

BURN RATE: THE ASTROLOGY OF RETROGRADES

April 22, 2011

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HOW TO INTERPRET RETROGRADES

[ABSTRACT: Are you liberal and future oriented or conservative and rooted in the status quo? Or are you actually in the present, in the here and the now... and by how much? Retrogrades tell this story and can be measured planet by planet. The technique is easy. Find out how to use it.]

A quick and accurate way to get a fix on a chart, whether of a person or an event, is to check out the retrogrades, whether the planets are moving backward or forward in the zodiac, in which direction, and how far from the conjunction with the Sun or opposition point for that planet. While retrograde phenomenon may appear complex, it is really quite easy to understand. Here is how to look at them:

The planets move around the sun in large almost circular orbits, always moving forward. But from Earth's perspective embedded deep within the solar system the planets appears at certain times in the year to come to a standstill in the sky, move backward for a while, come to another standstill, after which they resume their forward motion. This is called the "retrograde loop" and is something like "two steps forward and one step back," and the planet continues to move into fresh zodiac territory with each retrograde loop. Despite the apparent backward motion from Earth's view, the planet actually in the solar system (heliocentrically) is always moving forward.

From Earth's view any given planet is either moving backward and forward over zodiac ground it has been recently on before (on the most recent pass or loop) or forging ahead into a new part of the zodiac it has not been on since the last full 360-degree go-around. In other words planets are moving through the past (either forward or backward in the zodiac) or forging ahead into the future, again moving forward or backward in that area, as well.

And the center of the retrograde loop for any planet crisscrosses over the point of conjunction with the earth/sun (and/or its opposition point) because it is the Earth/Sun that defines the retrograde loop. As mentioned earlier each planet is either re-crossing zodiac degrees recently travelled on or forging on ahead into fresh zodiac space. In other words, a planet is either in the past (zodiacally speaking) or in the future and so are we. The point where the planet and Sun are in conjunction or opposition can be defined as the "Present." That is the actual zodiac degree the planet is in as seen from the solar system (sun centered) and the zodiac degree Earth sees it at are the same – no difference. At all other times there is a difference between these two views and it is this difference we are discussing here and how to interpret it.

When a planet on its retrograde loop is far from its conjunction/opposition with the Sun, it is said to have a high burn rate. That is when the difference between the planet's zodiac position as seen from Earth and the true position in the zodiac the planet is in the solar system is at its maximum. In other words, interpretively it takes a lot to bring those two positions together and thus the term "high burn rate" for planets at their stations or stopping points. For example, my standard geocentric Mars is in Aries in the Tropical Zodiac, but in Aquarius heliocentrically. In other words, Mars was in Aquarius in relation to its center the Sun when I was born and from Earth's view of it (from closer to the Sun than Mars), it only appeared to be in Aries. Appearances can be deceiving and at least should be understood and interpreted.

When a planet is close to the Sun opposition/conjunction point, it is said to have a low burn rate. As pointed out, at these times there is little to no difference in zodiac position between the planet as seen from the Sun or from the earth. Planets with a lower burn rate are thus “clearer” or more straight-forward in their activity, while those with a high burn rate are more obscure and require time and effort to resolve when it comes to meaning or making that difference real in life.

In summary, we can say that when a planet is deep in the past when it is traveling in the zodiac where it has already been. And we can say a planet is far in the future when it is traveling in fresh zodiac territory that (from Earth’s perspective) is ahead of where the planet is in relation to the sun and the solar system.

So we have past, present, and future and we have direct and retrograde motion. And it is important to know whether the planet is on its first pass through a particular section of the zodiac, its second pass through the same section while retrograding (moving backward), or its third and final pass for that cycle when it finally goes direct. The difference is in experience, but it is a big difference and can be interpreted.

Not let’s talk about how to interpret all of this and I wrote on this some 35 years ago, but never got much feedback from my peers. Let me try again here. For any planet you can instantly determine which of the following areas of the chart they are in by looking. It only takes a second. These are in sequential order starting after the Conjunction/Opposition point:

- (1) In the Future and Direct
- (2) In the Future, Stationary, and Turning Retrograde
- (3) In the Future but Retrograding back
- (4) Retrograde at Conjunction/Opposition Point
- (5) In the Past and Retrograding
- (6) In the Past, Stationary, and Turning Direct
- (7) In the Past and Moving Direct
- (8) Direct at the Conjunction/Opposition Point

If you want to study all of this please see my free book “Burn Rate: Retrogrades in Astrology” at:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

If you browse the various diagrams here I will attempt to give you at least some idea of how to interpret retrogrades. The key thought to keep in mind is that a high burn rate (big difference between geo and helio planet position) means somehow we have to combine, merge, and pull that difference together into our single life experience. In other words, a high burn rate means a great amount of change on your part in relation to the particular planet and its functioning in your life. It won’t be dull.

On the other hand, a low burn rate suggests clear and straight-forward functioning for that planet, no great shakes or earthquakes. You can count on it working and you don’t have a giant learning curve. Obviously, both high and low burn rate types have their advantages and disadvantages. Check yours out. I will have a program that make this easy for you to do as part of our new Matrix Web Service, but it will not be for a month or so. Until then, this will have to do.

Burn Rate

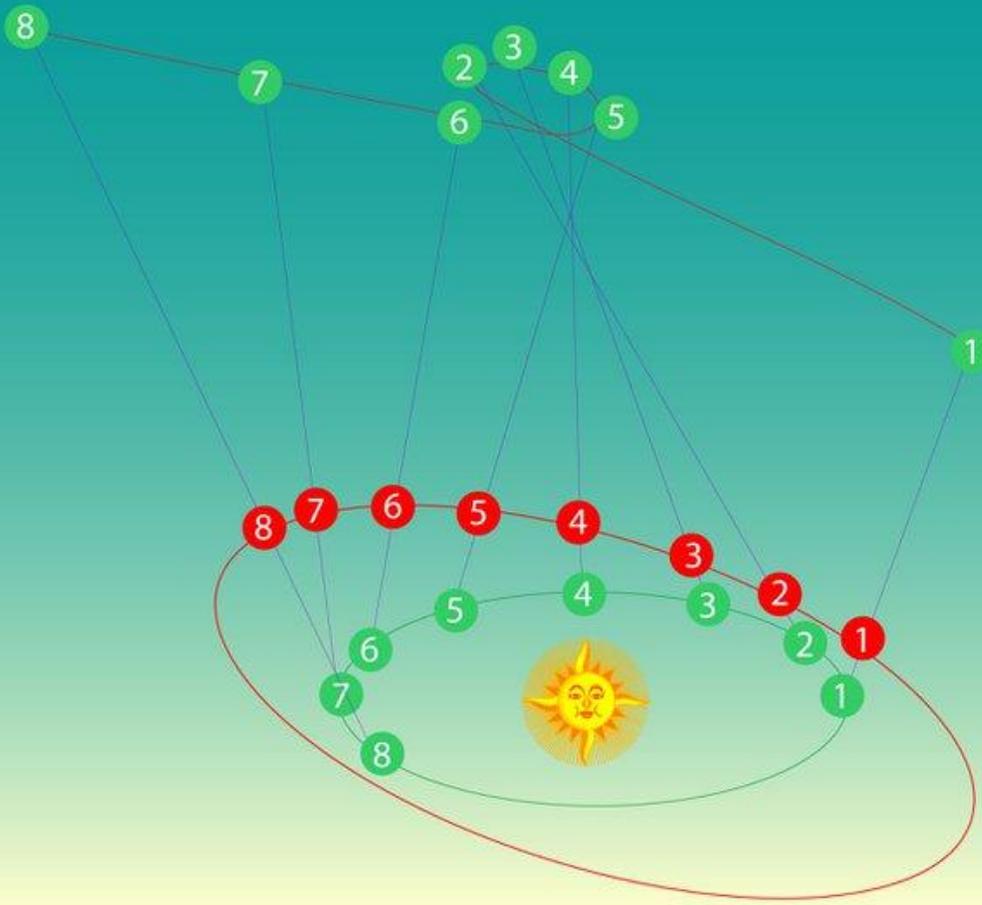
Retrogrades in Astrology

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Retrograde The Loop

The geo positions run into the future, and back into the past, and then again.

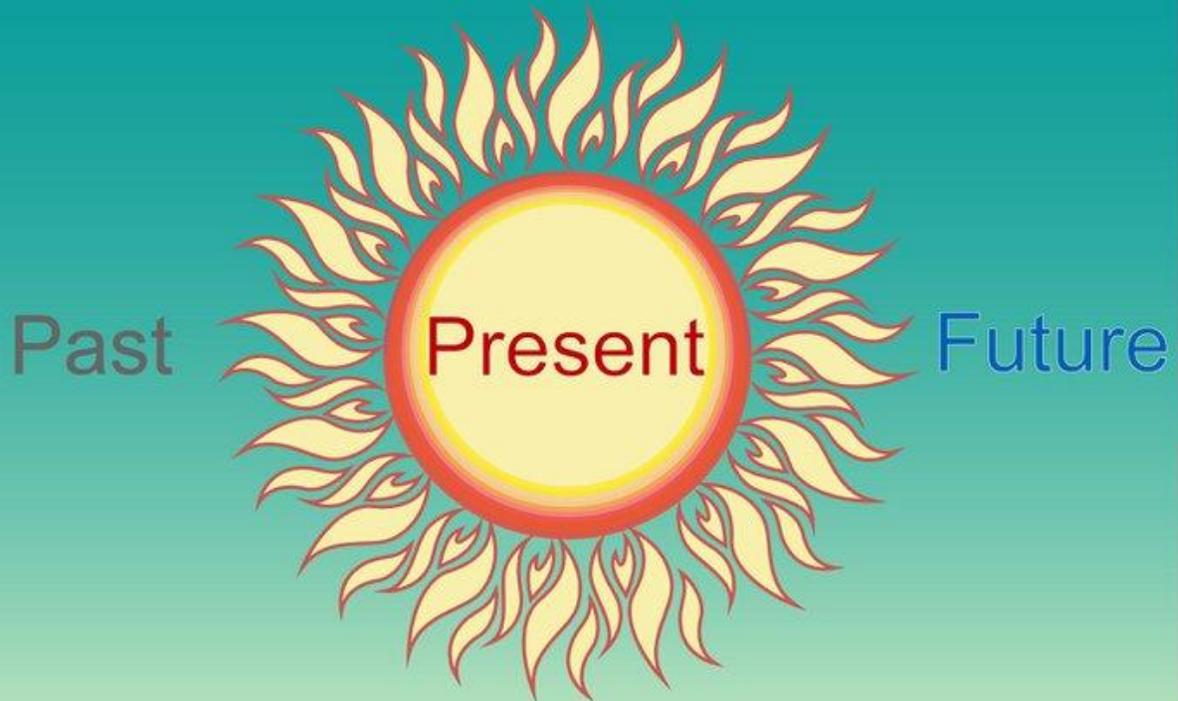


The Retrograde Loop

Each of your planets can be lost in the future or the past or fully present. They can be progressing and moving forward or moving backward and receding into the past. And each planet as seen by Earth performs a little cosmic dance, the dance of appearances for us to understand or be bewildered by.

Retrograde Ahead-Behind

At any given time, geo planets are either ahead or behind the helio positions.



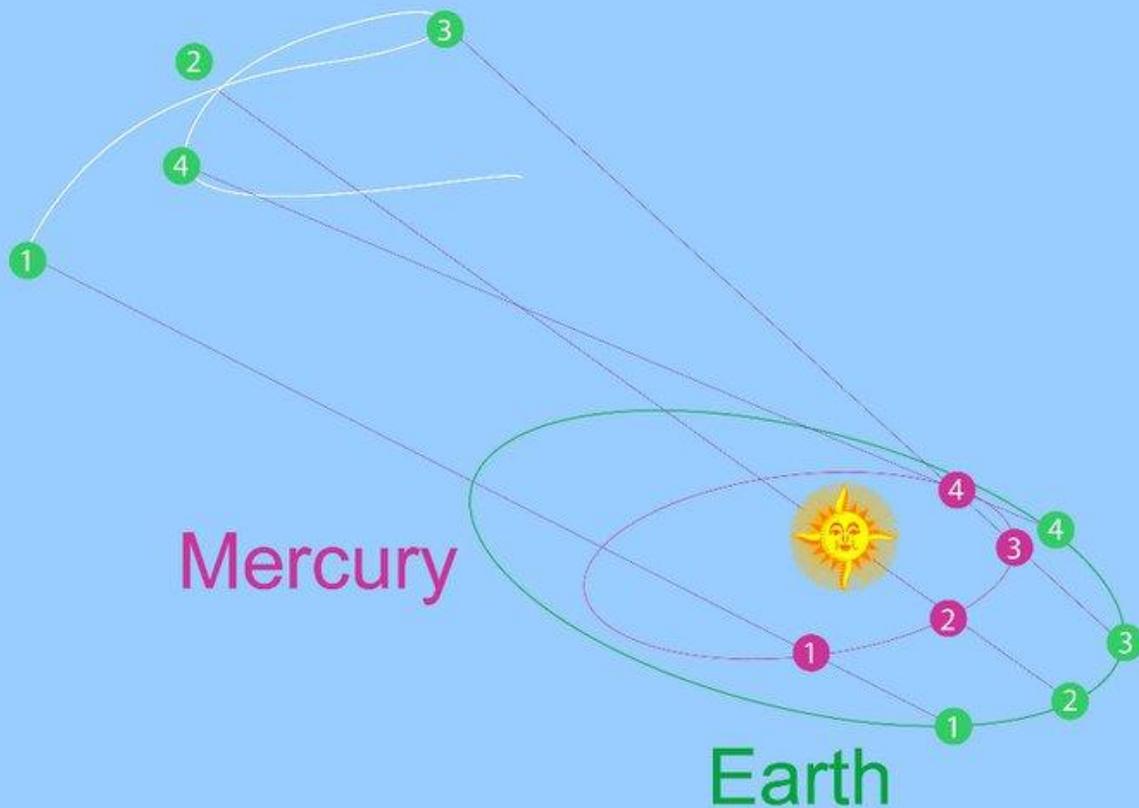
Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

The Burn Rate technique is about the past, the present, and the future. It is also all about the relation of our Earth to its center the Sun. And it is about appearances, what the earth thinks is true and what is actually true, how they interrelate, and what it means in your chart. I find it very fascinating.

Retrograde

Inner Planet

The retrograde loop, shown for the inner planets, Earth outside, Mercury inside.



Inner Planets Retrograde

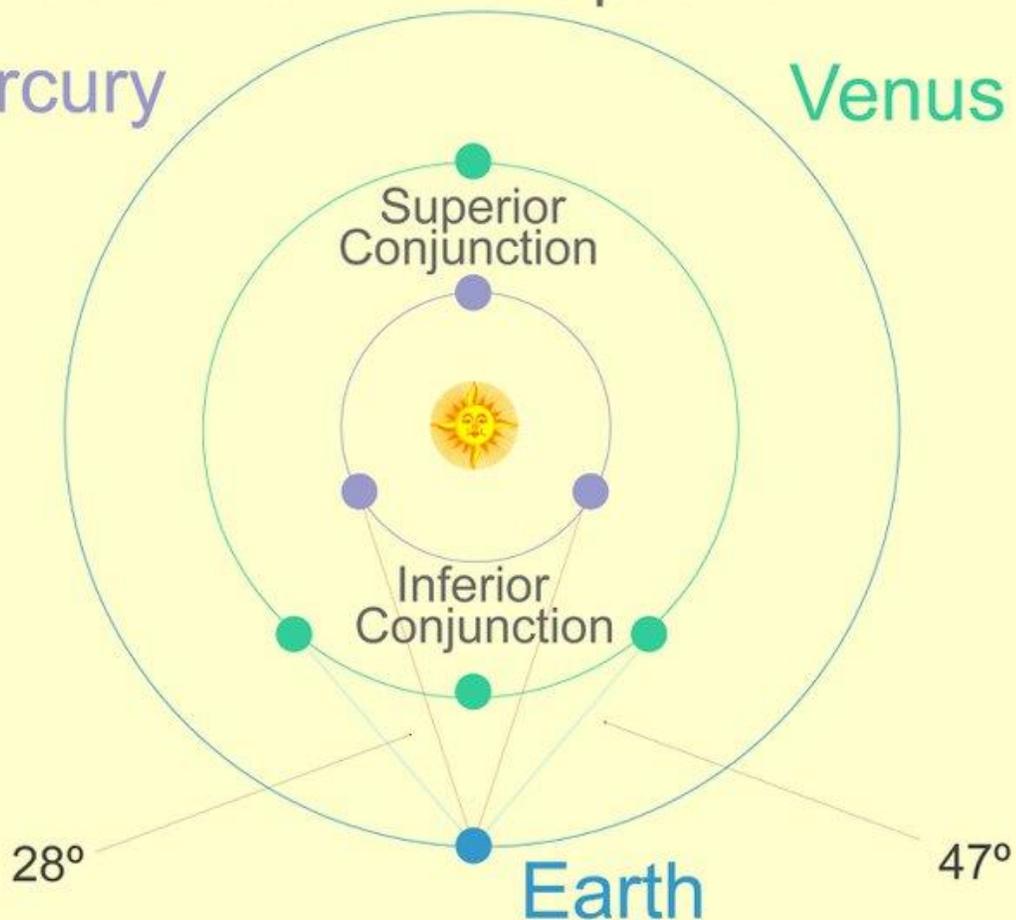
The inner (to the earth) planets Mercury and Venus go retrograde but their positions never get too far from the position of the Sun. Of course, heliocentrically in their actual orbits they go around the Sun in their almost circular 360-degree orbits.

Retrograde Inner Planet

Planets inside the earth's orbit never vary too far from Earth's position.

Mercury

Venus



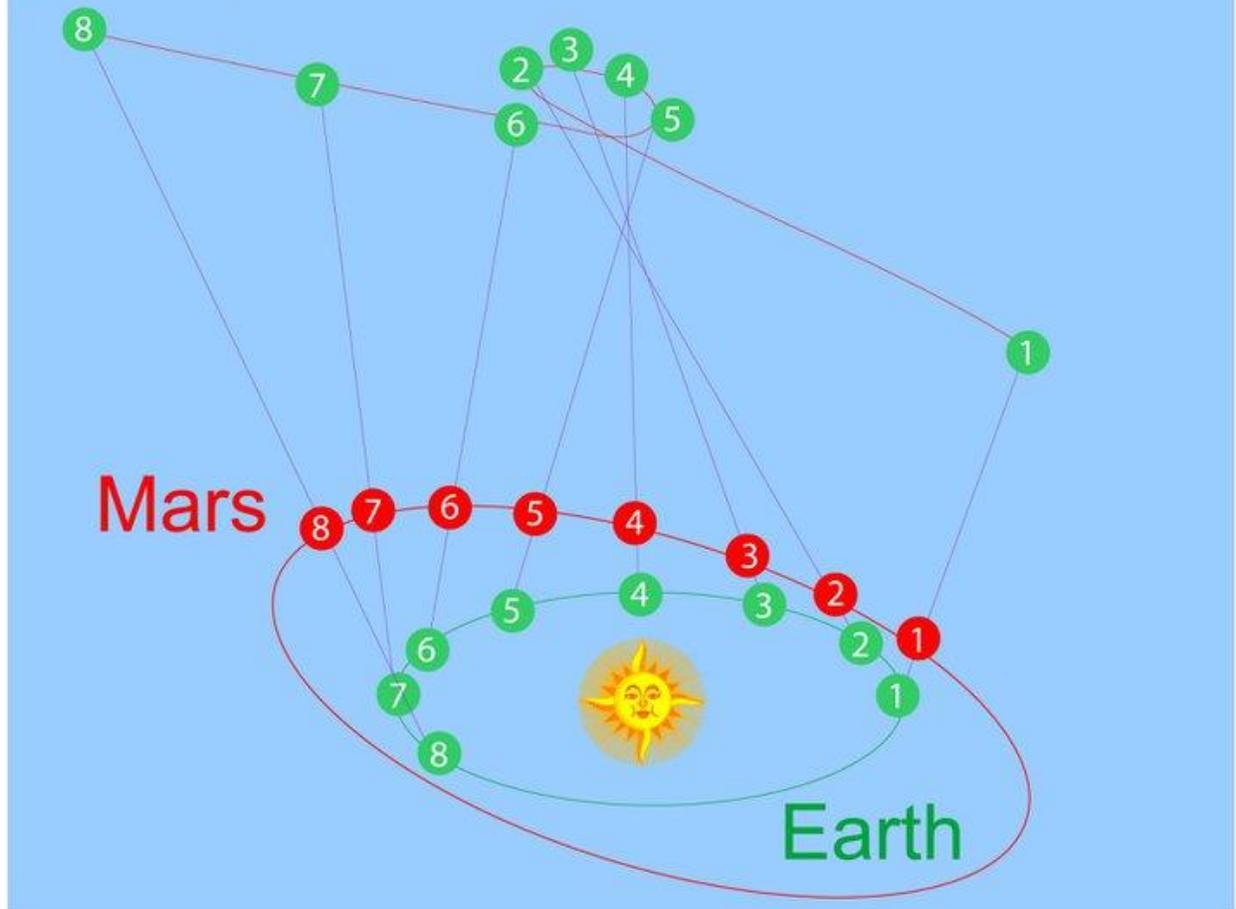
The Inner Planets Retrograde

Mercury and Venus as seen from the perspective of Earth can never travel too far from where the Sun is at. Here you can see why. Mercury reaches a limit of some 28 degrees and Venus some 47 degrees.

Retrograde

Outer Planet

The retrograde loop, shown for the outer planets, Earth inside, Mars outside.



Outer Planets Retrograde

The outer planets (beyond the earth) have a similar but different form of retrograde loop. Here is a diagram of how the earth sees Mars from Earth's more inner position.

Retrograde

Phase Angle

The outer planets have a limit as to how much the helio and geo are separated.

Mercury	22°46'
Venus	46°19'
Mars	41°01'
Jupiter	11° 05'
Saturn	06°01'
Uranus	02°59'
Neptune	01°54'
Pluto	01°27'

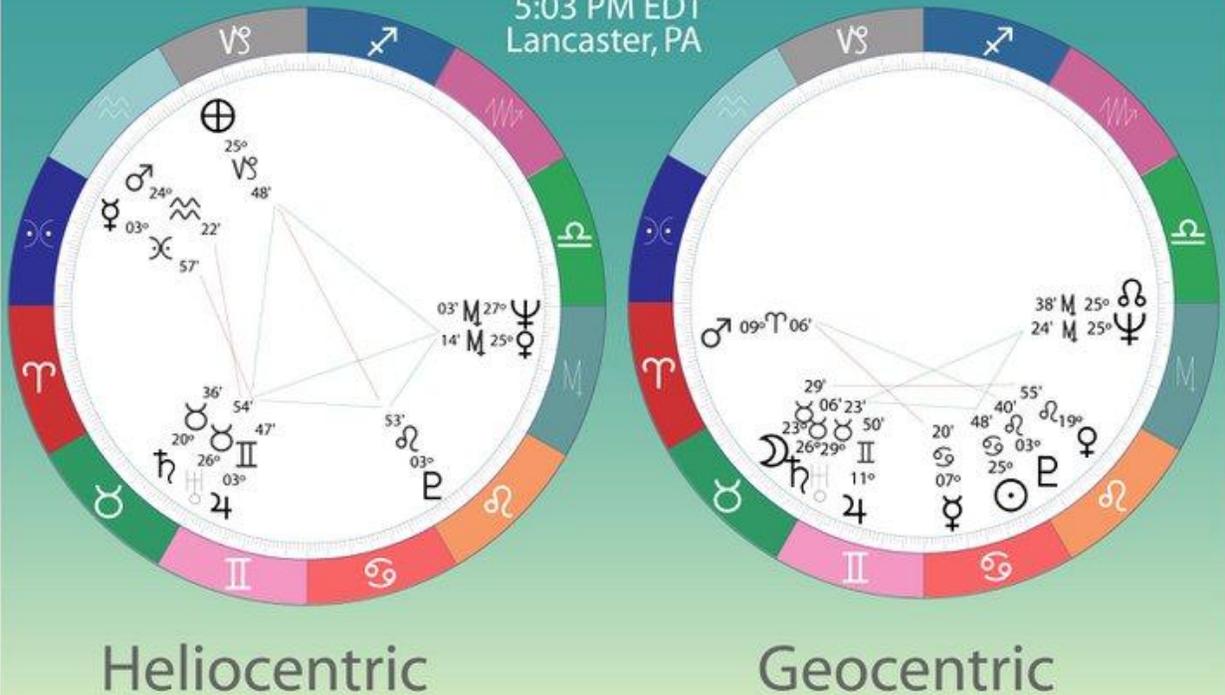
Phase Angles

This table shows you how much difference there can be (in general) between your standard geocentric planet positions and those of that planet in relation to its actual center the Sun (heliocentrically).

Retrograde Geo-Helio

Compare the patterns and positions of your geo and helio natal charts.

Michael Erlewine
July 18, 1941
5:03 PM EDT
Lancaster, PA



Geo and Helio Comparison

Here is my natal planets in both the helio and geo charts, so you can see how different these two charts can be. Notice my Mars in Aries geocentrically, but in Aquarius heliocentrically. Look it over and then check your own geo and helio charts. It can be thought provoking I assure you.

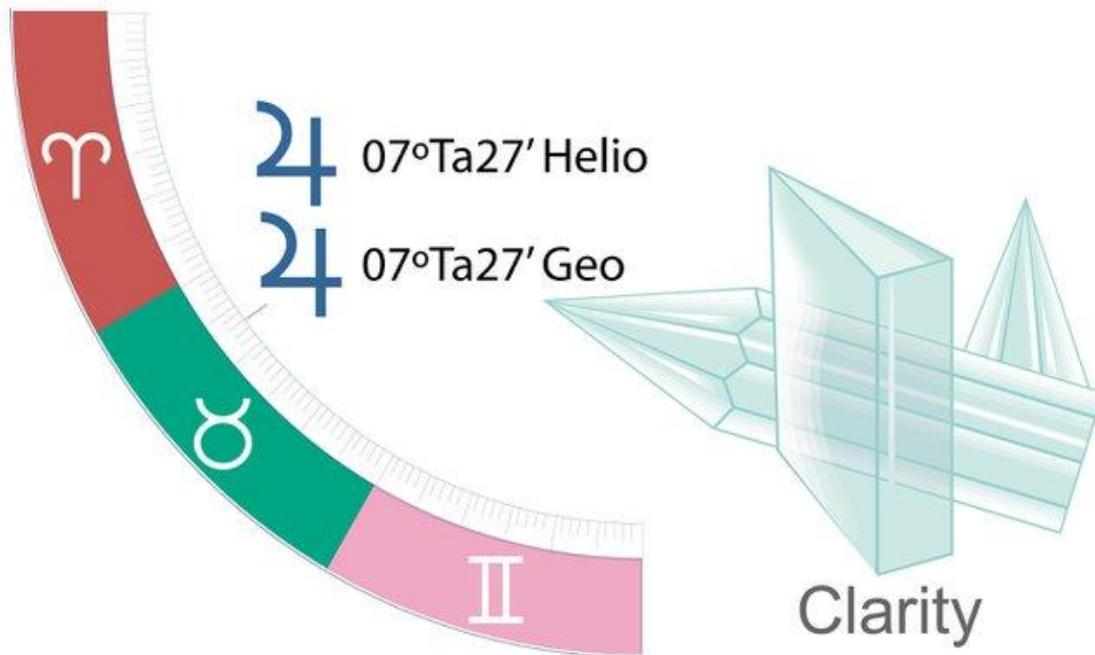
Retrograde Conjunction

Earth is conjunct Jupiter, so both geo and helio positions are at one - identical.

Apr. 27, 1976

Geo in the PRESENT

Low Burn Rate



Sun Conjunct Jupiter

Here both Earth's (geocentric) and the actual position of Jupiter in relation to the Sun coincide and there is NO difference in the geo or helio zodiac positions.

Interpretation: We can say that here there is a clear and non-wavering function of Jupiter, which relates to career and vocation, literally the path we go or negotiate through life. This is why Jupiter is connected with lawyers, the ones who handle the law (Saturn). There is no great learning curve here for those born with Jupiter with a low burn rate.

Retrograde

Retrograde

Geo Jupiter is as far ahead of the helio Jupiter as possible, it turns retrograde.

Sep. 19, 1976

Geo in the FUTURE

High Burn Rate



Jupiter Stationary Retrograde

As Jupiter passes the conjunction point of Jupiter and the Sun in direct motion it moves gradually deeper and farther ahead in the Zodiac from where it actually is in the solar system (in relation to its center the Sun). As you can see in this diagram Jupiter is still really in Taurus in the solar system, but geocentrically it already has entered Gemini.

Interpretation: This is the first pass through fresh degrees of the Zodiac and Jupiter is a naïve and innocent (fresh) as it will ever get. The farther it travels ahead of the Sun the more daring, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial it becomes. This is pure or true liberalism, future speculation, and devil-may-care attitude. It is all new and of the future. Jupiter reaches its greatest burn rate direct at the station.

Retrograde

Direct

Geo Jupiter is as far behind of the helio Jupiter as possible, it turns direct.

Jan. 15, 1977

♃ 21°Ta24' Geo

♃ 01°Ge24' Helio



High Burn Rate

Geo in the PAST

Jupiter Goes Retrograde

Jupiter when it goes stationary retrograde begins to retrograde backward over the same new degrees of the Zodiac it just passed through and, although part of the future and speculation, there is the sense of déjà vu and a growing expertise that reaches its clearest point at the solar opposition and once again a very low burn rate.

Interpretation: Jupiter retrograde on the second pass but still in the “future” has all the earmarks or risk, speculation, and whatever the future means to you, but with the caveat that there is now savvy here and experience, not to mention the Jupiter is headed no longer toward the future, but back into the past. Jupiter here has an eye out to make use of this experience and its risks or ventures are not calculated.

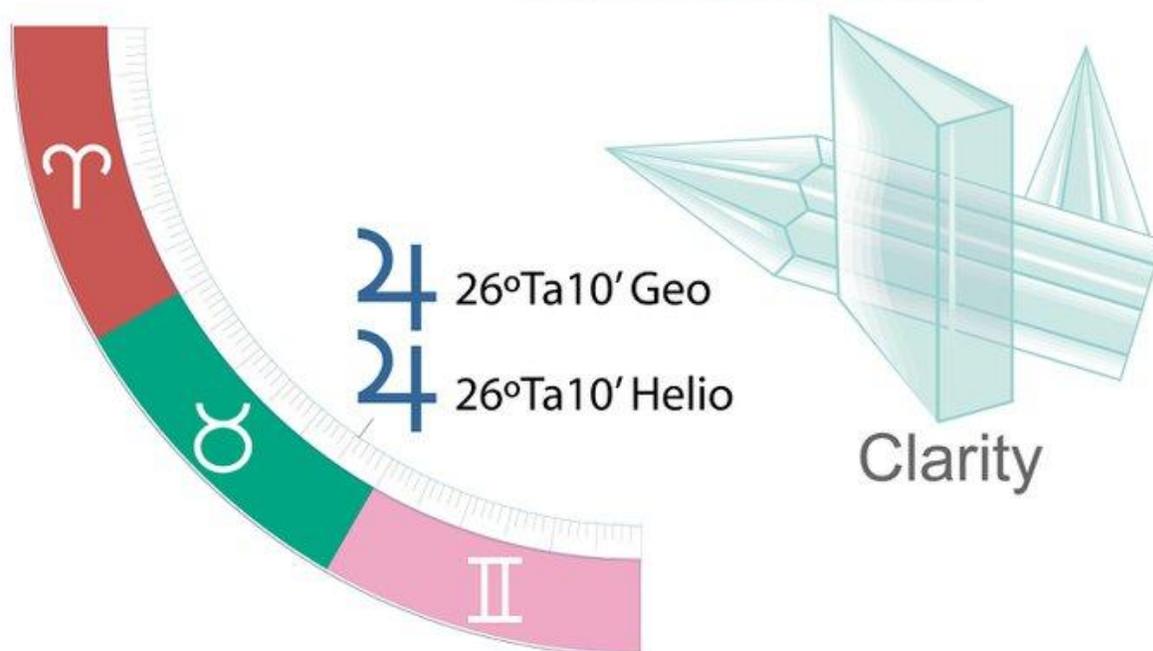
Retrograde Opposition

The Earth is again conjunct Jupiter, this time while going backward in the zodiac.

Nov. 18, 1976

Geo in the PRESENT

Low Burn Rate



Jupiter Opposition the Sun

Jupiter's position as seen from the Sun or Earth is again identical, so this marks a time of low burn rate. Although for the moment in the "Present," the movement is from the future toward the past.

Interpretation: Jupiter is here clear and insightful, with no confusion and no two positions to unify, plus it is on its second pass and has gained all that experience. No longer future oriented, Jupiter is now very much conservative and content to work with what is, not with what might be.

Retrograde

Direct

Geo Jupiter is as far behind of the helio Jupiter as possible, it turns direct.

Jan. 15, 1977

Geo in the PAST

High Burn Rate



Jupiter Retrogrades into the Past

After the opposition to the Sun, Jupiter is not headed straight into the past, no longer in new territory but in territory that has been traveled before. And the focus is on the past and this continues all the way back until the next station, the point where Jupiter turns direct.

Interpretation: Jupiter here is a true conservative, tracking back to the past and where history came from. Security and things known are key and I would not look for much entrepreneurial action here unless it is security based. And experience deepens.

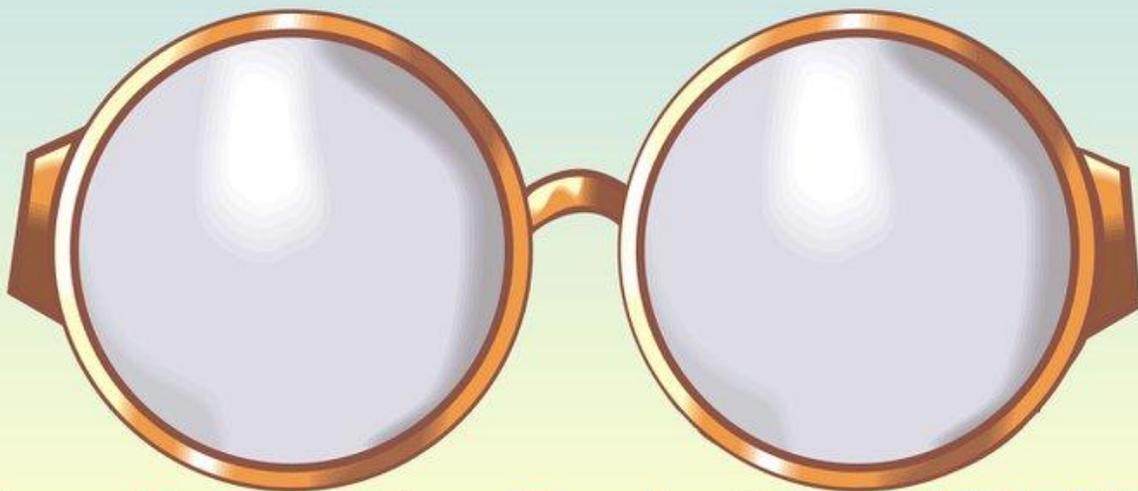
Retrograde Conjunction

Earth is conjunct Jupiter, so both geo and helio positions are at one - identical.

Apr. 27, 1976

♃ 07°Ta27' Helio

♃ 07°Ta27' Geo



Low Burn Rate **Geo in the PRESENT**

Jupiter Direct in the Past

Jupiter now moves in direct motion over the same Zodiac section but this time it is the third pass and this continue until the next Conjunction of Jupiter and the Sun and we begin a new cycle.

Interpretation: Jupiter is steeped in history and experience, but the eye is no longer backward looking, but forward looking. Jupiter here seeks to use the past and prolog to the future, as a means to build a better future.