**Let Us Ignore the Dwarfs!**

Should Astrologers use the Transneptunians (TNs, the Planets beyond Neptune), or “dwarf planets” at all? I suggest that the chart can be constructively limited to the Cisneptunians (the Planets this side of Neptune) plus Pluto.

**Reason #1: Individual Transneptunians are Weak**

My study “Planetary Strengths” showed that the individual Transneptunian contributes very little to the horoscope. The Table below suggests that more than 80% of the descriptive power of a horoscope lies in the Planets SA, JU, MO, UR, MA, VE, SU, ME, NE (in descending order).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PLANET | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION | SHARPE RATIO |
| SATURN | 0.949031 | 0.047351992 | 20.04204874 |
| JUPITER | 0.946055 | 0.050644239 | 18.68041299 |
| MOON | 0.926836 | 0.061707702 | 15.01977289 |
| URANUS | 0.880284 | 0.107174652 | 8.213550911 |
| MARS | 0.773077 | 0.140787816 | 5.491079663 |
| VENUS | 0.667011 | 0.191577059 | 3.48168587 |
| SUN | 0.63161 | 0.18534388 | 3.407772845 |
| MERCURY | 0.615487 | 0.191759396 | 3.209685999 |
| NEPTUNE | 0.660602 | 0.230440169 | 2.866695054 |
| QUAOAR  | 0.45819 | 0.176467403 | 2.596458043 |
| PLUTO | 0.539603 | 0.212670002 | 2.537279501 |
| MAKEMAKE | 0.508652 | 0.21958073 | 2.316470343 |
|  ORCUS  | 0.609666 | 0.265712647 | 2.294456223 |
|  HAUMEA  | 0.470078 | 0.216695401 | 2.169305257 |
|  ERIS  | 0.280401 | 0.138909455 | 2.018588325 |
|  SEDNA  | 0.264234 | 0.135798875 | 1.945770972 |

Admittedly, the study was based solely on occupations, and a study on personality might have different results. In particular, the low power of the Sun is disturbing, and suggests this to be the case.

However, the recent report of yet another such body (temporarily to be called “Farout”) has caused me to reflect on the ever-increasing problem of the Transneptunians.

**Reason #2 Transneptunians are contradictory**

We’ve seen from some of the statistical work I've done that not only is a TN's influence weak, it often contradicts the influence of a different TN. For instance, when we identify the principles of a given dwarf, we are in danger of neglecting a contrary principle from a second.

Imagine we only knew the Planets Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars. Then we discover Jupiter, and quickly find that he represents a powerful influence for joy and optimism in the psyche. But still we find that some people are much given to melancholia and pessimism, even those that have our new Planet in a prominent position. We cannot properly interpret Jupiter's contribution until we have found Saturn!

I wonder if Uranus (specific, sudden, and drastic) caused as much trouble before Neptune (vague, gradual, and gentle) was discovered?

**Reason #3: The Signs have significance**

I believe that if the average TN had any profound influence, we'd never have achieved an understanding of the Signs. There may be 200 Transneptunian bodies large enough to classify as "dwarf planets" within the Kuiper Belt, so there is on average one every 1.8 degrees, or around 16 per Sign. Despite their slow orbits, they must have changed Signs dozens of times, and configurations (with each other and the other Planets) many hundreds of times, over the last 2000 years. But, over all that time, the interpretation of the Signs has been consistent.

Suppose dwarf planets A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, and P in that order were in Aries when the tropical Zodiac was first used. We would expect these to have some bearing on the nature of persons born at the time, and since they couldn’t be observed, their contributions would have been lumped together under our interpretation of Aries. But, taking the average orbits to be 1000 years (say, 3 years to traverse a degree), after 30 years planets L to P would have left the Signs they were in, planets A to K would have changed position, and planets Q, R, S, T, and U would have moved into different Signs.

But in fact, the situation is even more complicated than that. Beyond the Belt, but still in orbit around the Sun, there may be *ten thousand* such bodies. A roiling mass of correspondences. That’s around 30 for every degree! Surely, only if they have a limited number of representatives could their voices possibly be heard.

If, however, we *ignore all the TNs*, they become a kind of "background noise" that should mostly cancel out. This is, I think, necessarily the case.

**Reason #4 The symbology of Neptune**

Ancient models of the world had this in common; the world of humanity lay at the centre of a continent of land surrounded by ocean. This ocean marked the boundary of all that concerned us, all that we could use and make sense of. The naming of the Planet was bound to suggest that it is Neptune’s orbit that marks precisely this boundary in Astrology, but this naming was undoubtedly synchronistic. James Challis, who missed the opportunity to discover Neptune (and Neptune rules such failures) wanted to call the new world “Oceanus”, a name with all the same connotations. The first name put forward, however (by Johann Galle) was Janus- the Roman god of duality, beginnings and endings, doorways, gates, transitions, and the measurement of time. So had this name been adopted, the argument would still stand- Janus is still a God of limits. (It is also likely that the Planet would again have been quickly associated with Pisces- a dual Sign, concerned with the limits of experience, and with prisons and isolation. Pisces’ fish look both ways, as do Janus’ two faces.)

**Reason #5 Pluto may do all the work for us**

Pluto may be an exception to this. The principle of Pluto is "news from the underworld", unconscious influences exploding into the light of day. Does this not suggest that, to a certain extent, Pluto *represents* the other TNs? It was discovered much earlier than the others (in 1930, by Clyde William Tombaugh- Haumea was next, in 2004) - the first part of the Transneptunian Solar System to be brought to light. If the TNs are the turmoil of the unbconscious, Pluto may be the only part we can make sense of. Pluto is King of the Underworld, is he not? Though shop steward of the Underworld may be more appropriate.

Pluto is certainly exceptional among the known TNs. It’s the largest Transneptunian known, though Eris is more massive. Pluto is unique for its moon system- all the other known TNs have only one or two small moons, but Pluto has five- Charon, Styx, Nix, Kerberos and Hydra. Charon is huge: if it weren't orbiting Pluto, it would be the sixth-largest known dwarf planet. Pluto and Charon form a genuine 2-planet system, having a centre of gravity between the two. So physically, Pluto has a degree of complexity that no other known TN possesses. Pluto is the only Transneptunian that dips inside Neptune's orbit- so she is a messenger from beyond, physically as well as symbolically. (Pluto is, perhaps, the serpent Jormungandr in Neptune’s surrounding sea.) Pluto's connection with the 8th House (collective property, the commons) is also suggestive in this respect.

The proposed Planet X may be another kettle of fish altogether, but I think not—

 remember, Neptune's influence isn't particularly strong, so why should a more distant giant's be?- and possibly there will be some surprising resonance between X's orbit and Pluto's (yes, that last bit is very speculative).

Only Orcus has strength on a par with Pluto, and Orcus is a special case- the “Anti-Pluto” in astronomical terms, its analysis suggests that it is astrologically Pluto’s complement or broken mirror. Orcus is the underworld ogre, the trivial but cruel goblin to Pluto’s King. Where Pluto is depth, and the bringing out of things (feelings, repressed incidents, hates and fears), Orcus may be shallowness, the debasement of the profound into the tacky. Quoting from my earlier essay, “Pluto’s principle is that of transformation and sublimation. Harmful tendencies can be turned into creative ones- but repressed talents or grudges always emerge destructively. There is in fact a term ‘desublimation’ in art (due to one Herbert Marcuse), referring to the process by which true art is exploited and made banal- so it is interesting that SEX WORKERS, the exploited, are high, and that ART features strongly.”

**In conclusion**

I suggest that the Planets used most constructively in the Horoscope are Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. To these, the Moon’s Nodes should be added- Hindu Astrology still uses only these, with the traditional seven, and clearly achivs good results (M. S. Smith, in *The New Astrologer*, suggests that this is due to the comprehensive system of harmonics used in this discipline).

What is the view of the Forum?