

Chapter 6

SEARCHING FOR PARENTAL SIGNIFICATORS IN THE NATAL HOROSCOPE

Where are our parents shown in the *natal* chart? Are they described by planets placed in the 4th and 10th Houses, the signs on the cusps of these houses, and/or the planets ruling them? Or are they somewhere else?

It is often quoted that the 'shaping' parent (the one who most prepares or conditions the child for the outer world) is indicated by the 10th-House complex, while the more 'hidden' parent is linked to the 4th. Some texts state that the father *is* the 4th House because – in spite of natural links to the feminine, maternal (fourth) sign of Cancer – this is the house associated with where we've come from (the father's 'seed') and the family name.

It may be important, even vital, to assign parents to specific houses when practising horary astrology but in my view, a house in natal astrology does not govern a specific person. Each house represents a *place* of activity, an *area* of life. Planets in signs show the players and their motivations, while aspects between planets reveal the storyline possibilities, but the houses show *where* on the set the performance will take place. People may be 'projected' onto – or encountered in – a particular house (area of life), but their influence can be seen elsewhere, too.

If we are products of our parents (and ancestors), then their influence, ambitions, desires and fixations – the various examples they set in our lives – should be seen *throughout* our horoscope in quite specific ways. For example, if our attitude toward money is formed by interaction with one or both parents, this will be seen by our natal 2nd-House complex (planets in that house, the sign on the cusp and its ruler) and possibly by transits, progressions, or directions at the time when issues involving money arise. By studying this house, we can uncover our attitude toward assets, earnings and possessions, much of which may have been shaped by our parents. (Planets in signs, of course, play a major role in

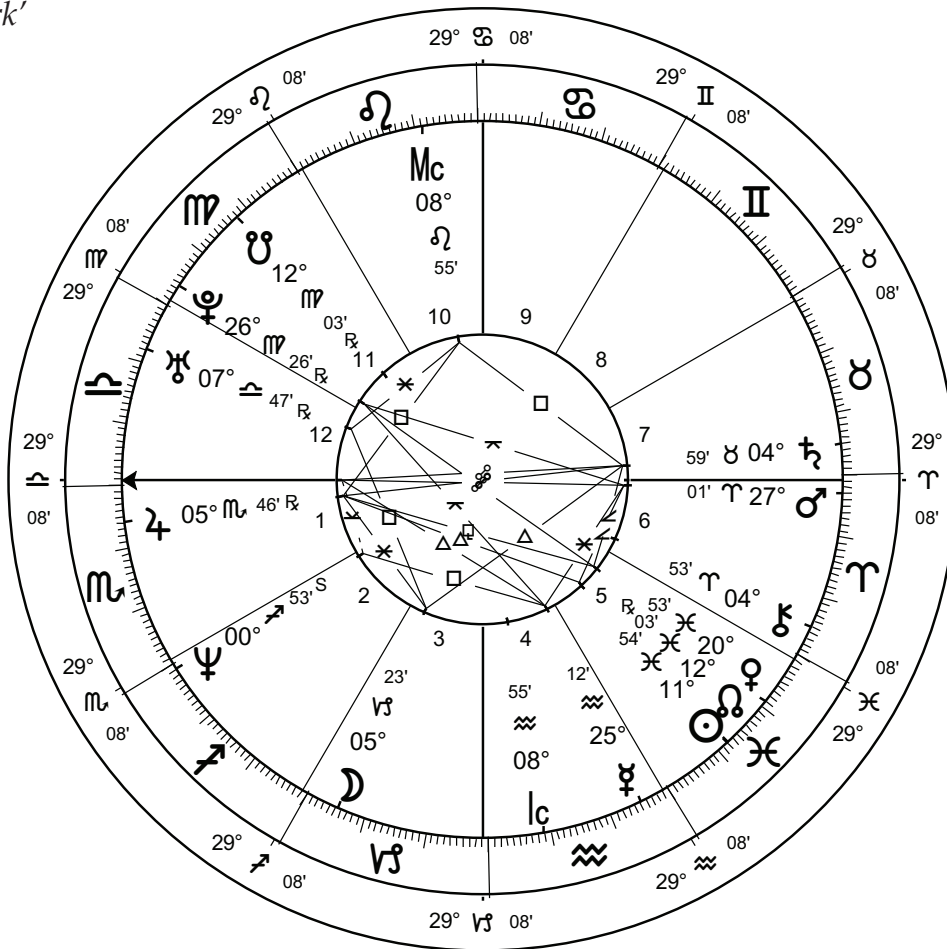
behaviour: the Moon reveals attitudes towards everyday spending and what we consider necessary purchases for comfort, survival and shelter, while Venus shows the ways in which we spend money on indulgences – the type of goods we splash out on to pleasure ourselves.)

If we attempt to assign a parent to a house, it's important to remember that parents usually come in pairs. For example, some cookbook interpretations would consider Neptune in the 4th House to indicate the possibility of a child having an absent father. But what of the child's mother? Perhaps she longed (Neptune) for a better life or resigned (Neptune) any hope of fulfilling her own ambitions. Is her life (or at least the image of her life as seen by the child) illustrative of Neptune, too? Was she perceived as feeling lost or victimized when her husband left? Was there an attempt to blot out the misery of her less-than-ideal life? Did she consider herself a martyr or yearn for life to be more magical? Perhaps she searched for greater meaning or spirituality. If we were to assign one parent to a house in this circumstance, which one would it be?

When I began researching parental signifiers, a student of mine, **Mark** (chart opposite), with Mercury in Aquarius in the 4th House told me the story of his childhood. His father was a Socialist who had Marxist literature around the house and often engaged the family in political discussions and social debates. His mother was a 'very sociable person who often invited friends over to the house', where they would chat about anything and everyone. Here, the 4th-House Mercury in Aquarius appears to reveal the influence of both parents. But more significantly, it tells of his *home environment*; it speaks of his perception of home, the activities taking place and the messages received there.

I started to collect parental stories and these kept leading back to the luminaries (the Sun and Moon) and the signs on the MC and IC, rather than the entire 10th and 4th Houses themselves. Images, impressions, facts and descriptions of our chief caretakers, Father and Mother, are best seen by the Sun and Moon, respectively. They describe our perception and awareness of our parents, how they impacted our life and what we feel/felt was important to them. In addition, the dispositor of the Sun and Moon is a planet *in operation*, functioning to 'serve' the luminary by carrying out *specific* tasks.

'Mark'

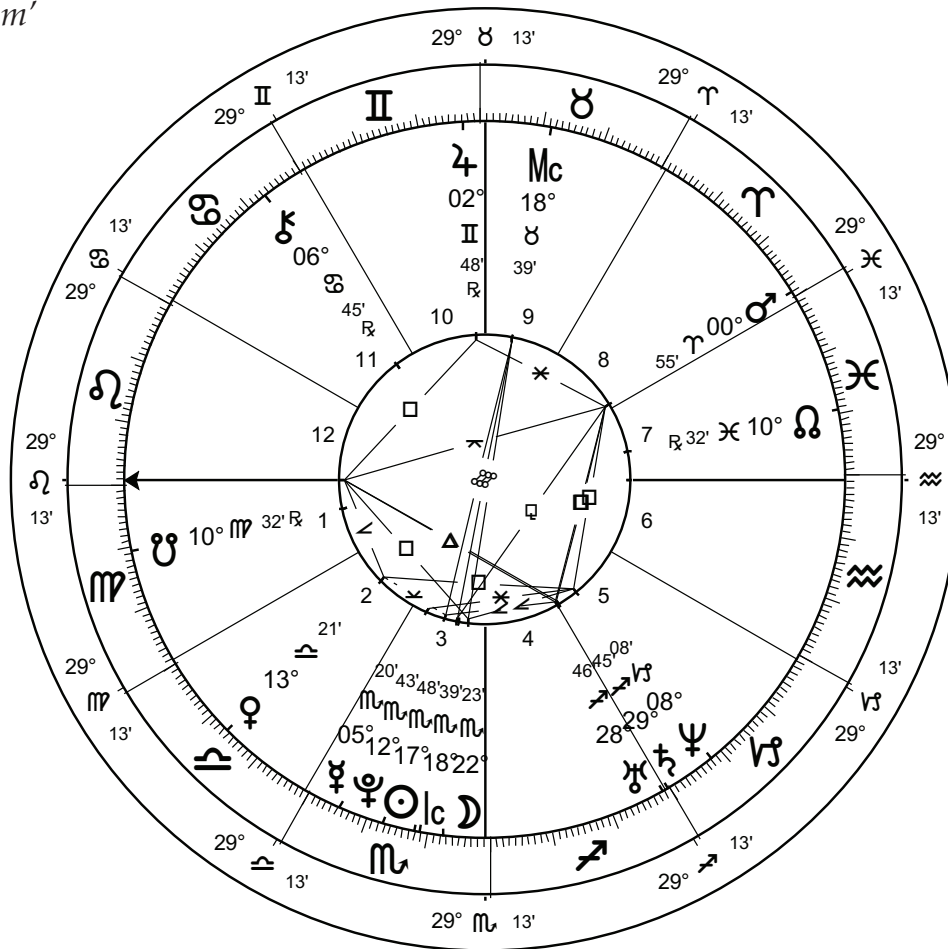


The MC/IC axis speaks of messages that we receive from parents/parental figures that create personal, deep-rooted principles (IC) and the social ethics and work philosophies shaping our place in the world (MC). Looking back, our first image of success (MC) comes from our parents: how they compared to other children's parents 'out there' in the world, how their own aspirations blossomed. Whether or not their tree was 'in bloom', the seeds of their experiences were planted in our IC, and this nurtures, cultivates, shackles or delays the development of the foliage and fruit that appear at our MC. What is inherited and instilled at the IC is called upon to be manifested through the social- and work-based lens of the MC.

Some Stories

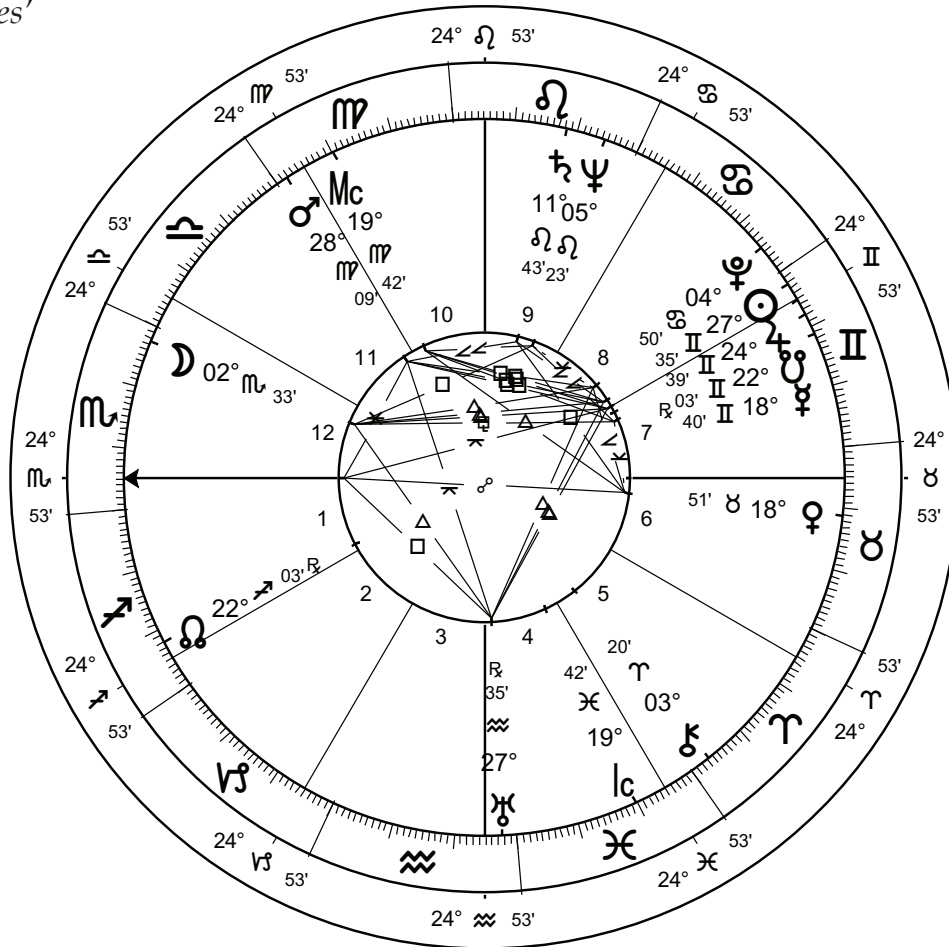
The father of 'Adam' (chart on following page) was shut out from Adam's early life by his mother, and both mother and son were

'Adam'



dominated by her own father. The grandfather attempted to dictate Adam's every move, even sleeping in the same bedroom as the teenager. In Adam's chart, the Sun (father) is contained (trapped on either side) by Pluto and the Moon – all three are in Scorpio and conjunct the IC. There are often early experiences of powerlessness and a lack of control over one's 'destination' when Scorpio is on the IC. A way forward may be to cultivate a professional life that is profitable, steady and secure (Taurus MC). Those with this potent axis often work to amass something of material value and permanence, to fend off the waves of emotional crises that are anticipated and feared. Adam's Scorpio planets are disposed by Mars in Aries: the boy's outlet was sport, but this was thwarted by a series of accidents to his ankles and knees on the football field (Mars squares Saturn-Uranus). Injured, he later trained as a mechanic and began teaching football to earn enough to leave home and gain a firm footing in the world (Taurus MC).

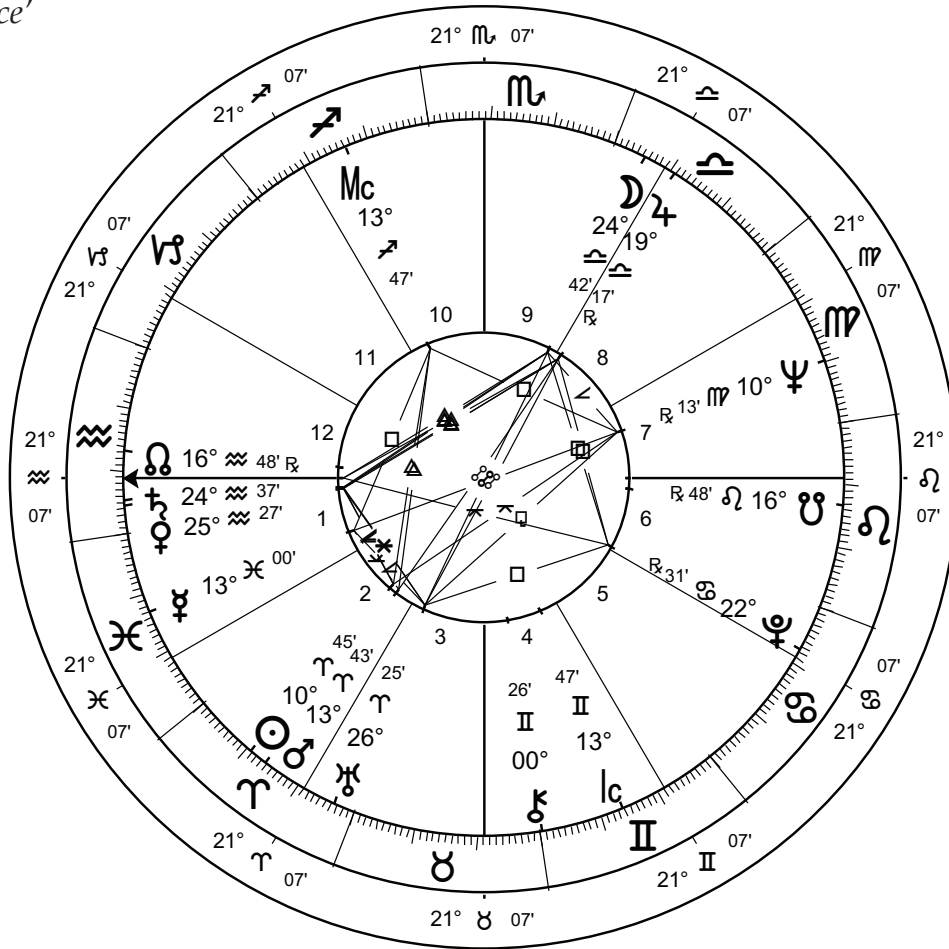
'James'



'James' grew up in dire poverty with an alcoholic mother who took an intense dislike to him (one manifestation of his Moon in Scorpio square Neptune in Leo) and a philandering father whom James nevertheless admired and elevated (Sun conjunct Jupiter in Gemini). With limited schooling available, his father encouraged James to read and educate himself (Sun-Jupiter in Gemini), learn a craft (Virgo MC), and move beyond the limits set by the religion that engulfed his community (Pisces IC).

An early school event changed James' life. His father, when asked by the headmaster what he thought young James could do with his life, hadn't considered any options – so he didn't speak up! This enraged the young Gemini, who was an exceptional student; it had been a chance for him to be given some help and direction before he left school. Instead, he spent the next three years on the streets selling newspapers and later bitterly regretted it. This is one of the life messages for Gemini: this sign encounters people who

'Grace'



stay silent or don't understand, so the Gemini person's motivation becomes a desire to communicate, to be heard and understood. With a mutable Pisces IC and Virgo MC, James took to cycling and, for a while, gambled to escape the hardship and penury of his life. He later trained as an engineer and technician (Mars is near the MC in Virgo). While learning his craft, he became a union representative who fought and 'spoke up' for the rights of his fellow workers.

For 'Grace', her father and the subsequent men in her life are described well by her Sun conjunct Mars in Aries: her dad was a pioneering radiologist and dentist who had been burned on the brain by X-ray equipment, which caused rages and blackouts. Grace would later get involved with three men who were either aggressive, philandering or physically abusive partners. If Aries is a sign of violence, Grace's Moon in Libra describes her mother, who would run away from the home following a confrontation

with her aggressive husband. This happened from the time Grace was three (note the Moon–Jupiter conjunction opposite Uranus and various 3° orbs in the chart that would have been triggered by Solar Arc at age three: Sun–Mars, Ascendant–Saturn, Mercury–Neptune, Neptune–MC) until her mother’s final departure eight years later. Grace’s childhood had many unanswered questions (Gemini IC). Missing a mother, she had no one to teach her about menstruation, sex and hygiene. And the big unanswered questions were ‘Where did my mother go?’ and ‘Is she coming back?’

With Mercury opposite Neptune T-square the MC in Sagittarius, Grace recalls a time when, after she was naughty, her father said, ‘As long as you tell me the truth about what you did, you’ll be OK with me.’ But she wasn’t. She confessed and was punished. So, she learned to lie to avoid her father’s wrath and a repeat betrayal.

Later, Grace spent much of her marriage not trusting her husband’s words and suspecting him of affairs, subtly trying to discern the truth and read between the lines/lies. The mutable (= avoidance) T-square speaks of, among other things, deceit, illusion, the distortion of facts and concealment of the truth, yet the Sagittarius MC as the apex points to discovering her own truth out of these mixed messages (Gemini IC).

She found her calling late in life as a Justice of the Peace, deliberating on criminal cases (Moon–Jupiter in Libra) from an elevated position of authority (Sagittarius MC). In the UK, a magistrates’ court deals with ‘small’ crimes such as petty theft, deception, trespass, stalking and illegal use of motor vehicles – apt therapy for Mercury in Pisces opposite Neptune in Virgo.

After a life of many unanswered questions, Grace was able to use her talent for spotting the details in evidence to reveal the truth and reach her own conclusions.