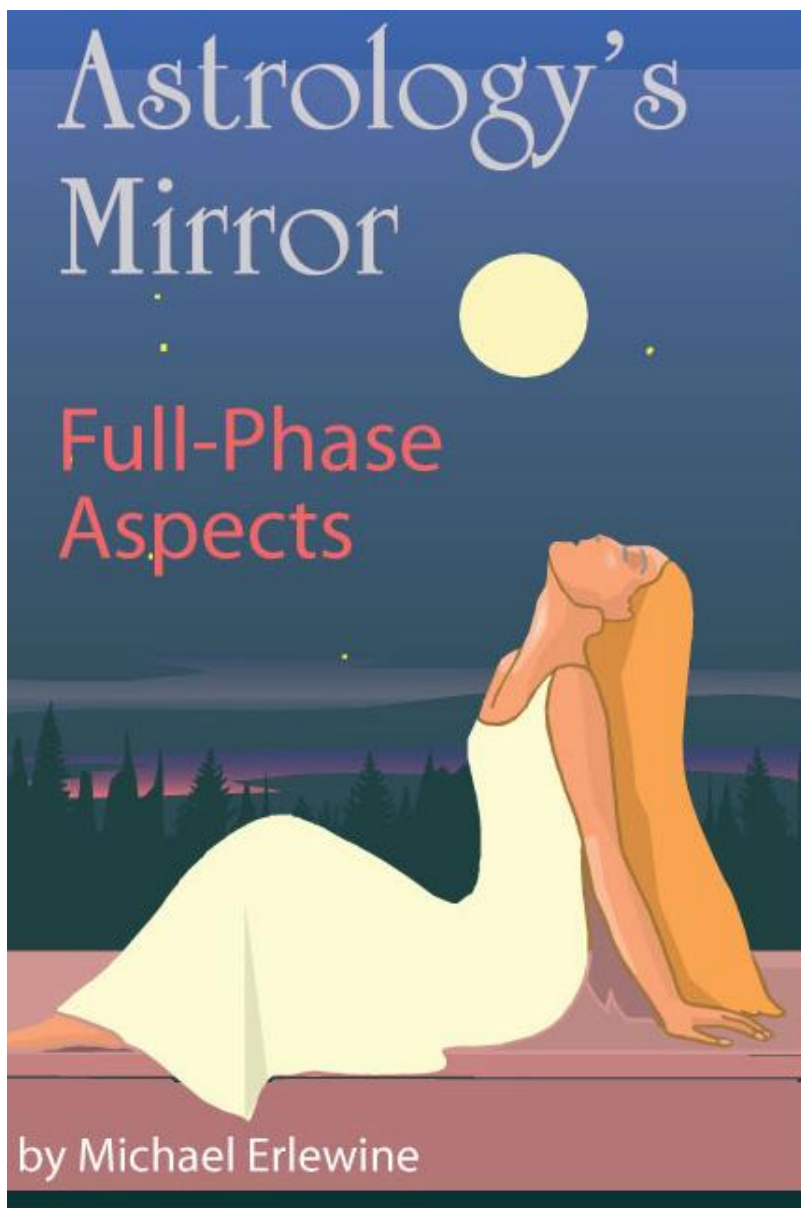


Astrology's Mirror: Full-Phase Aspects



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**Astrology's
Mirror
Full-Phase Aspects**

By

Michael Erlewine

Astrology's Mirror: Full-Phase Aspects

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Astrology's Mirror: Full-Phase Aspects

This book is dedicated to

Dane Rudhyar

L. Edward Johndro

Layla Hill

Champions of Full-Phase Aspects

Astrology's Mirror: Full-Phase Aspects

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Here is a new way to look at aspects, using the same astrological tools you have always been using. There is nothing new added from outside, just some rearranging of what you already know. When I came across it, I was amazed.

All of these years I had been playing with the various aspects, like most astrologers, and then one day they began to fit together in a new way, like pieces in a crossword puzzle. Before I knew it, all of these parts I knew so well came together, and before me was a picture of my own chart I had never seen so clearly. I want to share that technique with you, and it is all about how to use the aspects. This book makes it easy for you to learn to look at aspects in a new light and see for yourself.

Most astrologers have a particular set of aspects and orbs that they use. Some just use the standard

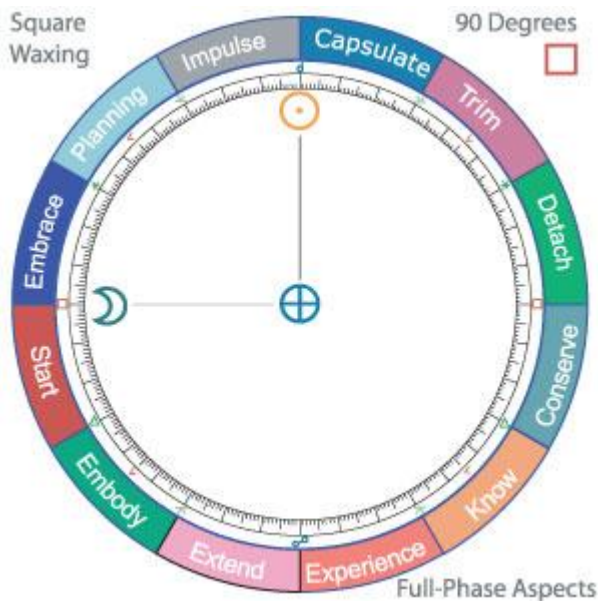
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Ptolemaic aspects, and others of us add to that list, even to the point of wandering into the various harmonic series.

The aspect orbs that we use determine whether that aspect is going to show up on our radar screen when we look at a chart, especially if we are using a computer. Obviously, the tighter the orbs, the less aspects that show up on the screen, and with wider orbs, we, of course, see more aspects.

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What Are Aspects?



Before we go any further into this, let's agree what we mean by aspects. Take any two heavenly bodies; it does not matter if it is the Sun or Moon, or one of the planets. One of any two bodies is moving faster and the other moves more slowly. The net effect is that the faster-moving planet describes a 360-degree circle or cycle of aspects to the slower moving body. The faster-moving planet goes from a conjunction with the slower body through a circle/cycle of 360-degrees and back around to the next conjunction. That is called the aspect cycle, and is what aspects are all about. Let's take the familiar solunar cycle as an example.

The solunar cycle (and astronomers call this a "synodic" cycle) begins with the Sun and Moon conjunct in the same zodiac degree at the moment of the New Moon. The Moon, being the faster-moving body, then begins to move away from the conjunction with the Sun and starts

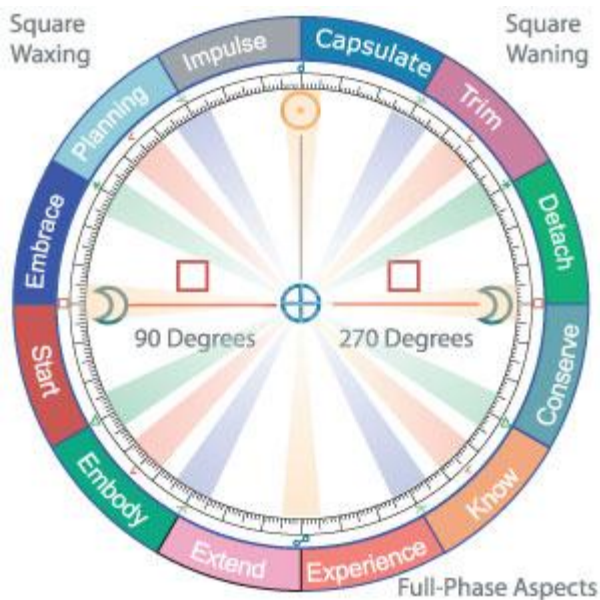
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to form aspects (angular arcs of separation) with the Sun, the most familiar being the First Quarter Moon (90 degrees), the Full Moon (180 degrees), and the Fourth Quarter Moon (270 degrees), after which the Moon moves to conjunct the Sun again, for another New Moon. The cycle continues on around, month after month.

This same type of synodic cycle of aspects takes place with any two heavenly bodies; it makes no difference which two you select. There is always one that moves faster, and one that moves more slowly. Aspects are formed, endlessly. It is happening now in the sky above. Each planet out there is in the process of forming or separating from one aspect or another with all the other planets.

In fact, the Sun, Moon, and planets are always involved with one another in these various aspect cycles, some 45 pairs of them (geocentrically), all going on at once.

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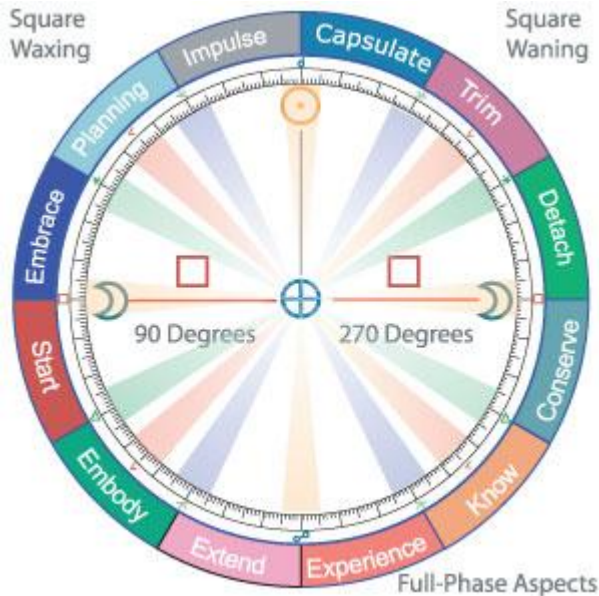
Why These Points?

Perhaps because there are so many aspects to consider all at once, astrologers have over the centuries picked certain points on the 360-degree aspect cycle and found them to be especially significant. We mentioned (using the solunar cycle) the 90-degree points (Square), and the halfway point (Opposition), which is the 180 degree point in the circle. Most astrologers add to this list, the 60-degree points (Sextile) and the 120-degree points (Trine). Still others want to include the 45-degree points (Semi-Square), and so on it goes.

If we kept adding points along the circle or cycle, we would eventually have all 360 degrees marked out. Some folks do, and the Sabian Symbols by Marc Edmund Jones has an interpretation for all 360 degrees of the zodiac. But let's back up a moment.

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We mentioned the 90-degree or Square points on the cycle, but there are two of these in any cycle. In the solunar cycle, there is the 90-degree point that marks the First Quarter, but there is also the 90-degree point that marks the Fourth Quarter. Each of these aspects is 90 degrees, and few astrologers would want to confuse a First Quarter Moon with a Fourth Quarter Moon. One leads to the light of the Full Moon, and the other to the dark of the New Moon. The same is true for the 60-degree (Sextile) and 120-degree (Trine) aspects. There are two of these in each cycle, as well. What are we to do with this fact that there are two of most aspects?



The Other Shoe

In modern astrology, almost all astrologers treat the 90-degree or square aspect as the same thing, whether it is that first 90-degree aspect (the waxing Square) or the second 90-degree aspect (the waning Square). The interpretation is the same. Yes, many astrologers would

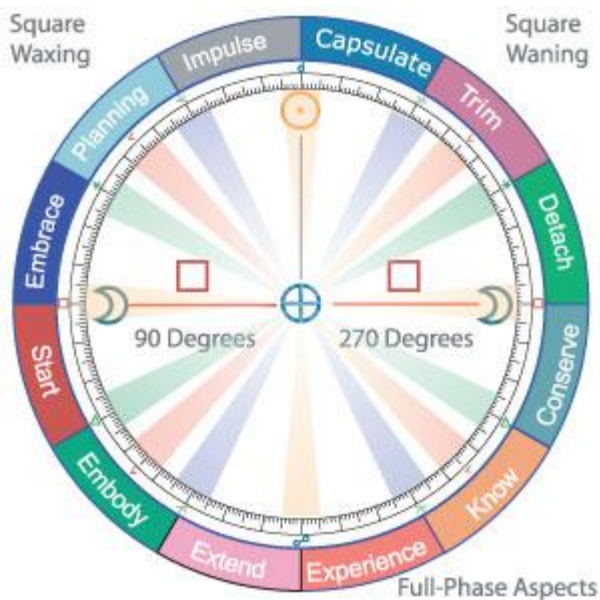
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perhaps make an exception with the familiar solunar cycle, and differentiate between a First Quarter Moon and a Fourth Quarter Moon, but when it gets to the planets, in all their various combinations, there is usually only one interpretation given.

A Square is a Square is a Square, and so on. However, not everyone agrees.

It is true that a very few astrologers have pointed out to the rest of us that, reasonably speaking, we ought to interpret a waxing Square differently from a waning Square, just as we do in the solunar cycle, most notably L. Edward Johndro and in particular Dane Rudhyar. Both of these authors writings have made it clear that we are missing something very important by grouping all squares, all sextiles, all trines, etc. together and interpreting each pair in the same manner. What are they trying to tell us?

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The Message about Aspects

If we read these authors (and I have), and others on this subject, here is their message to us. I will paraphrase and summarize what they have said:

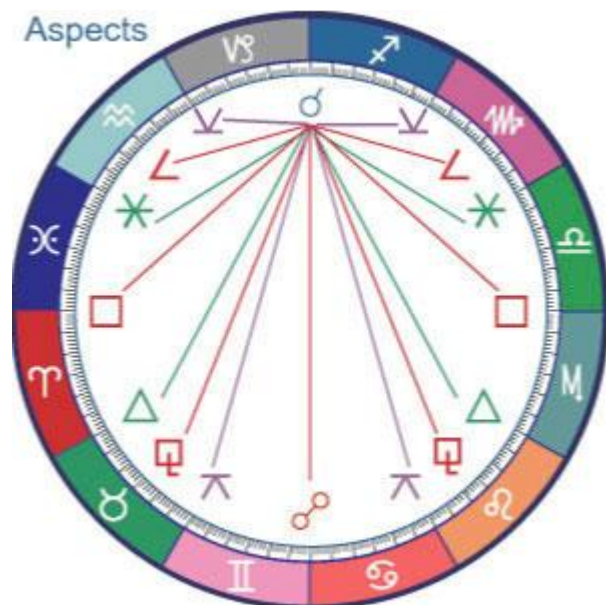
These cycles are living events in the heavens above, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, starting at the point of the conjunction of the two bodies, extending to the opposition, and then back to the next conjunction. It can be important for us to know, when we speak of an aspect like a Square, whether we are referring to the square at the beginning or the square at the end of the cycle.

If you asked me to help you plan a social outing, and I told you to have your social event "after" the Square aspect between the Sun and the Moon, it would be important, according to the tradition of astrology, to designate that it is the waxing Square, after which you should hold the party, and not the waning Square. If you

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threw the party after the waning Square, you would be holding it right before the New Moon, and the dark of the Moon in both Eastern and Western astrology is more of a time to hunker down, and not a time to celebrate.

Everyone knows that the Full Moon is when to get together. You get the idea, and I believe most of you would agree. We have this discrimination for the solunar cycle, but we don't extend this to the planetary aspects. Why is that?



Waxing and Waning Aspects

The point is that, according to Dane Rudhyar and others, we should discriminate in our interpretation between what are called waxing and waning aspects. An aspect is waxing if it occurs before the Opposition point (180 degrees), and it is waning if it takes place after the Opposition. There is the going out to the opposition, and the coming back from the Opposition. Therefore, we

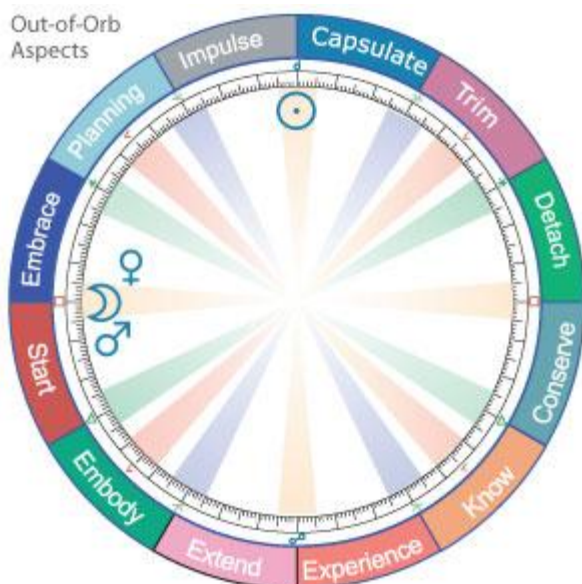
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would have a waxing Square and a waning Square, and same goes for Sextiles (60 degree), Trines (120 degree), Semi-Squares (45 degree), Sesqui-Quadrates (135 degree), Inconjunct (150 degree), and any other aspects you might care to use.

The only aspects that are not mirrored in this way are the Conjunction (zero degrees) and Opposition (180 degrees). They are the beginning and mid points of the cycle, and, in that sense, they stand alone.

Discriminating between waxing and waning aspects takes us a long way to re-invigorating our astrological interpretations. The question of how the interpretations differ between waxing and waning aspects is something I want to get to, but first there is a more important point to be made about the wholeness of cycles as they relate to individual aspects.

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Inconvenient Aspects

While it may have been a great convenience to astrologers over the centuries to have fixed upon a series of aspects, like the Square and Trine, and to have more-or-less ignored whatever takes place in between those aspects, we now need to take a good look at what we have been ignoring, and that is: the essential wholeness or continuum of these planetary cycles.

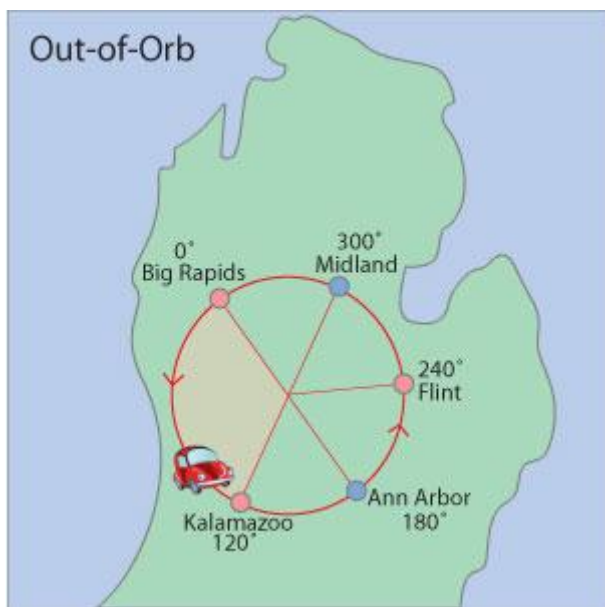
If we use aspect orbs, and most astrologers do, then no matter what orbs we use, there will always be the case where a planet is just one degree out of orb, and that aspect will not be taken into consideration by us. This is particularly true if we are using computerized astrology, which will simply not list an aspect if it is out-of-orb. What are we to do with these unlisted aspects?

We do know by looking at the chart that the unlisted aspect is either an aspect waiting to happen or an

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aspect that has just happened recently. It certainly is not any other aspect, and the fact that the aspect is very close to the particular aspect we have set orbs to, we can know it is at the very least in the same ballpark.

Regardless of what orbs we may have set, each and every planet is somewhere in its journey or relationship with every other planet. It is never "not out there," and it never somehow drops out of the cycle, but it always continues, degree by degree, on its appointed round of the zodiac. In the entire 360-degree orbit, every degree is essential. We can't get along without each one of them.



An Analogy

Here is a simple analogy that will point out two areas where we, as astrologers, may be missing out. Suppose I were to send one of my daughters on a round trip to Ann Arbor, by way of Kalamazoo on the outgoing leg and Flint on the ingoing.