

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

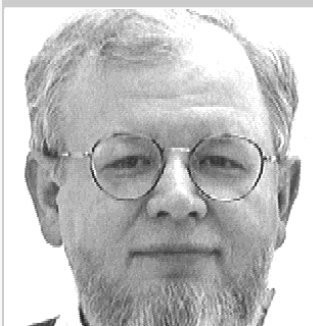
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# THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



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,

This month's commentary is the first installment of a two-part essay that analyzes in greater detail the astrology of the 1960s and the 2010s. This is territory we've visited before in the newsletters and will again, no doubt, in preparation for what's coming, but each time with a different slant and a new perspective.

—Bill Herbst

## SATURN-URANUS-PLUTO (PART ONE)

The astrology that marked the 1960s as an extraordinary decade involved the simultaneous alignment of three planets: Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto. A configuration coming at the end of this first decade of the 21st century involves the same three planets and implies that the second decade of this century will be even more extraordinary, tumultuous, and radical than the 1960s.

All planetary symbols in astrology represent archetypal functions within the whole of human experience. Each planet has meanings at different levels: individual, interpersonal, familial, and social; also psychological, political, economic, spiritual, etc. We are concerned here with the meanings of these three outer planets as they apply to the collective—in society, culture, and the evolution of humanity.

In society and culture, Saturn represents authority and tradition, what is older and well-established, the status quo of accepted normality, and the pecking order of rank based on status. Saturn is the center of the bell curve where belonging matters. By contrast, Uranus is the fringe of the bell curve—either the quiet, desperate fringe of those who do not fit and cannot live within the ordinary rules, or the active, intentional fringe of those who are iconoclastic, rebellious, or contemptuous toward the status quo. Uranus sees the established order as flawed and backward, serving only those who are privileged. As a result, Saturn and Uranus are polarized: old versus new, age versus youth, tradition versus innovation, stability versus revolution.

Pluto operates on another social level entirely. It is the power that resides within the entire collective from the center to the fringes, power waiting to be tapped and released for good or ill. Pluto represents mass social movements driven by largely unconscious pressures that become conscious only after they are expressed.

In evolution, Saturn is slow, gradual, cautious, and resistant to change. Only what is known is trusted; innovation is viewed with suspicion. Uranus is sudden and unpredictable, the cutting edge of change through shock, upset, and revolution. Pluto represents cumulative and total change, the critical mass of extreme transformative power that wells up and erupts to destroy the old completely and pave the way for the new. Pluto is, essentially, the transmutation of energy into matter or matter back into energy.

The movements of these planets constitute three paired cycles: Saturn-Uranus, Saturn-Pluto, and Uranus-Pluto. Those particular cycles connect two decades half a century apart in time—the 1960s and 2010s—but all three cycles are in different phases in each decade. So, while both decades are innately similar in basic planetary symbolism, each is quite distinct in the particular manifestations of those paired symbols. As a result, what occurred more than 40 years ago and what will be coming in the years just ahead share a common resonance, yet uniquely different tones, like evolving themes in successive chapters of a mythic story. We won't know the end of the story even by 2020, but collectively we'll be much further along in understanding the plot.

Deconstructing these three astrological cycles to explain their respective meanings in each decade is no easy task. I think it safe to say that most astrologers have not done the historical research or thoughtfully analyzed the phase changes in light of astrological cycle theory, although more astrologers are doing so as these major cycles approach critical mass again. We need not wait, however. The effort is well worth making here and now, both on my part as a writer and yours as a reader. If I can decode at least the essence of the astrology into English plainly and with sufficient eloquence, then by the end of this essay you will understand more than many astrologers do about what lies ahead, where it came from, and why it's happening.

### **Saturn-Uranus**

Saturn and Uranus were opposite in the 1960s, meaning that they had reached the halfway point or full phase of their cycle. The full phase transition represents the culmination of the cycle, akin to flowering or harvest. What was planted in spring is harvested in autumn, so the halfway point means that what was growing bursts into full social expression as the ideas are “taken to market.” With the Saturn-Uranus cycle, this implies that challenges to traditional authority and the status quo break out into open confrontation.

The beginning of that cycle occurred in 1941-1943. This is the period of the titanic struggle between Germany and the Soviet Union, as well as America's entry into World War II. Below is a sampling of the extraordinary developments that germinated in that time.

- The urgent push to arm Allied forces began what would evolve into a permanent military-industrial complex. Though our army, navy, and air force were composed mostly of “citizen-soldiers,” those years saw the first push toward a professional military and corporate support system that would reshape America's economy and its society.
- Technology leaped forward because of the war. Radar, the first computers, jet aircraft, rocketry, and the push to create nuclear weapons are just a few examples of unprecedented developments in war industry that would later change the entire landscape of ordinary life.
- Blacks entered the armed services in large numbers out of the patriotic urge to serve their country. Their self-esteem rose despite entrenched institutional racism. America was “fighting for freedom and democracy,” and the irony was not lost on blacks that they were neither free nor respected in their own nation. Although no overt rebellions took place in the ranks, the resentment felt by black soldiers stoked the fires that would later inflame the Civil Rights Movement.
- Women took over a significant share of the effort to produce war materiel as factory workers. “Rosie the Riveter” is a famous icon from that period of women's newfound freedom to work outside the home. The Feminist Movement's insistence on equal rights was seeded here.

These revolutionary developments highlighted the confrontation of new versus old in American culture, and, as they came to culmination and bore fruit during the 1960s, all of them would play significant roles in the cultural upheavals of that decade.

## **Saturn-Pluto**

Saturn was also opposite Pluto in the 1960s configuration. The Saturn-Pluto cycle represents the galvanic power of human fears, especially fears that emerge from the unconscious concerning real or imagined external enemies. The major turning points of the cycle—especially the conjunction and opposition—imply times where the ruling elites (traditional authorities) manipulate public fears to justify aggressive use of power, usually to make war and repress dissent. Activations of this cycle involve secrecy, conspiracy, and all the other institutional manifestations of flat-out paranoia that serve some vague notion of “national security,” usually with the tacit approval of a frightened (and misinformed) public.

The Saturn-Pluto cycle that culminated during the 1960s had its roots in the beginning of that cycle from 1946-1948. Despite the euphoria of Americans over the victorious end of World War II, that period saw a deeper, more insidious fear set in—that of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the melodrama of “democracy and capitalism” against “godless communism,” and the start of a nuclear arms race that would jeopardize the very future of civilization. Winston Churchill delivered his well-known “Iron Curtain” speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, as the conjunction took hold in 1946. The final year of 1948 saw the East German blockade of Berlin and the defiant American airlift. By 1949, the Russians had The Bomb.

From those roots, the Cold War reached its peak during the 1960s—early on with the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, then again as the “domino theory” of uber-hawks such as General Curtis LeMay embroiled America in the senseless slaughter and penultimate tragedy of Vietnam (“penultimate” because a similar tragedy would be played out in Iraq during the next Saturn-Pluto opposition in the aftermath of 9-11).

Richard Nixon was elected president in 1968 on a “law and order” platform, a classic Saturn-Pluto ploy, after Richard Daley’s Chicago police ran riot during protests at the Democratic Convention. In May 1969, California Governor Ronald Reagan ordered state police to quash public demonstrations supporting “People’s Park” in Berkeley, followed one year later by the Ohio National Guard’s infamous Kent State shootings. J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI infiltrated the Black Panthers, and in December, 1969, Panther leader Fred Hampton was mysteriously murdered in his bed. These are just a sampling of the many violent clashes between Saturn-Uranus and Saturn-Pluto: social revolt juxtaposed by state repression.

## **Uranus-Pluto**

This brings us to the third and most important cycle that shaped the 1960s: the conjunction of Uranus and Pluto. Unlike the two oppositions that had their roots in earlier times, this was the beginning of the Uranus-Pluto cycle, meaning that what was seeded was brand new, original, and unprecedented, taking shape through deeply emotional and instinctive passions.

I wrote about the Uranus-Pluto cycle at the beginning of this series of commentaries, in the September and October newsletters of 2005. Those essays are archived on my web site. One or two essays are hardly sufficient to plumb the depths of Uranus-Pluto meanings, so I’ll add more here to what was written then.

Uranus represents the intellect applied to science, technology, and social theories. Its expression varies from the idiosyncratic and eccentric at the individual level, where willful insistence on personal freedom throws off shackles of conformity and restraint, to concerns for equality at the collective level, where its humanitarian impulses operate. The action of Uranus is sudden, unpredictable, shocking, and revolutionary. Like alternating electrical current, Uranus is a bipolar symbol that flips back and forth between opposite poles.

Pluto symbolizes the power buried deep within the dark recesses of the natural world or the collective unconscious of the human psyche, powers so primal and vast that they are nearly incomprehensible to our rational minds. Sex and death are both Plutonian. The primordial energies of Pluto are usually destructive when released, in metaphorical volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, or floods that wipe away most of what came before. Pluto purges the landscape, leaving in the wake of annihilation a void that appears empty and barren, but is actually super-fertile. The phoenix rises from its own ashes.

When the heady, willful intellect of Uranus fuses with the deep-seated emotional power of Pluto, the activations of their shared cycle in each quarterly phase change correspond to radical ideas (either social or technological) that erupt at a mass level to destabilize the collective and explode us into periods of dynamic, chaotic, and provocative revolution that are both exhilarating and upsetting. Creation of the new and destruction of the old intertwine.

People who resonate to Uranian or Plutonian archetypes suddenly feel empowered to challenge society, and even those whose temperaments are otherwise reasonable or cautious can be swept up in the emotional tsunami of extreme behaviors. Moderation vanishes in the quest to manifest at any cost what one believes to be true. A sense of crystalline clarity coexists with the shadow of insane compulsivity.

This cycle is immensely powerful when active, in part because of the inherent wild-card nature of the outer planets involved, but also because of its length. The current Uranus-Pluto cycle is 139 years long and thus much “heavier” than the 46-year Saturn-Uranus cycle or the 34-year Saturn-Pluto cycle. As a result, the Uranus-Pluto cycle is the most critical when all three are simultaneously active. It sets a tone and a context within which the two Saturn cycles then take specific shape.

### **Deconstructing the 1960s Alignment**

When Saturn moved into the middle of Pisces precisely as Uranus and Pluto conjoined in the middle of Virgo, we saw the results of two oppositions colliding with one conjunction. This implied on the one hand the natural and inevitable culmination of cultural movements first set into motion during the 1940s. These movements reached full maturity, although in great tension, just as an entirely new and unexpected development erupted from the collective unconscious that provoked mass impact and social upheavals in successive tidal waves of uncontrollable passion.

Oppositions imply confrontation, but they also present opportunities for negotiation and the necessity for compromise. Those latter possibilities were swept away in the 1960s, undercut by the extreme emotions of the accompanying conjunction. What might have been a social dialogue became instead a cultural melee, the equivalent of a bar room brawl.

A profound and intractable polarization was implied by this configuration. Those who rebelled against the status quo to seek change did so based on longstanding grievances (Saturn-Uranus) or because they were caught up in the wild momentum erupting from the collective unconscious (Uranus-Pluto). For them, the time was ripe to demand freedom. Meanwhile, those whose self-interest was invested into authority, conservatism, conformity, or traditional values (Saturn-Pluto) felt intensely threatened and saw no other option but to forcibly repress this assault on the existing social order.

Some crossover occurred, of course, in conversions of faith. Certain people who believed in new ideals were quickly disillusioned by the increasing chaos and reverted back to tradition. Likewise, some on the side of authority and order were galvanized by the push for justice or disturbed by reactionary abuses of power. Mostly, however, polarization increased throughout the 1960s into the early 1970s. Those who insisted on change were indefatigably opposed by those who resisted it, with neither side giving an inch except through coercion.

The '60s cracked open a huge generational divide. The ramparts were lined with banners, courtesy of mainstream and underground media: “Tune in, turn on, drop out” and “Don’t trust anyone over 30” became mantras for young Baby Boomers, while the “Silent Majority” and “Law and Order” united the older Civic-GI cohort that felt bewildered and angry over their children’s rejection. Mass media itself moved toward cultural dominance in this decade as the psychological tools of marketing were honed (Uranus and Pluto in Virgo) into a potent force for manipulating minds and shaping public opinion.

In science, the fantastic actually happened (Saturn in Pisces) when humans walked on the Moon, providing the culmination to the rocket science begun in the 1940s. Beneath the spectacular, however, quieter scientific revolutions were emerging in the understanding of systems (Uranus conjunct Pluto in Virgo). Ecology was born here. Agribusiness conglomerates aligned themselves with the evolving science of genetics.

Breakthroughs in manufacturing and fabricating technologies allowed creation of the first true microprocessors to miniaturize computer circuitry.

Limitations and rules (Saturn) of every kind were challenged, disrupted, or cast aside (Uranus and Pluto). The birth control pill fomented a chaotic sense of sexual freedom and experimentation (Uranus) that challenged traditional mores (Saturn). While guilt and shame (Saturn) remained powerful psychological forces, they lost some of their power as social inhibitors when sex (Pluto) burst out of the closet with a vengeance. “If it feels good, do it” inspired some and disgusted others.

The sanctity of marriage and the nuclear family itself came under assault. Divorces increased dramatically (Saturn-Uranus). Open marriage, communes, alternate lifestyles, and blended families made inroads against 1950s myths of conformity (Uranus-Pluto). Family systems therapy was invented here (Virgo-Pisces), along with addiction/recovery movements, and both led to disturbing revelations surrounding the formerly secret violation of taboos such as incest and abuse within a larger percentage of families than anyone had previously imagined.

Institutionalized religion (Saturn in Pisces) shuddered and quaked (Pluto) as churches were radicalized (Uranus) toward social activism. Some people rejected faith altogether (Saturn-Uranus) while others gravitated toward the sudden influx of Eastern religions and occult mysticism that later took hold as New Age Metaphysics (Uranus-Pluto). Less visible in the tumult was an equally intense grassroots movement toward reactionary fundamentalism (Saturn-Pluto), which emerged in later decades as a potent social force lobbying for ultraconservative values in sexuality, traditional families, and a fervent, absolute belief in the imagined goodness of times past. Such is the nature of the human need for certainty.

In all these shocking developments, polarization was the order of the day: revolution and counter-revolution, ideal and counter-ideal. Societies around the world—most conspicuously America and China—were wracked and pulled apart from both sides as extremes attacked the center. Despite the tendency to identify certain people as radicals and others as reactionaries, the truth was infinitely more complex and altogether paradoxical. Almost everyone in 1960s America embodied elements and beliefs from both sides. The proportions varied from person to person, as did particular interests and manifestations, but the wild, strange, often incoherent amalgam of pushing for change while also holding onto tradition was present in some fashion within nearly every psyche. The movement was forward and backward simultaneously.

Some people responded to these pressures by fusing the opposites into an alloy of great strength and purpose that they took with them into their futures. Others remained unresolved, divided within themselves. Many were relieved when the tumultuous period ended. And finally, some people were literally destroyed, burned out and consumed either by their own inner contradictions or by the violent excesses of the decade itself.

All this is indicated within the matrix of the three astrological cycles that defined the 1960s, revealed by their specific phases. One conjunction and two oppositions on the Virgo-Pisces axis. One long cycle started (Uranus-Pluto), propelling us toward the future, while two shorter cycles culminated (Saturn-Uranus and Saturn-Pluto), illuminating the past. New seeds were planted while already ripening crops were harvested.

The Saturn-Uranus-Pluto alignment of the 1960s was the fulfillment in fact of what had been (both for good and for ill) and the creation in feeling of what might eventually become (both for better and for worse).



**Bill Herbst** resides in Olympia, Washington. To learn about his telephone sessions with clients, go to his web site at [www.billherbst.com](http://www.billherbst.com), and click on the link in the upper right corner for **Sessions FAQ**.

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