

The USA Chart in 2020

Part Four (of Four)

by Bill Herbst

Version 1.4 (posted on 16 October 2018)
© 2018 by the author, all rights reserved

[In Part Three of this four-part commentary about the USA chart in 2020, posted two weeks ago, I discussed the Saturn and Pluto opposition to the USA's natal Mercury. Now, in Part Four's final installment, I'll focus on a very different possible meaning for Pluto in the USA chart that could turn out to be a significant movement as the new decade opens.]

Pluto Redux

The primary interpretation for Pluto in the USA Sibly chart, positioned late in the sign Capricorn, occupying the 2nd house and ruling the 12th, opposite Mercury, concerns the powerful but deeply unconscious drive to amass material riches through work, business, and economics— personal wealth , family wealth , and national wealth. To suggest that America is and has always been obsessed with money is an understatement. The shift toward America's becoming a global empire that began late in the 19th century and coincided with the closing of continental expansion and the end of the Western frontier was motivated by economics. At that time in our history, America produced more food and goods than it could consume, and empire seemed to many the natural answer, through the opening of foreign markets.

Over the next century, America's transformation into a global superpower was always driven by our own economic interests. Foreign policy increasingly became an arm of capitalism, especially in the ideological conflict with Soviet Communism starting as early as the Russian Revolution in 1917, but ramping up to fever pitch as the Cold War immediately followed defeat of Germany and Japan in World War II.

Throughout the 20th century — correctly dubbed “the American Century” — the U.S. enjoyed the ethos of being a “can do” nation and people. No industrial project was too big for us, no invention beyond our creative means. Underplayed as a crucial contributor to our economic success was the fact that it was fueled by the influx of immigrants willing to work hard for low wages, in return for a better future for their children. The titans of industry who owned most of the companies and became unimaginably wealthy sometimes started out as immigrants, but eventually solidified their social position among the ruling elites

of white Northern European stock. All this is reflected in the USA chart, with Pluto as a significant factor.

Another Interpretation for Pluto in the USA Chart

There is, however, another interpretation for Pluto's meaning in the chart. It doesn't leap out at first glance, and some astrologers might consider it a stretch, but I'll make a case for it in this commentary. It doesn't invalidate or supersede the more obvious monetary and economic interpretation of Pluto about which many astrologers have written (including me, most recently in the three previous parts of this quartet of commentaries about America in 2020 and the opening text above. Instead, it augments the basic interpretation and casts it in a new light.

The USA Sibly chart has a particular emphasis on sex. That emphasis isn't straightforward — it's definitely twisty, potentially confused, and historically difficult. The USA chart indicates that America is both culturally conservative and politically radical (Cancer Sun and Aquarius Moon). The nation tries to square the circle between hard-core traditionalism and forward-thinking progressivism, often with great inner conflict.

In the astrological houses, which specify different arenas of life-experience, four sexual areas exist. These are the houses termed "Succeedent" and concerned with judgment or evaluation of experience. Succeedent houses are the 2nd, 5th, 8th, and 11th. Each of the four is associated with numerous meanings, and included among them is a particular expression of sexual orientation, experience, and meaning.

The **2nd house** connects to sex as pure, self-absorbed sensuality. No "relatedness" exists here — it is metaphorically similar to the newborn infant suckling at the mother's breast. This is the primal satisfaction of warmth, milk, and love, driven by vital, biological imperatives. The 2nd house in any chart reveals the natural orientation toward fundamental sensuality — sex as personal pleasure for the self.

The **5th house** is the area of creative performance through intentional persona. Here is the actor onstage and the audience, with the actor doing everything possible to please the audience, but remaining the center of attention. In different terms, the 5th house is other-directed but still personal. The 5th is the area of the role of "the good lover" — pleasing a partner through one's own creative display of prowess. The payoff is the beloved's happiness and subsequent gratefulness. The risk is being judged by the beloved as inadequate.

The **8th house** is the arena of union, of two separate individuals merging into oneness. This is tantric sexuality, the great mystery of sexual energy as a means to transform the self. In physical terms, it is the orgasm — the temporary loss of

ego control and ordinary personal consciousness during the momentary surge of kundalini. The French phrase, "*le petite mort*" (the mini-death) refers to the surrender of the small self as consciousness cascades into transcendent, if temporary, merging with another.

11th house sexuality is the area of social mores, the attitudes and orientations toward sex that are held by one's society or culture. This is the intellectual dimension of sexuality. For some people, sex is proscribed by the beliefs or norms of their social groups. Others may be inclined to break the rules and move sex into previously forbidden realms. The 11th house reveals this in charts.

Pluto in the 2nd House

In the USA Sibly chart, Pluto is in the 2nd house. This fuses the frequently unconscious drive for power of Pluto with the self-centered sensuality of the 2nd house. The linkage of Pluto with the 2nd house is not inherently negative — the intensity and passion of Pluto can be beautiful and profound, and powerful sensuality can be deeply pleasurable for both lover and beloved. The problem arises when that drive takes the form of domination through sex. In that case, no relationship exists, no negotiations conducted, and no agreements forged. The object of one's desire and pleasure is seduced if possible or overwhelmed if necessary, then consumed.

Over the past 50 years, we have learned a great deal about sexual assault. The statistics about sexual abuse in America and around the world reveal how common such violations are. Anyone can be the target of sexual abuse, but women and children are far more likely to suffer.

Throughout much of the 200,000 year history of the human species, gender equality was not an issue. We lived in small groups, based on kinship, as hunter/gatherer/foragers. Groups were as likely to be matriarchal as patriarchal in social structure. Women and men worked together.

While humans have always been contentious, conflict between such groups was limited. With the onset of civilization 11,000 years ago, that changed. Domestication of animals for labor, the beginnings of agriculture, possession of land, and ownership of resources all fostered competition for wealth acquisition, which promoted the assertiveness of masculinity. Men took power in civilization, gradually cementing their dominance, and women found themselves in the back seat. Humanity has struggled with gender problems ever since.

Feminist social movements arose in the 19th and 20th centuries to restore women's dignity and respect, and to allow full participation in society. Despite ebb and flow, these often radical movements have achieved significant gains — women's suffrage in the right to vote, the right to own property, and even acceptance of their presence in the workplace and the military. America and

most of the world remain stubbornly patriarchal, however, and women still have a long way to go in reclaiming their power.

The recent rise of the #MeToo and #Time'sUp movements mark a major step forward in this struggle. The prevalence (and de facto acceptance) of sexual abuse has remained a dirty secret until now, kept under wraps by a combination of factors, from the existing male-dominant power structures in society to women's very realistic fears that they will be dismissed and not believed if they come forward to bear witness. Justice in the sexual arena has been slow to evolve.

In addition, any social movement that arises quickly and powerfully after a long and seemingly invisible gestation tends to inadvertently provoke serious backlash in opposition, no matter how justified its goals. Once released, long-repressed passions galvanize supporters as a flood of emotion is released, but those same passions also stiffen resistance among disbelievers. Reason and a sense of proportion are not typically characteristic of these early periods of social revolution, whether for or against.

Some people continue to believe that gender inequality is a peripheral sideshow, essentially just another facet of identity politics based on presumed grievance. I disagree. I think such people are missing the Big Picture. In a world facing extraordinary and urgent crises — among them, catastrophic climate change that threatens not just human beings but all life on earth; huge and increasing disparities of wealth and privilege; economic systems based on infinite growth, unregulated extraction, and pure self-interest; the emptiness of consumerism; rampant militarism; and the continuing threat of nuclear war — we are not likely to come up with solutions to protect humanity and preserve civilization without a major rebalancing of masculine and feminine archetypes. This is not really about women versus men. It's about the masculine and feminine inside each of us.

By itself, the #MeToo revolution won't save us. Here in the early days of its arising, the movement has not yet found its sea legs. Just outing certain male predators for public shaming and punishment will not be enough. Nor will just electing more women to political office be sufficient to save us, either. Both of these changes, however, are necessary steps in the right direction.

In America, white men have been dominant and in power since the beginning of the nation. Sadly, they've made a mess of things, and nothing indicates the likelihood of their changing for the better. Since Donald Trump took office as President in 2017, backed by Republican majorities in both chambers of Congress, we've witnessed shocking displays of raw political power. None were more obvious than the recent confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.

Trump himself — a self-admitted sexual predator, who cannot utter three sentences without lying, labels anyone who disagrees with him as “evil,” projects all his own sins onto others, and has hoodwinked the most gullible 30% of the American public by stoking their worst instincts of racism, hatred, and division — has both captured and emboldened the Republicans. Winning at any cost is all that matters to them. The misogyny of so many of these old white GOP gargoyles, such as Mitch McConnell and John Kelly, would be appalling were it not so utterly predictable.

Who can challenge the scourge of Trump and the Republicans? Not the current Democratic Party, which has lost its way and survives only by losing. In our political duopoly, Democrats tend to be Republican Lite, beholden to corporations and the wealthy and supporting endless wars and increasing militarism.

For all the hope invested in the young, those under 30 are the least likely to vote. I hope that will change in the 2020s, but it hasn't changed yet.

No, the only force I know of that can rid us of Trump and the Republicans are women. Women who vote, and women who run for office. Those in command will not relinquish their power. Women must take it.

Plutonian Power

In the early years of the coming decade, America's chart indicates that we are coming to a major Plutonian watershed, a time of dramatic transformation that may be more than any of us are prepared for. This includes the social, political, economic, and financial realms.

In 2020, both Jupiter and Saturn conjoin the USA's natal Pluto. Then in 2021-2023, the USA chart goes through its Pluto return. Coming as they do on the heels of the Uranus-Pluto square that began its destabilizing symbolism in 2007 and is now approaching its end, these three new Plutonian cycles imply that Something Big is already underway, although we cannot yet know exactly what will manifest or how. One need not be an astrologer to see these dynamics operating in America. The volcanic rumblings are plain to see for anyone who cares to look.

End Part Four

[This concludes my four-part commentary on America's chart in 2020. At some point, I'll address the USA chart in 2021-2023. Right now, however, that's still more than two years away, so I may wait until the new decade arrives and we know more about the real circumstances that will shape the new decade.]