

Pluto Out-of-Bounds 2025-2035

Part One (of Two)

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There is a fair amount of buzz these days in the public realms of astrology — podcasts, videos, books, articles posted online on web sites (such as the commentaries I write) — about a specific phenomenon within technical astrology called “Pluto Out-of-Bounds.” Let me first explain what that is, then how astrologers typically interpret its significance.

Astrology is practiced mostly as a two-dimensional or “flat” system. We tend to focus on the movement of bodies in the solar system through celestial longitude, based on the plane of the ecliptic, the earth’s orbital path around the Sun. The ecliptic is better known by the public as the zodiac of signs — Aries, Taurus, Gemini, etc.

When astrologers draw charts of the heavens, we do so almost exclusively in two dimensions, either as a computer graphic or on a sheet of paper. A two-dimensional approach is well-suited primarily because the solar system exists as a flattened plane, a kind of disk. The solar system is not perfectly flat, however. So, we could use three-dimensional charts or astro-spheres to account not only for longitudinal movement through the zodiac, but also for *declination*, which is the celestial version of what’s called *latitude* on earth.

Declination is the “tilt” of a moving body’s orbit around the sun in the flattened disk of the solar system. Planetary declination is measured in degrees and minutes away from the earth’s equatorial plane and listed as either Plus (also called North) or Minus (also called South).

The earth is like a top, spinning around its vertical axis while it moves horizontally around the Sun. But that axis is not perfectly vertical. It’s tilted away from the vertical by $23^{\circ}27'$. This is the offset difference between the plane of the ecliptic and the plane of the earth’s equator. A planet is considered “Out of Bounds” whenever its declination exceeds $23^{\circ}27'$.

When a planet’s declination is *less than* $23^{\circ}27'$, we regard it as operating within the Solar “family” of objects moving around the Sun. When the declination is *more than* $23^{\circ}27'$, we think of the planet as a more eccentric or rogue factor.

Its symbolic meaning in astrology is intensified and made both more unpredictable and more extreme.

All bodies in the solar system can go out of bounds, but the most important planets in this regard astrologically are the trans-Saturnian outer planets discovered over the past three centuries — Uranus (1781), Neptune (1846), and Pluto (1930).

The inner five planets — Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn are all visible to us with our naked eyes. The outer three, however, are not. They're too far from the Sun for our eyes to make out. Especially for Neptune and Pluto, they are so far from the Sun that they're barely planets at all. Symbolically, they represent motivations and urges within the unconscious human psyche that are not "normal." All three trans-Saturnian outer planets act as bridges between solar consciousness and galactic consciousness. We might think of them as emissaries (or intruders) from a much larger realm, a realm distinctly unlike our local solar neighborhood.

The Significance of When the Outer Planets were Discovered

Uranus was discovered in 1781. It came into humanity's collective awareness at the tail end of the Age of Reason (also called "the Enlightenment"), and while the American Revolution was being waged. The time of discovery also dovetailed with the early decades of the first Industrial Revolution. Our knowledge of electricity was being codified at that point, and the shift away from artisan crafts and toward factory-standardized manufacture of goods was underway.

Neptune was discovered in 1846, during the "Second Great Awakening" in America, a populist revival of fundamental religion, spirituality, and metaphysics. Four years later, the devastating 15-year Taiping Rebellion broke out in China. That conflict was provoked initially by mystical revelations, but then morphed into the most destructive civil war in human history, where 20-30 million Chinese were killed.

Pluto's discovery — first posited by mathematicians in 1905, then actually found by astronomers in 1930 — corresponds to the flood of scientific developments in 20th-century physics that led directly to the creation of nuclear weapons during World War II (i.e., the Manhattan Project), the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the onset of the Atomic Age.

In each case, the introduction into humanity's awareness of the three outer planets corresponded with powerful developments that societies were unable to assimilate peacefully. With Uranus, the new developments were democracy, science, and industry. In Neptune's case, what accompanied discovery of a new planet was the welling up of provocative religious faith and spiritual beliefs. Then Pluto arrived, and with it came dramatic leaps in our power to transform and

destroy. In each instance, civilization was radically altered, but in ways that carried unforeseen and almost unimaginable costs.

Correspondences Confirm the Meanings of Astrological Symbols

Like other astrological techniques, Pluto Out-of-Bounds carries significance similar to the correspondences that accompanied the discovery of the outer planets, but not as a one-time event. Instead, Pluto Out-of-Bounds has been a recurring astronomical phenomenon displaying symmetry with numerous critical developments in human civilization. The aligned events tend to be even more extreme than "normal" Plutonian correspondences. Some astrologers have written that it's like removing the guardrails from Pluto. No training wheels. Just pedal-to-the-metal, out with the old and in with the new, hell-bent-for-leather CHANGE — no matter how destructive or over-the-top the changes may be. The study of such a phenomenon is potentially a very meaningful addition to the astrology of collective human evolution.

Looking for parallels between various symbolic emphases in the planetary dance of the solar system and events in human civilization is a fundamental process in modern astrology's quest for meaning. What makes the current discussions in the astrological community about Pluto Out-of-Bounds even more compelling, however, are two special factors that add unexpected new dimensions to the correspondences.

Pluto Out-of-Bounds North versus South

The first factor is a relatively recent new theory, suggested by astrologer Rosie Finn, that the North and South directions of Pluto Out-of-Bounds are fundamentally different. Finn's theory, which she supports with extensive historical research, is that Pluto Out-of-Bounds **North** corresponds to periods when despots, dictators, and other fascist movements rise, gain traction, and take power in civilization. By contrast, Finn asserts, Pluto Out-of-Bounds **South** signifies periods when those authoritarian and controlling forces are brought down, overturned, or destroyed, followed by a renaissance of more egalitarian governments and societies.

Finn cites as evidence for her theory the most recent Pluto Out-of-Bounds **North** phase from 1938-1953, with 1945-1946 being the most intense phase of the period. That 16 years included all of World War II, with particular emphasis on the last year of the war. This was when the U.S. engaged in an intense campaign of many B-29 fire bombing raids on all the major population centers of Japan, killing at least 300,000 Japanese citizens, followed by the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Yes, that ended the Second World War, but the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union geared up immediately after. Interestingly, in 1953 — the final year of the Pluto OOB North period —

Joseph Stalin died, after having ruled the Soviet Union with an iron fist since 1924 (that's 29 years, or exactly one Saturn cycle).

By contrast, Finn highlights a 12-year period two centuries earlier when Pluto was Out-of-Bounds **South**, from 1775-1796, during which both the American and French revolutions occurred. OK, I presume that Rosie regards these rebellions against authority to have yielded positive meanings for civilization, but I'm not sure that I agree. The Reign of Terror during the French Revolution transpired in 1793-1794, during the waning years of that Pluto OOB South phase. 17,000 people were executed, and 10,000 others died in prison. Ironically, Robespierre, the architect of The Terror, was himself executed in 1796, the final year of the period. Hardly what one would call a time of sweetness and light. So, for me, the jury is still out on Finn's theory of Pluto OOB North versus South.

End Part One

In Part Two of the Commentary, I'll discuss the significance of the fact that the current Pluto Out-of-Bounds period will be the last time Pluto is Out-of-Bounds for thousands of years. I'll conclude Part Two with my overall assessment of the Out-of-Bounds delineation technique in astrology.