



## **Aspects with Inferior planets (and Mercury, Neptune in the charts of cheats).**

A specific group of charts is examined here, for a particular purpose but the results highlight a situation that is true for all charts of any type. We will see that once the Sun is already in aspect with a planet there is automatically significantly less chance that the planet can also be in aspect with Mercury at the same time. Venus, the other inferior planet, is similarly restricted from forming aspects with any planet already in aspect with the Sun but to less extent. Both the number and type of aspects the inferior planets can form is limited by their tie to the position of the Sun. Seasoned astrologers know full well that Mercury cannot square the Sun and Venus cannot trine it. It is less obvious to remember that, for example, once the Sun is trine Saturn it is impossible for Mercury to be sextile or conjunct Saturn. Forgetting such things is unlikely to matter when the task at hand is to read a single chart, however it is important to bear it in mind when the astrologer is engaged in research with a group of charts.

The aim of astrological research is generally to observe what occurs naturally in various situations in order to establish general tendencies, which may then serve as a basis for improving working practice. In this type of work it is not enough simply to count how many charts have X in them and form conclusions, which tend to support or condemn a technique, based upon whether X is common or rare in their chosen sample. Research must also establish what actually constitutes common or rare for X in **any** given sample. It may be relatively abundant or missing for reasons that have nothing to do with the type of native or situation being studied or even that favourite scapegoat - the small sample size.

The previous article discusses a sample of natal charts belonging to individuals who cheated on their partner. It showed that the most common Neptune aspect was formed with the Sun. As far as this small sample goes, Neptune, Mercury aspects appear not to be a factor in the charts of cheaters. Only five cases contained a Neptune, Mercury aspect. This amounts to 18.5%, which was the lowest for any of the planets. (The Sun, Neptune aspect was highest at 59%). The aspects found for Mercury, Neptune were also wider than for the Sun, Neptune.

Four of the five cases **also** had the Sun in aspect to Neptune.

The closest Mercury, Neptune aspect was a trine, Mercury was conjunct the Sun and so the Sun was also trine Neptune. The other cases were;

Mercury sextile Neptune, 1°03' separating, also with Sun square Neptune, 5°58' applying.

Mercury sextile Neptune, 2°12' applying, also with Sun semi-square Neptune, 0°50' applying.

Mercury opposite Neptune, 4°52' applying, also with Sun opposite Neptune, 2°25' separating.

The fifth case was Mercury square Neptune,  $3^{\circ}26'$  separating, there was no Sun, Neptune aspect. Venus was square Neptune and it is also very probable that the Moon was conjunct Neptune, within  $5^{\circ}$  but the time cannot be confirmed.

The highest number of Neptune aspects in the cheaters charts was with the Sun. The only case in which Mercury, Neptune was not supported by Sun, Neptune had strong support from both a Venus square Neptune and a Moon conjunct Neptune aspect of uncertain orb. All this tends to suggest that Mercury, Neptune alone may be insufficient to cause alarm and that in four of the five cases above, the Sun aspect was more significant than the Mercury one. Whether this is true on a large scale or not **it is still necessary to understand a bit of astronomy if we are not to draw false conclusions from these results.**

If we prove a group of cheaters, anaesthetists, ballerinas, alcoholics, psychics, and bishops, or children and partners, of the above have a higher than average number of Sun, Neptune aspects we should know that this tendency will automatically reduce the potential for Neptune, Mercury aspects to occur in that group. Once the natal Sun, Neptune relationship is locked in, unless Mercury is in close conjunction with the Sun, the chances it can also aspect Neptune are small.

In more general terms the astronomy dictates that, whatever the criteria for inclusion in a sample group, if the group has more cases than average where the Sun is in aspect to planet X then Mercury will tend to have fewer than average aspects with planet X, (and vice versa, a group with a lot of Mercury, Saturn aspects will tend to have few Saturn, Sun aspects).

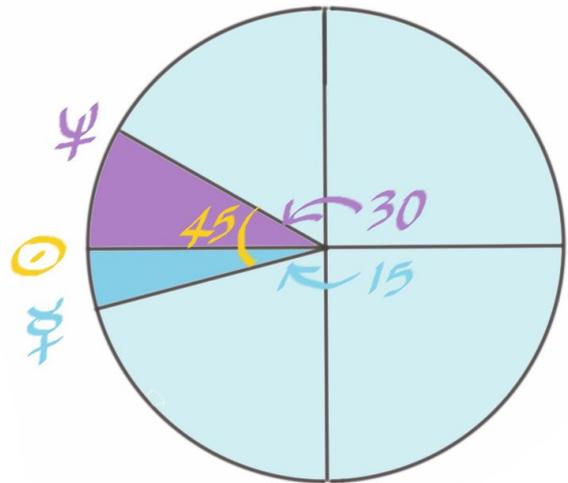
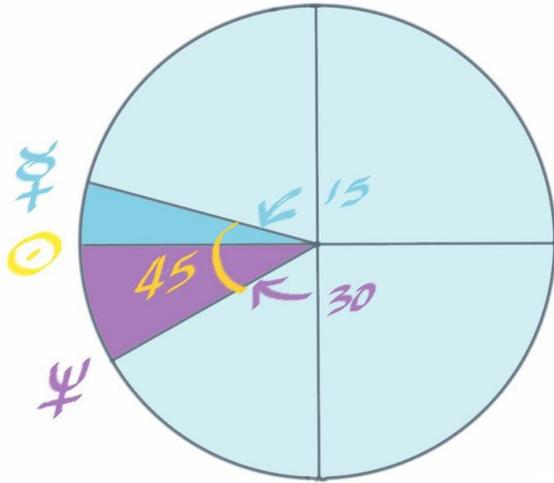
The same trend is true for Venus but to a lesser extent. Venus is allowed a slightly longer leash by the Sun, she sometimes escapes as far as  $47^{\circ}$  away, which offers her a bit more opportunity for interesting liaisons with Neptune (or indeed Mars and Pluto) on the side.

We know that if Mercury is semi-sextile the Sun one of the pair may form a square with Neptune (or planet X) and the other a sextile or trine (and similar combinations of aspects). However Mercury is not in the necessary position nearly as often as is generally believed. (More on this below).

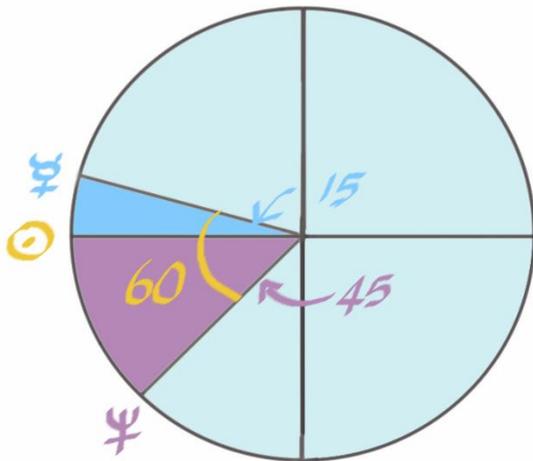
Two other kinds of tripartite relationships are possible when the Sun and Mercury are  $15^{\circ}$  apart. The first includes a semi-square, the second a sesquiquadrate.

**Forming the semi-square.** Mercury may be semi-square Neptune when the Sun is sextile Neptune **and** Mercury is  $15^{\circ}$  **in front** of the Sun. (Mercury rises and sets before the Sun); or when the Sun is semi-sextile Neptune **and** Mercury is  $15^{\circ}$  **behind** the Sun. (Mercury rises and sets after the Sun). In addition Neptune must be on the opposite side of the Sun from Mercury, which halves the number of cases that can occur.

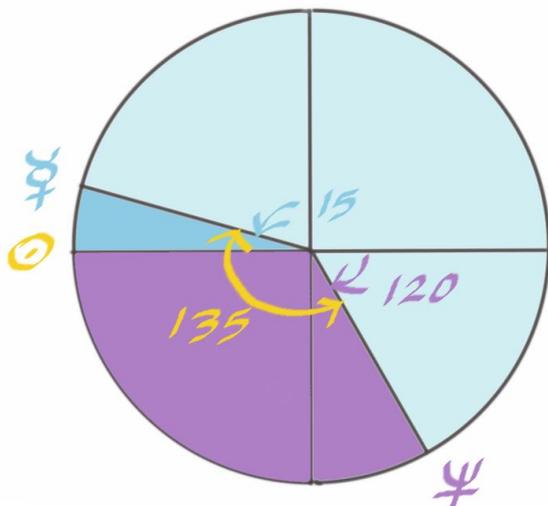
What sounds complicated is simply a matter of putting the Sun in a sandwich between Mercury,  $15^{\circ}$  to one side of it, and Neptune (or X)  $30^{\circ}$  to the other. Magically there appears a  $45^{\circ}$  angle between the two bits of bread.



Alternatively putting the Sun in the sandwich between Mercury, 15° to one side of it, and Neptune (or X) 45° to the other. Magically there appears a 60° angle between the two bits of bread.

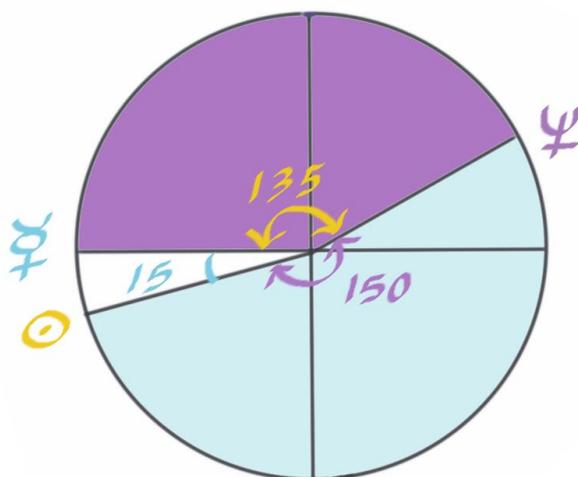


In this case, as above Neptune may be in front of the Sun and Mercury behind but Mercury cannot make the larger angle.



**Forming the Sesquiquadrate.** Mercury may be sesquiquadrate Neptune when the Sun is in the sandwich with Neptune trine it on one side and Mercury 15° degrees from it on the other side.  $120 + 15 = 135$ .

Alternatively **when Mercury is in the sandwich** and  $15^\circ$  from the Sun, at the same time as Neptune is inconjunct the Sun from the other side of Mercury. Mercury is in the sandwich because in this case the angles go  $150 - 15 = 135$ .



Unfortunately these sandwiches are about as common as white truffles. Mercury and the Sun are  $15^\circ$  apart for only a short time in each Mercury cycle. The chances that Neptune, or anything else, will actually be at the correct angle and on the correct side of the Sun at the same time reduces the number of aspects Mercury can make with it. When the aspects we are counting are “minor” the orb we allow is halved and therefore so is the time span under which we might find the

aspects. (Those who are interested can see the workings of the cycle and the time scale involved in the appendix).

As an example, given Neptune is currently in Pisces, the Sun can only trine it twice a year, from Cancer or Scorpio. In 2016, in both cases, Mercury happened to be close to its conjunction with the Sun, therefore a sesquiquadrate between Mercury and Neptune was impossible that year while the Sun was also trine Neptune. (Near the Sun, Mercury conjunction both were trine Neptune for a day or two in November and a day or two in July. In each case one was applying the other separating.)

In 2015, if the astrologer accepts a Sun, Neptune trine at  $5^\circ$  separating and also widens the orb for a sesquiquadrate to  $3^\circ$ , the two things were possible together for just one day in the year.

It is also possible for the aspects to be reversed, that is the Sun may form the sesquiquadrate while Mercury forms the trine. In the case of Neptune this particular permutation did not occur at all in 2016. It occurred for about 36 hours once in 2015. This time may be extended a little if the astrologer is prepared to accept wider orbs than are used here. Finding these simultaneous angles in a chart is unusual.

**Forming aspects when Sun, Mercury are semi-sextile.** However infrequently any planet is in the exact spot for Mercury and the Sun to form one Ptolemaic and one minor aspect with it simultaneously this situation still seems more likely than the Sun and Mercury forming a pair of Ptolemaic aspects with a third planet. This is because the commonly held notion that the farthest Mercury can be from the Sun is  $30^\circ$  is not quite correct, it is about  $28^\circ$ . In this context, with the orbs allowed, those two degrees matter. Even more importantly Mercury rarely reaches this “maximum elongation”, which may in fact occur when it is only  $18^\circ$  from the Sun! At **every** elongation the two bodies will separate more than  $15^\circ$ , which means there is the potential for a semi-square or a sesquiquadrate between one of the pair and planet X, at the same time as the other aspects planet X. In reality the Sun and Mercury **never** reach the  $30^\circ$  necessary for both to form exact aspects of other types, with the same body, at the same time. On the very best morning, with everything else in place, one of them has to be at

least 2° from exact. Accepting a 5° orb for each aspect, when the Sun and Mercury are less than 25° apart it is not possible for one to aspect a planet by sextile at the same time as the other squares it.

2013 contained only two occasions, each lasting a few hours, when the Sun and Mercury were separated by more than 25°, 2014 had only one. This does not mean Neptune or another planet was also in the correct place to be helpful.

**Conclusions.** Given that cheaters seem to favour Neptune, Sun aspects of various kinds, the tether the Sun has on Mercury may be the most important reason why Mercury, Neptune aspects occurred less often than Neptune aspects with any other planet. The astronomical patterns may have far more to do with the absence of Mercury, Neptune contacts found in the cheaters charts examined here than either the small sample size or the fact when these two characters *are* in cahoots they are innocent or irrelevant to the activity of cheating.

These results, along with research in other areas, is leading me towards the conclusion that the Sun does dominate the inferior planets and its condition should be taken more seriously. However, theory suggests that Mercury working with Neptune frequently leads to splendid detachment from truth and I have seen them operate in practice with calculated and sustained lies and deception, without requiring any help from the Sun. I have also seen them do what it takes to cover cheating, their activities do not seem to be confined to particular areas. It seems prudent to put this double act on the suspect list any time you notice they have teamed up.

In total, concluding Mercury, Neptune aspects are unimportant in the inner make-up of the cheater, because very few turned up in a group of cheater's charts, may be very dangerous. When they also appear as part of a trio with the Sun the results are likely to be particularly significant. These two guys rarely get the opportunity to pool talents at the same time as they have the advantage of being on the same team as the boss. The opportunity to work unhampered by management because its aims are largely your aims is one to be relished.

If the native in these cases is a vegan, violin playing, vicar, who writes poems and does the occasional exorcism there may be less to worry about. When similar aspects belong to an atheist you would not lend five pounds to, who spends the day doing business from the side window of his car, it is more reasonable to assume he has also mastered a few beguiling tricks to explain away his whereabouts in the evenings. Mercury, Neptune is ideal for the magician, who survives because he is very good at making everybody look the other way, precisely so they don't see exactly where he has his hands. (A couple of politicians will be mentioned in a bit, to underscore the theory.)

It may be worth noting that, despite it being difficult to achieve, a quarter of the cheaters who had a Neptune, Sun aspect also had Neptune, Mercury. The two together could be a warning sign that rational decision making may be overpowered by the needs, or will, of the Sun. Logic may be subordinated by desire or ego. The evidence arriving from the senses may be distorted because it does not look like the world that has already been envisioned by some more primitive department than the one marked "critical analysis". If so the evidence must be reshaped and recoloured until it does. Life may not be seen as it is but in a manner that will not only support the world the Sun seeks to create but also justify its creator.

The general condition of Mercury should help indicate whether it might be capable of resisting the distorting lens of Neptune and retaining a little more "sensible" advice to offer the Sun. In a chart with Mercury in Virgo, and a little help from Saturn, there lies more hope. With Mercury in Pisces and square Venus there may just be lies, as The Trickster aligns itself with the Purple One, and the two construct the necessary subterfuge, self-deception and self-justification the

Sun requires of them. The general condition of the Sun may help to indicate how far it might be persuaded to ignore Neptune and discipline or modify its will after listening to Mercury.

Offering case histories in these situations is fraught with peril, internationally notorious cheaters are the safest bet. They have too many book royalties and too many friends partying in glass houses to care, and tend to move on faster than common folk. The ones who instantly sprang to mind were a trio of Royals, a President, a Prime Minister and an actor turned politician. I do everything possible to avoid hearing the news, if rumours have reached me they are also circulating round second-hand huts in Borneo, further embarrassment to those involved should not be an issue.

Three of the six natives have natal Sun in aspect to Neptune. The actor, turned politician has a close sextile. He was apparently afraid of his father as a child and rose up by his own efforts, which, whether wholly conscious or not, began in order to build strength in himself to challenge either the actual father, the imagined father or the fear. The important point may be that this is a case in which the native needed to create his personal vision of the Sun because the one presented to him was unhelpful or he viewed it that way.

The fairy tale princess has a wide conjunction of Sun and Mercury, Neptune is trine both. The Sun, Neptune is close. How healthy is the solar core of the individual who, (we have been led to believe), courts universal popularity but seems unable to deal with its consequences?

The President leads this field by several lengths, provided the reported data is accurate, Neptune sits on the Ascendant and aspects the MC, Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars. Further comments will not be made here.

The Prime Minister in contrast has only Neptune semi-square Venus. This aspect seems to have more muscle than is believed and probably needs watching. True to say it does have a little help in this case, Venus is in detriment, in Scorpio and rules the Sun, in fall in Libra, plus Mercury. There is an argument that Venus in bad shape carries the influence of Neptune to the Sun and Mercury. Jupiter is strong and the Solar is weak, there is the desire to expand without strong direction from the centre.

The most royal of the list has no Neptune, Sun aspect. His Solar energy is well catered for on the physical plane and this may be quite handy in making a person feel it is unnecessary to craft either extra strength, to prove a point or something a bit Leonine, like a fling, in compensation. Irrespective of social position he seems to have a healthy quantity of creative purpose on a personal level. The down side is that Royals are rarely free to choose a mate, which puts them in a different bracket. He has Neptune conjunct Venus, which describes quite a lot. Mercury is not involved, his relationships may have suffered from lack of clarity but his mind is not enveloped by the same fog.

The lady in the case has Moon, Venus and Mars in aspect to Neptune. She appears to have a strong centre and an absence of Mercury, Neptune in the mix implies that lies are not a natural feature of her persona. It is an unpopular opinion but mine is that her perceived role as the other woman was false, circumstances left her dressed in the costume, which is also Neptune at work. Her first marriage seems reasonably described by the Neptune aspects.

The foregoing six cases were not sorted from a larger group, they were chosen for their well-publicised history and examined later. They all contained Neptune in places we might expect. So far it seems there is little difference to be seen between the Smiths and Browns and those in loftier places.

## **Appendix: The Mercury Cycle.**

When Mercury is retrograde and retracing its steps to meet the sun the two reach a point 5° apart about 2 ½ days before the conjunction is exact. Mercury is slowing down at this stage and they are travelling in opposite directions. After their paths cross it takes a similar 2 to 3 days for them to reach 5° of separation. Therefore **the time during which a close conjunction is in effect is only around 5 days.** At this point Mercury theoretically forms the same aspects as the Sun. However not every astrological chart will count all the Sun and all the Mercury aspects. For example, if the Sun and planet X are separating from an aspect at the beginning of the 5 days of the Mercury, Sun “conjunction”, the Sun may have moved out of orb with Planet X by the time the equivalent Mercury aspect is acceptable to astrologers. (Who will not agree when this is). The exact position and speed of each of the three bodies may extend or reduce the time frame involved. (This too will cause a squabble). It is still short.

Roughly 10 days after the conjunction Mercury makes its **station direct**. This occurs when Mercury is about **15° behind** the Sun in longitude. It is behind because it has (apparently) been going backwards for a while. This means it rises and sets after the Sun, which is easy to see in a chart. For **two or three days either side of its station direct Mercury is in a position where it may be semi-square or sesquiquadrate another planet that is also in a particular relationship with the Sun.** Since Mercury is always behind the Sun in longitude at this stage, if Planet X is in front of and semi-sextile the Sun, X may also be semi-square Mercury. If X is trine and in front of the Sun then X may also be sesquiquadrate Mercury. See previous diagrams.

If Mercury is allowed 2° 30' either side of its position exactly 15 distant from the Sun, during this part of the Mercury cycle **the chance for Mercury to be in minor aspect with planet X, more or less simultaneously with the Sun in appropriate aspect with Planet X, lasts about six days.** As above, the exact positions of the bodies in question may also extend or reduce the timeframe. **It is also the case that every possible planet X may be off somewhere more interesting, unaware that it should be available to take part in this brief encounter.**

The best opportunity for simultaneous aspects is about 35 days later when the **second conjunction** of the cycle occurs. The Sun and Mercury are 5° applying about 7 days before the exact aspect and 5° separating about 9 days after. **That gives 16 days when the pair may form the same Ptolemaic aspect with other planets, half that time for minor aspects.**

After which, when the Sun and Mercury cross, Mercury decides not to be caught out twice and sets off at fairly rapid pace to pull ahead of the Sun. It manages to open the gap to nearly 15° within a fortnight. Now Mercury leads the way there follows **10 or 11 days when it is in the correct position to form a semi-square with any planet behind and in semi-sextile with the Sun. Or a sesquiquadrate with any planet behind and trine the Sun. As usual, being in the right place guarantees nothing, when everybody else is so fickle.**

**Stationary Retrograde** occurs about 26 days after the conjunction, when Mercury and the Sun are again about 15° apart. (In the case of Neptune), when the Sun already aspects Neptune there are theoretical options for Mercury to be semi-square or sesquiquadrate Neptune. The semi-square occurs if the Sun is already sextile Neptune and Mercury is 15° in front of the Sun in longitude. (Mercury rises before the Sun). Since Mercury is always in front of the Sun at this point of the cycle no other combination is possible.

Similarly there is only one type of sesquiquadrate possible between Neptune (or Planet X) and Mercury at this stage. When the Sun is inconjunct Neptune and Mercury is 15° in front of the Sun. (The mechanics are also the same for Mercury in aspect to Planet or point X). In April 2017 the bodies are in the wrong signs for these aspects to occur.

**The conjunction occurs about 10 days after the retrograde to complete the cycle.**

Sun conjunctions occur, naturally enough, in the sign of the Sun. Those with Mercury happen at roughly two month intervals, moving forward through the signs in zodiac order. That means only half the signs are likely to host a conjunction each year. In addition extra signs can get skipped because nothing in the sky is neat and tidy. The rest of the cycle is based on this (near) alternating sign beginning. Given the length of time the outer planets remain in the same sign there are likely to be many occasions when they are incorrectly placed to interact with the Sun and Mercury, in the ways that interest astrologers, at the same time. These dual aspects are therefore unusual and may be significant because of it. If we find a cluster in a sample of charts it may be because they are from a narrow age group. If not we might be advised to take them fairly seriously. Even the ones we call “minor” because they have all made considerable efforts to turn up together.