

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

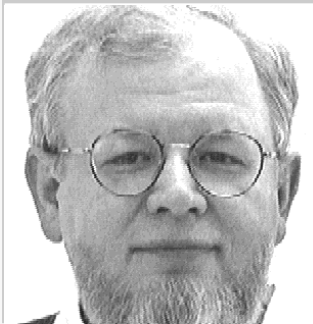
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# THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



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...

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Dear friends,

Well, my two-part essay has turned into a three-parter. Or perhaps four. Turns out that there's a great deal more that needs to be written to further explore the meanings of what's coming. That's OK, though. This is one case where more is better.

—Bill Herbst

## SATURN-URANUS-PLUTO (PART TWO)

Because Uranus and Pluto are so far from the Sun and their cycles around the solar system so extended—Uranus takes 84 years to make one circuit around the heavens, while Pluto takes 245 years—their paired cycle is among the longest of all interplanetary cycles in astrology, second only to Neptune-Pluto. The Uranus-Pluto cycle alternates from 115 and 140 years between conjunctions of the two planets. The reason for this back-and-forth rhythmic variation is Pluto's elongated elliptical orbit, which causes its apparent movement through the signs to accelerate and decelerate, as seen from our perspective on earth.

This long cyclic period means that the activations of the Uranus-Pluto cycle at the quarterly transitions are also extended. Using a 10-degree orb, the effective periods of Uranus-Pluto activations vary in length from 7-14 years.

Indeed, one of the reasons that the upcoming Uranus-Pluto first-quarter square carries so much significance for humanity is that it is among the longest possible activations—with 7 exact passes over 13 years, from May 2007 to March 2020. That is half again longer than the 3-pass, 9-year activation that occurred during the 1960s (from 1961-1970). Over the past 600 years, only one other Uranus-Pluto activation surpassed the one coming up. That was the 9-pass, 14-year first-quarter square from 1492-1506, marked by Columbus' "discovery" of the New World, followed by the long invasion of the American continents by European conquerors.

"Passes" refers to the number of times two planets are in precise alignment (otherwise called "partile") within a given phase transition—conjunction, square, or opposition. The number of exact passes varies depending on the interaction of direct and retrograde movements of the planets, but it is always an odd

number: 1, 3, 5, 7, or 9 in the case of Uranus and Pluto. The more passes in a given activation, the longer the effective period and the greater cultural significance of the alignment. So, the upcoming 7-pass, 13-year square between Uranus and Pluto carries profound potentials for change in disruptive crises whose breakdowns of structures in the existing order will likely provoke a wide range of possible reactions, from revolutionary reform and brilliant innovation to dreadful disasters and economic collapse. Action and violence. Birth and death. Awakening and hysteria.

Even though the first partile pass between Uranus and Pluto doesn't occur until June 2012, the effective period of 10-degree orb (the build-up) begins in May 2007. We are about to buy our ticket and board the rollercoaster.

Since the quarterly activations of the Uranus-Pluto cycle are so long (7-14 years), Saturn frequently enters the picture during any given activation. Saturn's orbital period around the Sun is three times faster than Uranus and eight times faster than Pluto. In seven years, Saturn passes through three signs of the zodiac; in 14 years, through six signs or half of the zodiac. Thus, Saturn has ample opportunity to move into a major angular relationship with Uranus and Pluto at some point in their activation. When this occurs, as it does in about 80% of Uranus-Pluto activations, Saturn adds stark conflicts with authority to the volatile mix of Uranian-Plutonian upheavals, as well as severe disruptions to the business of everyday life in the social marketplace. The distinctions between Uranus and Pluto combining alone or with Saturn are akin to the difference between a hurricane out at sea and one that achieves landfall and heads inland. Both storms affect the weather dramatically, but for humans, a hurricane that hits the coast in full gale force is often devastating, provoking destruction on a grand scale. The irresistible force (Uranus-Pluto) hits the immovable object (Saturn).

The outer planets challenge assumptions of order and overturn stable authority. The accepted wisdom is turned on its head. When quantum mechanics emerged during the early decades of the 20th century, traditional Newtonian physics was rocked to its core. This is the essence of Uranus and Pluto confronting Saturn: new worlds colliding with old worlds.

Both of the 20th century alignments of Uranus and Pluto were altered in consequence by Saturn's presence, the first time in the early-1930s and the second in the mid-1960s. The Uranus-Pluto alignment upcoming in the 2010s is even more amazing, for it contains not one but TWO configurations involving Saturn. The first ushers in the long emergency of crisis, disintegration, and chaos in 2010-11, while the second in 2019 indicates the efforts of all the King's men to put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

### **The Evolution of Collective Consciousness**

Another reason for the profound significance of the upcoming Saturn-Uranus-Pluto activations has to do with the way collective consciousness is understood in astrology. The discovery of the trans-Saturnian outer planets over the past two centuries threw a monkey-wrench into what had been a unified and elegant astrological scheme involving seven visible bodies in the solar system. The Sun and Saturn had previously provided the alpha and omega in astrology. The Sun symbolized the ultimate source of vital life-power at the center, and Saturn, with its visible rings, defined the outer boundary of physical life—that past which we could not go. Both bodies became symbols of authority in astrology, either internal, personal, and spiritual (Sun) or external, social, and material (Saturn).

In a very real sense, our current understanding of radical urges formerly buried in the human psyche began in 1781 with the discovery of Uranus. Neptune was first observed in 1860, and Pluto completed the trinity in 1930. Astrologers went back into history to study these planets, their paired cycles, and especially their changing relationships to Saturn, to reveal symbolic meanings and cultural correspondences.

The most striking example occurred when Uranus and Pluto were aligned in exact opposition from January 1793 to April 1794. The timing of that configuration pinpoints with almost uncanny precision the brief but infamous Reign of Terror during the French Revolution (September 1793 through July 1794), when Paris was gripped by social chaos, political extremism, and mass executions via the guillotine. Danton portrayed the revolutionary intellectual (Uranus), while Robespierre played the heartless execu-

tioner (Pluto). Then, from May 1794 to June 1795, Saturn aligned against both Uranus and Pluto, setting the stage for governmental collapse and the political coup that brought the ambitious Bonaparte to power. Napoleon grafted elements from all three symbols into his emerging persona—social revolutionary (Uranus), military conqueror (Pluto), and classic emperor (Saturn)—and subsequently changed the face of Europe.

### **Conscious or Unconscious?**

An unresolved issue among astrologers concerns how much should be read into historical events involving cycles that occurred before their planets were discovered. Pluto was unknown in 1794, and neither Pluto nor Uranus had been discovered for any of their earlier alignments. The planets existed, of course, but we were unaware of their existence.

In the astrological worldview, the outer planets are urges buried in the unconscious of our collective psyche. These wildcards—jokers in the deck of human nature—start to become conscious only as we discover them. At a minimum they will take many centuries to slowly integrate into our awareness. Meanwhile, the outer planets act as primordial agents of profound change, with their meanings and effects marked by a strong tendency toward compulsive expression and unintended consequences.

Consider Uranus. Discovered in 1781, Uranian symbolism is linked historically to science and technology in general and specifically to electricity. Throughout the early part of the 19th century, electricity was an oddity, presented to the upper classes as a kind of metaphysical parlor game. By the end of that century, when major cities began building large generators and implementing electric light systems, electricity was still largely a mystery to the public. Even today, more than two centuries after Uranus' discovery, with electricity now essential and second-nature to modern life, we still don't fully comprehend the effects of electromagnetic fields or the implications of covering the planet in an electrical grid. Oh yes, the technology has swept over us and revolutionized our lives, but do we understand what we've created?

A question asked more and more by modern historians is this: Why was the 20th century the most violent in recorded history? In an epoch marked by amazing technological advances and significant increases in standards of living, why were we engulfed in seemingly endless wars and genocidal purges that killed more than 150 million people? Some reasons stand out as obvious while others are more subtly interwoven, but traditional academics are unlikely to consider the reasoning of astrology, namely, that the 20th century was the first period where the extraordinary powers of Uranus and Pluto were fully released into human affairs, but were as yet unassimilated within an evolving human consciousness not ready to handle such powers wisely. Symbolic death has a spiritual elegance that literal murder does not.

Despite the apparent “progress” of modernity, the brilliant intellect of Uranus dredged up the darkly primal, subterranean forces of Pluto to produce in the 20th century a killing field of ideologies promoting ethnic supremacy and racist hatred. Combine the upwelling of disturbed philosophies of xenophobia with an explosion of potent weaponry (courtesy of the merchants-of-death armaments industries), and the result was an eruption of male-dominated violence around the world, not just in the two World Wars, but in regional genocides as well.

### **A Divided Zeitgeist**

Many contrasting worldviews emerged in the 20th century. Two general trends were especially polarized in classical terms of left versus right on the political, economic, and social spectra.

One took shape in revolutionary mass movements toward independence, social equality, and economic reform. In America, the early struggles to establish labor unions, then the New Deal, and finally post-WW II entitlements, most notably the G.I. Bill, built a prosperous middle class. Political revolutions in Russia and China attempted to transform two of the largest feudal societies on earth. In India, Gandhi's satyagraha movement coincided with the end of Britain's imperial rule. After the Soviet experiment failed so dismally, renewed independence movements later in the century, such as Solidarity in Poland, presaged

the fall and disintegration of the Soviet Bloc. Now, early in the 21st century, South America is finally awakening from a long period of Banana Republic colonialism into independence through populist socialism.

None of these movements has been flawless or entirely peaceful. All have involved coercion and violence to some extent, whether intentional or inadvertent. And the jury is still out on their ultimate results for reorganizing civilization. Overthrowing oppression too often results in a new class of oppressors. We are still a long way politically from anything approaching collective harmony.

On the other side is an altogether different momentum toward altering the social landscape. Commerce, which is the very life-blood pumping through the heart of human communities, has also been transformed. The raw Plutonian power of great wealth combined with the Uranian philosophy of “free markets” and industrial/technological consumerism to foster state-supported corporate commercialization of virtually everything. In less than a century, extreme capitalism has literally changed the world, most obviously in America, but now globally as well.

Many of those who believe fervently in capitalism are true idealists, sincerely hoping that a rising tide will lift all boats. But in commerce as in politics, ideals are one thing, realities quite another. The revolutionary communist experiments in the Soviet Union and China were sucked backwards into tragic totalitarian repression. Similarly, the march of global capitalism, however well-intentioned, is sullied by lust for power, desire for control, witless regimentation, and disconnection from any reverence for the natural world by regarding physical and social environments merely as exploitable resources to be plundered.

The wish to conquer nature is not new. What is new is our ability to concentrate massive industrial resources to milk from the earth everything she has to give. The cream is skimmed off for the ownership elites, while the thinned milk is then distributed to consumers, who are encouraged to drink their fill, whether it's good for them or not. Meanwhile, the sacred is reduced to the profane, and the world in which we are only one of millions of species is ravaged. We have poisoned the well.

This is commerce as religion, where pursuit of material wealth is elevated to a quasi-spiritual quest. Profit is the holy grail, and never-ending economic growth the mantra. Recognizing no local, regional, or even national boundaries, megabusiness propagandizes for the sanctity of hearth and home, all the while undercutting the emotional connections that bind us together. Over the past 30 years, America has gone very far down that road, to the point where we are now economically leveraged up to our ears, producing astounding wealth at the top of the pyramid, but equally astonishing debt from the middle down to the bottom.

All this—from idealistic political revolutions gone horribly awry to the benefits of commerce perverted under extreme capitalism—is occurring in part because collective humanity is not sufficiently mature to apply wisely the primordial powers implied by the outer planets. Our genius for invention (Uranus), our dreams and fantasies (Neptune), and our deep-seated passions (Pluto) are still driven by ancient conflicts and narrow perspectives.

The two Saturn-Uranus-Pluto alignments of the 20th century—during the 1930s and 1960s—showed us just how unprepared we are for the changes in consciousness that will be necessary if our species is to survive. The next two to come in the 21st century—during the 2010s and 2040s—will reveal the full dimensions of the crisis we face.

In the best-case scenario, the 2010s will kick off the transformation of self-interest into shared interest. Renegade individuality (meaning the freedom to do whatever the hell one wants, regardless of the consequences to others or to the life-systems of the planet) could advance toward responsible individuality (the full use of one's unique talents to support sustainable communities and a more harmonious approach to all other life on earth). Ideologies (including some cherished notions about “human rights”) would be supplanted by pragmatic necessities (keeping ourselves and the planet alive), so that the various “isms” (capitalism, socialism, et al) will lose relevance, and the culture wars will stop. Americans in particular might be jolted out of alienation and public passivity as communities reorganize locally to address urgent economic and political challenges.

Imagine a small, remote village where a storefront in the business district catches fire. The fire spreads to the adjacent warehouses, overtaking the town hall and the church near by, then into the residential neighborhood of family homes, raging out of control. The fire department is quickly overwhelmed, so citizens form bucket brigades. The mayor, ignoring the fires, instructs the police to “restore order.” Some disaffected residents merely stand by and watch, saying “Let it burn.” Others wring their hands and moan, “Oh, this is the end!” The majority, however, put aside their individual differences and band together to put out the fires and save their town.

That is a metaphorical scenario for the global challenge of the 2010s.

### **The Flow of History from One Chapter to the Next**

By the mid-1970s, the turbulence of the previous decade had subsided. The new seeds of revolutions in the 1960s—especially ecological, feminist, and pacifist movements—went underground as the now-harvested crop from the past filled the marketplace. Disco appeared. Conservative backlash and the Reagan counterrevolution soon dominated the landscape. Military spending accelerated. Corporate culture flexed its muscles in the malling of America. Consumerism spread like wildfire. In the 1980s and 1990s, as our Empire ruled the world, America pursued wealth and material pleasure as if there were no limits.

Those 25 years represented the lull before another storm.

With regard to the Uranus-Pluto cycle, we can think of the 1960s as a garden of new philosophies and social movements that initially sent up shoots to reach the sun, but then receded into the background, taking four further decades to root and anchor themselves in ground that was not particularly fertile (largely because of the cultural, political, and religious backlash that flared up during this last, dying phase of the Piscean Age).

The 2010s represent the shift from spring to summer in the astrological cycle that defines this epoch (Uranus-Pluto). The ideas, technologies, and movements that have been quietly rooting in the background will suddenly burst into visible manifestation again. What was largely emotional in the '60s will become tangible and physical in the '10s. Like young, fragile plants that were gathering strength, these memes have now absorbed enough nutrients to push upwards and outwards by building their stalks and leafing out fully on the way to flower.

Saturn's involvement with Uranus and Pluto at the beginning of this period in 2010-2011 will signal the initial crises. That provocation will take shape through an astrological alignment called a T-square, a right triangle with two planets opposite and a third perpendicular to their axis. A similar configuration of these three planets occurred in the early 1930s, during the worst depths of the Great Depression.

Economics will again be the key to what's coming, for that is where we are most vulnerable. The majority of people who lived through the Great Depression of the 1930s will be gone, and those of us born afterwards, especially from the mid-1940s on, will never have experienced anything like it.

We're about to get an education.



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