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The Pre-Natal Epoch

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The Pre-Natal Epoch is a very ancient concept. Known as the Trutine of Hermes, or the Trutina Hermetis, and attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, it is cited in the 51st Centiloquy of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* ¹ but is now generally considered to have been written in the 10th century by the Arabic astrologer Ja'far Ahmet ibn Yusuf ibn Ibrahim al-daya. ²

The Trutine of Hermes, as cited in Ptolemy, is:

Make the sign occupied by the Moon at the time of birth the ascending sign at the conception; and consider that in which she may be posited at the conception, or the opposite one, as the sign ascending at the birth.

Simply put, the Trutine is the relationship between a normal period of gestation (approximately nine months before birth) and the moment of birth, depending on the Moon and the lunar rhythm. This sets up a correlation between the chart for the moment of conception and the chart for the moment of first breath, as the physical body separates from the body of the mother.

This technique originated from a time when the firstborn child of a family, especially a son, had the right to succeed or to inherit property or title, to the exclusion of all other claimants. Therefore, it was imperative, not only for the monarch of the day but also for the noble, wealthy, and privileged classes of Europe and the Middle East, to know whether they were going to have offspring and whether the child would be male or female. This could be determined either by reading the chart for when sexual intercourse has taken place or by setting up a chart for the best time for it to take place in order to produce offspring. Thus, two of the required tools in the astrologer's toolkit were (1) to be able to read the horary chart of the sexual event as to whether or not it would bear fruit and, better still, (2) to elect a chart for copulation from which a child of either gender would ensue, nine to ten months later. Hence, the Trutine of Hermes was

a method of determining the fecundity of the action, the length of pregnancy, and the resulting gender.

Although the success rate of this principle is not tabulated, we do know that the method was absolutely part of the toolkit of the medieval and ancient astrologer. Robert Zoller ³ tells us that the oldest extant exposition of the subject appears to be that of Vettius Valens in his *Anthologiarum Libri*, written between 154–174 C.E. Three astrologers from the Arab world also dealt with this: Haly (998–1061); Zael, one of the most important astrologers of the 9th century; and Achaiat (possibly al-Khayyat), c. 770–835 (all three are mentioned by Bonatti). The doctrine appears in 11th-century astrologer Al-Biruni's *Elements of the Art of Astrology*. The 13th-century astrologer Guido Bonatti gives detailed instructions for electing such charts in his *Liber Astronomiae, Tractatus Tertius*, col. 445: "On the Generating and Conceiving of Sons and Daughters." Bonatti, in turn, influenced the works of John Dee, Pico della Mirandola, and Johannes Shoener. Before the Palatine Library was destroyed in 1620, it contained at least two books on the subject.

Why Link the Ascendant and the Moon?

In ancient and medieval astrology, the individual was thought to be represented by the Ascendant; the ruler of the Ascendant and the rest of the chart indicated the physical reality that surrounded a person and acted upon him or her ⁴ - a very different concept from the more psychologically inclined attitude of today which sees the whole chart as a blueprint for personal behaviour. The ancient and medieval astrologers could describe the capabilities of a person's soul and mental capacities in terms of the Moon and Mercury, but everything else to do with the person's character was limited to circumstantial factors. Hence, the Ascendant was the most significant consideration for determining the character and capabilities of an individual. And since the Moon was the beat of time used to measure birth (the Pre Natal Epoch is based on the cycles of the Moon and takes 8-10 lunations for childbirth, not 9 solar months. Hence the Moon, rather than the Sun, becomes the beat of time used to measure childbirth) it became extremely important to link these two measures in order to gain the best outcome.

What Bonatti refers to as *De Mora Infantis in Utero Matri* ("On the Period of the Infant in the Mother's Belly") is sometimes called conception; however, the word "conception" is the sticking point in all this, because fertilisation does not necessarily take place at the time of copulation. Zoller suggests that ancient texts that referred to "conception" actually meant "coitus," since it is almost impossible to ascertain the true moment of conception. He states that "the ancients, not knowing about true conception, confused it with coitus, assuming that the actual

fertilisation took place at the time of insemination.”⁵ Therefore, references by Ptolemy and others to “the conception figure” or “the moment of conception” are, in fact, references to the moment of insemination or coitus.

But Pre-Natal Epoch charts are more than this. They are the charts for sexual moments which are incredibly successful in producing a child. They are the charts for physical endeavours which cause fertilisation to occur. They are the charts for the beginnings of a journey which has, as its outcome, the birth of a human being.

Modern Use

In modern times, the Trutine of Hermes, or Pre-Natal Epoch, has been more frequently used to look backwards in time than to look forwards – that is, more to rectify the birth time⁶ than to ascertain fruitfulness of sexual union. I believe that we are on shaky territory if we limit the Pre-Natal Epoch to its sole guise of fine-tuning the natal birth time since, as stated above, fertilisation of the egg cannot be fully pinpointed.

So, what if we free the Pre-Natal Epoch is freed from the shackles of having to be a rectification device? What if we allow it to become a *piece of information in its own right*? A chart which describes the potential of a sexual action that is ultimately successful in producing a child must surely show the seeds of actions which ripen in the womb to become formed behaviour patterns. If we take this stance, then the Pre-Natal Epoch might be telling us something quite different. It may be showing us the drive *behind* the natal chart, the unmanifest energies, latent potentials, or raw resources of the psyche prior to the birth process – the “underbelly” of the natal chart which, if acknowledged consciously, can help us to understand many inner drives not necessarily shown by the natal chart.

Since the Pre-Natal Epoch is based on the cycles of the Moon, we can carry the model even further and say that, just as the natal chart shows us the externally driven Solar Hero’s journey (no matter how yin the chart might be), the Pre-Natal Epoch may show us the *lunar*, or internal side of ourselves – the feminine, interior, or spiritual side.

This article proposes that the Pre-Natal Epoch chart can be delineated as an authentic chart in its own right, rather than a theoretical concept or rectification device, a chart which can be read in actuality for behavioral patterns which is as intimately connected with the natal chart as yin is to yang. The Pre-Natal Epoch chart can thus show us the shape and form of the incoming energy – what is *potentially* there, as opposed to what is *physically* there in the natal chart – and give us valuable information about a person that is not necessarily apparent from the natal chart. It can also tell us how aspects may have improved or degraded

during the time in the womb — the decisions an individual has made in the womb about the expression of those aspects.

The Mathematics

Mathematically, the relationship is: The sign and degree of the natal Moon must be the same sign and degree as the Pre-Natal Epoch (PNE) Ascendant; the sign and degree of the natal Ascendant must be the same sign and degree as the PNE Moon or its opposite sign (see **Diagram** ***wherever***).

A chart is constructed for the time when the Moon was in the exact degree of the natal Ascendant nine to ten months before birth. The resulting chart must have its Ascendant at the same degree and minute as the natal Moon, and the sign and degree of the natal Ascendant must be the same or opposite sign and degree as the Pre-Natal Epoch Moon.

The method I use is as follows:

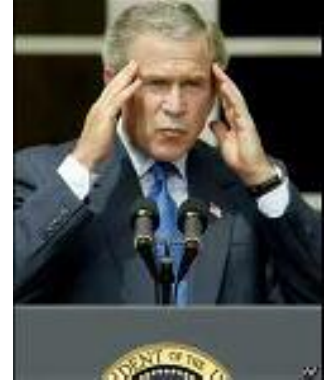
1. Calculate the 8-10 lunar returns before birth, with the Moon set to the degree of the natal Ascendant.
2. Look through the options offered to find the exact degree of the PNE Ascendant as the degree of the natal Moon.

When counting back nine to ten months, there are always two possibilities for the Pre-Natal Epoch chart. Both of these will have the Moon in the exact degree of the natal Ascendant. However, in the process of adjusting the Ascendant to the degree of the natal Moon, one chart will become more obviously correct as the PNE Moon maintains its relationship by sign and degree to the natal Ascendant.

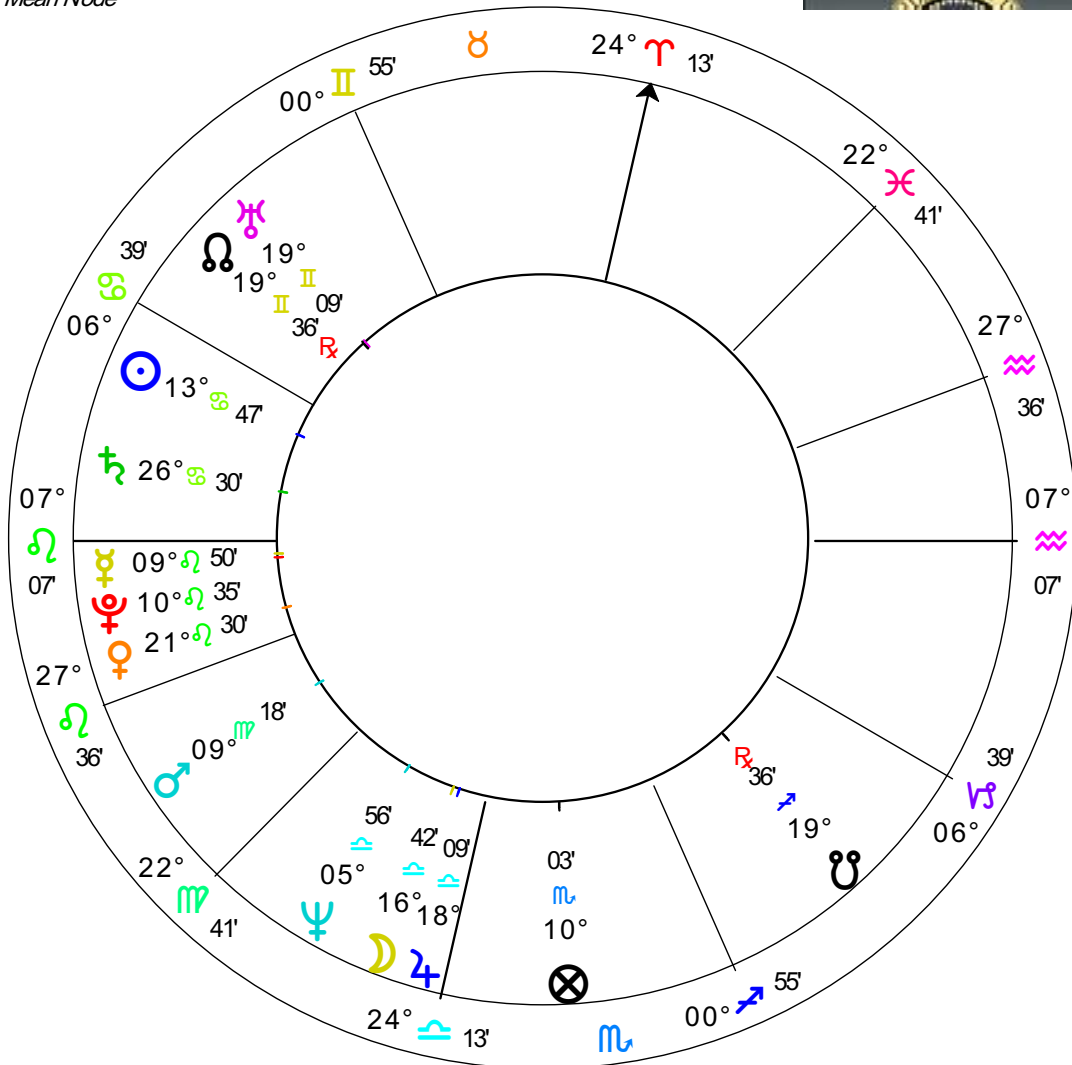
Note: Freeing the Pre-Natal Epoch from having to be a rectification device means that the natal Ascendant does not have to correspond exactly to the Moon of the PNE chart but should at least be within 3° of it.

Besides the above, I do not reverse the latitude of birth to account for any hemisphere change.

Example One: George W. Bush



George W. Bush
Event Chart
 6 Jul 1946
 7:26 am EDT +4:00
 New Haven CT, USA
 41° N 18° 072° W 55'
 Geocentric
 Tropical
 Placidus
 Mean Node



George W. Bush is the 43rd President of the United States. Formerly the 46th governor of Texas, President Bush has earned a reputation as a "compassionate conservative" who shapes policy based on the principles of limited government, personal responsibility, strong families, and local control.

President Bush was born in the state of Connecticut but grew up in Texas. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School. He served as an F-102 pilot for the Texas Air National Guard before beginning his career in the oil and gas business in Texas in 1975; he worked in the energy industry until 1986. After participating in his father's successful 1988 presidential campaign, he assembled the group of partners that purchased the Texas Rangers baseball franchise in 1989.

He served as managing general partner of the Texas Rangers until he was elected governor on November 8, 1994, with 53.5 percent of the vote. In an historic re-election victory, he became the first governor of Texas to be elected to consecutive four-year terms on November 3, 1998, winning 68.6 percent of the vote. President Bush is married to Laura Welch Bush, a former teacher and librarian, and they have twin daughters, Barbara and Jenna. ⁷

The Natal Chart:

Issues and Themes

The Primary Drive or Primary Motivation ⁸ (defined by the Leo Ascendant) is that of someone who goes for influence, power, and freedom of action. This is realised by:

- The Sun as the ruler of the Ascendant through the following themes or issues:
 1. Sun in Cancer in the 12th house, making a cardinal square to Neptune in the 2nd which rules the 9th house.
 2. Sun in Cancer in the 12th house, making a cardinal square to the Moon-Jupiter conjunction in Libra in the 3rd house conjunct the IC; the Moon rules the 12th house, and Jupiter rules the 5th and 9th houses.
 3. The Moon-Jupiter conjunction:
 - a. making an air trine to Uranus conjunct the North Node; nodal axis across the 11th/5th axis.
 - b. Jupiter making a cardinal square to Saturn in Cancer (in detriment) in the 12th house; Saturn rules the 6th house and, by old rulerships, the 7th and 8th houses.

4. Uranus making a wide mutable square to Mars in Virgo in the 2nd house which rules the MC and, by old rulership, Scorpio intercepted in the 4th house.
 5. Uranus making a yang (Fire-Air) sextile to Venus in the 1st house which rules the IC and Taurus intercepted in the 10th house.
- The Mercury–Pluto conjunction in Leo conjunct the Ascendant, with Mercury ruling the 3rd and 11th houses and Pluto ruling Scorpio intercepted in the 4th house.

These themes and issues translate as follows:

- ***Sun square Neptune:***

This describes a person whose inner identity is shaped through genuineness and ethics and maintaining clear boundaries (Sun–Neptune). In its most difficult form, the Sun–Neptune aspect belongs to the person who cannot clearly distinguish between what is appropriate and what is not. In its best-case scenario, this describes someone who recognises that he will always be presented with issues of limits and integrity and be given opportunities to draw a clear line in the sand beyond which he will not step. These issues of limits and integrity come in the form of tension between openly discussing things and working behind the scenes or keeping things hidden (cardinal square between the 3rd and 12th houses); this tension is very much based on his feelings and emotions (Sun–Neptune, Sun in Cancer, Sun in the 12th) and his philosophy of life (Neptune ruling the 9th). The myth of the Sun in Cancer is the myth Achilles who is both a mortal and an immortal. So he is given two parallel fates: one as a mortal (safety of home and hearth) and one as an immortal (brilliance on the battlefield). They are fates offered as options to fulfill. The person can pull back from fulfilling them, however. So it is with George Bush. His human fate seeks the safeness of home, hearth, family, and clan and tells him that he must learn to love without emotional manipulation; his immortal fate pushes him from within to succeed in his own right. The Sun in the 12th house also speaks of someone whose own father is either lost in the System or who represents the System and models this pathway for him.

- ***Sun square Moon–Jupiter:***

This aspect describes a person whose inner identity is shaped through education; the grandfather (Sun–Jupiter) and mother may play a large part in this person's education (Moon–Jupiter). He has been taught to feel emotionally secure when he can maintain balance and harmony and avoid confrontation or conflict (Moon in Libra). This also suggests that he comes from a family of people who have been eminent in some way (Jupiter conjunct the IC), as part of his family's destiny or fate (the Moon as ruler of the 12th conjunct the IC), and that a grandfather is particularly important to the family ancestry (Jupiter conjunct the

IC). Bush's maternal great grandfather, Bert Walker, and paternal grandfather, Prescott Bush, were both prominent in the banking industry, and Prescott Bush was a Republican U.S. Senator from Connecticut.

- ***Jupiter square Saturn:***

This is the signature of "The Consolidator." It implies a successful, steadfast person who can consolidate his expansion through methodical consistency, taking one step at a time. Saturn in the 12th house suggests that Bush can be most effective when he works in large organisations or institutions; through negotiation and moderation (Jupiter in Libra, Jupiter-Saturn) and by forming alliances and working with other people's energy or power (Saturn in detriment), he can achieve a satisfactory outcome. His role model has either been a strong teacher or a strong grandfather (see above).

- ***Moon-Jupiter trine Uranus:***

The Moon-Uranus contact implies that Bush uses his intellect to resolve emotional issues and feels most secure when things are calm, taking no risks, making no decisions (Moon in Libra); yet, through an intimate or business partner (Uranus ruling the 7th house), he can rapidly take risks with ideas and concepts (Jupiter-Uranus air trine).

- ***Uranus conjunct the North Node:***

The above risks force Bush to encounter issues of freedom (Uranus-North Node). This is what he seeks to give him fulfillment (nodal axis). Hence, he may encounter groups who fulfill this desire early on in life, but he subsequently finds that such encounters sit on shallow foundations and don't meet this need. Life then forces him to look back at what he neglected; in this case, it is his own personal creativity (South Node in the 5th) which may be fulfilled by having children.

Bush's Sun is in Cancer, so it is fair to assume that having a family helps the pathways of both his Sun and his South Node in the 5th house. Having a family gives him a far broader understanding of life (South Node in Sagittarius) and allows him to learn negotiation and consolidation (Jupiter, the dispositor of South Node, square Saturn) as well as to start taking risks (dispositor of South Node trine Uranus). The support of a partner (Uranus ruling the 7th house) also helps him to move back toward the North Node when he is older and offers him the ability to work with groups on issues of freedom when he has the depth of life experience to deal with such issues more appropriately.

- ***Mars (wide) square Uranus and the nodal axis:***

Mars-Uranus describes a very physical person with a very high libido, someone with a quick, eccentric, chaotic temper. It is not usually a problem for the person who owns the aspect as long as there is an outlet for expression of this energy, such

as fast-moving physical sports or heavy physical activity. Mars is the ruler of the Midheaven, so this theme in Bush's chart is clearly going to be important in his career and can manifest through a connection with the military. In the worst-case scenario, Mars in Virgo represents righteous anger; in the best-case scenario, Bush is motivated through correct procedure, that is, he takes action by following rules and regulations. Mars squaring the nodal axis makes this even more pronounced. Home and family (Mars as the old ruler of Scorpio intercepted in the 4th house) and Bush's business or intimate partnerships (Uranus ruling the 7th house) support this strong motivation and drive.

● *Mercury-Pluto conjunct the Ascendant:*

A Mercury-Pluto aspect describes a person who is an intense, deep, persistent, and obstinate communicator, with a sharp, incisive mind — someone who is extremely passionate about expressing his ideas. In its worst-case scenario, this signifies the obsessive, stubborn, pig-headed fanatic, the byproduct of which is the worrier. In its best-case scenario, this signifies a brilliant analytical research mind, prepared to take risks in thinking yet with a locked-in single-mindedness. Hence, Bush is seen (conjunct the Ascendant) as either the obsessive worrier or the person who can apply single-mindedness to his thinking. Groups and communication (Mercury rules the 2nd and 11th houses) as well as hearth, home, and family (Pluto rules Scorpio intercepted in the 4th house) help to shape his thinking process.

● *Venus sextile Uranus:*

Venus in Leo in the 1st house adds charm and charisma; the yang (fire-air) sextile to Uranus suggests a highly social and gregarious person who is offered many opportunities to explore and relate to humanity in all its myriad shapes and forms.

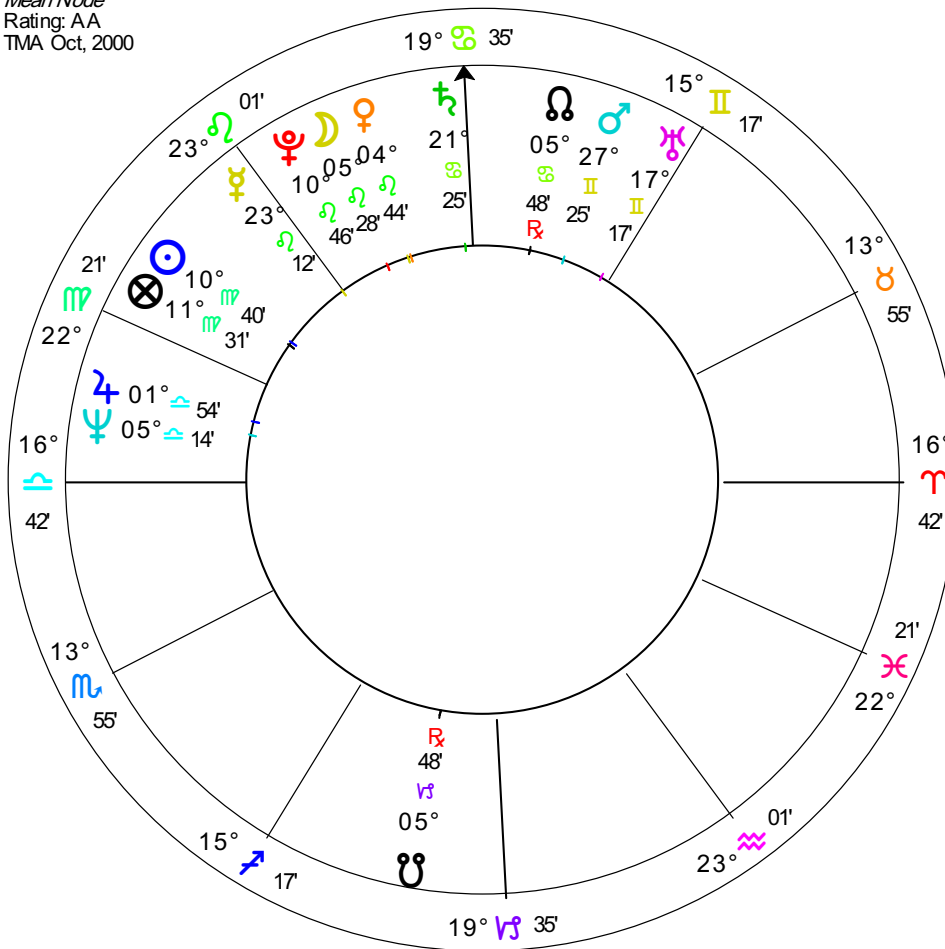
In summary, Bush is a focused (best case) or fanatical (worst case) communicator whose life path is shaped through issues of integrity and clear boundaries modeled for him by both his father figure and grandfather. This is the chart of someone who has to learn to work with alliances in a slow, steady way. There is a dilemma between staying safe and taking risks. However, as he encounters issues of freedom and liberty, then he also encounters his fierce temper and compulsive drive; this may, in some way, be focused on the military.

The Pre-Natal Epoch Chart

Once we move to the Pre-Natal Epoch chart, a different picture emerges.

George W. Bush – PNE

Natal Chart
 3 Sep 1945
 9:27:13 am EWT +4:00
 New Haven, CT
 41° N 18' 29" 072° W 55' 43"
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node
 Rating: AA
 TMA Oct, 2000



The main themes of this chart are:

- The Primary Drive or Primary Motivation, defined by the Libra Ascendant, is that of someone who goes for freedom of movement and communication, realised by the Venus–Moon–Pluto conjunction in Leo in the 10th house, with Venus ruling the Ascendant and the 8th house, the Moon ruling the MC, and Pluto ruling the 2nd house. This triple conjunction makes a yang sextile to the Jupiter–Neptune conjunction in the 12th house, with Neptune ruling the 6th house and Jupiter ruling the 3rd and, by old rulership, the 6th house.
- The Sun in Virgo in the 11th house (and ruling the 11th), making a mutable square to Uranus in the 9th house ruling the 5th house.
- Neptune (partile) square the nodal axis; nodal axis across the 9th/3rd Capricorn/Cancer axis.
- Saturn in Cancer conjunct the MC and ruling the IC and, by old rulership, the 5th house.
- Mercury in Leo in the 11th house ruling the 9th and 12th houses, making a yang sextile to Mars in Gemini in the 9th which rules the Descendant and, by old rulership, the 2nd house.

These themes and issues translate as follows:

- ***Venus–Moon–Pluto conjunction in the 10th house in Leo:***
This aspect describes someone who is seen (Libra Ascendant) as charming and willing to look at both sides of an argument. In the worst-case scenario, this is a person who is unable to make clear decisions. The primary drive or motivation is realised through the lens of the nurturing figure (Moon in the 10th and ruling the 10th) who taught this child that all relationships embrace passion, power, and pride (Venus–Moon–Pluto in Leo) and seem intense, fated, or predestined in some way. In the best-case scenario, this is an intense relater, someone who recognises and values that, once he makes an emotional bond, it is there forever (Pluto ruling the 2nd). In the worst case, he comes to learn that relationships contain power struggles and issues of trust and betrayal (Venus–Pluto) and can be agents of drama, crisis, and change (Venus ruling the 8th). If this intensity is not expressed, it can build up unconsciously and explode in a highly dramatic way, ranging in its extremity from fights, financial upheaval, damage, and chaos to the dramatic disintegration of relationships. Placed in the 10th house, this aspect will play out in Bush's career. As long as he is loved and appreciated for such commitment and passion and is able to be the centre of attention in his career (Venus–Moon–Pluto in Leo), then this theme will have a safe channel in which to run.

- ***Jupiter-Neptune conjunction in the 12th house:***

This is the signature of “The Dreamer,” the idealist who seeks a spiritual teacher, believing that other people have the knowledge that he desires. In its extremity, it is the signature of the Guru Hunter. The journey for a person with such an aspect in his chart is to realise that he is his own best teacher and judge. Placed in the 12th house, this PNE conjunction suggests that Bush is seeking either to become the “guru” of the masses or to hunt down a charismatic, hidden enemy (the 12th house) through hard work (Neptune ruling the 6th) and communication (Jupiter ruling the 3rd).

- ***Neptune (partile) square the nodal axis (At The Bend - that is square the nodal axis”) across the 9th/3rd Cancer/Capricorn axis:***

With Neptune stressed through its partile square to the nodal axis, this theme describes the need for clear boundaries, ethics, and principles in order to avoid deception, disillusion, and despair. The nodal axis lies across the 3rd/9th axis and brings in issues of education as a way of understanding emotional need and responsibility.

- ***Sun square Uranus:***

This aspect describes a person whose inner identity is shaped by a socially gregarious, critical, or judgmental father figure (Sun in Virgo in the 11th, ruling the 11th) who imprints his son with a creative drive for freedom, independence, and rebellion (Sun-Uranus, with Uranus ruling the 5th). The child has a natural affinity with what is logical, linear, left-brain, and intellectually based, and he is drawn to hierarchical structures in order to bring about change. Often called “The Rebel” and “The Revolutionary,” this individual can also become known as “The Scapegoat” in extreme circumstances, when systems or groups are called upon to change too quickly and too soon; he seeks someone to take the blame whilst he maintains hold on his narrow-world security. In its most difficult form, the Virgo Sun square Uranus can become quite righteous in its need for freedom.

- ***Saturn conjunct the MC:***

This is a very ambitious aspect of the chart and describes someone who – supported by home, hearth, and family and their creativity – seeks credibility and respect from a job or career (Saturn in the 10th, ruling the 4th and old ruler of the 5th house). In the worst-case scenario, the person can feel intimidated and dominated by other people and become strict, suppressing, and controlling – fearful of having to go out into the world and have a career, feeling that all success is merely a fluke. In the best-case scenario, this is someone who can consolidate a career and gain immense credibility and community standing, as long as he accepts the help of friends and allies in taking on such responsibility (Saturn in detriment).

- ***Mercury sextile Mars:***

Opportunities come to this person as a result of intuitive ideas he gives to groups (Mercury in Leo in the 11th house, ruling the 12th), as long as he feels appreciated (Mercury in Leo), supported (Mars ruling the 7th), and valued (Mars ruling the 2nd).

In summary, this is the chart of a passionate and proud (best case) or paranoid and revengeful (worst case) networker whose career must contain appreciation and large, dramatic issues. This is the chart of someone who seeks credibility and respect in his career and who must do things differently or alternatively to be successful. This can come by changing the system in some way or by bringing in new laws about protecting people's liberty. There is also the potential for him to become a guru in his own way, as long as he can keep his paranoia in perspective.

The Ties that Bind

So, how are these two charts related? What has been the translation in the womb from the potential of the Pre-Natal Epoch to birth? What is the fruit of the sexual act undertaken at the moment of the Pre-Natal Epoch?

Pluto: The **PNE Venus-Moon-Pluto** in Leo in the 10th has translated to the **natal Mercury-Pluto** conjunction on the Ascendant. This is a clearer expression of intensity, one that is not so focused on issues of trust and betrayal.

Moon: The **PNE Venus-Moon-Pluto** in Leo in the 10th has translated to **natal Moon-Jupiter trine Uranus**. The intense need of the PNE chart for love and appreciation in order to feel secure has changed into a more balanced desire for harmony, in the natal chart, possibly at the expense of clear decision-making.

Sun: The **PNE Sun square Uranus** has translated to **natal Sun square Neptune** and **Sun square Moon-Jupiter on the IC**. A focus on rules, regulations, and intellect has been converted to a gentler pathway, with the need for clear ethics and principles. This also highlights Bush's path as one that follows in the footsteps of his ancestors rather than radically changing it, as the PNE suggests.

Neptune: The **PNE Jupiter-Neptune in the 12th house square the nodal axis** has translated to **natal Sun in the 12th house square Neptune in the 3rd house**. These two aspects have a similar flavour. Both rely on clear boundaries; however, the translation to the natal chart has softened the issue of idealism, making this a highly personal part of the chart.

Nodal axis: PNE Jupiter-Neptune square the nodal axis has translated to **natal Mars (widely) square the nodal axis**. The stress in the PNE chart on moral principles and spirituality has turned into force, assertion and drive in the natal chart.

Saturn: PNE Saturn conjunct the MC has translated to **natal Saturn in the 12th square Jupiter on the IC**. The need for dominance, authority, and control has adjusted to a position of service, the forming of alliances, and working steadily toward a goal.

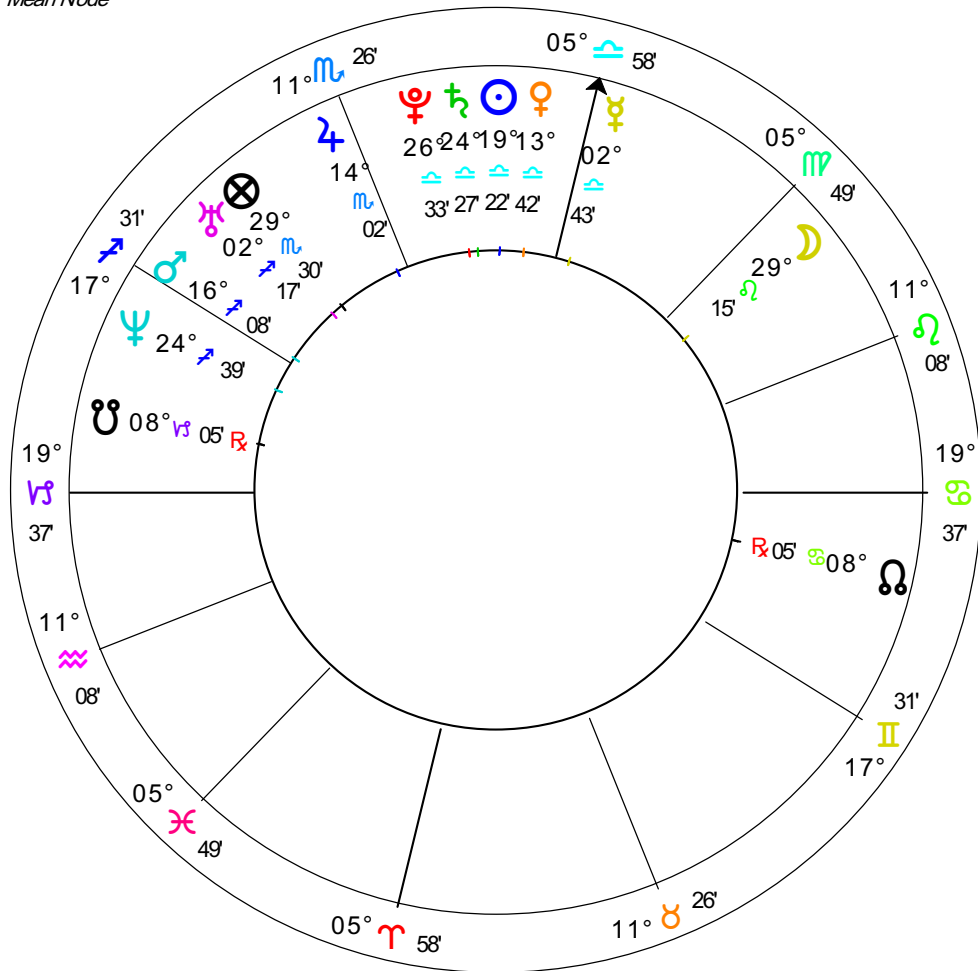
Observations

Clearly, the yin expression — the Pre-Natal Epoch — is the chart of a passionate, powerful, charismatic authoritarian who brings in new laws regarding freedom and liberty; this individual has the possibility of becoming either a sage/teacher or someone who seeks revenge against a powerful hidden enemy. The yang expression — the natal chart — is concerned with following family pathways and forming alliances to solve issues forcefully. In George W. Bush's position as a U.S. president whose country is under terrorist attack and siege, he has found a clear outlet for the PNE chart to express itself.

Example Two: Ian Thorpe



Ian Thorpe
Natal Chart
 13 Oct 1982
 10:52 am AEST -10:00
 Sydney, AUSTR
 33° S 52° 151° E 13'
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node



At age 14, Ian Thorpe became the youngest male to qualify for an Australian swim team. Since then, Thorpe and his size-17 feet ("They have finally stopped growing," he says) have gone on to new heights in national and international swimming competitions.

Ian Thorpe's swimming career started with the help of his sister, Christina. When he was 8, he got sick of watching his sister swim and decided to jump in, too! However, he definitely wasn't serious about swimming until 1998. Soon after that, he rose to prominence at the National and State Age championships, where he won everything from the 400-meter individual medley to the 50-meter freestyle.

In 1999, he was named Young Australian of the Year, an honour which recognises him as one of Australia's highest achievers (and not just in sport). He was also given the Young Australian Sports Award.

At the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, he won three gold medals and two silver, and he broke several world records. To top off his first Olympic experience, Thorpe was given the honour of carrying the Australian flag into the Closing Ceremony.

The pool is not the only place where Ian excels. While in high school, he usually scored in the top 5% of every subject, except for mathematics. This was no small achievement, considering that he woke up at 4:15 a.m. for training and then trained again after school in the afternoon. He has been taking correspondence courses since 1998 and now plans to go to university. [At the time of writing his website suggests that Ian has yet to complete the last few subjects of his HSC in order to enter University. ⁹]

The Natal Chart:

Issues and Themes

The Primary Drive or Primary Motivation, defined by the Capricorn Ascendant, is of someone who needs physical security. This is realised by:

- The Venus-Sun-Saturn-Pluto stellium in Libra in the 10th house, bringing in rulerships of the MC, 1st, 2nd, 5th, 8th, and 11th houses:

1. Sun-Venus making a yang sextile to Mars in Sagittarius in the 11th ruling the 4th and 11th houses.
2. Neptune conjunct Mars in Sagittarius, affecting the 12th house (Mars is within 1°30' of the cusp of the 12th).

3. Saturn making a partile yang sextile to Neptune in the 12th ruling the 3rd house.
 4. Pluto making a yang sextile to a void-of-course Moon in Leo in the 8th house ruling the 7th house.
- The Moon in Leo in the 8th house, ruling the Descendant trine Neptune in 12th house ruling the 3rd house.
 - Mercury in Libra in the 9th house, conjunct the MC and ruling the 6th and 9th houses and making a partile yang sextile to Uranus in the 11th ruling the 2nd house.
 - Unaspected Jupiter in Scorpio in the 11th house, ruling the 3rd and 12th houses.
 - Mercury and Venus squaring the nodal axis across the 6th/12th axis in Cancer-Capricorn.

These themes and issues translate as follows:

- ***Venus-Sun-Saturn-Pluto stellium in Libra in the 10th house:***
The myth of the Sun in Libra is the myth of Paris of Troy whose decision-making was based on his heart, not his head and caused one of the longest and bloodiest wars of the ancient world. Connect this to the Sun ruling the 8th house and the pathway that Ian Thorpe walks is one where drama and crisis force him to encounter and make clear decisions in his career (Sun in the 10th house). Those decisions will be based not so much on what he thinks he wants to achieve (Sun in the 10th house) but rather on those goals of his father figure (Sun in the 10th, Sun-Saturn) who has, consciously or unconsciously, set very high benchmarks which young Ian strives to achieve in order to gain recognition and credibility. He learns to put tremendous effort and energy into his career and to not take no for an answer (exalted Saturn); people see (Capricorn Ascendant) a hard-working, achievement-oriented young man with a great deal of charm (Venus in rulership in Libra stellium conjunct the MC). Yet sometimes his decisions or those of his father figure cause things to go awry (Sun in the 10th and in fall), because a 10th-house Sun does not signify a powerful father figure handing down a strong identity and ego to the offspring but rather the reverse: a weakened father figure who is unable to sustain the life journey of success and who unconsciously asks the child to do this for him.

This is reinforced by the Sun-Pluto conjunction: the failure of the father figure to protect the child from pain when the child is young; hence, the father is unable to give the child a clear model of how to take action and to have power in the world. The child, therefore, learns to judge people rapidly, as a survival technique; he is extremely sensitive to betrayal and constantly challenged to

develop his sense of identity and vitality through power struggles. At this stage in Ian Thorpe's life, we see this clearly manifested in the pool, along with his taking on responsibility very early in life (at age 14, Ian Thorpe became the youngest male to qualify for an Australian swim team) and working extremely hard to fulfill the father figure's expectations (Sun-Saturn). What people don't see is an underlying sense of inadequacy and fear of authority figures which causes him to work even harder to achieve early success. All of this, in turn, gives him physical security (the primary motivation of the chart). It takes a great deal of courage for him to recognise that he does not have to run his father figure's race, but this clearly will not become apparent until he is past his Saturn return.

- ***Sextiles:***

All the sextiles in Thorpe's chart are yang sextiles, so he sees life as a fertile field, constantly offering him opportunities through his motivation and drive (Sun-Mars), his emotional intensity and loyalty (Pluto-Moon), his sudden flashes of inspiration (Mercury-Uranus), and his persistence in working hard whilst holding a vision (Saturn-Neptune).

- ***Neptune conjunct Mars:***

In its extremity, a Mars-Neptune aspect can manifest as a person who is unfocused, appears weak, and feels drained by the groups with which he mixes or works. Anything to do with acceleration and direct action can feel undermined and exhausting. However, this combination can also assert itself as the personal expression of collective energy – the “Clark Kent-Superman syndrome” – where Thorpe finds an enormous storehouse of physical energy by focusing within himself. Here is the talented swimmer supported by his family (Mars ruling the IC), groups (Mars ruling the 11th house), and his ability to communicate (Neptune ruling the 3rd). There is also a family issue here of following a more yin approach to life, learning to trust his own judgment rather than that of the external world; this is underlined by Neptune's placement in the 12th house and echoed by the Sun in the 10th house conjunct Saturn and Pluto.

- ***Moon trine Neptune:***

The Moon-Neptune fire trine describes an energetic, fast, enthusiastic talent or ability that comes through totally merging with his environment and gaining a rapport with it. The Moon in Leo suggests that Thorpe needs to be the centre of attention to feel secure, and he does this through crisis or drama (Moon in the 8th house). Clearly, competing will allow this aspect a clear channel in which to express itself; all will be well as long as Thorpe is supported by a relationship or a business partnership (Moon ruling the 7th house) and keeps doing a reality check (void-of-course Moon). A Moon-Neptune aspect also describes someone

who is sensitive to drugs and susceptible to allergies: Thorpe has always maintained a steadfast focus on keeping all competitive swimming drug-free.

- ***Unaspected Jupiter in Scorpio:***

Not only is Jupiter the only planet in Ian Thorpe's chart in a water sign, but it is also unaspected. Karen Hamaker-Zondag¹⁰ describes people with unaspected planets as the ones who change family patterns and who often experience the second half of their lives as totally different from the first half. Time will tell whether this is to be the case with Ian Thorpe, but we can surmise that his life will certainly be different after his third Jupiter return at age 36 when benefits and expansion flow to him from groups (Jupiter in the 11th house) supported by his communication abilities (ruling the 3rd house) and his intuition (ruling the 12th house).

- ***Mercury conjunct the MC:***

Hard work (Mercury ruling the 6th) and travel (Mercury ruling the 9th) highlight Thorpe's ability to negotiate in his career (Mercury in Libra conjunct the MC). Mercury's partile sextile to Uranus adds brilliance of thought and the ability to value an opportunity (Uranus ruling the 2nd house) when it is staring him in the face.

- ***Mercury and Venus square the nodal axis (At The Bends) and conjunct the MC:***

A planet or luminary squaring the nodal axis always indicates stress or an emphasis on that planet. In Thorpe's case, the emphasis is on his communication and business skills (Mercury) and his networking (Venus) skills, both of which affect his career (conjunct the MC).

- ***Nodal axis:***

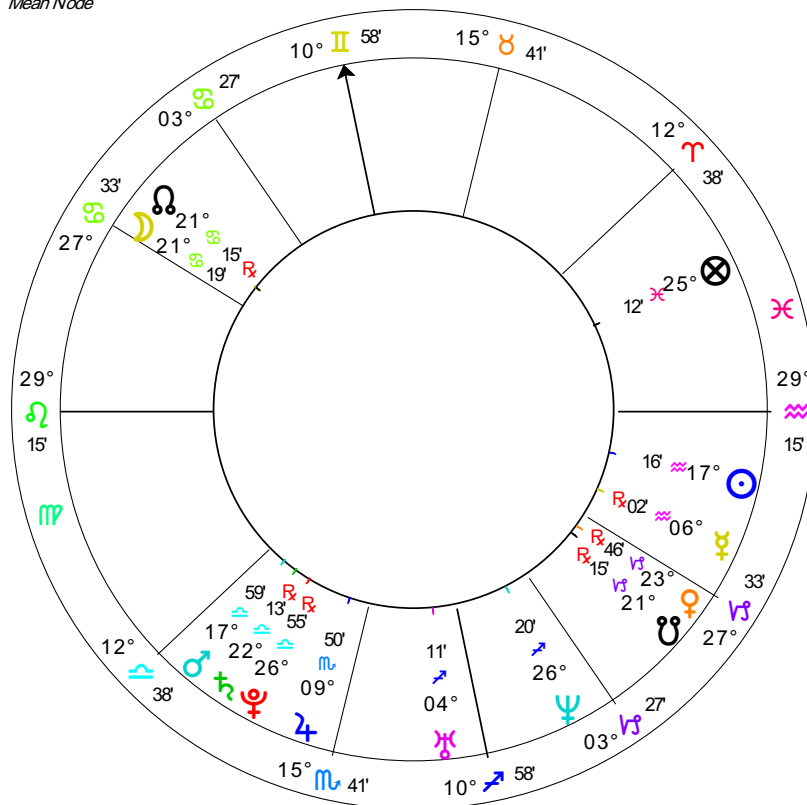
Thorpe is encountering the early success of the North Node where he gains emotional fulfillment (North Node in Cancer) through hard work (in the 6th house). At some stage, all of his achievements will seem hollow, built on sand and he will seek greater responsibility (South Node in Capricorn) as a representative, spokesperson, or diplomat for an organisation, institution, or possibly – given who he is – even his country (South Node in the 12th house). This will enable him to re-encounter his North Node and to gain even greater emotional satisfaction, with this added responsibility giving weight to his life's work.

In summary, this is the chart of someone who, with charm and appeal and hard work, builds an achievement-oriented, intense, and successful career path (best-case scenario) as a way of gaining physical security; or who feels suppressed and dominated by authoritarian figures, drained by other people's energy and unable to trust his own judgment (worst case scenario). His gift of speed in the water comes from totally merging with it, and he harnesses this talent through crisis

and drama. His identity is shaped by power struggles and contests and by living up to other people's expectations; his fate is to change family patterns in some way, to learn to make clear decisions based on his own pathway, not that of his father figure.

The Pre-Natal Epoch Chart

Ian Thorpe – PNE
Natal Chart
 6 Feb 1982
 7:27:54 pm AEST -10:00
 Sydney, AUSTRALIA
 33° S 52° E 151° E 13'
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node



In Ian Thorpe's natal chart, all the planets and luminaries are above the horizon; now, in his Pre-Natal Epoch chart, everything except the Moon is below the horizon. This is the chart of a much more private person.

The main themes of this chart are:

- The Primary Drive or Primary Motivation, defined by the Leo Ascendant, is that of someone who goes for power and freedom of action, realised by the Sun in Aquarius in the 6th house square Jupiter in the 2nd house ruling the IC and Pisces intercepted in the 8th house. The Sun also makes a partile trine to Mars in Libra in the 2nd house ruling the 3rd and 8th houses.
- The T-square: Moon in Cancer in the 11th house rules the 11th and conjuncts the North Node opposite Venus in Capricorn in the 5th; Venus, which rules the 2nd and 9th houses, is conjunct the South Node and square the Mars-Saturn-Pluto conjunction in Libra in the 2nd house. Mars rules the 3rd and 8th houses; Saturn rules the 5th and 6th houses and, by old rulership, the 7th; and Pluto rules the 3rd house.
- Jupiter in the 2nd house ruling the IC and Pisces intercepted in the 7th; Jupiter is also square Mercury in Aquarius in the 6th house ruling the MC and Virgo intercepted in the 1st.
- Neptune in the 4th house; Uranus in the 3rd house conjunct the IC. Both planets involve the 7th house through rulership or interception.
- Neptune in the 4th house sextile Saturn; Uranus yang sextile Mercury. (Both of these sextiles are repeated in the natal chart.)

These themes and issues translate as follows:

- ***Sun square Jupiter; Sun (partile) trine Mars; Jupiter square Mercury:*** The life path, identity, and vitality are different, unusual, and intellectual - this person is hard-working and most effective when fighting on behalf of other people (Sun in Aquarius in the 6th house). This is someone who works at the cutting edge of society – whether with underprivileged groups or new technologies – and rebels against whatever ties him down, even though he is forced to operate within hierarchical systems. This person's identity (Sun) is bound up with education and expansion (Sun square Jupiter), working for the good of others (Sun in the 6th) and finding an outlet for his broad-based ideas (Jupiter square Mercury, Mercury in Aquarius) by taking action one step at a time (fixed square), supported by family (Jupiter ruling the IC) and a partnership (Pisces intercepted in the 7th house). As in George W. Bush's chart, a grandfather may be an important role model in Thorpe's life. These broad-based ideas (Jupiter square Mercury, Mercury in Aquarius) are an important part of his career (Mercury ruling the MC), and he himself (Virgo intercepted in the 1st house) works hard to realise them (Mercury in the 6th). Indeed, as he pushes and

struggles to express these ideas (fixed squares: Jupiter-Sun, Jupiter-Mercury), he finds a great deal of unconscious motivation and drive (Sun partile trine to Mars).

- *T-square: Moon-North Node opposite Venus-South Node square
Mars-Saturn-Pluto:*

This T-square allows Thorpe to actively seek solutions to problems (cardinal) as part of a team (succeedent houses). The conflict he must resolve has to do with personal creativity versus group dynamics: how much time he can devote to personal networking and relating (Venus in Capricorn in the 5th house) and how much time he spends seeking or giving emotional nurturance to a group (Moon in rulership in Cancer in the 11th house). The old issue that he neglects in the pursuit of emotional happiness has to do with restriction or shyness around relating (Venus in Capricorn conjunct the South Node), which affects his self-worth (Venus ruling the 2nd house) and higher learning or travel (Venus ruling the 9th house). He rushes toward groups (Moon conjunct North Node) only to experience a far more unconscious fear (Moon ruling the 12th house), as he seeks emotional fulfillment. He resolves the issue by the Mars-Saturn-Pluto triple conjunction in Libra at the apex of this T-square, the midpoint of the opposition, as follows.

In its worst-case scenario, this triple conjunction expresses itself as an immense or superhuman power (Mars-Pluto) which is inhibited, restricted, or blocked (Saturn-Mars, Saturn in exaltation) and which causes a great deal of frustration, intensity, and even violence (Saturn-Pluto). This restriction on his superhuman power develops into wariness and paranoia that Thorpe uses as a coping mechanism for underlying crises (Mars ruling the 8th house), exacerbated by the triple conjunction in Libra which wants to maintain harmony but doesn't allow him to talk about it (Pluto and Mars ruling the 3rd house), and results in a massive sense of inadequacy and self-worth (triple conjunction sited in the 2nd house). This sense of inadequacy then turns into deep anger, rage, and a volatile temper, possibly involving close friends (Saturn ruling the 5th house), his work (Saturn ruling the 6th house), and intimate relationships (Saturn ruling the 7th house by old rulerships). If this energy continues to be blocked, it can cause health problems such as excessive cell growth, malignancies, or immune system problems such as cancer. Such restrictive actions only serve to fuel his sense of isolation, rejection (Moon square Saturn), seclusion, and shyness (Venus square Saturn), and sense of betrayal (Venus-Pluto, Moon-Pluto).

In the best-case scenario, this is someone who can transform anger into productive energy by becoming self-motivated and developing persistence, stamina, and endurance through the strength of his convictions (Mars-Saturn) and applying that to teamwork (T-square in succeedent houses). This persistence,

stamina and endurance then, gives the person a total mastery of the energy. If Saturn is allowed to mature rather than to suppress, the person learns to pace himself and to become a strong and reliable team player, turning the isolation and loneliness into emotional consistency gained from groups (Moon square Saturn) and loyalty and commitment from close friends (Venus square Saturn). Through an immense amount of physical activity (Saturn-Pluto), the person can then be seen as a dynamic, lively, energetic, vibrant, sexual individual who requires an incredible amount of drama and intensity in his life.

- ***Neptune in 4th house; Uranus in the 3rd house conjunct the IC:***

This combination describes sudden, unexpected changes to one's early learning (Uranus in the 3rd house) and loss and confusion around the house and home (Neptune in the 4th house). Thorpe's biography tells us that, because of his training schedule, he "has been taking correspondence courses since 1998 and now plans to go to university."

In summary, this is the chart of someone whose power and freedom of action is realised by working on behalf of other people, through expansion of ideas and education. He has the ability to solve problems, as long as he can overcome his feelings of inferiority which, in the worst-case scenario, can cascade into feeling isolated, rejected and betrayed, fuelled by restricted or blocked anger. In the best-case scenario, this is a team player with nearly superhuman energy and perseverance who gains loyalty and commitment from his teammates.

The Ties that Bind

So, how are the two charts related? What has been the translation in the womb from the potential of the Pre-Natal Epoch to birth?

Saturn-Pluto: From the **PNE triple conjunction with Mars**, the Saturn-Pluto conjunction has softened through its **natal conjunction with Sun-Venus** and, rather than being a statement of inferiority and rejection, has turned into a statement about career. Yet, the flavour of inferiority and overachievement has continued with the Sun-Saturn aspect in the natal chart.

Mars in detriment: The **PNE Mars conjunct Saturn-Pluto** has translated to **natal Mars in Sagittarius conjunct Neptune**. The formidable energy of the PNE triple conjunction has found a safer outlet through Mars in Sagittarius and has forsaken blunt power for the motivation and drive that come with inner focus.

Sun: From a **cadent, service- and systems-oriented, dogmatic identity** in the PNE, the Sun has translated into Thorpe's defining himself through **an ambitious career**. The focus on hard work and education has given way to his being forced to define his pathway one step at a time, on his own terms.

Nodal axis: The PNE nodal axis has swung from **involving personal planets and issues of self-worth, anger, and violence** to a stand-alone statement about **service to others** in the natal chart.

Mercury: The natal cart has maintained the Mercury–Uranus sextile, but instead of Mercury being **retrograde and in a cadent house and simply ruling the MC**, as it is in the PNE chart, it is now actively engaged in his career by being **conjunct the MC and in direct motion**.

Observations

The Pre-Natal Epoch - the yin expression - is the chart of someone who can resolve his feelings of inferiority by becoming self-motivated and developing determination, fortitude, and endurance. The natal chart - the yang expression - is the chart of a person with a successful career formed through hard work and founded on building networks and teams, business acumen, and a love of being centre stage. The blunt, harsh energy of the T-square in Thorpe's PNE, which is so reliant on his self-esteem and self-worth, has turned into the natal chart's challenge of learning to trust his own judgment in his career path and, in so doing, changing a family pattern in some way. It would seem that the immense, almost superhuman energy of the t-square is being actively used by Thorpe in the swimming pool. The question is: How will he continue to use this in his life when his days as “the Thorpedo” are complete?

Conclusion

The conclusion we can draw from the Pre-Natal Epoch is that it gives us valid, authentic and genuine information about a person that may not necessarily be apparent in the natal chart. It tells us where aspects in a natal chart may have originated and, hence, the decisions that the individual might have made in the womb about the expression of those aspects.

There is also a strong indication that the issues of the Pre-Natal Epoch chart will have some sort of bearing on or expression in the life of the individual. This is particularly true if, in the process of recombining the energies of the PNE chart into the mix of the natal chart, these issues have been suppressed, because they can erupt at a later stage in life. In other words, if there is a conflict between the themes of the PNE and the themes of the natal chart showing a suppression of some sort, then the Pre-Natal Epoch chart will push through to the surface in a violent and dramatic way. If, however, the natal chart shows a welcoming of those energies from the Pre-Natal Epoch, then the aspect from the Pre-Natal Epoch will form a massive inner strength and drive toward achievement of the potential of both charts.

The ancient and medieval astrologers believed that it was possible to construct a chart whose outcome was productive and fertile in terms of child-bearing. If a man and a woman had sex at a properly elected time, then they could safely expect to conceive a child, rather than leaving this to an ad hoc experience. According to the literature, this was an established astrological practice for at least 2,000 years. That the Pre-Natal Epoch process is so well documented suggests that (whilst no outcomes are commented upon) the method gave good results. Although it is not be used as extensively in this way today, it is an engaging and illuminating task to reverse the process the ancients used, not for the sake of rectification (its more common modern use) but rather to understand the underground stream that pours forth from the Pre-Natal Epoch and shapes the natal chart.

Having released the Pre-Natal Epoch from its harness of having to be a rectification device, we can hypothesise that the Pre-Natal Epoch chart has a direct correlation to the natal chart and describes the possible choices an individual might make during his or her time in the womb. As yin is to yang, so is the relationship between the Pre-Natal Epoch chart and the natal chart an intimate and connected one, linked by cause-and-effect. My research over the last 13 years¹¹ has shown me that both charts demand expression in an individual's life.

Chart Data and Sources

George W. Bush, July 6, 1946; 7:26 a.m. EDT; New Haven, CT (41°N18', 72°W55'); AA: Birth certificate.

* **Ian Thorpe**, October 13, 1982; 10:52 a.m. AEST; Sydney, Australia (33°S52', 151°E13'); A.

* When I queried Ian's birth time with Stephanie Johnson (Esoteric Technologies) on the source of Ian's birthtime she replied (3rd October, 2001) :

"I am as confident as I can be about Ian's time. There was a photograph of his birth certificate in a newspaper which had the date and place. Someone then contacted Ian via his website. He has a section whereby the general public can email him with questions (usually about his sporting prowess or social life). In this case the person (Alina) asked when he was born and he said "10.52am". I then decided to try out the website and wrote an email asking him how he knew his time was 10.52am. He answered saying that his mum had told him. Of course, it could always have been some PR person making up the time and the rest of it, however; I seem to recall that there was another astrologer, perhaps Lois Rodden? with a chart stating the same time. Darrelyn Gunzburg then checked his website on 13th July 2002 and on it he says he himself answers the questions posed. So we can take it that it is as good a time as we are likely to get, that is, a "mother said" time.

References and Notes

1. J. M. Ashmand, *Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos*, London: W. Foulsham and Co. Ltd., 1917; republished in the U.S. by Health Research, 1969, p. 229.
2. Robert Zoller, *Tools & Techniques of the Medieval Astrologer*, Book One: Prenatal Concerns and the Calculation of the Length of Life, <http://www.new-library.com/zoller/books/index.shtml>, p. 22.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
4. Robert Zoller, "Medieval Delineation of Character," in *Astrology: An Ancient Art in the Modern World*, ed. Mari Garcia, Adelaide, Australia: FAA SA Inc., 1998, p. 171.
5. Robert Zoller, *Tools & Techniques*, p. 21.
6. Gustav Schwickert, *Rectification of the Birth Time*, trans. Eugene Dernay, USA Tempe, AZ: American Federation of Astrologers, 1954, p. 21.
7. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/president/gwbbio.html>
8. Robert Zoller, "Medieval Delineation of Character," p. 172.
9. <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/8824/thorpe.html>
10. Karen Hamaker-Zondag, *The Yod Book*, York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 2000.
11. This research began life as a thesis for the (then) Diploma Exam of the Federation of Australian Astrologers in 1988.

All charts use Placidus houses and Mean Node.

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