

Where We Are

by Bill Herbst

Version 1.1 (posted originally on 11 February 2017)

© 2017 by the author, all rights reserved

Preface/Note:

Although I'm not a writer with a large readership — far from it — over the past weeks I've received numerous emails from readers asking when my next commentary would be posted on my web site.

I want to thank those individuals for their interest and care. The Commentary below will be brief, essentially a stop-gap to let people know that I'm still here.

Where we are now is effectively at the “official” opening ceremonies of the breakdown of civilization that so many thousands of people (including myself) have written about and predicted for many years, sometimes dating back into the previous century. Yes, we've had numerous sneak previews over the past decades, but this appears to be the critical mass point from which there is no return to normalcy. It is the announcement that the pre-existing status quo is beginning to come apart at the seams and will not return.

What's happening, and the way it's happening, is no surprise. In fact, the political shape of the turmoil is almost banal.

Apart from the decade-long Uranus-Pluto first-quarter square, which continues to be the symbolic backbone of our times, the only other significant outer-planet cycles currently active are the last-quarter square between Saturn and Neptune, which peaked in September of 2016 and is now packing its bags to leave the stage, and two Jupiter transits: Jupiter opposite Uranus and Jupiter last-quarter square to Pluto. Both of these mundane transits are effective now, will remain in effect through September 2017, and imply greater than normal social turbulence. Patience and forbearance are in short supply.

The Saturn-Neptune square was profoundly significant in the presidential election. Now separating (meaning gradually fading out), the transit will continue to imply conflicts between reality and fantasy through October 2017.

The Jupiter-Uranus transit corresponds to new, unusual, or unexpected developments in society, especially in technology or cultural mores. The Jupiter-Pluto transit indicates an expansion of extremism and dogma through hard-line

positions or didactic viewpoints, and the tendency (or at least the willingness) to use force to control others. We are a nation in turmoil, divided against itself.

While neither Jupiter cycle is particularly powerful in itself, taken together (and considered within the larger context of the much longer and more potent Uranus-Pluto alignment), the two Jupiter cycles represent a year-long wake-up call to a population that is already restless. These are alarm bells that will be difficult to ignore.

It's important to remember that we are only in the beginning of awakening to the problems that beset us — problems that are essentially of our own making. Collectively, we are a very long way from recognizing the depth and breadth of the changes that will be necessary to reform or salvage modern civilization. These changes will go far beyond mere political differences (whether economic or cultural) and debates over public policy.

Since civilization began 11,000 years ago, human beings have done mostly what we're good at, which is to say, we've used our innate ingenuity and extraordinary cleverness to build things. What we haven't done, however, is solve or even address any of the fundamental failings of human nature: greed, envy, cruelty, domination, violence, and a host of other stunningly less-than-wonderful traits that routinely influence human behavior and affect the ways we regard and treat each other.

Put into the most basic terms, the many disturbing questions that surround human nature tend to revolve around the issue of family: *Who is Us, and who is Them?* And that is a subject of such daunting complexity and profound difficulty that I won't presume to elaborate on it here. I mention it only to provide context and set the stage for future commentaries.