discussion about her father ended.

The reason she came to see me for a second session was that she had become very upset about her brother-in-law, who was ill. He had been developing small malignant growths, and although the doctors kept operating and removing these, new ones kept growing, and she feared that he would die. What she couldn't understand was that, although she was not close to this brother-in-law, the idea of his dying filled her with blind terror. Contemplating the death of anyone else, including her husband (she had married since I had last seen her), evoked no such drastic response.

For some reason the role this brother-in-law played in her life was far greater than she had thought. She saw very little of him. They had a friendly relationship, but she wasn't close to the sister who had married him, nor had she ever entertained erotic fantasies about him. She couldn't understand why she was now in a state of extreme anxiety about the mere idea that this man might leave her life. She called her state 'an irrational obsession', which indeed it was. We should also note that, along with transiting Pluto conjunct Chiron, transiting Neptune was crossing and recrossing her natal Sun.

Gradually it became apparent that the real event which underpinned her anxiety was the death of her father. This may sound strange, because he had already died, but on the inner level he had not died at all. There was no grief, no emotional separation, and no sense of loss at the time of the actual death. Yet the presence of Chiron in the 4th, combined with a Sun-Jupiter trine, suggested to me that there were highly ambivalent feelings about this father, extremely positive as well as extremely painful, which had been totally suppressed. This lady was in the habit of suppressing virtually all feeling. Although extremely intelligent, she had a curious blankness, as though there was no one home.

The real death seemed to be coincident with transiting Pluto coming up to natal Chiron, four or five years after the father's physical death. My client's brother-in-law had fulfilled the role of father for her. His Saturn, at 22° Cancer, was exactly opposite her natal Sun at 22° Capricorn. He evidently felt deeply responsible for her, although he saw little of her, and she responded to his Saturnian qualities as a daughter might. She took him for granted; he made her feel safe. He was always there in the background. He was extremely stable. She knew that if she ever got into any trouble she could go to him, financially and emotionally. She had never exercised this option, but she knew he would be there if she needed him. She had allocated to him unconscious feelings of a childlike kind which were bound up with her actual father, with whom she had clearly had a very painful and complicated relationship that she had been denying for most of her adult life.

If we were to try to predict the events suggested by this transit of Pluto over Chiron in the 4th, we might say, 'She is going to move house, or emigrate. Or perhaps she will divorce.' Or, if we are a little braver, we might say, 'Here is the death of a parent, and it may raise some very painful and confusing feelings.' The death of the father is certainly a likely expression of this transit, especially if we take into account the conjunction of transiting Neptune to the natal Sun. But how can the father die if he is already dead?

For my client, the event of her father's death is taking place now. That is her reality, although it may not be yours or mine. This death and all its painful accompanying feelings have nothing to do with the flesh-and-blood father being popped into his coffin. Now, for the first time, my client is facing the fear and panic and grief which she denied when the actual parent made his exit. She has focused these feelings on a man who is not really the person she is feeling the feelings about. Her brother-in-

law is a surrogate, a hook for her unconscious father-complex. Whether or not the brother-in-law will die is not made clear by the transit. In a sense it is not even relevant. It is the possibility of his death which has invoked such a powerful reaction. We might say that his possible death is synchronous with the ripening of a father-complex which is now ready to become conscious.

This kind of dislocation of inner and outer events upsets our notions of what we define as reality. An event, in the sense that it reflects a transit or progressed aspect, may not be quite what we think it is, because the time when concrete things happen to a person may not be a true reflection of when they happen inside. Our emotional recognition of and involvement with the occurrences of our lives are what make an event real. We remember what has impact on us, and the impact may not come at the time of the physical occurrence. The brief example I have given is not uncommon. The time that things happen is not always the same as the time that they physically occur. This is why material events may pass with an inexplicable lack of relevant transits and progressions, even if we expect something important to show up in the chart.

As another example, let's consider the end of a relationship. When does this happen? When the two people physically part? This is obviously not always the case, not even when it is death which has caused the separation. For many people that relationship is still alive and powerful years after the physical separation, and one partner may still be angry, grief-stricken, and unable to get over the loss even though the other partner has long since gone. This is particularly tragic and poignant when a parent loses a child, and cannot process the loss. The child's room may be preserved like a kind of museum, with nothing moved or changed, as though he or she were expected to return at any moment. This can also happen with divorcing couples. The ex-partner's photograph is never removed from the mantelpiece, and no new love is allowed to sit in the old love's favourite chair.

Often people are quite unconscious of this, and are then shocked by their own violent reactions when, sometimes many years later, the ex-wife or ex-husband remarries. All hell breaks loose, as though the vanished partner has been put on ice in a secret compartment of the soul. Even though he or she has gone physically, the beloved presence has still been there internally, and when the ex-partner makes a commitment elsewhere, all the grief and pain are experienced as though the separation has only just happened. In fact it has only just happened, although it may have happened on the concrete level years before. And that may be when we see progressed Venus conjunct Pluto, or transiting Saturn over Venus, or transiting Uranus opposition the Moon in the 7th house.

When relationships end, they may end for only one of the two people. Also, relationships sometimes end long before they actually end. A couple may remain living together all their lives, but the life left the relationship two or ten or thirty years before. This also may be reflected by the relevant transit or progressed aspect, even though there is no physical event. Movements in the chart may describe the end of something, but there may be no visible end, no concrete event. Or the relevant transit or progressed aspect may describe the end of something long after everyone else says, 'Oh, it ended years ago.' Endings, like beginnings, are a highly individual business. Different people take different lengths of time to process events. Some events mean nothing to one person, and a great deal to another. Death itself means different things to different people, and one person may be full of anger and terror and deny his or her mortal illness to the very last, while another is peacefully resigned to death as a rite of passage years before the actual passing.

The perception of an event - its timing, its significance, and the interpretation we give

it - is described by the synchronous transit or progression, and thus the real 'events' described by planetary movements are those occurring in the psyche. An external event itself may or may not be relevant to the individual. If one has a powerful transit or progressed aspect, an event may have great significance and can completely overturn one's life; but if the same event occurs at another time, when there is not such a powerful concordance of aspects, it is experienced entirely differently and may not be felt as 'major'. The event itself is not that important as an objective entity. But what one experiences internally attaches importance and meaning to the event, according to the transit or progression coincident with it.

I know this is a difficult thing to grasp, because our habitual way of interpreting reality is that anything happening 'out there' is objective. The physical manifestation may be



objective (although that too is open to question), but the way we perceive it is not. It is very disturbing to explore the ways in which our perceptions colour what is 'out there'. And our perceptions are what the horoscope describes, including the transits and progressions over natal placements. When transiting Saturn is on the Moon, we are predisposed to perceive and respond to situations in a certain way, which is likely to be more realistic, and more negative, than when transiting Neptune is on the Moon. When transiting Uranus is on Mercury we perceive truths different from the ones we perceive

when transiting Chiron is on Mercury. When transiting Jupiter is on Venus, we experience people differently from when transiting Pluto is on Venus. Is it the people that have changed, or is it ourselves? And if it is indeed the people, might our changing perceptions influence the kind of people we attract, as well as the attitudes they show to us?

If a separation occurs during a transit of Uranus trine Venus, it will have a completely different feeling from one which occurs under a transit of Pluto opposition Venus. In the eyes of others, the event may look the same. Joe Bloggs leaves his wife and runs off with his eighteen-year-old secretary. But if Joe's wife has Uranus trine Venus at the time, she will probably heave a great sigh of relief to be rid of him and free at last. If she has Pluto opposition Venus, the most bitter thing about the whole situation is the betrayal. If progressed Venus opposes Neptune, she may feel victimised. If transiting Saturn squares Venus, she may be preoccupied with material survival and a gnawing sense of inferiority in the face of a humiliating rejection.

We should never underestimate the importance of the subjective dimension of events. How an event feels, how it is understood and perceived, and when it really registers as a reality will be totally different according to the prevailing astrological 'weather' as well as the natal chart, because the individual is receiving the event in an individual way. This complicates our definitions of what constitutes an event. The level can vary enormously, and so can the timing. And the event reflected by a particular planetary movement may or may not be connected with a physical happening.

Things become even more complicated when we consider the heavy planets. They may hang about forming particular aspects to the birth chart for two or three years, or, in the case of Pluto, even longer, moving back and forth as they make their stations direct and retrograde. A whole series of apparently unconnected events may occur during the time of these outer planet transits, and all these events will be perceived through a lens coloured by the particular tint of the transit. Thus all the events that occur during such a period seem to carry a similar feeling or meaning.

If those same events happened at any other time, they would not be experienced in the same way. They would seem random. We would not say, 'Ah, there is a connection here between my father's death two years ago, the fight I had with my employer last year, and the new love affair I have just started this month; it is all part of the same package.' It is the transit or progression which reflects this sense of concurrence, not the events themselves. We tend, in the main, to remember periods of our lives, rather than one specific item after another, and this sense of a period, a specific time span coloured by certain kinds of happenings, is deeply subjective and linked with the presiding transits and progressions of the time. We have to be extremely careful when we try to define an event, because the more closely we look, the more subjective it becomes. An examination of aspects at the time of an individual's death is a vivid example of this. By this I mean not only the aspects occurring in the chart of the person who dies, but also those occurring in the charts of those close to the dead person. We might think that death is such a terribly specific event, which occurs at a particular moment, and we can set up a chart for that precise moment. But no astrologer has successfully come up with a typical 'death signature' - it looks different in every chart. And the aspects which are building up, sometimes for several years, may be as relevant as those occurring at the precise moment. It is possible that some deaths really occur on the inner level long before the actual death, and reflect something within the individual that has 'given up'.

Trying to make sense of the materialisation of transits and progressions means that we need to try to keep in mind all three levels of expression, including the emotional and teleological levels. These latter two have a direct bearing on the actuality of events. Not only are all three levels relevant, but it is also wise to remember all the complexities of each of these levels. Only when we have got a bigger picture of what is going on can we responsibly say, 'There is a likelihood that such-and-such will happen.' Without this rounded picture, we are throwing darts with a blindfold on. We might get a bulls-eye, but we might also hit someone in the eye.

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