

Exam Board Exceptional Essay

by Gina Baines

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Some amendments have been made to the original layout of this essay (and Exam Board guidelines) to meet Journal publishing requirements.

Mark Green , Exam Board Director

2006 ADVANCED EXAMINATION - QUESTION 5

Harmonics - (1,500 word limit)

Harmonic charts are a common part of Vedic astrology used for finding partners or a vocation etc. John Addey introduced the concept of 'harmonics' into the tropical system last century, focussing on three main harmonics, 5, 7 and 9, which he used to highlight a particular area in an individual's psychological make up and drive.

Using the chart of Mel Gibson, 3 Jan 1956 16:45 Peekskill, NY 41N17'24" 073W55'15", (Asc. approx. 15 Deg. Cancer) show what factors are highlighted in these three harmonic charts. Explain what each harmonic represents and how it either reinforces a natal potential or highlights an area previously hidden.

* * *

Introduction to Harmonic charts:

Harmonic charts are a means by which we can spot the less noticeable facets of a natal chart. They are not intended as stand-alone charts, but rather as sign-posts to the angular relationships which exist already in the natal. Like musical harmonies, harmonic charts offer rich and deep layers, revealing crystal-clear messages.

Mel Gibson's natal chart:¹

For such a successful entertainer, Mel Gibson's natal chart is somewhat surprising in its emphasis below the horizon. Still, with Mercury strongly aspected and in 7th house, he

¹ charts calculated using Solar Fire Deluxe, v.6.0.25, 2005, Esoteric Technologies, Adelaide, Australia.

‘meets the public’. Cancer ascendant with Moon in Libra trine Mercury, illustrates his popularity, while Capricorn Sun conjunct Descendant from 6th house describes a hard-working individual for whom personal relationships are important. He shows initiative and ambition through his Sun, Moon and Ascendant in cardinal signs. The t-square involving Neptune in 4th (Scorpio) square a Mercury/Uranus opposition in 7th/1st, drives him to express himself uniquely, from the security of a loving home base which Moon in 4th needs. Mars/Saturn in 5th in Scorpio imparts resilience and a driven quality to his creations; Saturn square Jupiter/Pluto Rx in 3rd house is a compelling and mentally provocative placement which expresses charismatically through the dramatic arts (Leo on cusp).

Gibson’s natal Sun has no major aspects (neither does Venus). This creates an all-or-nothing nature, and (to me) suggests a lifelong search for “Who Am I?” Perhaps his fifth harmonic chart answers this question, through the characters he portrays in his creative work...

Mel Gibson’s 5th Harmonic chart

Fifth Harmonic charts (hereupon referred to as H5) divide the circle by five, giving us the Quintile aspects. These will appear in the H5 as conjunctions. The Quintile derives its meaning from the five-pointed star - a symbol of wholeness - and is associated with the urge for creative potency, particularly in the mental realm. It’s also connected with another form of creativity - the male/female union. According to David Hamblin², there is a powerful urge to create form and patterns, and order out of chaos through the number five. H5 can describe a person’s style of doing so.

This fifth harmonic, then, as a representation of our creative progeny, of ‘knowing our topic’, is already evident through Gibson’s film career: we see it immediately through his H5 stellium of Neptune, MC and Sun. He truly knows his stuff with this medium! Through Neptune he has the gift of a chameleon so necessary for acting roles; later to switch to talents from the other side of the camera lens. There’s also a natal quintile between Venus and Saturn, which introduces a moral element based on traditional values, as well as a concern with bringing structure to beauty. What these aspects do show, which the natal chart lacks, is Gibson’s sensitivity – something also evident in his seventh harmonic chart...

Mel Gibson’s 7th Harmonic chart

Dividing the circle into seven uncovers the Septile series of aspects (51 ½ degree increments). Seven is a sacred and religious number. Hamblin describes number seven as inspiration from within – cosmic order, rather than the human order of number five.³ It’s our inner reality, our fantasies, motivation and creative inspiration; our tastes and our heroes; our wild imaginations. Simply put, it pushes our buttons.

² David Hamblin: “*Harmonic Charts*”, The Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, 1987, (first published 1983). p 48

³ Hamblin, op. cit. p 64

Looking to Gibson's 7th harmonic chart, we find several things which do this. For one, it's the power to create his own 'role' in life (Pluto/MC); another is seduction and illusion, beauty and film (Venus/Neptune); expressing himself, inside and out, through the media (Sun/Moon, trine Mercury); and sex appeal (Mars/Desc). This strong and lively chart goes a long way to describing his successful career and home life, and his universal appeal. What turns him on, is self-mastery!

Mel Gibson's 9th Harmonic chart:

The Ninth Harmonic divides the circle by 9, giving us the Novile increments of 40 degrees. The Novile aspect is thought to be connected with our unique purpose in life, our spiritual path; our greatest sense of real peace and happiness and fulfillment⁴. John Addey describes it thus: "It stands in relation to the radical map 'as the fruit to the tree.'"⁵ It depicts the power of the universal heart, and overall, a sense of completion.

Gibson doesn't have any natal Novile aspects; however he does have two planetary conjunctions in his H9 chart: Moon/Mercury; and Venus/Mars conjunct MC. While the natal Moon/Mercury trine is obvious, the natal 80-degree distance between Venus and Mars is not. Here the H9 chart provides an added layer of meaning for us.

Gibson's natal Moon/Mercury are noticeable through his acting roles in his love of story-telling. In the H9 chart they sit opposite Saturn, which suggests that he takes his role as an actor and director very seriously in his efforts to get his message across. He also seems to have a good sense of timing, and of what the audience is ready for.

The ninth harmonic chart has been correlated with the marriage partner.⁶ Although David Hamblin does not wholly accept this suggestion,⁷ I have through my own research found some merit in it. Gibson's H9 Moon/Mercury could describe that he seeks through his partner a sounding-board for his ideas, and loving communication. Venus/Mars in his H9 suggest a very physical relationship which is based on equal terms in gender and roles - something quite probable, as he and Robyn have been married for several decades, have seven children and a strong family bond. It is well-known that early on in their marriage, when Gibson was going off the rails through youthful partying, Robyn gave him an ultimatum: "Shape Up or Ship Out!" He chose the former. This reinforces several natal chart features which indicate his strong ethics, faith, and commitment to his wife and family.

So, what do Mel Gibson's Harmonic charts tell us that we don't already know?

While the fifth harmonic chart pretty much confirms what we already can see in his natal, it is the other two harmonics which add some intriguing nuances...

⁴ Hamblin, op. cit. p 81

⁵John Addey: "*Harmonics in Astrology*" 1976, L.N.Fowler & Co. Ltd., Essex, England. p 103

⁶Addey, op. cit. p 102

⁷ Hamblin, op. cit. p87

The seventh harmonic as a representation of what turns him on, what motivates him at a soul level, has three distinct messages. Through the Sun/Moon conjunction it suggests Gibson is at-one with himself: the anima and animus are united, and he is comfortable being just the man he is. This aspect confirms his natal 'unpected' Sun and Venus, and his natal Moon trine Mercury. There's an easy-going nature which shines through his whole manner of expression. Through the seventh harmonic, we can imagine that Gibson will be inspired, then, by the equality of the masculine and feminine traits in human nature, and will wish to inspire others, too.

Through the Venus/Neptune conjunction in H7, we see he is stirred by an image of the ideal, of bliss, beauty; a sense of nirvana perhaps. There is also a narcissistic theme, so perhaps some vanity is there, too.

This aspect hooks into the Pluto/MC/Chiron conjunction, which introduces a compulsion to go deep into the guts of the matter, and to see this as one's role in life. For Gibson, what matters is to change at a core level, to transform, to overhaul. This is something we may not give him credit for just by looking at his natal chart – although we note that with Pluto/Jupiter in 3rd house, he will be a deep thinker. Chiron in the H7 configuration adds the sense of a mentor or guide. Together, it suggests Gibson is motivated by the urge to uncover the Truth, to dig it up from below and teach it, share it. It also describes his kind of half-mortal, half-divine image. Gibson is never so 'above' himself that he detaches from the ordinary souls. Like Chiron, he mingles with the rowdy mob and, like Pluto, he keeps his queen, his muse (Venus/Neptune) underground with him half the time, and lets her go the other half. I see this expressed in his contentment to divide his time between work and family: Robyn may well be his muse. She certainly drew him out of his cave of self-destruction.

Finally, the ninth harmonic chart has two focuses, combining inner planets: Moon/Mercury, and Venus/Mars/MC. They are linked by a trine. To me, this describes his home and family life - particularly his relationship with Robyn - far better than does his natal chart. While his natal chart shows the commitment and love he has for his wife and family, it lacks warmth and joy – whereas in the H9 this is clearly there. The Moon/Mercury confirms their natal trine, describing heartfelt communication, instinctual thoughts and cherished memories – but natively Venus and Mars lack connection with anything but Saturn, which scarcely describes one's sense of bliss (well, maybe it does to a Capricorn). In the H9 their pattern suggests, again, a union of genders, a comfortableness with the male-ness and female-ness within. I reckon Gibson understands the value of a good partnership, of desire and motivation and how the two must work together – and of the overriding power of Love.

What is interesting to look at in the 5th, 7th and 9th Harmonic charts, is how a close natal semi-sextile will carry through a theme via that pair of planets – such as Gibson's Moon/Neptune, and Jupiter/Uranus. These themes aptly describe his fantasy world, and his pursuit of the truth as he sees it. It also begs further research into the semi-sextile, which might some day receive an upgrade in significance given that the 30-degree angle gets picked up in all of these three most popular harmonics charts.

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Bil Tierney: *"Dynamics of Aspect Analysis"*, First CRCS Edition, USA, 1983. (Rev. ed. of: *"Perceptions in Astrology"*, c.1980)

Attached charts: Mel Gibson's natal chart + grid (standard orbs); on the flip-side is
Mel Gibson's natal chart + grid (Harmonics orbs)
Mel Gibson's 5th harmonic chart + grid (harmonics orbs)
Mel Gibson's 7th harmonic chart + grid (harmonics orbs)
Mel Gibson's 9th harmonic chart + grid (harmonics orbs)

Software: Solar Fire Deluxe v.6.0.27, 2005. Placidus house system; also Equal houses