

astrological-cultural-spiritual-political  
views & commentary...

Issue #80  
Sept 2005

# THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



Thoughts, dates, & reminders about our lives as members of the craziest species on this lovely planet. Like a message in a bottle washing up on the sandy shores of consciousness...

website ..... [www.billherbst.com](http://www.billherbst.com)  
email ..... [bill@billherbst.com](mailto:bill@billherbst.com)  
voicemail ..... 612.207.4486



Dear friends,

I don't usually quote other writers in my newsletter, but this week's dramatic events warrant an exception:

*"The destruction of New Orleans represents a confluence of many of the most pernicious trends in American politics and culture: poverty, racism, militarism, elitist greed, environmental abuse, public corruption and the decay of democracy at every level."*

— Chris Floyd,  
"The Perfect Storm"  
[counterpunch.org](http://counterpunch.org)

As bad as it is, this "unnatural" disaster is only a sneak preview of what's to come in the years ahead.

As a result, I begin this month to explore a subject to which I have alluded in past newsletters and intend to write about frequently and at length over the next years. That subject is our shared future, which I will discuss against the background of a set of four significant astrological events. The first of these occurred many decades ago; the rest will not transpire for some years into the future.

Many astrologers are well aware of these looming configurations, but only a few have written about them in books, articles, and on the internet. Not much is out there yet, although that is bound to change. In addition, as far as I know, precious little has been offered astrologically to connect what is on the way to what happened 40 years ago.

I intend to start with astrological symbolism and move into pragmatic speculation, by offering various possibilities about what may transpire in reality. This will be a process of discovery, and along the way I hope to illuminate my own awareness as well as that of my readers. So please bear with me; this is merely the set-up, the first of many installments.

# THE URANUS-PLUTO CYCLE: REVOLUTION, ANARCHY, AND POWER

The word “perspective” has numerous meanings. One is the subjective evaluation of significance through a point of view (“*from the perspective of an observer*”). Another is the relationship of various aspects of a subject to each other and to the whole (“*the perspective of history*”). A third meaning is more objective: the ability to perceive things or events in their actual interrelations and comparative importance (“*keeping perspective in a crisis*”). As we move further into the 21st century, perspective in all its meanings will be critical to how we create the future, individually and collectively.

Life does not exist in a vacuum. The long-term views we hold about reality—views that include not only perceptions, but also beliefs and attitudes—act as lenses or filters through which we interpret the here-and-now. When our long-term perspectives change, our choices and decisions in the present change correspondingly. The circumstances in which we find ourselves arise out of critical-mass points in the past and evolve toward critical-mass points in the future. Comprehending the nature and timing of those points can dramatically influence our ability and our willingness to create coherent strategies and successful tactics.

The future is surprising enough without walking into it blindfolded, but that is what we do much of the time. We try to analyze the past to better anticipate the future. As is said in the stock market, however, “past results are no guarantee of future performance.”

Metaphorically and often literally, we drive down roads where the path ahead is obscured, as if by fog. Unable to see where we are headed, we gaze into our rearview mirrors for guidance. That’s natural, of course, given the limitations of time, space, and the human psyche, but it’s hardly a safe way to drive. We would do better if we could dispel the fog to reveal how the past and the future are connected. And that’s a task to which astrology is uniquely well-suited.

Three astrological events will occur over the next decade that mark extremely challenging crossroads for our species and for civilization itself. Other configurations unfolding in the heavens may contribute additional meaning, but these three represent a progression of interconnected shocks to the system that will tell us much about who are and who we will become. Here are the three events:

- In 2008, Pluto will leave Sagittarius, through which it has been passing since 1995, to enter Capricorn, where it will remain for 16 years, until 2024.
- In 2010-2011, a T-square pattern will occur between Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto. This configuration, literally a right-triangle, takes shape mainly in the early degrees of cardinal signs. Astrologer Ray Merriman has christened this event with the name, “The Cardinal Climax.”
- In 2012-2015, Uranus will move into early Aries and be exactly one-quarter of the heavens ahead of Pluto in Capricorn. That is the first-quarter transition (square) in the current 138-year Uranus-Pluto cycle. It is the main cycle of relevance to this discussion, the culminating event, and the most critical time period.

[For those readers who are cross-referencing, the Uranus-Pluto square corresponds closely to the end of the creation epoch (the 13-baktun wave harmonic cycle) in the Mayan Calendar that has been calculated to occur on December 21st, 2012. The Mayan calendar is not my area of interest or expertise, so I won’t have much more to say about the synchronicity, but it’s worth noting and without doubt will be discussed by other astrologers as that time approaches.]

All three of these astrological configurations reference another event that occurred 40 years ago:

- In 1965-1966, Uranus conjoined Pluto in Virgo. During that passage, both outer planets were opposed by Saturn in Pisces.

The 20th century was filled with momentous and apocalyptic events—World War I, the Russian revolution, the Spanish Flu pandemic, the Great Depression, World War II and the use of the first atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the revolution in China, the Cold War, the exploration of space and human landings on the Moon, the technological explosion and development of computers, etc.

The past century was also defined by the clash of political-social ideologies—capitalism, socialism, communism, and fascism. Empires disintegrated. Totalitarian governments rose and fell. The map of the world was recast in a bewildering array of new nation-states. The struggle for equality and minority rights—for women, blacks, and workers—took root in that hundred years. Along the way, and despite our impressive progress in science and technology, 150 million human beings perished prematurely in wars, genocides, pogroms, political purges, and famines.

By the midpoint of the century, America had emerged as the clear winner. By the end of the millennium, America was the great reigning Empire, having outlasted communism and spread its political, military, economic, and cultural influence to every corner of the globe. In writing about what may come and how it relates to the past, I will focus primarily on the U.S., in part because this is my home and the place I know best, but also because America is now the single most dominant power in world affairs (for better or worse, depending on one's perspective).

Considered purely in terms of astrological symbolism, the case can be made that the 20th century turned on the fulcrum of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto configuration of the mid-1960s. At least, I intend to argue that case. Though the literal events of that period—which I will extend to encompass the years 1963 to 1969—were neither as dramatic nor as apocalyptic as other times in the century, the symbolic implications of those years (and their portents for developments yet to come in the 21st century) were absolutely crucial.

That particular decade represented the implanting and germination of extraordinary seeds out of which we will later reap a harvest in reality over the four decades to come. We cannot predict with certainty whether that eventual harvest will be bountiful or bitter, but we can observe how we are currently tending the garden and assess to some extent the predictable weather conditions we are likely to face in the seasons ahead as the crop bursts into fuller manifestation during the metaphorical summer growing season, which starts in 2012 and lasts until the harvest in 2046-2047.

Before discussing what happened in the 1960s and how those developments are so strongly connected to our future over the next ten years and beyond, allow me to set the stage by explaining some of the basic meanings of the Uranus-Pluto cycle. This is the necessary introduction to much that of the more substantive information (and provocative speculation) that will follow in further newsletters.

Uranus is the planet of mental awakening through shock. Its very nature is disruptive—in the jolt of a 40,000-volt cattle-prod that rouses us suddenly from our sleeping state. As an urge in our psyches, Uranus has little respect for tradition or the status quo, and none whatsoever for existing power hierarchies. This is the planet of revolution—anarchy as a temporary way of challenging or breaking down hardened structures whose vital time has passed. It loves what is new or cutting-edge and has disdain for anything old or traditional.

Uranus is associated with electricity, invention or innovation, scientific or philosophical experimentation, radical ideologies, sudden and unexpected or unpredictable changes, and freedom of expression (often linked with defiance toward whatever is socially expected or approved). It emphasizes both the individual and the eccentric, genius and crackpot alike, and yet embraces a humanitarian outlook, assuming that everyone is (or should be) equal.

Uranus tends toward absolutes, insisting on personal freedom and challenging authority, but often acting autocratically once in power. It lives on the extreme wings of the political spectrum, either right or left, but never in the center.

Pluto, on the other hand, is not mental at all. It is the power of emotion—deep, unconscious, primal, and often compulsive emotions. It is also the will to control, and the willingness to destroy whatever cannot be controlled. (Bush's War on Terror is an example of this methodology. Rather than addressing the root causes of terrorism or just ignoring terrorists and letting them die on the vine, Bush and the neocons are obsessive and violent in their overreaction, thus stimulating and amplifying the very dangers from which they claim to be protect us.) Terrorism itself is Plutonian, as is fanaticism in any guise, wherever the ends justify any means. Rule by an elite (plutocracy) is symbolized here, but also the power of mass consciousness (often through collective trauma or propaganda), including mob rule.

Paradoxically, Pluto can be transformative, leading to the restoration of ecological balance through excessive imbalance, the need to push the envelope to extremes, to the point of collapse. Thus, the symbolism of death and regeneration, the phoenix rising from its own ashes. The death may come invisibly from within, as in radiation sickness, or visibly from without, through confrontations with overwhelming external power.

Pluto represents what is hidden, secret, or occult. Curiously, what is hidden is often in plain view for anyone who cares to look with unconditioned eyes, like the fable of the emperor's new clothes. Pluto is the blind spot in our psyches that must be made huge and overwhelming before we become aware. It rules anything that builds to a crescendo from invisible sources. Positively, Pluto represents getting to the heart of a matter, especially after period of blockage or confusion. It is not, however, gentle in that process, but instead is ruthless and unforgiving.

Whenever total change is needed, Pluto reaches into its dark side bag of tricks stored in the unconscious and blasts into our awareness to remove the clog (like eruptive Drano) and open the way through utter purging of what once was but can no longer be.

Put these two symbols together, and we get the Uranus-Pluto cycle, which charts the progression of radical social movements that involve massive shifts of power from one group to another, or from one manner of collective expression to another. These occur through shocking revolutions, where a resistant status quo eroded from within is overturned by force, clearing the way through destruction for a new beginning.

When the first-quarter crisis of the cycle activates with Uranus in Aries and Pluto in Capricorn, this means serious trouble for government, social institutions, and large corporations. The economy may suffer a huge meltdown from cumulative shocks, including but not limited to military misadventures, natural disasters or attacks on American cities, and disintegration of the dollar due to Peak Oil instabilities or foreign dumping of currency notes. All those are logically predictable possibilities, but the assaults will also include total surprises that traditional wisdom did not anticipate, some of which will arise from inside our own culture as people in and out of power become radicalized. Ordinary life might continue for some, but everyone will feel the pressure.

This is what will confront us increasingly in America (and around the world) during the seven years from 2008 through 2015. Not that the disruptions will end after 2015, but by then we will be on our way toward the creation of a quite different society and a new collective reality. All the problems in America we've known about for the past 40 years but which we ignored, wished away, or simply could not muster the will to address, are likely to come to a head. One does not have to be an astrologer to anticipate such developments, but astrology confirms them in spades.

We are approaching a crossroads unlike anything our nation has faced before. This will involve economic, political, cultural, and spiritual crises of unprecedented proportions. Optimists and pessimists alike will have their place in responding to what is coming. How we deal collectively and individually with this progressive series of ongoing shocks will reveal whether we are indeed the people we tell others we are and believe ourselves to be.

Both comforting illusions and painful self-deceptions will drop away as the status quo collapses, sometimes by provocation and other times by its own dead weight. Change, often of an extreme nature, will be the order of the day. Some of us will fall as casualties, either psychologically or literally. Others will become real heroes or imaginary saviors, rising to the occasion, leading the way into a brave new world.

America's 200-year adolescence is coming to an end, and our ability to mature quickly will be sorely tested. Reality will cause many existing dreams to evaporate, and new dreams will take their place.



Bill Herbst resides in Olympia, Washington. To schedule an astrological session, either in-person locally or long-distance via telephone, send an email to [bill@billherbst.com](mailto:bill@billherbst.com)

*© 2005, by Bill Herbst, all rights reserved.  
Permission is granted by the author to copy and  
distribute or forward this PDF file via email.*

Subscriptions to receive The Herbst Newsletter monthly via email are free and can be requested by sending an email to: [newsletter@billherbst.com](mailto:newsletter@billherbst.com)  
Or go to Bill's website at [www.billherbst.com](http://www.billherbst.com) and sign up there.  
Donations are accepted with the author's gratitude.