Solstice /Antiscia Points
The Space in Your Chart for Your Partner

When the Sun reaches the Tropic of Cancer, it attains one of the two major standstills of the year, also referred to as Midsummer because it is roughly the middle of the growing season throughout much of Europe and North America.

It is the tilt to the Earth’s rotational axis that gives us our seasons. At the Tropic of Cancer the lengthening days have reached their greatest extent. The noonday sun which prior to this moment has risen higher and higher in the sky on each successive day to reach culmination now rises no higher. It reaches the same height and in effect it "stands still", hangs like a great orb in this position now for three days before she begins her journey southward, pulling in her light, shortening the days as she trudges slowly but ever surely towards the Lands Down Under, towards the Tropic of Capricorn until the days are at their shortest and Winter cloaks the world with darkness, short days and inward focus.

You can see this illustrated best on the horizon or through the use of raised stones called henges. Each day the Sun rises one degree to the left of where it rose the day before until it reaches its furthest point north. It then appears to rise in the same place for three days before it begins moving one degree to the right of where it rose the day before until it reaches its southernmost declination. This is one of the great pendulum movements of the sky, from standstill to standstill, north to south, Cancer to Capricorn, solstice point to solstice point.

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The word “solstice” comes from the Latin, “sol” meaning “sun”, and “stit”, which is the stem of “sistere” meaning “to cause to stand still”. As the Sun appeared to journey from tropic to tropic through the zodiac, so it came to be known as the tropical zodiac. So these points of stillness came to define the seasons and as we developed the calendar, so we came to call it the “tropical” or seasonal calendar.

In actuality the seasons of the year are caused by the 23.5° tilt of the earth's axis. In view of the fact that the earth is rotating like a top or gyroscope, the North Pole points in a fixed direction continuously towards a point in space near the North Star. But the earth is also revolving around the Sun. During half of the year, the southern hemisphere is more exposed to the Sun than is the northern hemisphere. During the rest of the year, the reverse is true.

These solstice points were of great importance to the ancients. Since the age of electricity, such great moments have ceased to impinge upon us in the same way as when the world was governed by light and dark and it is difficult to truly imagine what it must have been like to live in a time when observation and ritual underpinned these seasonal shifts.

At 0° Cancer (the Summer Solstice), the northern hemisphere relinquishes warmth and light and life and prepares for hibernation, shedding and dormancy. Our solar-focused, agrarian, Neolithic mythology is full of this three day point of stillness, the battle between the forces of dark and the forces of light, emphasising the importance of these solstice points. Modern story narratives never let the hero win until this battle has been fought. The hero appears to die, witnesses death, causes death or faces his or her shadow before gaining the reward. This fight to gain the high ground is won first by the light as we move from the Winter Solstice and then by the dark as we move from the Summer Solstice. The Sun wins and the Sun loses.

In pre-historic times, much as today, summer was a joyous time of the year. The snow had disappeared, the ground had thawed, warmth filled the air, flowers bloomed and leaves returned to deciduous trees. However, unlike today where food is plentiful and available year round from all parts of the world, food then was only available in its season. At midsummer, some herbs could be harvested for medicinal and other uses. Food was easier to find. The crops had already been planted and would be harvested in the months to come. Although many months of warm and even hot weather remained, days began to shorten. The summer solstice carried this message of diminishing light.

Animals follow precise seasonal patterns of mating, hibernation and migration. All three are linked to seasonal differences in sunlight. Much that is followed instinctually by animals is culturally motivated in people. Social patterns tie people to their culture and culture to nature. An example is the Australian indigenous people, the aborigines. For generations they have followed the same imperceptible paths which have been communicated through song and memorized for generations. The songs didn't just transmit information but according to their belief, the singing of them renewed plant and animal life.
And so a pulse is set up: at 0° Capricorn (the winter solstice), the northern hemisphere struggles for warmth and light and life; three days of anticipation is followed by relief and joy as the Sun began its long days’ journey into light. This meant celebration.

So what are these Solstice Points?

What we know of these Solstice points comes from Julius Firmicus Maternus. Firmicus Maternus wrote two books in his time and his time was the 4th century CE. He wrote The Eight Books of the Mathesis or Theory of Astrology, the final and most complete work on astrology in the western world prior to the penalties exacted against non-Christian practices. And then ten years later he wrote a bitter attack on the mystery religions from a Christian point of view, clearly after a conversion to Christianity. It is in Book 8 of the Mathesis that he mentions these Solstice points only he doesn’t call them solstice points. He tells us that the beginning of the Antiscia is either 0° Cancer or 0° Capricorn and he calls them Antiscia.

"The Antiscia of the Greeks have been handed down by tradition. I do not wish anyone to think that this has not been discussed by the Greeks. For even Ptolemy followed no other theory but that of Antiscia. Antiochus when he said that indeed Libra did not see Aries because the Earth was in the middle, as if through a mirror reached theory of the Antiscia. Dorotheus of Sidon, on the other hand, a very wise man who wrote about forecasting by the stars in very accurate and learned verses, explained the calculation of the Antiscia in clear terms in his fourth book.”

Julius Firmicus Maternus
The Mathesis: Ancient Astrology Theory and Practice

[The references Firmicus Maternus gives above are to Ptolemy (c. 127-148 CE), Antiochus (first century BCE) and to Dorotheus of Sidon, (first part of the first century)].
This technique was brought to western civilisation when the Greek-neat thought had domesticated the sky and it is totally based on the ecliptic. Even so, it is a technique that is totally filled with enchantment. The word “Antiscia” comes from the Latin antiscii and the Greek antiskioi meaning anti- opposite and skia shadow. “Shadows on the other side”. In the modern dictionary we have this definition of Antiscia:

“dwellers on the same meridian on opposite sides of the equator whose shadows at noon fall in opposite directions.”

Antiscia Points – formed from the Solstice axis - are “shadows on the other side”. Firmicus Maternus states:

“II send Antiscia towards ☶ and ☶ towards II; Ω send Antiscia towards ☶ and ☶ towards Ω; Μ send Antiscia towards Τ and Τ towards Μ... What we have said about Antiscia is not enough unless we list in detail which degrees emit influences to which other degrees ...”

This last statement is a very important point: certain degrees exert influence over other degrees.

So the Solstice Axis acts as a dividing line in much the same way as does a mirror when we look into it. Hence a point’s Antiscia is its reflection from the Solstice or Capricorn/Cancer axis. What he is saying is that if we took a natural zodiac beginning with 0º Cancer and 0º Capricorn, then this Solstice Axis divides the chart into two hemispheres. If we orient the chart to the natural zodiac beginning with 0º Aries rising, then an abundance of planets/ luminaries in the right hemisphere will tend to signify a compulsive relator, one who needs other people in his or her life to fulfil that person’s life. An abundance of planets /luminaries in the left hemisphere will tend to signify an independent person, one who is comfortable with aloneness and self-reliance, autonomy and lack of constraint. In a natural zodiac, the Solstice points divide the chart in half in terms of dependent and independent relationships.

The hardest thing to see is ourselves directly. We only know ourselves through reflection. By looking into a mirror we see who we are. What we see is our counterpart likeness and representation. Our reflection fills the same space “on the other side”, duplicated yet reversed. We and our image are equidistant from that mirror no matter where we stand.

Hence a point at 29º Gemini will send an Antiscia towards 1º Cancer; a point at 28º Gemini will send an Antiscia towards 2º Cancer; and so on.
How to Find Antiscia Points

Method 1:
Subtract the point you are looking at from 360° and translate this into its sign of the zodiac.
For example, you may have Saturn at 15° Gemini.
Translate this into degrees of the zodiac: 15° Gemini = 75°.
Subtract this from 360° = 285°
Translate this back into signs of the zodiac = 15° Capricorn.

So the Antiscia of this person's Saturn 15° Gemini is 15° Capricorn.

Method 2:
Visually by counting the number of degrees either side of the Cancer-Capricorn axis.

Method 3:
The following table makes it easier to see what degrees send an Antiscia towards what other degrees. [Note: Antiscias can also be found using Solar Fire 5 software under “Chart - Harmonic” and then selecting “Antiscia”]:

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### Solstice (Antiscia) Points - Conversion Table

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Firmicus goes on to say that

"thus, if computing the chart, some of the planets are not in aspect, it must be asked whether they are connected to each other through the relationship of Antiscia."

In other words, does a planet at, say, 2° Libra make an aspect to another planet in your chart at 18° Pisces? The answer is that even if you had a planet sitting there, with 162° of separation it does not make an aspect to it. However, it sits in the place in your chart where it forms a mirror reflection across the Solstice axis to its Antiscia point. It **influences** that point.

Think of it like this. You are walking along a street of houses and then you come to a shop window. Suddenly you see your reflection in the window. Your reflection is made clear to you at that point along the street.

So it is with Antiscia points. That Antiscia point holds tremendous power to bring that part of a person into clear focus, catalysed by another.

**Why does it work?** There are many ways to divide a chart and bisecting it is a natural solar action. We live in a duality - night-day, male-female - north-south. If we look to fairy stories, they are full of information on what to do in the world of enchantment, how to behave, what to eat - and to make sure that one remains grounded in the mundane, practical world.

Solstice points are most relevant in relationships. Since in a natural zodiac the Solstice axis divides the chart in terms of dependent and independent relationships, if one meets a person who has a planet at that exact degree, that is a tremendously powerful point for interaction and connection between the two people. It is the point where that person allows the other to express that planet or luminary in the external world. It is a point where your planet/luminary is made possible in the external world.

Hence Antiscias are of special use in Synastry work, for they define one’s points of expression in the world via another individual. To look at Antiscia points to see how another person helps one to fulfil oneself may explain why a person may feel such a close connection, positively or with difficulty, with another when it may not be that obvious through Composite and Synastry work.
Example 1:  

GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE USA CHART:  
A Political Marriage

The USA chart:  Campion, Nick,  
George W. Bush's chart - Blackwell data set, Solar Fire.

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Page 9.
US "Sibly" Chart
Natal Chart
4 Jul 1776 NS
5:10 pm LMT +5:00:40
Philadelphia, PA
39°N57' 075°W10'
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
True Node
Marriages don’t always have to be between people. They can also exist between a person and a business, a person and a company or between a President and his/her country.

The USA chart is a long-lived entity and it makes many “marriages” in its lifetime. So for there to be a political “marriage”, George W. Bush’s planets must fill some of the USA chart's key Antiscia points.

**Connections between George W. Bush and the USA Chart:**

**Sun-Mars:** George W. Bush’s identity, vitality, vigour drive is fulfilled by the drive and motivation of the USA chart. In simplistic terms, he is shaped, identified and made possible by the USA military. Not all the USA’s Presidents take the country to war but this is underlining and making a statement of war, antagonism, military aggression and drive connected to the very heart of this President.

**Saturn-Uranus:** Issues of liberty and freedom within the establishment.

**Uranus/North Node-Sun/Jupiter:** The call for change, independence and rebellion (Uranus/North Node) is fulfilled by the USA’s desire for expansion, education or the way of the forefather’s (grandfather)

A point to observe is that clustered either side of the 0° Cancer point George W. Bush’s Uranus fills the Sun’s Antiscia point. When this occurs it suggests that even though Uranus-North Node and the Sun do not make an aspect in his chart, they do by Antiscia. The Uranus-North Node makes his Sun possible and vice versa.
Example 2: GEORGE W. BUSH AND TONY BLAIR
A Political Relationship

George W. Bush
Event Chart
6 Jul 1946
7:26 am EDT +4:00
New Haven CT, USA
41°N 18’ 072°W 55’
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
True Node
• George W. Bush’s Chart: Blackwell data set.
• Tony Blair’s Chart: Clifford Data Set
Connections between George W. Bush and Tony Blair:

**Mercury = Sun:** What one says shapes the identity of the other.

**Mars = Mercury:** The strategies of war of one are articulated by the other.

**Saturn = Mars/Ascendant:** Responsibility and authority is made possible through the visible drive and determination of the other.

**Uranus = Uranus:** Both have the same ideas of freedom.

**Pluto = Sun:** The desire for irrevocable change makes possible the identity vitality and vigour of the other.

If we widen to 6° orb:

**Venus-Sun:** The networking skills of one influence the identity of the other.

**North Node-Uranus:** Encountering what satisfies and fulfils one’s and freedom and intellect.

**Ascendant-Jupiter:** How one is seen influences the wisdom of the other.
CONTRA-ANTISCIAS

If the solstice points are time of holding one’s breath - the battle is won or the battle is lost - then the equinoxes are times of stasis and balance. Twice a year, during the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes, the hours of night and day are rendered equal with exactly 12 hours each. These are the two points where the Sun is closest to the earth. The Equinoxes are the two days out of the whole year when the northern and southern hemispheres receive the same amount of sunlight, and the days and nights are the same length. The tilt of the Earth’s axis is not toward the Sun, but lies at a right angle to an imaginary Earth-Sun line. At the equator, the sun is directly overhead. These days are the Equinoxes (Equinox means "equal night").

The two Equinoxes, 0° Aries or 0° Libra, also formed a marker for survival in ancient times. This was a time where things were in balance. They are also times of intense change. The energy of Spring is upward, plants pushing towards the bright sun. The Autumn Equinox is the time of harvest.

If we took a natural zodiac beginning with 0° Aries on the Ascendant on the 0° Libra on the Descendant, then this Equinoctial Axis divides the chart into an upper and lower hemisphere. An abundance of planets and/or luminaries in the upper hemisphere will tend to signify a socially active person, one who is concerned with status and standing and interacting in groups or organisations. An abundance of planets and/or luminaries in the lower hemisphere will tend to signify someone who deals with personal issues, advancing a sense of self-knowledge through private, intimate and internal sources without a social buffer. In a natural zodiac the Equinox points divide the chart in half in terms of social and personal relationships. This is the axis across the chart from which Contra-Antiscia Points are derived.
SOLSTICE (ANTISCIA) POINTS

INDEPENDENT  DEPENDENT

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EQUINOX (CONTRA-ANTISCIA) POINTS
Contra-Antiscia points describe how one defines one’s expression in the world without the catalyst of another individual. If they are filled by a planet in the natal chart, then it implies you are doing something for the whole world. Contra-Antiscia Points work out to be the exact degree and minute of the Antiscia planets but with opposite signs. Subtract the point you are looking at from 180° and translate this into its sign of the zodiac.

Example 3: **JANE AUSTEN**  
**A Self-fulfilled Energy**

Her relating issues in a nutshell …

Jane Austen’s natal chart suggests that she is seeking someone who will support her in a relationship through the arts, music, spirituality, drugs, alcohol or addiction (Neptune conjunct the Ascendant ruling the Descendant). We know that she had a number of gentlemen interested in her and that she even accepted one of their proposals and then changed her mind the next morning. That strong Neptune conjunct Ascendant ruling the Descendant, however, suggests that the relationships she seeks is with herself through her creativity or her spiritual endeavours. If we look at both Antiscia and Contra-Antiscia Points for Jane Austen, we find the following grid:

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<td>Natal planet/luminary = Antiscia = Jane Austen’s natal planet/luminary</td>
<td>Natal planet/luminary = Contra-Antiscia = Jane Austen’s natal planet/luminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>☉ = 5° ♂ 03’</td>
<td>☉ = 5° ☉ 03’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♀ = 15° ♀ 04’</td>
<td>♀ = 15° ♀ 04’</td>
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<tr>
<td>☽ = 23° ☽ 48’</td>
<td>☽ = 23° ☽ 48’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>φ = 20° ○ 30’ South Node</td>
<td>φ = 20° ♀ 30’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♄ = 10° ♄ 36’</td>
<td>♄ = 10° ♄ 36’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♉ = 14° ☉ 29’</td>
<td>♉ = 14° ☉ 29’</td>
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<tr>
<td>♊ = 10° ♊ 24’</td>
<td>♊ = 10° ♊ 24’</td>
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<tr>
<td>♋ = 26° ♋ 09’</td>
<td>♋ = 26° ♋ 09’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♌ = 5° ♌ 07’</td>
<td>♌ = 5° ♌ 07’</td>
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<tr>
<td>♍ = 4° ♍ 38’</td>
<td>♍ = 4° ♍ 38’</td>
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<tr>
<td>♎ = 12° ♎ 57’</td>
<td>♎ = 12° ♎ 57’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asc = 5° ♎ 54’</td>
<td>Asc = 5° ♎ 54’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC = 7° ♎ 39’</td>
<td>MC = 7° ♎ 39’</td>
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</table>

The Antiscia grid shows that she has a number of her own planets fulfilling the Antiscias of other planets: her Antiscia Mercury is fulfilled by her own Mars conjunct Pluto and she is the writer who becomes the first renowned woman novelist of the English-speaking world. She changed the way women and writing were perceived. Her drive and energy applied to her writing transformed it for herself and for others forever. And of what did she write? Love, romance and the situations where, in her era, women had no rights, privileges or resources except through marrying a man of fortune (Venus South Node interaction). How she defined herself in the external world, her Contra Antiscias, emphasises this Venus with a North Node interaction: seeding a new pathway for viewing women’s relating patterns.

She also wrote of integrity and how her heroines would not marry unless they could respect and love the men they married. This underlying theme to her work and to her life heralded her Neptune conjunct Ascendant ruling a Pisces Descendant. The Antiscia and Contra-Antiscia Points indicate that she was changing a pathway (nodal interaction) of relationship (Venus) herself (Contra Antiscia) by her writing (Mercury conjunct Pluto Antiscia) and hence for future generations.
UNASPECTED PLANETS AND ANTISCIAS

If someone has an unaspected planet in a chart, that is, a planet that makes no aspects at all to another planet, it acts as if it is completely blind to the rest of the chart. So they are either very strong or non-existent at any given moment in a person’s life. Aspects cause planets and luminaries to be modified by each other. An unaspected planet can neither see nor hear nor have a relationship with any other planets in the chart but it will have an Antiscia, a sensitive point on the other side of the Solstice Axis, and if someone else has a planet or a stellium which sits there, suddenly that unaspected planet begins to work much better. That other person somehow enables that planet to fulfil itself in a natural way and will bind them to that person, for better or worse, as interacting with them allows that part of the person’s chart to be activated and gain voice.

It is important to realise that Antiscias work both ways. Each person mutually benefits. Hence relationships can be productive or destructive. Antiscias are a form of gear-meshing for both parties involved.

Conclusion

Antiscia points are very ancient. They describe the degrees seen by each of the planets and luminaries in a chart. These points become extremely powerful when one of two things happen: either a person has a planet occupying that position; or the person interacts with another person, business, company or organisation whose planet or luminary occupies that position. Hence they either describe a contained person who has no need for relationships; or they can show the guts of a relationship, revealing underlying themes of intensity and connectedness not necessarily seen to the outside observer or apparent from the natal chart but which allows each other to fulfil those planets or luminaries.

They are most relevant as a form of synastry. The best way to see how they work in your life is to explore them via your own partnerships to gain greater insights about how they gain expression in your life.

References:

Chart Sources:
- All other charts come from the Clifford and Blackwell Data Sets.