



Navigating the Mysteries

Full Moon Features

"When the student is ready the teacher will appear.

When the student is truly ready"

Lao Tzu

Welcome to the March Full Moon Penumbral Eclipse, with its invitation to notice as the earth casts a shadow across the moon.

I was excited to see the almost full moon rising last night and I sat for a while in its gentle light, greeting what felt like a long-lost friend. My old illusion that the weather is fine at the full moon has been shattered these last months, with their grey stormy skies.

And today the rain has returned – what will this evening bring? The moon will of-course continue to exert its pull, whether shrouded in cloud or radiant in crystal clear skies.

Radiance and shadow, darkness and light, the theme is one mentioned by Heather Ensworth in her Penumbral Eclipse talk on YouTube. Only five days after the equinox, with equal hours of day and night across the globe, we have today's full moon, and then in just two weeks, a total solar eclipse at the new moon on 8th April.

Last year, at the equinox, many felt that humanity was at an individual and collective choice-point – do we continue to live in fear, or will we choose love?

I still remember the urgency I felt as I convened the first equinox prayer gathering – professing love and the urge to actively support those working towards humanitarian goals.

Since then, I have seen how, deep down, fear was alive and well in the pit of my psyche. I've seen what it looked like when I was in its grip, and I was aghast at what I saw.

Bill Plotkin, depth psychologist, wilderness guide and agent of cultural evolution names the wounded, fragmented or immature parts of our wholeness as Subpersonalities. He describes one set of subpersonalities as *Loyal Soldiers* – because they defend another set, the *Wounded Children* vehemently and sometimes without our consent!

Noticing, without judgement, our defensive survival strategies and the harmful behaviours that emanate from them seems to be universally accepted as the first step to healing. And so, my seeing, painful as it was, offered me an opportunity to face my

deepest wounding, and from there to heal. I write this, wanting to encourage you that this journey is possible, worthwhile and a necessary part of our formation!

Our Subpersonalities protect our *Wounded Children*. They were or are essential to our survival and will only ease their expression when we show them that our generative adult part, our compassionate witness selves, can care for our inner children without them. It is only through reparenting these hurting little ones will we develop more mature ways of being.

We know this!

This equinox / eclipse season we're again being invited to notice our shadow aspects, individually and collectively and to heal them.

Astrologically, to quote Heather Ensworth again, "there are layers of complexity" in the chart for the Full Moon! In a grouping of astrological bodies –Quaoar, Pholus, Ceres, and Ixion we have themes of singing and dancing spirit into matter, the lid coming off – revealing a lineage of issues that need healing and clarity, our connection with our earth mother and Ixion!

Ah! Ixion!

Ixion is a dwarf planet. He sits in the Kuiper belt, sharing an orbit and angle to the ecliptic with Pluto and Orcus, suggesting their archetypes enable us to cut across consensus thinking.

All the objects found in the Kuiper belt are named after deities of the underworld. The other dwarf planets, those named after creation deities for example are way further out in space. Symbolically, the suggestion is that, on our journey of spiritual formation, we must pass through the underworld, pass through a death experience, before new life blossoms. Of course! We know this life, death rebirth pattern too.

Thinking of underworld deities, Eugene Monick, Theologian and Jungian analyst, in his work on masculine psychology describes Dionysus as a "chthonic trickster god".

Perhaps Dionysus is more familiar, I think we'll notice similarities between him and Ixion. More on this to come.

But first, a digression!

"When the student is ready the teacher will appear.

When the student is truly ready"

Lao Tzu

Astrologers generally believe that new planetary discoveries are made when we are sufficiently conscious, ready to recognise the cosmic archetypes and accept how they play out in our lives. They appear as our teachers when we, as students are ready.

How encouraging!

The dwarf planets generally and Ixion specifically have appeared to teach us.

I'm ready, are you?

Whether ready or not, all the astrological bodies have been impacting us since our births, taking their place in the cosmos and waiting for us to awaken to them, so that they can teach and guide us through life.

It's gloriously complex, and separating out one thread is somewhat false, but I believe we can learn a lot by doing so.

In the way that a birth chart is prepared, at the time of my birth, Ixion was conjunct, next to the Sun.

A one-line interpretation of this suggests that I'm wilfully independent! From the earliest age, my mother has affirmed that!

I share this, because at his most immature, Ixion is not someone I would want to associate myself with.

Expounding a little, Ixion conjunct my natal sun has a strong influence on my sense of self, my core identity, radiating energy and individuality – my authentic self! Whether I like it or not, whether I attempt to suppress, repress or embrace it, however wonderful it sounds or inconvenient it is, the strong influence remains.

And so, rather than resisting the inevitable, I'm choosing to explore and work with it, to learn from the insights gained and embrace aspects of myself that have been outcast.

Returning to Eugene Monick and his "chthonic trickster god", as he quotes Karl Kerényi, the mythologist, reviewing the underworld deity archetypes, he says

"The trickster god [such as Hermes or Dionysus] is a transpersonal source of a particular lifestyle and way of experiencing the world. . . "

Monick continues,

"Dionysus is slightly mad, impulsive, off-balance . . . he emotes with intensity [he feels] rather than talks about feeling.

The slightly mad qualities of Dionysus and his flock belong to psychic reality, and room must be made for them, whether or not Apollonian [those whose trademark is order and regularity] enjoy the coexistence."

Does Ixion belong to this Dionysian flock?

Being wilfully independent, I suspect he would deny it!

And slightly mad, impulsive and off-balance are not the usual words I include if writing a bio! I've tended to go for the Apollonian order & regularity descriptions.

OK! I can no longer fool myself, and . . . slightly mad sounds like much more fun!

In myth, as is so often the way, Ixion seems trapped forever in his immaturity. It is this expression that repels me.

And it is this story that has come to the fore at this full moon.

Ixion, the King of Lapis, and son or grandson of Aries, the god of war was to be married.

It was customary for the groom to honour the bride's father with a generous gift, a dowry for his daughter and a way to seal the relationship between the two families.

Ixion, unhappy with this arrangement chose not to provide a gift for his new father-in-law.

Affronted and offended by Ixion's impudence, the father-in-law took some of Ixion's horses.

Enraged, Ixion planned another banquet for his father-in-law. During the banquet, Ixion pushed the old man into the fire and murdered him,

Aghast by the murder and such a blatant violation of traditional kinship agreements, Ixion was cast out from his home, shunned and treated as an outlaw.

Ixion was so distraught at not getting his way, and of losing power and control that a kind of madness overcame him.

Eventually Zeus, in a rare merciful moment, invited Ixion to Olympus, to be released from his guilt.

However, Ixion started to lust after Zeus' wife and in a final punishment, Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt and sent him spinning forever into space on a burning wheel.

At this lower octave, immature or shadow expression of chthonic masculine, is "characterised by its grossness, brutality and carelessness . . . insatiable desire and possessiveness, by its unmitigated power needs, by a kind of mad drivenness, by the mayhem of war and ruthless competition. . . ." (Eugene Monick)

Or summarising Heather Ensworth – by a pathological grandiose narcissism; arrogance, hubris, grandiosity, and the need for power and control alongside an inability to accept and learn from mistakes, and a lack of empathy, care and concern for others or the consequences of choices and actions.

Whilst we might readily agree that we are seeing this behaviour played out in the world – the defensive survival effort of over-vehement *Loyal Soldiers* protecting *inner wounded children*, and causing devastation in so doing it's less easy to accept how whispers of arrogance, pride and the need for power and control might still be evident in us.

Perhaps our way is more subtle. Perhaps we protect our inner *wounded children* as closet narcissists – the inner critics, inner flatterers, lion tamers, caretakers, enablers and codependents (Bill Plotkin).

Ouch!

Is it not always the case with shadow work, that what we see outside of ourselves is reflected within and vice versa?

It is only by noticing that we can begin to heal.

In *Wild Mind*, Bill Plotkin suggests that, with a few exceptions, “there has been too little consideration of what is inherently right and inspiring about human beings.”

He continues (emphasis mine)

“What if, for example, our primary human need and opportunity is not to endlessly attend to our emotional wounds and the eradication of perceived psychological disorders but rather to fathom and flesh out our natural human wholeness and to embody this integral bounty as a gift to others and our world.”

My adult witness self can see the need for both approaches.

Our inner *Wounded Children* need to be seen, heard, and nurtured to be healed.

Our *Loyal Soldiers*, need to be thanked, assured that the “war of childhood survival” is over, and reassigned so that their loyalty and skills may be employed in a growth-promoting way.

I’m grateful to Alan Clay for offering higher octave interpretations of the dwarf planet myths – freeing them from the prisons of their immaturity and lighting a path for us to emerge from the underworld with them.

“Ixion opens us to seeker consciousness allowing us to develop our authenticity and to follow our bliss.

Ixion is the wild child in each of us that just wants to satisfy our personal passions and is constantly asking ‘Are the rules we’re playing by the right ones?’ He teaches us to foster an independence of spirit, which enables our seeker consciousness and allows us to pursue a personal spiritual mission. . .

As we reach the spiritually evolved level, we define our own rules and live life on our own terms, while respecting the implicit agreements in our relationships and transmuting our base emotions.

We need strong internal passion to guide us beyond the traditional ideas that are crumbling around us in the present era.”

May it be so!