

*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,

Although the opposition of Saturn-Neptune through which we are currently slogging still has another year to go in its effective period, I'm ready to move the newsletters into the future. So, taking a deep breath, let's haul up the anchor, cast off the lines, and push away from the dock into the current that pulls us forward in the river of time.

—Bill Herbst

WHERE WE ARE, WHERE WE'RE HEADED

Having written over the past year about the tenor of the times and the accompanying astrological cycles that have led us over the past four decades from the 1960s to our current setting, I'm turning slowly to discuss the future at length, and in some depth.

I might have titled this commentary "Where *I* Am and Where *I Think* We're Headed," since that is obviously a more technically accurate statement. In the title I chose, however, the first "We" is not just me, but includes millions of people in this country who are like-minded and feel as I do. This probably includes the bulk of my small readership. What I write is certainly based on my own thoughts, feelings, and perspectives, but I am neither so radical nor unique as to assume that such ideas are mine alone.

I come from what I consider an honorable tradition in America of free speech and political/cultural dissent—although many Americans feel otherwise; they fervently believe that people like me are traitorous, disloyal, and downright un-American. But then, we already know that a sizable percentage of this country's population includes authoritarians who are enthralled by the concept of the nation-state (and the American Empire, to boot, even to the point of insisting that America is culturally supreme and spiritually chosen by God to remake the world, or at least do whatever we want with it in domination). Such people would happily coerce uniformity if they could.

Unlike obviously totalitarian societies, however, America is much more subtle in the treatment of its own dissidents, and, I might add, much smarter. Those who openly question authority and the status quo are not generally kidnapped in the middle of the night, thrown in jail, or clapped in irons. (Only in the rarest of examples when protest becomes effective and a real threat to the elites in power are its advocates violently “taken out,” as with Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy in 1968.) For the most part, dissent is marginalized, sometimes by ridicule or shouting down, but more often simply by ignoring dissenters and getting on with business-as-usual. Corporate-owned mainstream media is a great help in this by providing a prodigious weight of blanket conformity that restricts discussion to standard and approved perspectives.

In other words, we have the right to say whatever we want in America, as long as it doesn’t change anything. That may not remain true in the years ahead, however. From 2009 on, mass protest is likely to ramp up dramatically. We can also expect the counterforce of active state repression to increase, although I doubt that it will be effective, given the widespread institutional breakdowns that are coming. Order will be infiltrated by chaos.

I also didn’t choose to use the phrase “Where I *Think* We’re Headed” in the title. In part, this is because I prefer a more didactic and hard-hitting header, but there’s another, more important reason as well: What I intend to write over the next year about our collective future does not generally involve the prediction of concrete events. I leave that, with considerable scorn, to those who scramble for media attention. They can have my spot in the limelight, for all I care.

As I have stated before, and often, I don’t claim to know the specific events that will shape our future. Instead, I will write about the coming challenges to our consciousness, both individually and collectively, as indicated by my best understanding of astrology, history, and human nature. This includes not only what might occur through various shocks to our collective systems, but also a kind of propaganda in lobbying for what I hope *could* occur if we are sufficiently mature, awake to repercussions, and willing to flow with the inevitable changes. I doubt that much of what I hope to see will come to pass over the next five years, but I’ll give it a shot anyway.

Mass Hypnosis

One of the amazing qualities of outer-planet cycles is their ability to enthrall us. When active, the vibrations from these cycles act like the water around the fish, coloring our psychic landscape in such a way that we *feel* certain emotions without much if any awareness of how subtly we are being manipulated. When Uranus and Neptune came together in the 1990s, we were collectively enthralled with technological toys. Collectively, we tripped off into la-la land. When Saturn opposed Pluto in 2001-2003, fearful and aggressive war fever gripped the public. No one could speak out against the invasion of Iraq without being castigated by the unconscious tidal wave of majority opinion. Now that Saturn is opposite Neptune, disillusionment and despair have soaked into every corner of public discourse. Now no one quite believes anything and doubt is pervasive.

Imagining a future different from the present is always difficult. Each here-and-now carries with it a particular version of past history and an equally distinct set of portents for the future, which almost never play out as expected. Only as the here-and-now changes do the past and future mythologies change as well.

Yes, some people resist the mass hypnosis, but few of us can do so completely, and the center of the collective bell curve always succumbs. Only those on the fringe point out that the emperor has no clothes, and they are routinely discounted. Part of the challenge of watching unfolding cycles in astrology is to disconnect oneself from the seduction of the present. In many ways, such a discipline of looking into the future is a lonely and isolated pursuit. Like monks in cubicles, we study the charts and try to feel the essence of what is not yet here.

In general, people cannot now foresee the revolutionary upheavals coming over the years ahead, first with Saturn-Uranus and then Uranus-Pluto activations. The bulk of the population won’t recognize the changes

until they arrive, starting in 2008 and gearing up until hitting full bore in 2012 and beyond. Sitting as we are now in the tepid pool of Saturn-Neptune exhaustion at the endless lies, distortions, and self-delusions of life in America, imagining the incredibly high energy of disruption and radical change that awaits us is a huge leap.

When I began writing this series, I tried to remind readers of the experience of the 1960s—how we *felt* in that turbulent decade, with its awakenings, its shocks and tragedies, its exhilaration and excitement. History alone, however, is insufficient preparation. What's coming is not simply a replay of the past; it is an unprecedented phenomenon that builds on that past, but takes what once was into new and unfamiliar territory.

Nonetheless, that's where these commentaries are about to go.

An Astrological Outline

The next section of this newsletter lays out in technical detail the progression of outer-planet configurations that will lead from where we are now up to 2012, which, as I say, is the critical-mass point of collective change, the kickoff to the next major revolution in America and the world. For those among my readers who are not astrologically astute, I've included a brief annotation of the tone and possible meaning of each period. Over the months ahead, I plan to write about this sequence of successive astrological events in terms that everyone can understand and, hopefully, appreciate.

I do not claim that this list of timed configurations is astrologically comprehensive. Astrology is a huge universe, much more vast than most people realize, and the old tale of the blind men and the elephant usually applies. Every astrologer has a different perspective and approach within the encompassing whole.

Take eclipses, for example. Some astrologers glean great meaning from the evolving patterns of twice-yearly pairs of solar and lunar eclipses. Personally, I'm not drawn to that particular technique, since I consider eclipses wild-card factors that are both too momentary and by definition wildly unpredictable in their manifestations. I prefer the more stately progression of longer-term cycles of the outer planets and the multi-planet alignments they form along the way. That opinion does not, however, invalidate eclipses (or anything else in astrology) as a predictive tool that may be used with insight by other astrologers.

So, what follows below are the fruits of my particular research only. This list represents the center of what I feel to be important within the astrological perspectives that appeal to me. I can state without hesitation that the slant of this research is sound and accepted as valid among the bulk of astrologers who are concerned with collective evolution. Nothing in what is listed below is particularly radical or from the fringe of oddball arcana. All the events listed come from the heart of astrological technique and interpretation.

December 2005 to November 2006

Kicking off as a fixed Grand Cross during the Mars retrograde, this configuration is mainly a T-square between Saturn, Neptune, and Jupiter.

In May through July, 2006, the T-square heats up when Chiron replaces Neptune as a leg in the T-square, Pluto moves to the semi-sesquisquare stress point, and Jupiter trines Uranus. This was a temporary eruption that manifested in one form through the Middle East conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Then the original Jupiter-Saturn-Neptune T-square returns in August through November, while the Saturn-Neptune opposition stretches out into and through much of 2007. The Israeli-Hezbollah eruption that boiled over so briefly returns to a simmer on the back burner. Collectively, we go back into a kind of uncomfortable limbo. This is akin to walking through the desert and seeing visions off in the distance. Are they real or just mirages?

The midterm Congressional elections in November are part of this confusing period. Whatever the results, the significance will probably be less clear than hoped for by any political faction. The will of the electorate is likely to remain dormant and shrouded, and the melodrama of politics will still be more heat than light.

August 2007 on

Saturn begins its four-year-long opposition to Uranus. Authority and the status quo are polarized by sudden change and confronted by rising energies of revolution and counterrevolution. Breakdowns in social institutions begin as the struggle takes shape. In America, foreign policy and domestic economics move to center stage finally.

The initial years of this on-again, off-again opposition occur with Saturn in Virgo and Uranus in Pisces, from mid-2007 to mid-2009, and imply movement toward reform of the system (which will be too little and too late to succeed, in my opinion).

Then, in 2010-2011, the opposition shifts into Libra-Aries, which is when collective crises hit more aggressively. Authorities will likely strain to hold the line through increasingly draconian measures of civil control and social repression, but mass rebellions bust out into the open in a flagrant and angry demand for radical and immediate change.

4 November 2008

Precisely on the day of America's next presidential election, Saturn makes its first exact opposition to Uranus. Expect the unexpected. The election could be a major surprise as a provocative challenge to the status quo.

August through November 2009

While Jupiter, Chiron, and Neptune are conjoined in Aquarius, a long T-square makes its first appearance with Saturn opposite Uranus and both square Pluto, all in late degrees of mutable signs.

A dramatic acceleration of breakdown and tumultuous change gears up. To address the various crises and keep order from disintegrating, 1st world societies will be forced to seriously consider adoption of ideas and implementation of policies that were previously considered too extreme or too disruptive for ordinary business-as-usual. Suddenly, such ideas—both good ones and not-so-good ones—will no longer seem so far out.

February through September 2010

The Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square returns, becoming cardinal. From April 2010 on, Jupiter moves into the configuration by conjoining Uranus.

The proverbial feces begins to hit the fan. Masses of people are shocked awake, which will carry with it the panoramic complexities of positive and negative repercussions. "Normal" life will probably continue for some, but no one will remain untouched by the events reshaping our world.

March through August 2011

The Jupiter-Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square returns a final time, as all the outer planets form a single grand configuration, with Neptune and Chiron moving to the semi-sesquiquare stress point.

This alignment is extremely reminiscent of a similar rare configuration that occurred in mid-1931 during the lowest depths of the Great Depression. Once again, our economic chickens come home to roost, which should be accompanied by a re-localizing of life as communities band together.

Jupiter moves out of orb in April, 2011, but the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square continues with all its extremism, conflict, and unpredictability. In June-July 2011, a mini-trine between Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto complements the T-square, which finally ends in August after two years.

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All these astrological events—from 2005 through 2011—reveal to us the gradual, step-by-step setup to the long Uranus-Pluto square that makes its first official pass (of seven total) in June, 2012, and will last through 2020. So, from 2012 on, all bets are off as we enter Brave New World.

Footnote

I want to comment briefly on the recent upsurge of armed conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon. (For those who are astrologically curious, this “war” erupted just after Chiron replaced Neptune as one leg in the yearlong T-square with Jupiter and Saturn, and Pluto moved into the semi-sequisquare stress point. The arrival of Chiron and Pluto signaled the possibility of an eruption in a disturbed social matrix.)

Ignore whatever the mainstream media says. Israel lost decisively. Hezbollah is still standing and more viable than ever. The myth of Israeli invincibility has been shattered, at least on the Arab street. Whatever one’s politics, this is stunning.

Hawks who love the iron fist and believe that domination can be achieved through the barrel of a gun, with destruction, violence, and killing (which includes not only the Bush administration, but also most members of both major political parties in Congress) face a real dilemma. They did not learn from Vietnam. Nor did they learn from Russia’s hard loss in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Now we are paying the price of their refusal to deal with reality.

All the military invasions of the past four years—Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Lebanon—have demonstrated the impotence of high-tech armies against militant, fourth-generation insurgencies. The U.S. and Israel possess the most advanced and powerful armies in the world, and they have been vanquished, with no possibility of victory now or in the future. The handwriting is on the wall. The epoch of empires is fading fast, though the war parties in power remain in denial. Massive armies and dazzling weaponry are now little more than pitiful giants, hamstrung by ground-level resistance movements as effectively as Gulliver was tied by the Lilliputians in the Jonathan Swift tale or defeated as shockingly as Goliath was felled by David in the Old Testament.

Some soldiers at command level in the military understand these signs. Unfortunately, the institutional and bureaucratic pressures to continue feeding the unlimited and voracious economic hunger of the military-industrial complex drown out voices of sanity, even generals. So, the military is not blameless, just caught in the same complicity we all share in a war-based economy that continues its ludicrous justification on the false grounds of “national security.” As if the government or the military could protect us at all from the many looming dangers of the 21st century. Terrorism exists, but we can no more end it with the so-called “War on Terror” than we could protect the ecosphere by sending armies to fight global warming.

The killing will no doubt continue and may worsen in the years to come, for power that is not guided by love inevitably produces chaos and destruction.



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