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Daniel Giamario

Shadows of Venus and Mars

Scribe: Patrick Hesselmann

Shamanic astrology, which Daniel practices, deals with the astrology that one can derive from physical observations and the impact of the visible constellations, stars, planets and planetary patterns on the psyche. His Vision Quest process emphasizes meditation under the night sky, allowing it to reveal its mysteries. It also covers a philosophy of “as above, so below; as without, so within.” This means that the same cycles that we observe outside ourselves occur within ourselves. Then there is the understanding of the Underworld, not some place of torture, but rather an existence in its own right, subject to the laws of its realm, and very much a part of our life experiences as we go through downs and then ups.

He suggests that death and rebirth in the same body (i.e. within the same lifetime) may be replacing the recent emphasis on full-scale reincarnation as the primary process of transforming through cycles. Planets going under the horizon (i.e. moving toward the conjunction with the Sun) may be one of the significant expressions of Underworld cycles. One of the emphasized Underworld cycles that he deals with and equates to Pluto is the external (superior) conjunction of Venus and the Sun, when Venus is going through what would be considered the conjunction for a planet outside Earth’s orbit, out of sight or below the horizon.

A shamanic investigation of Shadow might start with the normal Jungian definition of Shadow as those aspects of the self that we deny, repress and avoid, that then express themselves through our uncon-

scious either as our own unpredicted behavior or as the behavior that we attract or stimulate in others that reminds us of the things that we are trying not to deal with. To that concept, Daniel adds that Shadow inevitably involves lineage as well.

His shamanic astrology process divides the life into three realms or tenses: Lineage, represented primarily by the moon and south node; Present, or what we are doing with our current lives, represented by Sun, Venus, Mars, Mercury and Jupiter; and then the Future, which is defined as the lessons of the four angles. The ascendant is our personal identity project; Midheaven, our right livelihood project; Descendant, our partnership project; and IC, our home and roots project. These angles are the major lessons or skills we are here to learn as we move through life.

If there are similarities between the lineage and the ascendant, then our development of our Personal Identity will be somewhat smoother than for those whose ascendant, moon, and south node have nothing in common. For example, Sagittarius Ascendant with Aries Moon and south node in the 5th will be relatively well versed in the freedoms and independence being studied as the Personal Identity project. But say one has Scorpio rising with Moon in Sagittarius and south node in the 5th (in Aries...), then this individual comes from a very independent and self-assertive tribe (Moon in Sagittarius) and job within the tribe (south node in the 5th) and will have trouble graciously expressing the Scorpio Personal Identity. This person is likely to go through

phases when the sting or secretiveness of Scorpio come out. This represents the Shadow side, something that we have not really expressed in our past.

Leo Moon might express a background of being royal in a time when royalty was well-received, or of having a special set of skills or abilities that brought great popularity and adulation. Now if that person comes in with, say, a heavy Capricorn, including the ascendant, there would tend to be a hiatus while they had to dis-identify themselves from the assumption and expectation that everyone loved them. This typically is accomplished by the lack of support the world shows us for a set of characteristics we take on from our moon. They would also have to develop the discipline and responsibility that the Capricorn Ascendant requires. This might be somewhat difficult, and run them through some of the high-handedness of the Capricorn shadow.

By contrast, consider the Cancer, Virgo, Capricorn and Pisces moons, which Daniel calls the giver moons. Their lineage is that of service to the community, the family or maybe some specific authority in the community. Their understanding is to put others first and to be modest and unassuming, even as they are effective and useful. Now give one of those moons a Leo Ascendant, and we have judgment coming from the moon to the behaviors that the person feels drawn to and rewarded for. To keep on giving is redundant. The objective is to become radiantly self-loving. So it's time to start again.

Daniel cites an intelligence test. Say we have a giver moon and an Ascendant (with Mars for men and Venus for women) not in giver signs. We start off with a tendency to give because that has gained us acceptance in the past. But this time we find there is no reward forthcoming. So many of us will try harder and give more. The more we try, the less we are rewarded. At the same time, we realize that the laugh is on us. We need to do what we are rewarded for now, not what we know from the past. Then there is the other case where the individual has the same or similar sign for moon and Ascendant, say, Virgo Moon and Ascendant. This tells us that

we have perfected some of the art of service and ceremony without show, but there is another branch of the skills to learn. So now the project becomes to switch from our past skill in, say, being a tribal health practitioner to becoming the accountant or keeper of sacred ceremonies (or whatever it is we find ourselves rewarded for).

Our society and time in general are going through a strong Underworld phase. It seems to have a death wish that we see expressed all around us. Daniel is developing models based on Venus and Mars, particularly when they relate to Pluto in the natal chart, that take the Underworld context to a different plane. With connections between Pluto and Venus or Mars, we are drawing on more of the Underworld emphasis in our relationships, which may or may not be defined only through right partnering. Signatures such as Pluto conjunct the Ascendant, or in hard aspect to Venus or Mars, bring the special magnetism of the Underworld with them. People may react to us with fright or anger, or we may draw out their shadow sides and receive blasts of energy from them. For these people with the strong Pluto-relationship signatures, this intensity of interaction with other individuals becomes their medicine, some of which they take themselves, and some of which they knowingly or unknowingly give to others.

Daniel's strategy for dealing with Shadow in relationship is to draw on the positive side of the ascending sign (with second consideration to the sign of Venus for women, Mars for men), and try to keep that in clear perspective as we go through the stress of the shadow energy being projected at them. Some insights into these signatures is as follows:

Gemini Ascendant: Don't fight it. Just disengage and disappear. Step aside at the last moment like a bullfighter.

Scorpio Ascendant: Deal with the shadow. As much as possible, build in the life force. Confront the energy coming at you.

Taurus Ascendant: Adopt a strategy of safety. Make the adversary comfortable, bringing comfort and physical reassurance into the equation.

Libra Ascendant: When confronted by the “bad guys,” use the Scheherazade strategy: Keep telling them in the most delightful way of all the good things that are contained within the present. Tell useful, engaging stories. Keep them engaged one-on-one.

Sagittarius Ascendant: The truth shall set you free. In Daniel’s hypothetical example, you are camping in the desert and find you are about to be abducted by bad aliens. Say to them, “I invoke the Universal law of non-interference with the affairs of other sentient beings. And if you doubt me, consult your superiors.” Tell the truth with conviction ... but it has to be your truth.

Leo Ascendant: Blast the shadow material with the radiance of your self-love that translates to love for all. But it has to be genuine. You have to authentically love yourself ... so keep in practicing.

Virgo Ascendant: Relate to nature and the natural cycles of the Earth. When you do healing work, the shadow energy often goes to the healer. So have a relationship with a physical entity such as a great tree, rock or stream that will accept the energy and ground it for you when you approach and contact the entity.

Aries Ascendant: Use healthy competition and aggression to diffuse the shadow energy. This might get into physical contact but, if done with self-love, will not result in harm.

Pisces Ascendant: Enter into the space and framework of the other person. Absorb their situation and deal with it as your own. ... I know what you are feeling.

Cancer Ascendant: Daniel is still working on the definition of this, but it has to do with providing them a space where they can feel truly at home, where the family love and relaxation can come out.

Capricorn Ascendant: Make the law clear to them. Act as an elder, bring out the consequences of crossing the boundary.

Aquarius Ascendant deals with not acknowledging the possibility of shadow. It becomes something that they deal with in their heads, something that can be defined out of existence. Detachment becomes an important way in which Aquarius deals with the messages they don’t want to come to grips with. They cut off emotion as being “too dense,” directing themselves “toward the light.” With Aquarius rising and lacking support from the lineage, we may see detachment and sublimation away from emotion (density) to excess, just as a way for the individual to learn how to “do” Aquarius.