

THE REAL SCOOP ON MUTUAL RECEPTION

The natal horoscope is the blueprint that reveals the natural scope of our creative potentials. It also reveals what blocks or what stands within us to either aid or inhibit the expression of such talents and abilities. The positions and interrelationships of the planets clearly indicate such circumstances. But we are not limited by our horoscopes, by any means. As the Path of unfolding presence of the Soul reveals itself, we gradually obtain the potential to co-create our own destiny. This is free will in action and when, through the Soul, free will is connected to Love, this becomes goodwill.

—A.O.

One of the most important factors in astrological delineation is a feature called “dispositorship.” The word itself comes from the Latin verb *disponere*, meaning, “to put in different places.” A planetary dispositor in astrology has come to mean a planet that has the ability to move the energy of another planet (or house) to a different location in the chart. For the astrological student, the discovery of the structure of dispositorship in the natal map allows him or her to perceive a true ordering of planetary powers.

Mutual reception is a facet of dispositorship that intimately links planets and/or houses. Planets are said to be in mutual reception when they are placed in each other’s signs in the same horoscope. Mars in Aquarius and Uranus in Scorpio, Jupiter in Leo and the Sun in Sagittarius, the Moon in Virgo and Mercury in Cancer, are all examples of this kind of mutual dispositorship. When you are interpreting the chart, it is important to view any such planetary connections as a pair of influences. The two planets in questions work together, enhancing or debilitating their various functions. Although each of the planets in a mutually receptive pair ought to be considered individually, the effects of the combined energies existing between the two bodies also exists and needs to be interpreted as such. It is only by so doing that the full range of implications of *both* planets may be fully comprehended.

There are two other factors that complicate but also complete the matter of your analysis of planets in mutual reception. The first is that the astrologer has to consider which of the two planets dominates the mutuality of the reception. If we have Venus in Pisces and Neptune in Libra for example, Venus in Pisces would be the stronger as Venus is in exaltation and thus strengthened in this sign while its “partner” Neptune is “comfortable” but otherwise neutral in Libra. If the two were Mercury in Sagittarius and Jupiter in Gemini, *both* planets would be seen to be weakened as both are in detriment in their opposite signs. One would have to look elsewhere (such as the house positions, other planetary aspects and if there is a sign of Jupiter or a sign of Mercury on the Ascendant) to assess which of the two is the stronger. Secondly, are the planets in mutual reception also connected by one

of the six major aspects: conjunction, sextile, square, trine opposition, and inconjunction? If we combine these two factors we come up with an important **Astrological Rule**: When two planets are in mutual reception and also connected by one of the six principle aspects, the effects of the mutual reception are either strengthened for the good or debilitate the planets even further depending on the nature of the aspect.

The astrological student should also keep in mind that the houses in which planets in mutual reception are found are also closely linked. Thus if Venus in Cancer in the Tenth House were sextile to the Moon in Taurus in the Eighth, the positive energies of this combination would extend themselves over into an harmonious linkage of these two houses and their functions in the natal chart. *This would be especially the case if Cancer and Taurus were the signs of the cusps of their respective house placements.* Remember that in natal astrology we are always, always seeking to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of the planets and houses in order to give them proper emphasis and priority in our analysis.

There are literally dozens of possibilities for mutual reception in the natal chart. As this is such a common factor in natal analysis, it is impossible for us to write about all of them in the space of an article of this length.¹ But let us examine a number of mutual receptions in order to give the reader some insights as to how to interpret such planetary relationships when they are found in a chart. To help us in this endeavor, the following is a table of planetary powers.

Planet	Honor	Detriment	Exaltation	Fall
Sun	Leo	Aquarius	Aries	Libra
Moon	Cancer	Capricorn	Taurus	Scorpio
Mercury	Gemini/Virgo	Sagittarius/Pisces	Aquarius	Leo
Venus	Taurus/Libra	Scorpio/Aries	Pisces	Virgo
Mars	Aries/Scorpio	Libra/Taurus	Capricorn	Cancer
Jupiter	Sagittarius/Pisces	Gemini/Virgo	Cancer	Capricorn
Saturn	Capricorn/Aquarius	Cancer/Leo	Libra	Aries
Uranus	Aquarius	Leo	Scorpio	Taurus
Neptune	Pisces	Virgo	Cancer	Capricorn

¹ The reader may wish to consult my book *Rulers of the Horoscope* (The Crossing Press, 2000) for a more lengthy discussion of this and many other important factors of dispositorship.

Pluto Scorpio/Aries² Taurus/Libra Aquarius Leo

Sun in Aries and Mars in Leo: The first question we ask ourselves is: which of these planetary combinations is the stronger? The answer is the Sun in Aries. Although Mars is quite potent and very comfortable in the sign of the fiery Lion, the Sun in Aries is in the sign of its exaltation. Thus we can imagine a person with this combination in his or her natal chart to be a “super Aries”, or an individual who has little trouble projecting his or her fiery creative will. This would be even further emphasized should Mars in Leo and the Sun in Aries also be in trine. As it involves the ruling planet of the chart, we would have an even more willful and dominant personality if Leo or Aries were rising making this trine the predominate aspect of the horoscope. We must keep in mind that there are many, often contradictory elements in a given map. Thus the ease of self-projection indicated by this mutually receptive trine would be strongly modified to the contrary should Capricorn be on the Ascendant and Saturn square either Mars or the Sun. As the reader has no doubt found out, astrology and natal analysis in particular are very complex studies!

Sun in Capricorn and Saturn in Leo: Which is the stronger? As Saturn is in detriment in Leo, the Sun in Capricorn *by default* is the stronger. Why do we say “*by default*”? The Sun is happiest and shines most brightly when it is in the fiery signs. Its energy is diffused in air, obscured in water and buried in earth. In soul-centered astrology, the potential of the Sun in Capricorn gives rise to the Initiate (i.e. Christ is born when the Sun is in Capricorn). The Initiate is a man or woman who has transcended the urge for personal power and achievement, personal wealth and worldly status and who by his or her service to humanity, reveals the power of what we call, the “True Spiritual Sun/Son.” But such an exalted status is not the common lot of humanity. A person with a highly evolved consciousness could use this mutual reception of Sun and Saturn in order to express “the will-to-good,” but an ordinary fellow with this combination would most likely go through life seeking to express one’s personal will with the urge to dominate the environment accordingly. This would be especially true if either Leo or Capricorn were the rising sign. Thus frustration he or she would encounter in this willful urge would be even more emphasized if the Sun in Capricorn were inconjunct Saturn in Leo. The reverse could also be true, i.e. one of the major karmic inferences in an incarnation with this mutual reception would be for the individual to learn how to develop and properly use an

² Although some would dispute this listing, there are a number of astrologers including the writer, who view Pluto as the co-ruler of Aries

underdeveloped sense of willpower. As is always the case, the entire horoscope would have to be examined.

The Sun in Libra and Venus in Leo: Which is the stronger? Venus in Leo. The Sun is in fall in the sign of the Scales. Its rays lose their potency through a wavering inconsistency especially when the individual is forced to act independently for any period of time. Libra's greatest strength (and weakness!) is when he or she is interacting in partnership or in social settings. The creative and attractive force of Venus is dramatically focused in Leo, although the "urge to merge" of the Divine Aphrodite as well as her esthetic sensibilities will tend to be personal to the extreme. The energies of this mutual reception however, especially if there be a sextile between the Sun and Venus in these signs, generally yields an artistically oriented, socially graceful and often physically beautiful individual. These qualities would be emphasized if either Libra or Taurus were rising. Even if there were a semi-square (45 degrees of separation) between these two planets, i.e. Venus at 16 Leo and the Sun at 2 Libra, not much harm could arise. This mutual reception is "soft" by its very nature as the two planets in question are quite compatible. The challenging nature of the semi-square linking this mutual reception would not deny having partners—even good ones! On the contrary, this connection by mutual reception between the Sun and Venus would tend to stimulate an intense and passionate love life and would definitely enhance the fun factor in intimate relationships. Any problems that could arise would come from the fact that the Venus in Leo, Sun in Libra person would tend to create a relationship on his or her concept of what is fun and what is passionate which may or may not be the same concept as the chosen beloved.

Mars in Capricorn and Saturn in Aries: Which is the stronger? Mars in Capricorn. Mars is exalted in the Mountain Goat and Saturn in is fall in the Ram. Mars in this position would tend to stimulate and give focus and structure to personal drives and ambitions. Saturn in Aries on the other hand, would tend to inhibit this martial "go-for-it" attitude by limiting its scope of effectiveness based on the individual's need to create his own system of rules and regulations. This instead of penetrating (Mars) one's ambitions into a larger social structure (Capricorn) and making use of larger, collective resources, the individual would tend to shape those resources according to a sense of personal limitations and timing (Saturn in Aries). The latter is often in conflict with the larger social world in which he is a part (Saturn in fall). Should there be a square between Mars in Capricorn and Saturn in Aries (which can easily be the case), such an aspect would only enhance the natural antipathy existing between both these planets and their respective signs. The square between Mars and Saturn links them in a constant

battle for dominance. Mars says, “Go!” and Saturn says, “No!” This is very much like driving a highly tuned car with the brakes on while all the time attempting to break records at the Indy 500.

But what would occur if Mars in Capricorn were trine Saturn in Aries? This could happen if Mars were in the first degrees of its sign and Saturn in the last degrees of its position (for example, Mars at 2 Capricorn and Saturn at 29 Aries, yielding a trine of 117 degrees well within the 120 degree orb for this aspect). Although the struggle between these two very different forces would still exist, the individual could find that life would more easily provide some solutions to this “stop and go” kind of tension. The individual could more easily learn how to create the proper boundaries and structures for his particular goals, recognizing the relationship that has to exist between the personal ordering of events (Aries) and the exigencies of the social order in which one lives (Capricorn). Thus through successful trial and error, the individual would come to learn how to minimize the inherent frustration that exists within the energies of this mutual reception.

A complication arises if both planets are in mutual reception but are also in the signs of their detriment. This can only occur in the case of so-called, “reversed pairs”: Venus in Aries or Scorpio and Mars in Libra or Taurus, Mercury in Sagittarius or Pisces and Jupiter in Gemini or Virgo, the Moon in Capricorn and Saturn in Cancer, the Sun in Aquarius and Uranus or Saturn in Leo, Neptune in Virgo and Mercury in Pisces, and Venus in Scorpio with Pluto in Taurus. Should any of these pairs also be in opposition, the resulting mutual reception could be even more deleterious as here you are compounding weakness upon weakness.³ In terms of delineation, you still need to determine which of these two planets will be of the greater influence. This requires that the astrological student know the “theme” of the horoscope.

Let’s say that you are studying a chart that Cancer rising. The Moon, as the ruler of the Ascendant, plays one of the most if not *the* most vital roles in the entire nativity/life of the person. If the Moon were in Capricorn (its detriment) and Saturn in Cancer (*its* detriment), the Moon as ruler of the chart would be the more debilitated and hence debilitating to the native. The Moon’s house position would thus be an area of serious conflict for the individual. As another example, let’s say that you are looking at a chart with Sun in Scorpio with an Aries Ascendant (that is conflict enough!) and Mars were placed in Taurus in opposition to Venus in Scorpio. As we can see, both these planets are

³ In the case of Mercury and Jupiter squares are also possible, i.e. Mercury in Sagittarius square to Jupiter in Virgo. In the case of Mars and Venus conjunctions may also be found, i.e. Venus at 28 Aries conjunct Mars at 2 Taurus. Such conditions would also prejudice the horoscope.

in their detriment but Mars is much more of a debilitating influence to the native as it rules both the Sun and rising sign.

Yet another factor in the correct judgment of mutual reception occurs should one of the planets be in its exaltation and the other in a neutral sign. This is the case when Jupiter is in Cancer and the Moon is in either Sagittarius or Pisces. Here the Moon rules Cancer but Jupiter in this sign is in its exaltation as well as the ruler of the Moon's sign placement. The influence of Jupiter would thus tend to predominate *unless* Cancer was rising in which case there would be ample reason to give the Moon increased influence. This example leaves little doubt that it is in the ability to synthesize the various elements of a horoscope that the real art of the astrologer expresses itself.