

Descent and Renewal: A Case Study

Orientation:

Utilizing Aquatic Integration™ (AI) and my background in psychology, ecopsychology, expressive arts therapy, and massage, I explored what has been traditionally known to all ages and cultures as Underworld Descents: initiatory experiences in ones life when darkness calls and offers its Wisdom. Such a descent reflects what Joseph Campbell has described as the “Hero’s Journey” – an initiatory ordeal that is inherent to the very nature of human development reflected in stories and myths throughout time and place. My Case Study became this type of reflection as well. It takes place in present-time with one client but in the writing it reads as story for I chose archetypal patterns as names to protect the privacy of my client. The AI community will glean the insights learned at a deep level as they drop into the awareness that myth carries the threads of truth inherent to human nature. Enjoy!

My initial interests and concerns were fourfold and reflected within the study:

1. **Women’s Mysteries.** Initiatory cycles of descent and renewal are common to women’s experience of health and well-being with such descents referred to as “Women’s Mysteries” in ancient times. To name a few examples of myths embodying the Heroine’s Journey of descent and renewal: Inanna’s Descent, Women’s Dionysian Mystery Rites, and the Eleusinian Mysteries – were all life-enhancing descents into the abyss of the dark goddess and out again for the purpose of uniting above and below into a new pattern.¹ How women find their own individual balance and development as they descend-ascend and ascend-descend – that is still to be lived and written.²
2. **Repression and Depression.** Within Western culture’s repression of Underworld Descents since the time of the “Enlightenment” (the 1700s onward), such Underworld matters *literally* became demonized – the Dark Feminine became Hell, Hades, and descents became lumped into a very broad category as “depression.” At one time or another, most people go through a period of sadness, trial, loss, frustration, or failure and many of these experiences are labeled “depression.” However, not all descents are

¹ Sylvia Brinton Perera, *Descent to the Goddess*, 13-15.

² *Ibid.*, 94.

depressive but a time of questioning the meaning of life, the soul's intent.³ These dark nights of the soul, or rites of passage – the Hero's Journey – require entering the unknown and letting go of the tried and true routes in order to glean the treasures found within.⁴ There are many rites of passage into the Underworld: adolescence, mid-life transitions, addiction recovery, divorce, grief as well as astrological Underworld passages when Pluto or Chiron are initiating descents (See Appendices 1 and 2). As it so happens, Hades is Pluto, “the cornucopia which spills over with riches and nourishment, the infernal realm which feeds the roots of the World Tree.”⁵

3. **Swamplands of the Soul and Water.** The Underworld is also referred to as the Swamplands of the Soul where nature, our nature, fashions and forges our purpose, dignity, and deepest sense of meaning.⁶ The descent is for the sake of moistening. As James Hillman notes, “Depression into these depths is experienced not as defeat, but downwardness, darkening, and becoming water. (A major caution in alchemy was: Begin no operation until all has become water.)”⁷ In early systems of healthcare water was understood as the basis of all health, “the element linking man, the earth, and the heavens.”⁸ The Underworld descent may have a sensation described as “oceanic” – being in the sea, at sea, or immersed in the waters of the womb. As Thomas Moore observes, “The sea is the vast potential of life, but it is also your dark night, which may force you to surrender some knowledge you have achieved.”⁹ In AI, the fluid state of water, and each movement both above and below the surface of the water, provides information for accessing deeper states of healing and transformation.¹⁰
4. **Breath and the Soul.** *Psyche* is the Greek word for “soul,” and is also the verb “to breathe”: the invisible wind that enters at birth and departs at death.¹¹ Whenever we serve the mystery within we experience a linkage to the mystery outside, inhalation and exhalation. When we stand in conscious relationship to this mystery, we are more deeply alive, in breath. When one bows to a willing partnership with the rest of psyche, then the individual becomes more at ease with the larger mystery. Soul, breath, requires our willingness to descend into the depths of events, to let their literalness and our own literal reactions die in favor of another perspective, to see the world as if from below, to surrender.¹² Breath awareness, therefore, becomes a powerful therapeutic tool. It provides a means to “be” on several levels: the physical,

³ Thomas Moore, *Dark Nights of the Soul*, xiii.

⁴ Nancy Qualls-Corbett, *The Sacred Prostitute*, 80; and, Thomas Moore, *Dark Nights of the Soul*, xv.

⁵ Tom Cheetham, *Green Man, Earth Angel*, 16; and, Melanie Reinhart, *Chiron and The Healing Journey*, 203. Also see Daniel Giamario, *The Shamanic Astrology Handbook*, 103-104.

⁶ James Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 9.

⁷ James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis*, 284.

⁸ Charlie Rylie, *The Healing Energies of Water*, 112.

⁹ Thomas Moore, *Dark Nights of the Soul*, 5.

¹⁰ Cameron West, Aquatic Integration III Course Material, 2012.

¹¹ James Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 9.

¹² *Ibid.*, 143; and, Thomas Moore, *The Planets Within*, 41.

the emotional/psychological, and the spiritual, straddling the fence between conscious and unconscious activity. On the physical level, breath awareness begins to change the structure and functioning of the body. We begin to understand the subtle energy we are composed of, and learn to listen to the body's intelligence, wisdom and messages for optimal health and growth.¹³

My AI inquiry, therefore, is focused on the Below, utilizing the mysteries of the underwater techniques of the AI modality to study if the Underworld descents of psyche can be gentle when assisted, supported, witnessed and guided through the intelligence of breath and water. I worked specifically with one client, one who has received AI sessions from me for two years and recently developed a readiness to explore the underwater dimension. Additionally, she is in an Underworld transitional passage of divorce and entering an unknown future. Lastly, she is psychologically reflexive and possesses a background as a nurse-midwife. These qualities made her a perfect candidate for the AI study, a collaborative inquiry.¹⁴

The process involved giving her eight underwater AI sessions over the course of six weeks, and, while I gave her sessions, I also received four from the Founder of Aquatic Integration, Cameron West, in order to track my own experience of underwater descents and how underwater sessions reflected and/or assisted initiatory descents. This study includes both the client's and my reflections while we were in the midst of the sessions followed by an interview to gather any final impressions of the work. For privacy, I am using archetypes of the Tarot found in *Motherpeace* by Vicki Noble for names. Therefore, my Case Study client has been named Star, as it is a Tarot image of a woman basking in the glories of a pool of water. Hierophant, a repressing others figure, represents the person she is divorcing; Magician, a mercurial figure, represents one that recently appeared; and, Fool is another that has expressed infatuation – these are the persons addressed in Star's journal writings and in the interview.

My intention within this case study is to serve the AI community by demonstrating the multifaceted potential of what our culture has narrowly defined as depression. Underwater work, or even the more traditional floating AI work, is

¹³ Cameron West, Aquatic Integration III Course Material, 2012.

¹⁴ It is important to note that I was working with someone with a strong psychological foundation. It may be prudent in other cases to work in conjunction with a therapist.

appropriately named: *Aquatic Integration*. It assists with the integration of mind, body, spirit, mystery, subtle energies and much that I am certain we've yet to even identify for AI works with levels of psyche and soma that are precognitive/preverbal. It is a warm water, holistic therapy that encourages sensory integration through touch, communication, stillness and movement by utilizing deep listening and the natural elements of water. The client is invited into an intuitive, reflective state of awareness, supporting a greater potential for movement, ease and synchronicity.¹⁵ Aquatic Integration cultivates an atmosphere through which curiosity and gentle inquiry is nourished within a safe, fluid environment.¹⁶ It is a technique whose theory is based on the development of a language that receives and communicates body intelligence through understanding and utilizing the value and principles of water, homeostasis and resonance.¹⁷ In working with emotional states, it is important that the AI practitioner recommend complementary psychotherapy if the client needs additional support. AI work is not psychological but integrative of the whole.

Within my reflections, I noted that my first underwater session with Star began by introducing her to the basic steps of underwater work and the sense of autonomy interacting with surrender. We explored the principles of push, pull and yield – tools that humans possess (or that might be weak) as we navigate our way through the world. At times Star would stretch to explore her underwater surround and at other times become quite fetal. She seemed to grow with a sense of opportunity, expansive glee around what was possible within the Below. I was aware of Star becoming feisty, playful, resilient, self-confident and possessing a quality of balance and coordination that I have never seen in her before during the past four years of providing body work to her.

Over the course of our sessions, I noticed that when she would resurface, there were many times where she would offer herself care, soothing, by rubbing her belly or touching her heart. I also was aware that her co-dependency struggles seemed to be dissolving. Star had expressed desire to meet the Masculine within the unconscious-underwater dimension and this theme was present throughout the sessions, though not

¹⁵ Cameron West, Aquatic Integration Institute website.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Cameron West, Aquatic Integration I-III Course Material, 2010-2012.

dominant. During our sessions, the Masculine was showing up in many shapes and forms within the water and without, pressing her to find her own Masculine energies to compliment her cultivated Feminine. What stood out most for me was Star's sense of freedom and curious play mixed with moments of deep reception/surrender. Within the guided underwater-Underworld, there was a growing buoyancy, self-confidence, self-strength, a letting of all of the turbulence wash over her in order to move with greater clarity and Trust. What I perceived was that when moving in some of her darkest times, the guided Underworld descents offered her illumination, lift, authority in the shaping of her life, and Voice in relation to the Divine Masculine. This shows the resonance found in water: we had kept discussion of her experiences to a minimum, yet my sense-impressions noted above closely reflect her own writings that I received the day of our final interview.

Below is Star's journal reflections written after each session. They are followed by a quote from the literature review pertinent to her experience:

Session 1:

Intention: to align the inner male and inner female. Magician representing inner male.
 Expression: Left expectations behind and played in the water. Experimented with newfound underwater abilities. Some fears arose – drowning, forgetting to breathe when I needed, hitting my head on the bottom and getting knocked out. Then playfulness overtook all fears and realization that I am safe in water – water is my mother and my buoy; not to worry, but test my limits of where I can go with this and trust that the water and I are one.

“Play belongs to health: playing facilitates growth and therefore health.”
 – D.W. Winnicott¹⁸

Session 2:

Intention: None
 Expression: much more passive. Allowed Mary to move me. Felt the release of my body into the body of my Mother Earth as she flows in her arteries and veins. I was able to put my body in positions that it's never gone into because I'm in the water. Feeling, *feeling* every fiber of my body – the muscles that are tight: they stretch and relax. My

¹⁸ D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 41.

neck...it lengthens. Inner thighs work to release and then release. Ancient connections arise in my psyche. Mermaid? Unnamable. Don't want to name anything any more.

“Sometimes in your darkness you may sense that something is incubating in you or that you are being prepared for life.” – Thomas Moore¹⁹

Session 3:

Intention: Awareness of the body of water with my body.

Realization that Franklin's water is water that comes all the way from Yellowstone. This is the circulatory system of Mother Earth. We humans have the ability to detoxify Mother Earth just as we can create toxins. The willows take mercury into their roots and transmute it into an inert substance. We have that ability too. We are all reverse osmosis machines in our own way.

“Aquatic Integration™ facilitates greater access to positive resources within, promoting a healthy, integrated self.” – Cameron West²⁰

Session 4:

Intention: Can't remember

Expression: Knowledge of the life of the whale, the dolphin, the mermaid, the otter – all mammals who live in the water. Sparkling effervescence of bubbles through my lungs. No hurry. No worry. Letting go of Hierophant and my psychic submission. Remembering my own connection to the mystery of life. Relaxing into deep surrender. And then relaxing more – feeling loved by Mary and safe in her hands. Plenty of support for whatever I need to do – the safety is becoming more reliable as the weeks go on. When fears arise, I dive down and give myself to the water.

“As the Sungod descends to his corpse, we, too, return again and again to an ancestral world where our creative potential lies hidden. Here our consciousness regenerates, and with it our physical and mental skills – and, not least of all, our capacity to feel love for our fellow human beings and for all that exists.” – Andreas Schweizer²¹

Session 5:

Intention: Letting go of expectations

One way of letting go of expectations is to not try to control anyone else's actions, thoughts, feelings, habits, likes or dislikes. Magician is an example. Maybe I think that some of the energy he expends is unnecessary and futile. But it's his life; not mine. And I can love him for who he is when he is with me – absolutely nothing else. I also have the choice to fret and worry – or not. Letting go into the water lets me feel the visceral

¹⁹ Thomas Moore, *Dark Nights of the Soul*, 4.

²⁰ Cameron West, Aquatic Integration Institute website.

²¹ Andreas Schweizer, *The Sungod's Journey Through the Netherworld*, 20.

feeling of letting go. It translates to the psyche and the mind. Water is my living body, and my living body is mostly water. Just a thin membrane between the water of my body and the water of my Mother Earth. Stick a pin in me and I will leak into my Mother and she will carry me away.

“Aquatic Integration™ is a technique based on the practice that our bodies have the ability to heal themselves when allowed to recognize the potential for movement and alignment in the physical, emotional and spiritual realms.” – Cameron West²²

Session 6:

Intention: Faith?

Expression: Feeling just like a baby in the amniotic fluid. Pushing up against the wall of my mother’s uterus and using her to test my limits. Enjoying the feeling of being one with the water. Just letting go. Stretching with sensuousness and appreciating my ability to move in the world. Thankful for my life that has been given to me in such abundance. Letting go of worry about the future and experiencing a steadfastness that is seriously deepening. Knowing that I will be cared for and keeping it in my heart/mind as a present-tense experience.

“In time, the acceptance of our periodic descent into the underworld moves us toward that enlargement of soul, that embrace of the polarities of life which we call wisdom.”
– James Hollis²³

Session 7:

Intention: Release. Of Magician, or expectations of what life is like with Magician. Of Hierophant, or how things are going to turn out. Trust.

Expression: Very much in the cosmos. Planets spinning around me, hanging suspended in space for eons. Watching the colors of the inner eye change, meld, swirl, glisten and gleam. Am in my own universe. Mary worked on my body – I let her and let go. I saw trails of kelp and stars together, gaining faith that I am not alone in the world, that there are myriad relations who call when I acknowledge them. Drifting off into nothingness, everythingness – realizing it’s the same. Streeettttchhhhhinnnnngggggg. Like a rubber band.

“An expansion of consciousness is often preceded, accompanied or followed by disruption and challenge, as our previous understanding gives way to new insight.”
– Melanie Reinhart²⁴

²² Cameron West, Aquatic Integration I-III Course Material, 2010-2012.

²³ James Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul*, 125.

²⁴ Melanie Reinhart, *Chiron and The Healing Journey*, 24.

Session 8:

Intention: Cannot remember

Expression: Pushing off, trusting the water, feeling the water's life and healing properties sinking into my being and remembering that it's there for everyone, any time, if we just choose to sink into it. Playful, thankful, twirling, feeling my body and its liveliness. Great gratitude for being alive on Earth at this time and for having the strength of body and mind to stay intact. Greater trust, emboldened to speak my truth no matter what.

“It may be necessary for us from time to time to absent ourselves from the world in order to reflect, regroup, or revision our journey, but ultimately, we are to bring that larger person back to the world.” – James Hollis²⁵

Ten days after of last session, Star and I met to discuss any further reflections. I had had another underwater AI session with Cameron in the interim which happened to coincide with a very visceral Underworld descent. Astrologically, when I was born, Pluto directly opposed the Sun making my very nature one familiar with the pattern of descent and return. My experience of descents is always familiar: it is not the same as depression; it feels like being under and that something unknown is cooking; I don't really know what is going on and try to move through the culture as if “normal” while wishing our culture made space for such descents. The final aspect of the experience is also very familiar: I catch a piece of Wisdom I didn't know I was searching for; a jewel is gifted for my time below; and then I feel like I pop to the surface anew. Because I received an underwater session during this time, I realized that there is a clear distinction to be made: the underwater sessions *support* the state, make space for the state, but do not speed it up and alleviate the need for the descent which the Dark Feminine seems to require for Health – Hers and ours. Tom Cheetham notes, “The point of this psycho-cosmological labor is not to eliminate the need for the descent, but to reclaim its meaning and its efficacy, in part by learning the topographies of Hades, by differentiating among styles of descent and modes of darkness.”²⁶

²⁵ James Hollis, *Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life*, 12.

²⁶ Tom Cheetham, *Green Man, Earth Angel*, 32.

Therefore, when I met with Star to discuss further reflections, I was intrigued to find this to be part of her experience as well. She too felt that the underwater work was different from an Underworld descent but that it created the space for the descent. She also did not see the work as psychological but as work that supports psychological unfolding. She noted, “AI is visceral, body, faith, spiritual, psychological all combined; a working with emotional states without saying but through doing.” Star added that the work was precognitive, recalibration body work that helps to balance one out. When I asked what she meant by “balance one out”, she added her awareness of her nervous system being more balanced during this challenging transition time and that she had been anxiety-free for ten days, realizing that continued underwater AI sessions would further assist while in this transition.

Star’s further reflections were broad in scope. She felt that she was building greater trust in the world in general from the underwater AI sessions. She commented that it was liberating to go under assisted “knowing you would come back up from the aid of the AI practitioner, and therefore could stay down and experience things not done before.” Star’s word for her overall experience was “Trust”. She found trust through the support of her Underworld transitions and experienced the water as benign, a friend, a helper inducing a sense of connectedness where there is only a thin membrane between self and earth, and because of this, our body is the water of the earth. This observation is in alignment with one by Tom Cheetham. He states,

Sometimes we are enveloped by the sudden Dark, and plunge without any warning, helpless and abandoned in a desolate space. When that dark night comes, it is almost impossible to resist walling ourselves off from the threat. But we have to do just that, because if we erect the wall we lose not only our souls but the Soul of the World as well. The darkness of the fall must not be denied; they have to be passed through and they have to pass through us. The more adamant and unyielding the resistance, the more implacable and irresistible is the Dark. We must not petrify. We have to try to do the most difficult thing: become transparent and protean, like water.²⁷

Physically, Star noted that the water work was very beneficial for testing flexibility, feeling joints acutely, feeling and enjoying stretching within the warmth. She was aware of her increased balance and coordination and attributed it to the AI sessions

²⁷ Tom Cheetham, *Green Man, Earth Angel*, 13.

along with classes in water aerobics. Overall, she viewed AI as a “not thinking” experience but a *being* process that seems opposite of intellectual. “It is a process of unification, where every time I had an underwater session I was gifted Wisdom from within the descent, wordless Wisdom and gained acceptance, Wisdom within itself.” Additionally, at the same time, she felt more resolve, drive, determination to fight and advocate for herself. “Acceptance and resolve. Acceptance for the things I cannot change. And crazy mad confrontation which I would never have done before!” Star added the example of Fool’s over-the-top email about how he wanted to be with her. “I wrote back, ‘You’re projecting, you don’t know me!’” Star began to stand up for herself in ways that were new and related to cultivating her inner masculine. As James Hollis describes,

For the woman, Jung’s term *animus* [masculine ending of the Latin for “soul”] represents her sense of “empowerment,” namely, her sense of personal worth, psychological *gravitas*, permission for and capacity to *do* her life *in* the world. If the *anima* for men represents the life-sustaining soul, the *animus* for women represents her spirited energy for achieving life on her own terms. When the woman’s inner animus is supportive, “he” legitimizes her desires and helps her achieve them. When the animus is negative, “he” undermines her confidence, impugns her worth, and divides her energy in doubt, desuetude, deflection of eros, and depression. When the animus is not consciously present for her, women will project them outward, as men do the anima.²⁸

During the course of our sessions, not only did Star confront Fool but also a couple’s psychiatrist who had minimized the verbal (and potential physical) abuse of Hierophant; she confronted her lawyer regarding her minimizing how hostile and strategic Hierophant would be in court – both thematically oriented to women minimizing the potential of the Masculine abuse of power. Star added that within the underwater AI sessions she really cultivated a relationship to her Self: “The underwater work contributed to my feeling more self-confident, and helped to cultivate the masculine aspects within me that haven’t been cultivated as finely as feminine. My life circumstances, including the water work, has called or challenged me to call on my inner masculine; it’s been an organic development of capacities. Fears are still present, ‘What is going to become of me?’ but in the AI water sessions I feeling at One, an ecstatic state,

²⁸ James Hollis, *What Matters Most*, 51.

yet one also dualistic – oneness and aloneness. I felt acceptance, faith-based, well-held, the Divine Feminine.”

Lastly, she noted how much the AI water work influenced her. “It was very experiential, with visceral experiences of many different things – sea creatures, part of galaxy, floating in deep space, death, timelessness, whale’s mind. The fourth session was the closest I’ve ever come to death.” I asked if there was panic within the experience to which she replied, “Not at all! It was letting go, release. And a lot of sense of play – in and out. It was a great play experience where I loved those moments of hanging upside down, buoyancy – in the lift.”

The underwater descents provided by AI sessions offer space for one to be with ones own dynamic depths. This work assists Underworld descents by creating a container to grow ones personal authority through *integration* in order to find what is true for oneself and to live it in the world. It is a humble acknowledgment of what wishes to come into being *through us*.²⁹

²⁹ James Hollis, *Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life*, 184.

Appendix A

Bullet Points for Pluto Initiations created by Cayelin K Castell and Lauren Jubelirer For the Shamanic Astrology Mystery School www.shamanicastrology.com

Cycles last about a year and two thirds. Long enough to get you really in it.

Intent is Shamanic Initiation to produce empowerment through dying to or clearing all that stands in the way of living your soul's purpose.

Caterpillar becoming butterfly – part of life process, completely natural

Pluto bumper stickers:

Shit Happens Or Give Chaos a Chance

First Part of a Pluto cycle is about the *Acute perception of what is missing* and feeling powerless to change it (caterpillar in cocoon)

Can't prepare beforehand and can't avoid it no matter how "Good" you are.

It is simply time for the Caterpillar to become a Butterfly. Caterpillar dissolves in the cocoon.

Events are so intense you can't detach from feelings - previous methods no longer work such as exercise, meditation, humor, working, etc. *Pluto will not be ignored*

Pluto initiations are not logical or rational. They function outside of ordinary reality.

Pluto produces events beyond your control forcing surrender to whatever no longer serves your soul's purpose even if was a sweet experience for you.

In any underworld initiation these 3 main strategies for handling challenges do NOT work:

1. People of action cannot use their strength, muscles, or will to change what is happening
2. Thinking types who perceive challenges as a puzzle to figure out and solve can't figure it out or solve it.
3. All varieties of denial no longer work. Such as, there are no problems, I didn't care about it anyway, or the work-aholic who doesn't notice there is a problem.

Second Part of a Pluto Cycle is about feeling your feelings, embracing your fears, allowing the Underworld to inform you about how to BE with it.

It is a standstill time – The caterpillar can not get out of the cocoon no matter much it would like to leave. While in the cocoon the caterpillar dissolves and transforms into the Butterfly

Last part of Pluto Cycle after you have embraced your feelings, faced your fears, and surrendered to the process – the High Witness can return to help you integrate the experience.

This is when the Butterfly is ready to emerge from the Cocoon.

The Butterfly must have the will and strength to leave cocoon - this pumps up its wings so it can fly.

The End of a Pluto cycle is a feeling of renewal, empowerment, strength! The Butterfly is ecstatically living and expressing the Full power of its New Life.

Learning Passion includes agony and ecstasy and you can't shut off the energy with the mind

1. The body is safe as this is a death and rebirth within same physical body.
2. A natural process of surrender - don't know how to do it until in it. Similar to giving birth to a child.
3. Invite your fears to tea: call them out, face them embrace them, engage them
4. Fear of dying - that life has no meaning, that you have nothing to live for and you wish you could die. This is a normal part of the process.
5. Denial, repression, and trying to control the outcome will only strengthen the underworld experience - Failure to feel your feelings magnifies intensity to catalyze the intended changes and empowerment
6. Acknowledging and embracing Fear is the guiding light in this process *When I face my deepest fears - it takes me to where my courage lives. AE*
7. Remind client that Pluto has a beginning - middle - and end. Depression, grief, anxiety, lack of energy, etc. are common feelings during the cycle. The cycle does end and they won't feel this way forever! When it is over they **will feel more alive than ever.**
8. This is the Dark Night of the Soul relative to the mystery school of Pluto - shamanically activating the archetype. What feels obliterated during the cycle returns (if a part of your true essence) **like a phoenix rising from the ashes, stronger, more alive and more aligned with life purpose.**
9. Helps to do ceremony (Spirits like it) and it lets Universe know you know what is going on. Ceremonial Dates are ideal near the exact passes.

Jung said the goal of the journey is NOT perfection - its wholeness. And wholeness occurs through integration of the shadow.

One result is learning it is about the ENERGY - it is beyond the mind judging 'good or bad'. Whatever the feeling it is an experience of the intensity of the energy.

Appendix B

Underworld Planets: Pluto and Chiron

prepared by Cayelin K Castell for the Shamanic Astrology Mystery School copyright 2007 all rights reserved www.ShamanicAstrology.com

Pluto Key Words: intent is empowerment – initial experience powerlessness or whatever it takes to produce surrender - dark night of the soul - forty days in the wilderness - descent into the lower world - facing shadow side (any denied or repressed aspects of self) including worst fears – what is unrecognized in you but none-the-less part of who you are - "mother right" – natural law - regenerative – transforming – chaos – Pluto is an antidote to Hubris

obsessed – vindictive – controlling – manipulative – fearful – denial – power over others – refusal to surrender

Complexes: indicates an agreement with universe to have regular pattern of overwhelming events that take one beyond who they believe themselves to be - themes of constant death and rebirth – dying to who you believe yourself to be - whatever it takes to get someone to pay attention to their shadow side...face their fears...until they get it is the medicine they carry – empowerment is the end result of any Pluto teaching

Transits A year and two-thirds: intent is to clear out or die to all that stands in the way of living your soul's purpose – this is initially experienced as disempowerment or being 'at the affect of' circumstances beyond your control requiring surrender to what needs to die – experiencing the acute perception of what is missing – this is a process of discovering what is most important to you – something happens you don't know will happen before it does – can't prepare can only give self permission to experience it – Pluto cycles are not logical or rational - best to allow yourself to feel what you are feeling including anger, rage, hurt, depression etc. – this is not ordinary reality - the bigger the fear the bigger the attainment – can't get out of it - can't ignore it - similar to how caterpillar can't get out of chrysalis until process is complete – must feel your feelings about what is taking place - what is dying? – grieve losses – then comes the phase where you can get what you have always wanted and that brings up deeper fear – fear of success often bigger than fear of failure – emotional release work can help, holotropic breathwork, riechian work, or any other processes that are feeling directed, not cognitive - you must feel your feelings and you must feel the energy - become aware of life force energy and embrace it; once you do that it begins to shift - then you reach the intent which is empowerment - Pluto will not be ignored – at the end of the cycle if you have surrendered and died to what needs to die embracing the energy, facing your fears and incorporating your shadow side...you get to experience what you have always desired and it is now real life – the primary goal of a Pluto initiation is to transform us from caterpillars to butterflies ecstatically living and expressing the full power of who we are

Chiron Key Words: sacred wound - healer heal thyself - fracture point - shamanic healer – bridge between the world of form (Saturn) and celestial world (Uranus) – bridge between mortality and immortality – bridge between our animal and divine nature – bridging our sense of purpose and meaning with the soul's original intent – holistic – knowing – accepting your own story - denial there is a wound – fragmented understanding of wholeness – scattered – diffused – ungrounded– self-doubt – dogma – spiritual unrest

Complexes: aspects of the sacred wound – where the fracture points are located – where we are required to do personal healing – intended breakthrough point in all our bodies mental, physical, emotional and spiritual –

Transits About a year: intent is to alchemically transform wounds of past into the medicine we carry - can be felt as a crisis of meaning - it empties us of what we think we know and who we are

- time to release attachments to structure, being organized, having it together in a practical world sense -Chiron return is when something shows up so you can take yourself off line for awhile – helps to relax and let go - health crisis happens when a person is really stubborn and does not surrender – there is nothing to prove or do – it's a time to allow for all your experiences up to that point – it is a time for having compassion for the wounds by incorporating them so they become our medicine – then greater amounts of eros and life force are available - it is about digesting the life experience up to that point moving beyond victim/perpetrator view – whatever our experience, it is our experience – self-forgiveness is a key - releasing attachment to being perfect – a time for releasing super ego or for example belief that by age 50 one should have it altogether – a time for incorporating more refined frequencies through shamanic healing or surrendering to what is transforming – similar to homeopathic process where what was a poison is refined in a way that it becomes a potent medicine and then we more powerfully live our life's purpose

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