



ASTROLOGICAL AFFINITIES

When Actors Play Real People

by Frank C. Clifford

Astrology not only tells us about the roles we are born to play in our lives, but if we act for a living, it can also describe the parts we are drawn to and the ones we're cast in. Actors, it seems, have the most therapeutic jobs in the world — through their work they are able to explore their inner landscapes and play out key themes, scripts, and dynamics “written” in their horoscopes. And these roles are often performed under very appropriate transits, directions, or progressions.

Art Imitating Life ... Imitating Art

Could anyone else have played the pugnacious ruffian Stanley Kowalski as vividly as Marlon Brando in *A Streetcar Named Desire*? Brando has the Sun conjunct the Moon in Aries in a t-square with Mars in Capricorn opposite Pluto in Cancer. This conflict-orientated, mid-cardinal configuration also describes Brando's role as the traditionalist (Capricorn) Vito Corleone, the violent head (Aries/Mars) of New York's most powerful Mafia family (Pluto in Cancer), in *The Godfather*. (In the sequel, Robert De Niro brought his own Sun-Mars square and mid-cardinal Cancer Ascendant to the role.)

And then there's the role of a lifetime that almost every leading actress in the 1930s coveted: Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind* (released December 1939). The character was specifically written as an Aries (“Scarlett”) by author Margaret Mitchell, who knew something about astrology — although the role was Scorpionic in many ways (as was the author). Fittingly, the race to be Scarlett brought many Mars-like actresses into the fray: Bette Davis (Sun in Aries, Scorpio rising), Katharine Hepburn (Sun in Taurus, Scorpio rising), and Paulette Goddard (Moon in Aries) were among the 50 women considered for the role. The book had been optioned by Warner Brothers with Davis in mind, and she went off to play a similar character in *Jezebel*. Hepburn, like Davis, felt that the part could have been written for her, but producer David O. Selznick snapped back, “I can't imagine Rhett Butler chasing you for twelve years.”

India-born British actress Vivien Leigh was cast, and brought her Sun in Scorpio on the Descendant and Moon-Uranus-MC in Aquarius to the role as the possessive, vindictive, willful Southern belle who rejects the social fashions and proprieties of the day. In the story, the character becomes materialistic and ruthless (Taurus-Scorpio) in her exploitation of workers to ensure her survival and the running of her plantation, Tara (named by Mitchell as an anonym for Taurus). Aptly, Leigh has Taurus rising opposite her Scorpio Sun. She would later bring the intensity and emotional fragility shown in her chart to the character of Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Synastry: Affinities

Often there's a delicate line between actor and role, particularly in on-going series or soap operas. I remember visiting the set of the British TV drama *Coronation Street* and reading the chart of one actress who had been on the show for many years. So much of the character was "seen" in her own natal chart, even though she was playing someone ostensibly very different from her. We spoke of the possibilities of Saturn reaching her Descendant by transit the following year. To my surprise, she even placed a call mid consultation to her husband so I could discuss this with him, too. What transpired was an interesting lesson for me. The following year, when Saturn crossed her Descendant, it was her *onscreen husband* (who was a cherished friend of hers) who fell ill and had to be written out of the show. My client experienced the transit as a loss of her fictional partner, which was accompanied by much concern for the man portraying him.

Another actor on the show had Neptune transit his Descendant during months of storylines where his character played out a scandalous love triangle, which led to the breakdown of his (on-screen) marriage. The actor's own marriage stayed intact during this transit, but he found himself confronted by some

In almost all synastry between actor and subject, there are meaningful links between planets/angles of both charts within 5° of a conjunction or opposition.

gullible members of the public who assumed he was *really* getting divorced and either consoled or rebuked him. One way or another, he was living out the transit!

Actors and Real People

In a similar vein, when an actor is attracted to playing a newsworthy or historical figure, we as astrologers have an interesting opportunity to look for and interpret inter-aspects between actor and subject — i.e., to see whether a significant planet in A's chart makes an aspect to a planet in B's chart. For

many years, I've been researching and collecting horoscopes in this area of chart comparison, and here I'd like to share some of my observations. In doing so, I'll attempt to demonstrate that there's an astrological reason that certain actors and not others are chosen to portray well-known people. We shall consider whether actor and subject share aspects or planetary themes in their charts, and whether their horoscopes align by progression or direction when the portrayal begins. But first, let's start by examining whether there is direct inter-aspect synastry between the actor's chart and the subject's and, if so, what kind.

We don't have to look far to see the synastry expressing itself. The astrological interplay between actor and subject tends to rest on a near-exact or near-opposite area of the zodiac. In other words, in my experience, there are usually **direct inter-aspects by conjunction or opposition between the two charts** (e.g., A's Sun conjunct B's Moon) — **all within an orb of 5°**. (Other aspects may offer additional information, but rarely describe the essence of the relationship.) In uncovering these cross-chart connections, certain areas or degrees of the zodiac come into view. These reveal a "quality," a characteristic hallmarked to that area of the sky which the actor (and the audience) recognises as important about

the subject who is being portrayed. For the actor playing the part, there is a recognition of shared experience, a dialogue, and a strong bond that unites him to the subject. (When I explained to one actor — famous for impersonating a comedian who suffered from depression — the many inter-aspectual links between their charts, he said he hoped he wouldn't "go the same way." I offered the view that, in playing him onstage, the actor could be "working out" many of his horoscope's potentials that the comedian wasn't able to come to terms with in his own.)

With inter-aspects, the conjunction speaks of clear and acknowledged shared experiences between actor and subject, while the opposition throws light (or perhaps shade) on the how polar opposite signs interact with each other. Actors are attracted to playing characters who appear similar to (conjunction) or very different (opposition) from themselves, but even then, the "very different" will be diametrically opposed (180° away), which of course introduces the "opposites attract" and "different sides of the same coin" perspective of the opposition.

One-Way Synastry

It is also rare for actors to personally know the subject they are portraying, so the remarkable inter-aspects we shall soon discover are not based on a "real"



Meryl Streep photo by Neon Tommy [CC BY-SA 2.], via Wikimedia Commons

relationship exchange between the two. And when looking at inter-aspects between the planets (and the planets and angles), it is just as likely that the actor, for instance, has the Sun on the subject's Ascendant as it is vice versa. Unlike regular synastry, where two people interact and know each other, here it is usually a one-way relationship, and the *merger* of the inter-aspects — *the synergy between the two charts* — is what creates and explains the dynamic. The result is a product shared with the world via TV, film, or stage. The outer planets can be involved, too, even though they are slow-moving, but they "must" connect with the angles or inner planets to show personal connections.

Other Observations

A lack of inter-aspects generally indicates that people do not "speak the same language." There is no shared dialogue, no recognition of sameness. This is exceptionally rare in this study. Having few synastry aspects reveals an indifference, and in that case, little impact would be made on actors by their subjects.

Occasionally, we see planetary combinations (e.g., Sun-Saturn) in common in this kind of synastry between actor and subject. Sometimes they have signs in common *without actual aspects within 5°* (e.g., A's Sun in the same sign as B's Moon but out of orb); however, this is rarer and the connection less impactful.

Ultimately, in almost all synastry between actor and subject, there are apt, meaningful links between planets/angles of both charts within 5° of a conjunction or opposition. ***These inter-aspectual links will describe the kind of portrayal (along with the actor's and director's motivation) and the main vision of the production.*** For instance, when Meryl Streep played Margaret Thatcher in *The Iron Lady* (2011), the emphasis was on the former Prime Minister at home (Moon), retired and dependent on her much-missed, late husband Denis (Descendant), who she imagined was still with her (Taurus) and with whom she continued to dialogue. Streep's Moon in

Synastry: Affinities

Taurus is, fittingly, conjunct Thatcher's Descendant.

Cuba Gooding, Jr. is currently playing O. J. Simpson in the *American Crime Story* TV anthology. We don't have a birth time for Gooding as yet, but his Sun-Mercury conjunction is opposite Simpson's Sun in Cancer, while Gooding's Mars is on Simpson's Descendant. The anthology focuses on the infamous and savage 1994 murder (Mars) of Simpson's former wife, Nicole, and the trial's investigation into his violent domestic relationship with her (Cancer/Descendant).

The Signs

A role can last anywhere from a few nights to several years (or more) of an actor's life — it is rarely a whim when we consider daily rehearsals and filming or appearing on stage night after night “being” the other person. What sense of commonality has been ignited in the actors to make them invest time and energy in the portrayal? Unless actors steer the project themselves, or it's a financial decision to have a box office name play a newsworthy character, the actor has been cast in the role because s/he personifies the essential nature of the subject to the director. So, it's important to consider the zodiac signs involved, for they show the traits/characteristics that the actor will epitomise, as well as the attraction s/he has to the role. For instance, an inter-aspect in Scorpio would suggest an attraction to a subject's full-on power and intensity — and a willingness for the actor to exhibit these traits (see Val Kilmer, later), while Sagittarius would give the actor a chance to highlight aspects of the subject's philosophy, spirituality, sense of fun, hedonism, or energy (see Kilmer and Janis Joplin, too). We'll look at more of the signs while introducing the next sections.

But there are the curious, rare examples when actors play themselves in their own life stories (for instance, Joan Rivers, Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali, and Ann Jillian), so expect to see plenty of helpings of the self-involved signs of Aries, Leo, and Aquarius (the wannabe Leo) in their horoscopes!

The Angles

Where the Ascendant is involved by inter-aspect (specifically, the conjunction), the actor is often chosen because of their strong physical resemblance to their subject. Most times this feature is a prerequisite for a performance that's deemed to be convincing, so Ascendant synastry is common. When the Ascendant is involved, the part requires the actor to literally embody the role, bringing the subject's physicality or presence to the fore. For instance, actress Angela Bassett's Sun in Leo is near Tina Turner's Ascendant, and Bassett transformed her body into a performing powerhouse for the biopic *What's Love Got to Do With It* (released July 1993).

The Sun is often present by inter-aspect when the actor feels personally drawn to the heart of a subject's life story.

The inter-aspect was in Leo, so the portrayal focused on Turner's discovery of self-belief and her Leo/solar need to go solo and move away from the dominating influence of her abusive spouse. Robert De Niro transformed his body to play boxer Jake LaMotta in *Raging Bull* (1980), and his Ascendant is straddled by LaMotta's pugilistic Sun-Mercury-Mars conjunction in Cancer. Wikipedia's entry about the film inadvertently highlights the planets and sign involved: “[LaMotta's] self-destructive and obsessive rage, sexual jealousy, and animalistic appetite destroyed his relationship with his wife and family.”

Midheaven (MC) inter-aspects appear particularly when actors make their name through this role or when they are able to capture the essence of the subject's public image. Powers Boothe's first major role was as the charismatic cult leader Jim Jones, who led 900 followers to commit mass suicide in a jungle clearing in Guyana. Boothe has

22° Taurus on the MC, the degree of Jones's Sun. (Both actor and religious fanatic share inter-aspects that speak of the religious sway that Jones had over his flock: Boothe's Venus is on Jones's Mercury, his Saturn on Jones's Descendant, and his Moon opposite Jones's Neptune.) When the role garnered Boothe an Emmy nomination, it was the year of a mass boycott of the ceremony. The actor took a principled stand (Taurus MC), defied the boycott, and turned up at the show (September 7, 1980). Upon winning, he announced at the podium, “This is either the most courageous moment of my career or the stupidest.” Boothe didn't land another TV role until three years later.

TV and Broadway star Michele Lee (of *Knots Landing* fame) worked for three years to bring her heroine Dottie West's life and music to the small screen. In *Big Dreams and Broken Hearts: The Dottie West Story* (air date: January 22, 1995), Lee paid homage to the country-and-western singer who had risen from a dirt-poor background and survived a miscarriage in her teens (as a result of rape by her father) to become a scandalously glamorous figure in Nashville. Lee said that she connected “in some mysterious way” when she met Dottie in 1983, and later, reflecting on the role she tackled with acclaimed gusto, said: “She became a part of me. I identified with so much of what she did and why. I loved her.” The Dottie West memorial website states, “Though [Michele] met Dottie only once briefly, there was a ‘spiritual connection’ from that moment on, and an inner empathic passion for the woman Lee described as ‘having an aura about her’.” (<http://www.dottiewestremembered.com/legacy/bigdreams/index.html>)

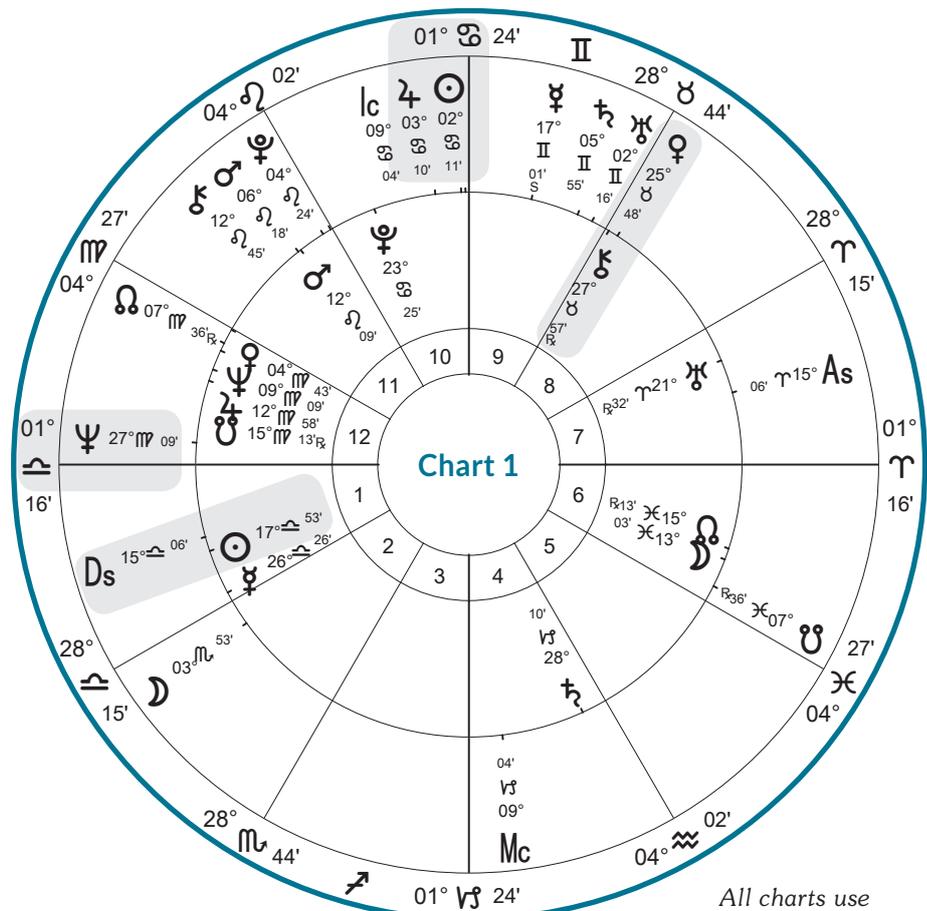
It's no surprise that Lee's Neptune is on West's Ascendant, and Lee's Sun-Jupiter conjunction in Cancer crowns West's MC. (See **Chart 1**, following page.) The movie revealed West as a victim of paternal incest and chronicled her three tempestuous marriages (the last to a man 23 years her junior) and her compulsive spending on loved ones (which led to her humiliating bankruptcy the year before a car crash claimed her life). Besides Lee's generous Jupiter connection to West's MC in Cancer, we can also note her Descen-

dant conjunct West's Sun in Libra, and her Venus in Taurus conjunct West's Chiron in West's 8th house. (Lee also had specialised vocal training to sound like West, performed West's hits in the film, and convinced West's singing partner Kenny Rogers to join the project.)

Often the public persona angles (the Ascendant and MC) are linked by synastry when both the image and physical appearance of the actor merge with the public's perception of the subject's lifestyle and reputation. Defying typecasting, Suzanne Pleshette — America's sweetheart from *The Bob Newhart Show* — was chosen to play the title character in the TV biopic *Leona Helmsley: The Queen of Mean*, which aired on September 23, 1990, one year after the tyrannical hotelier's conviction for tax evasion. Pleshette's MC is on Helmsley's Ascendant in Cancer, and her Moon–Ascendant in Libra squares Helmsley's Ascendant–Descendant axis. (See **Chart 2**, below right.) The film focuses on Leona's early life and relationship with her mother (Cancer), the power she wielded as the wife of real estate billionaire tycoon Harry Helmsley (Libra/Descendant), and the huge scandals (Jupiter–Neptune) that led to her downfall.

Other inter-aspects include Pleshette's Mercury–Jupiter on Helmsley's Descendant, her Sun conjunct Helmsley's Moon in Aquarius (opposite Mercury–Neptune), and her Venus on Helmsley's Pisces MC. Pleshette gave a remarkable, memorable performance that managed to portray the volatile Helmsley as human, vulnerable, and even worthy of admiration for her perfectionism.

Marion Cotillard “became” Edith Piaf in *La Vie En Rose* (released in



All charts use Placidus houses and the Mean Node.

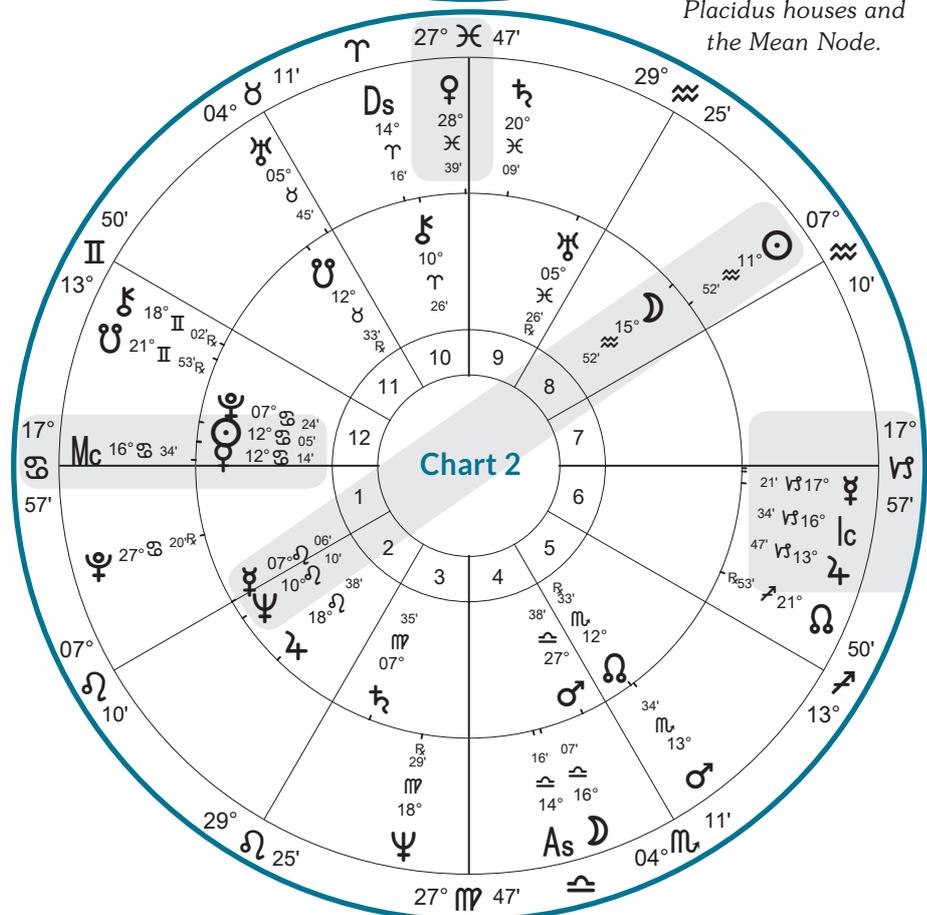


Chart 1: Bi-wheel.

Inner wheel and house cusps:
Dottie West
Outer wheel: Michele Lee

Chart 2: Bi-wheel.

Inner wheel and house cusps:
Leona Helmsley
Outer wheel: Suzanne Pleshette

Synastry: Affinities

February 2007), with such intensity that one critic (Carino Chocano in *The Los Angeles Times*, as quoted on Wikipedia) wrote: “Cotillard is astonishing as the troubled singer in a technically virtuosic and emotionally resonant performance.” This sums up the actor–subject synastry: Cotillard’s Virgo Ascendant conjoins Piaf’s MC, while her Venus conjoins Piaf’s Mars in Leo, and her Mars opposes Piaf’s Sun–Mercury in Sagittarius. Cotillard won seven major Best Actress awards for her portrayal, including the coveted Academy Award in February 2008.

The Luminaries

The Sun is often present by inter-aspect when the actor feels personally drawn to the heart of a subject’s life story or when the actor highlights a major arc in the subject’s personal journey (as we’ve seen with Angela Bassett and Michele Lee). Actress Cynthia Gibb played Karen Carpenter in the 1989 biopic. Gibb’s Sun conjoins Carpenter’s

Chiron (and her Saturn opposes Carpenter’s Moon); her portrayal illuminates the singer’s battle with the eating disorder anorexia nervosa.

In respect of solar synastry, it’s not uncommon for actors to take on roles of people who have birthdays on the same or the following day (i.e., to have Suns conjunct). Examples include Jim Carrey as comedian Andy Kaufmann in *Man on the Moon* (both were born on the same day 13 years apart); Irene Cara (born March 18) as activist Myrlie Evers (born March 17) in *For Us the Living: The Medgar Evers Story*. Interestingly, two actors, Anthony Hopkins and Frank Langella — both famed for playing disgraced president Richard Nixon — were born one day apart from each other. Both actors and the president have the Sun in Capricorn.

Lunar or IC inter-aspects are found when the portrayal links strongly to the domestic or private life, the heritage or childhood, or when the actor feels a strong emotional resonance to, or develops an intimate connection with, the subject. It may also occur when the public has a true sense that the actor is

the modern embodiment of the historical (Moon) person they’re portraying. Writer–actor Stephen Fry played Oscar Wilde, and their Moons are conjunct, as are their Venus placements. The film *Wilde* (released October 1997) was primarily about Wilde’s love affair (Venus) with “Bosie” and the personal and domestic (Moon) havoc it wreaked.

Singer–actress Bernadette Peters portrayed Tammy Faye Bakker (Messner) in *Fall from Grace* (aired in April 1990), showing her addictions, emotional vulnerability, and drama-filled marriage to televangelist Jim Bakker, who betrayed her with another woman. Peters’s Moon–Ascendant conjoins Bakker’s Moon in Scorpio, a sign linked to intense dramas and betrayals. (Jim Bakker, who was crucified by the press for his infidelity, was portrayed by a young Kevin Spacey, who has a Mars–Pluto conjunction on Jim Bakker’s Descendant.)

In *The Miracle Worker*, Patty Duke portrayed the young Helen Keller, deaf-mute-turned-educator, and their Moons are exactly opposite (from 18° Virgo to 18° Pisces). As an adult, Duke would go on to play Keller’s teacher, Anne Sullivan, who had her Mars at 15° Pisces. Meryl Streep played the Carrie Fisher/daughter role in the film adaptation of Fisher’s novel *Postcards from the Edge*, and Streep has the Moon on Fisher’s IC. Both Streep and Fisher also have Taurus Moons. (Shirley MacLaine played the character of Fisher’s mother, Debbie Reynolds, and their charts have more than half a dozen tight inter-aspects.)

The Inner Planets

Mercury is often strongly featured when the portrayal requires a mastery of speech intonation, accent, gesture, or personal mannerism. Robert Downey, Jr. caught Charlie Chaplin’s idiosyncrasies for the film *Chaplin* (December 1992); they have many inter-aspects, including their Mercurys conjunct. In *Mandela*, Danny Glover took on the role of Nelson Mandela; their Suns are 4° apart, and

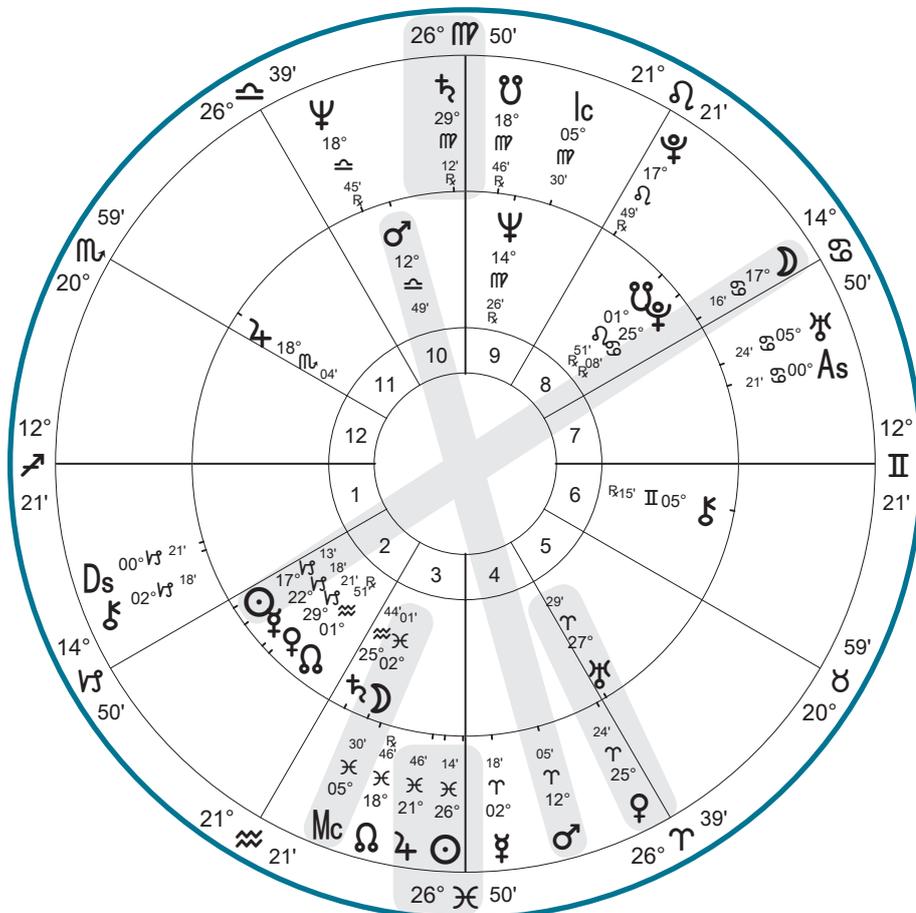


Chart 3: Bi-wheel.

Inner wheel and house cusps:

Elvis Presley

Outer wheel: Kurt Russell

Venus and, to a lesser extent, Mars have links to portrayals that heavily involve the subject's love life or sexuality.

Glover's MC is conjunct Mandela's Mars in Libra. But with both men's Mercurys conjunct in Leo, Glover was able to bring to the world stage (with great aplomb) the voice and passion of a man whose image and speeches had been banned for years. Sidney Poitier played Mandela, too; his Ascendant is near Mandela's Mars in Libra, and his MC is conjunct Mandela's Pluto. His TV film, *Mandela and de Klerk*, was highly political — Mars, Pluto — and focused on the negotiations (Libra) between the leaders to end apartheid. Michael Caine played de Klerk; they have Suns conjunct in Pisces, and their Ascendants oppose each other within a few degrees.

Venus and, to a lesser extent, Mars have links to portrayals that heavily involve the subject's love life or sexuality. Actress Loni Anderson's Venus is near Jayne Mansfield's Ascendant, while Farrah Fawcett played seven-times-married "poor little rich girl" Barbara Hutton, and their Venus placements are one degree apart. Jacqueline Kennedy has been portrayed by numerous actresses (including Jaclyn Smith and Katie Holmes) in films that focused on her first husband's assassination and her shocking decision to later marry Aristotle Onassis. Not surprisingly, Venus and Uranus inter-aspects appear between both actresses and the former First Lady.

Lynn Redgrave played the "happy hooker" Xaviera Hollander, with the actress's Moon-Venus conjunct Hollander's Mars in Aries (and the Sun on Hollander's MC). Mars has stronger links to portrayals that show violence, force, or stridency. Lynn Whitfield beat out many actresses to play the part of Josephine Baker, the dancer who became a civil rights activist and adopted

a rainbow tribe of children before losing everything to her own extravagance. Whitfield's Mars-Jupiter conjoins Baker's MC and Mercury.

Natal Chart Synastry

Let's return to some technical aspects of this study. With actors who play public figures, there appear to be three ways the inter-aspect synastry can manifest:

1. When the actor and subject are strongly linked in the public's consciousness (or it is a career-defining role), there are clear, fitting, and descriptive inter-aspects between both natal charts. The planets, angles, and signs implicated reveal the focus and motivations of the actor in the depiction, as well as how they feel connected to or inspired by the person they are portraying.

2. When it is a fleeting or non-career-defining role, there are usually fewer inter-aspects, but there can be directions and progressions from the actor's horoscope to the subject's at the time of the portrayal (whether at the commencement of rehearsals, filming, public announcement, or release). These alignments are usually one-way (the actor's chart directs/progresses to a significant planet in the subject's horoscope, not the other way around).

3. There is a mix of (1) and (2): strong natal inter-aspects and directions/progressions at the time of the portrayal.

Let's take a look at a few more actors who had career-defining roles playing celebrity subjects. Kurt Russell portrayed Elvis Presley in the television movie *Elvis* (which aired on February 11, 1979). The production began on August 4 (as Russell's progressed Lunar Return reached 17° Cancer opposite Presley's Sun at 17° Capricorn) and ended on December 14, 1978. At the time of the airing, both Russell's and the deceased Presley's Ascendants by Solar Arc were at 27° Cancer and Capricorn, respectively — they had been moving by Solar Arc in unison (by opposition) for all of Russell's life.

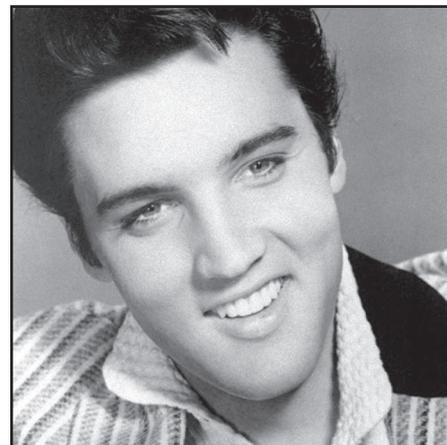
The film begins with Elvis's 1969 comeback and then flashes back to focus on his early life (Moon), his rise to fame (MC, Sun, Saturn), army service (Mars), and relationship with Priscilla

(Moon, Venus). The film omitted Elvis's decline — his divorce, obesity, and drug dependency — which followed in the 1970s. The young Russell captured Presley's mannerisms, voice, and demeanour, and his Emmy-nominated portrayal was widely lauded. Here are the exact inter-aspects:

Presley	Russell
Sun 17° Capricorn	Moon 17° Cancer
Moon 2° Pisces	MC 5° Pisces
Mars 12° Libra	Mars 12° Aries
Uranus 27° Aries	Venus 25° Aries
MC 26° Virgo	Saturn 29° Virgo
IC 26° Pisces	Sun 26° Pisces

We can't ignore such strong and plentiful inter-aspects between Russell and Presley. (See **Chart 3**, previous page.) Wikipedia notes that "Elvis Presley connections have run like a thread through [Russell's] career." At age 11, Russell appeared in *It Happened at the World's Fair*, a movie musical released in April 1963, starring Elvis Presley, in which Kurt had to kick Elvis in the shin (Mars opposite Mars!). It was the first time Russell had met a celebrity, and he later recalled being shocked that hundreds of fans had jumped on Elvis's car when he arrived on the set (Venus-Uranus, Moon-MC inter-aspects). Many years after this acclaimed TV role, Russell played an Elvis impersonator in *3000 Miles to Graceland* and provided the voice of Elvis in *Forrest Gump*.

Over the years, numerous actors have played Elvis, including *Miami Vice* actor Don Johnson in *Elvis and the*



Synastry: Affinities

Beauty Queen. For Johnson, it was not a career-defining or critically acclaimed role. His TV film focused on the effects that Elvis's philandering and drug use had on his last major relationship (Johnson's Sun had Solar Arc-directed to oppose Presley's Pluto at the time of the performance). The inter-aspects are fewer but still apt:

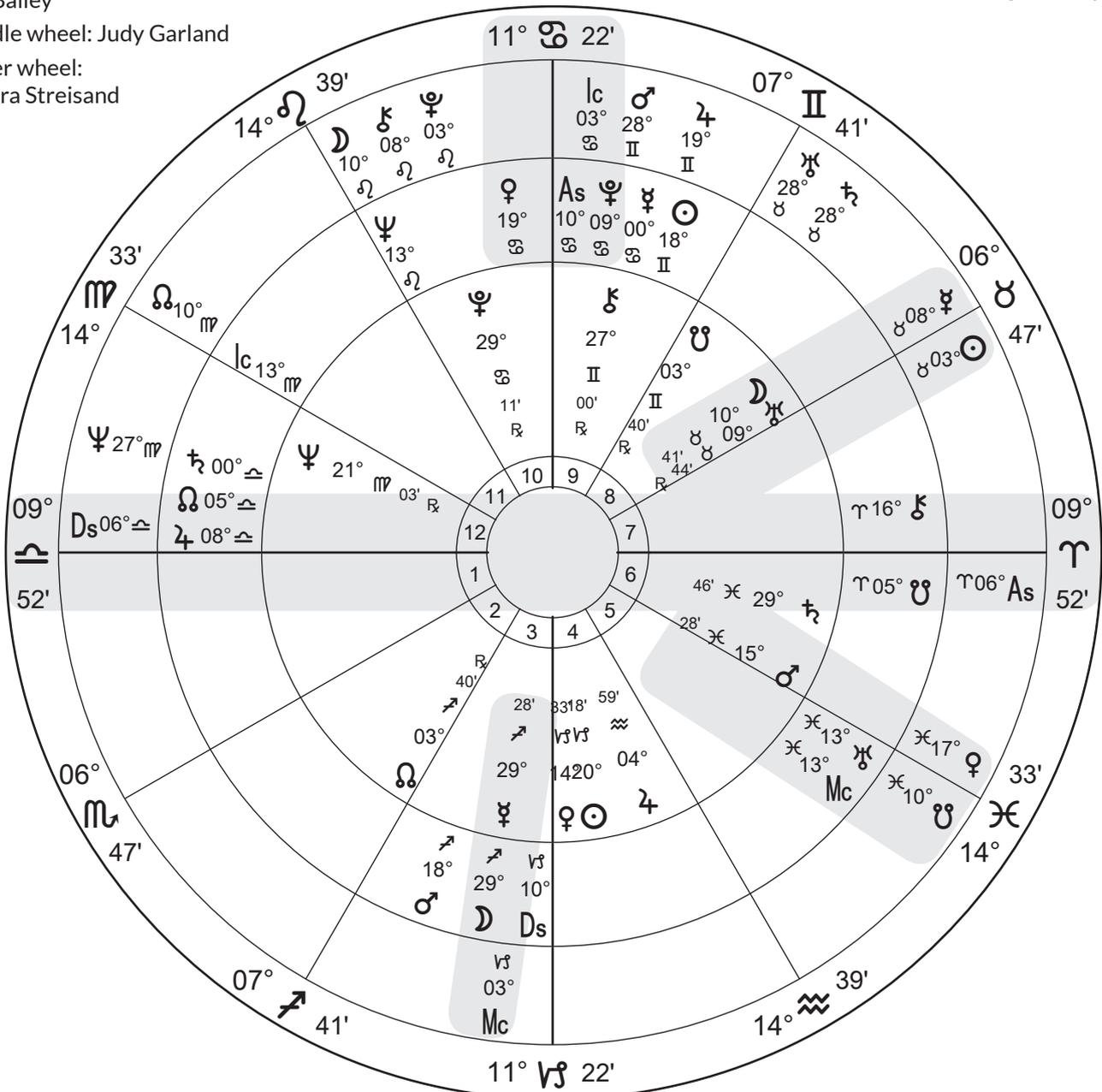
Presley	Johnson
Moon 2° Pisces	DSC 3° Pisces
ASC 12° Sagittarius	Chiron 13° Sagittarius
MC 26° Virgo	Mars 25° Virgo

In *Wonderland* (2003), Val Kilmer played John Holmes, the infamously well-endowed porn star. The film focused on Holmes's alleged involvement in the grisly murders of four people, rather than his reputation in the sex industry. Kilmer's Mercury-Mars conjunction in pleasure-loving Sagittarius

conjoins Holmes's MC, his Uranus conjoins Holmes's Sun, and his Sun-Saturn opposes Holmes's Saturn. In *The Doors* (1991), Kilmer played legendary frontman "Lizard King" Jim Morrison. Legend has it that Kilmer won the role by recording a video performance as Morrison and challenging the director Oliver Stone to tell them apart. Kilmer, with Scorpio on the MC, went to extreme lengths to become the hedonistic Dionysus of rock, and lived and breathed Morrison for nearly a year during rehearsal and filming. Kilmer's Venus in Scorpio is on Morrison's MC, and his Mars-Jupiter conjoins Morrison's Sun in Sagittarius. Actor, subject, and director all have Venus in Scorpio natively.

Chart 4: Tri-wheel.

Inner wheel and house cusps:
Jim Bailey
Middle wheel: Judy Garland
Outer wheel:
Barbra Streisand



Over the years, Vanessa Redgrave has played many characters based on real people. Two of her most memorable were Renée Richards and Agatha Christie. In *Second Serve* (air date: May 13, 1986), Redgrave played a character based on Dr. Richard Raskind, who underwent gender reassignment in the 1970s to become Renée Richards. Raskind/Richards was the first person to ever play on both the men's and women's tennis tours; later Renée would steer tennis champion Martina Navratilova to great heights as her coach. Redgrave's portrayal was astonishingly convincing and poignant, focusing on the breakdown of her character's marriage and the social rejection that resulted from her courageous decision to undergo the reassignment surgery.

Richards	Redgrave
Sun 25° Leo	ASC 24° Leo
Saturn 24° Aquarius	DSC 24° Aquarius
N. Node 9° Aquarius	Sun 10° Aquarius

Back in 1978, Redgrave had portrayed Agatha Christie in *Agatha* (released in February 1979). The film focused on the novelist's twelve-day disappearance in 1926, following her husband Archie's demands for a divorce. There was a public hunt for Christie, but the true motive behind her vanishing act (during which she checked into a hotel under the name of her husband's mistress) has never been revealed. Was it amnesia, revenge, a cry for sympathy, or an attempt to frame Archie for her suspected murder? We may never know, but the synastry is apt, involving Neptune (hearsay, disappearances, mysteries, scandals, "the stuff of legend") and Venus in Scorpio (revenge, secrets, enigmas):

Christie	Redgrave
Sun 22° Virgo	Neptune 18° Virgo
Moon 1° Libra	Moon 29° Virgo
Venus 8° Scorpio	Mars 12° Scorpio Uranus 5° Taurus IC 11° Scorpio
MC 22° Taurus	Equal House 10th 24° Taurus



The late female impersonator Jim Bailey (who preferred the term "character actor" or "illusionist") made a successful living by performing the songs of legendary entertainment divas, many of whom adored his portrayals. Judy Garland surprised him on stage and demanded they sing a duet. Garland's daughter Liza Minnelli performed a mother-daughter tribute with him, while Barbra Streisand had Bailey stand in for her during a party she hosted. Bailey also transformed himself into Phyllis Diller and Peggy Lee. At times, Jupiter is the key planet in impersonations, not only for being strong in the charts of impersonators but also for connections that are larger than life and exaggerated. Consider the numerous alignments between Bailey's chart and his two most famous subjects, Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. (See **Chart 4**, previous page.)

Rectification

In astrological practice, gathering together the charts of partners, family associates, collaborators, and inspirations can aid the process of rectifying a client's chart — as all add weight to guessing a person's true birth time. (In my opinion, rectification may be an art, but it is also a precarious one — at times revealing more about the astrologer's assumptions than the

subject themselves.) Sometimes the inter-aspects between these associated charts and the subject will only highlight planets rather than the time-sensitive angles, but often they can assist in rectifying the four angles.

I remember working on the horoscope of the British singer Cleo Laine. From a given estimate of "early morning," I pulled together various dates of major life events and then settled (as much as a mutable Mercury can settle) on a time of 4:05 a.m., which gave 4° Libra on the Ascendant and 6° Cancer on the MC. I then looked at the charts of people whom she'd worked with, portrayed, or had been influenced by. For instance, on stage in 1980 Cleo played French writer Colette, who was born with 6° Libra rising, Mars at 2° Scorpio (conjunct Cleo's Sun-Mars conjunction), and Venus at 24° Pisces (on Cleo's Jupiter). Cleo's late husband, John Dankworth, had Mars at 6° Libra along with Mercury at 10° Libra — both near Cleo's rectified Ascendant, suggesting the memorably dexterous, quick-fire (Mercury-Mars) interplay between John's saxophone and Cleo's vocal acrobatics, for which the couple was famed. Princess Margaret, a long-standing fan and supporter of the Dankworths, had 6° Aries rising.

During the period of Cleo's initial fame in America, transiting Saturn reached 4° Cancer, square to Pluto at 4° Libra, when she appeared on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* on September 21, 1973. That aspect appeared again many decades later when Cleo's husband passed away on February 6, 2010 — almost 59 years to the day they first met. That month, transiting Saturn at 4° Libra made a square to Pluto at 4° Capricorn, and Cleo famously performed hours after John's death with a stoicism befitting Saturn-Pluto.

As a humorous aside, many years before, I had quipped to Cleo (whose Jupiter conjoins my Mercury in Pisces) that she'd given her landmark Grammy-nominated Carnegie Hall concert some days after my birth in London, to which she replied, fittingly, "I must have been sending vibes to you across the ocean."

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Many Actors, One Subject

As we have seen, some historical figures have been portrayed numerous times. Queen Elizabeth I has been played by Cate Blanchett, Judi Dench, Glenda Jackson, Bette Davis, and Miranda Richardson, among others. Sometimes one part of the chart is highlighted by inter-aspects, and this is usually the outstanding facet of the subject's reputation as well as the common thread in the filmed portrayals. In Elizabeth I's horoscope, it is her Mars at 13° Gemini (the MC ruler, suggestive of her rousing speeches, "I have the heart and stomach of a king ... I myself will take up arms") that is the key to many of the people who have portrayed her: Blanchett's Mercury is at 11° Gemini, Dench's Sun is at 16° Sagittarius, Jackson's Chiron is at 14° Gemini opposite the Moon at 18° Sagittarius, and Davis's Moon is around 16° Gemini. (Richardson's birth time is unknown, but her Sun-Mercury at 12° Pisces squares the Queen's Mars.)

Over the years, failed efforts to create a biopic about Janis Joplin have been well documented. At one point, two films were "in development." Producers were looking for someone who could embody the raw energy of a singer who had Mars and the MC in Sagittarius, an unsuspected Jupiter in the 5th, and an Aquarian bent to her chart. (Bette Midler had played a Joplin-inspired singer in *The Rose*, released November 1979; she has the Sun at

9° and Mercury at 21° Sagittarius, while Venus in Scorpio is on Joplin's Equal 10th-house cusp.) One director hired Melissa Etheridge but also considered British singer-actress Sarah Jane Morris, whose Chiron is on Joplin's Ascendant and her Jupiter near Joplin's MC. They later decided on Britney Spears, but the project was shelved. Renée Zellweger (Mars in Sagittarius) was also attached to a Joplin project that was later abandoned (like Morris, she has Virgo rising and the Moon at 17° Leo). Yet, however bizarre it may seem to have considered a teenage Spears at the time, the inter-aspects were there — and Etheridge's planets are listed, too. (See **Table**, below.)

The long-gestating cinema biopic *Get It While You Can* is set to star Amy Adams as Joplin, but has been delayed numerous times. Astrologically, Adams, who has been attached to the project for several years, is a good fit. Her Descendant sits on Joplin's Moon, while her Venus is on Joplin's Pluto. Adams's Moon-Pluto is on Joplin's Neptune, her Neptune is on Joplin's MC, and her Sun-Mercury is on Joplin's Descendant-North Node in Leo. At the time of writing this, production has stalled due to legal issues, but a resolution may be found when Adams's Solar Arc Saturn directs to Joplin's Descendant-North Node later this year. With Adams's Solar Arc Uranus approaching Joplin's Sagittarius MC degree in two years, there is hope ...

Joplin	Spears	Etheridge
Sun 28° Capricorn	Venus 25° Capricorn	Saturn 29° Capricorn
Mercury 9° Aquarius	Moon 12° Aquarius	Jupiter 7° Aquarius
Venus 14° Aquarius	Moon 12° Aquarius	
Mars 24° Sagittarius	Neptune 24° Sagittarius	IC 21° Sagittarius
Saturn 5° Gemini		Sun 8° Gemini
Neptune 2° Libra	ASC 2° Libra	
DSC 25° Leo		Uranus 22° Leo
MC 7° Sagittarius	Sun 10° Sagittarius Mercury 5° Sagittarius	Moon 2° Sagittarius

Chart Data and Sources

The data and sources for the people listed above can be found at <http://www.astrodatabank.com>, except for the following (in alphabetical order):

Amy Adams, August 20, 1974; 5:30 p.m. CED; Vicenza, Italy (45°N33', 11°E33'); AA: e-mail from the birth registry, obtained by Grazia Bordoni.

Angela Bassett, August 16, 1958; New York, NY, USA (40°N43', 74°W00'); X: no birth time; date and location from various Internet sources.

Powers Boothe, March 12, 1945; 5:25 p.m. CWT; Dallas, TX, USA (32°N47', 96°W48'); AA: birth certificate obtained by Frank Clifford; copy on file.

John Dankworth, September 20, 1927; Woodford, London, England (51°N36', 00°E02'); X: various biographies and interviews.

Myrlie Evers, March 17, 1933; Vicksburg, MS, USA (32°N21', 90°W53'); X: from her autobiography with William Peters, *For Us, the Living* (Doubleday, 1967), p. 34, copy in hand.

Cynthia Gibb, December 14, 1963; Bennington, VT, USA (42°N53', 73°W12'); X: various Internet sources.

Cuba Gooding, Jr., January 2, 1968; Bronx, NY, USA (40°N51', 73°W54'); X: various Internet sources.

Jake LaMotta, July 10, 1921; New York, NY, USA (40°N43', 74°W00'); X: various Internet sources.

Renée Richards, August 19, 1934; "morning"; Manhattan, NY, USA (40°N46', 73°W59'); C: from her autobiography, *Second Serve* (Stein and Day, 1983), p. 3, copy in hand.

Miranda Richardson, March 3, 1958; Southport, England (53°N39', 03°W01'); X: various Internet sources.

Jaclyn Smith, October 26, 1945; 11:26 p.m. CST; Houston, TX, USA (29°N46', 95°W22'); AA: birth certificate obtained by Frank Clifford; copy on file.

Anne Sullivan, April 14, 1866; Feeding Hills, MA, USA (42°N04', 72°W41'); X: various Internet sources.

Lynn Whitfield, May 6, 1953; Baton Rouge, LA, USA (30°N27', 91°W09'); X: various Internet sources.

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Frank Clifford is the author of *Getting to the Heart of Your Chart: Playing Astrological Detective* (Flare, 2012), *Horoscope Snapshots: Essays in Modern Astrology* (Flare, 2014), and *Palmistry 4 Today* (Random House, 2002; new edition: Flare, 2009). Three new booklets, including *The Midheaven: Spotlight on Success and Humour in the Horoscope: The Astrology of Comedy*, have recently been published. Frank's website can be found at <http://www.flareuk.com>

