

Astrology and Human Spiritual Evolution

Astrology is a symbolic, metaphysical way to interpret reality. Technically, it has more in common with Jungian psychology and its archetypes than with hard sciences like physics. For example, in contrast with astrologers, physicists claim that Pluto can have no affect on a human. They say that the planet is too small and too distant for any known force to influence us. On the other hand, most scientists admit that we live in a multidimensional universe. We can then speculate that a mechanism may lie in another dimension that would allow planetary energies and human consciousness to interact, both individually and collectively. Or perhaps consciousness *is* that multidimensional mechanism.

While the most common uses of astrology are for personal self-discovery and prediction, we also can use it to chart humanity's evolutionary progress. In his novel, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Arthur C. Clarke portrayed something similar. His story was not about astrology, but he linked humanity's spiritual and physical evolution to our expanding awareness of the universe and technological progress. The "astrological evolution" model introduced here uses those same principles — growing awareness of the universe and technological progress — as keys to charting human destiny.

Another principle we are using is that a celestial body will only affect us if we are aware of it. If Pluto could affect us through some materialistic force, then it would not matter if we knew about it or not. However, as we have not found such a force, we will assume that human awareness of a celestial body is what activates the energies of that body within the human psyche.

Possibilities in a Multidimensional Universe

Before delving into the astrological evolutionary story, we should address the present Creationism debate. This will show that underlying forces could shape the spiritual and physical evolution of our species. While cosmic forces may work through us individually, at a broader level the species as a whole is often targeted.

Within our context, the creation argument is not about which side — science or religion — is right. Here, the underlying issue is *territory*: to which discipline does creation belong? Science believes it belongs in its domain, because science assumes that creation was a natural, not a supernatural, event. Even if the supernatural exists and can affect the material plane, science will not consider metaphysical causes and will interpret those affects as having a materialistic cause. This way of thinking has the advantage of offering a rational explanation about the creation of the universe. Unfortunately, science recognizes that it can never prove what caused the birth of the universe. They can only guess — go on faith — about what happened. In the realm of creation, they must confine themselves to materialistic storytelling.

Religions do not suffer from having to rely on faith. With them, faith is part of the game. They claim creation belongs in their domain because it was a supernatural, not a natural, event. The difference between religion and science, then, is that each arrives at an answer in different ways. One relies on revelations from ancient texts, the other on mathematical models. Of course, some religious stories sound out of touch with the available evidence. Several African creation myths claim that the Creator brings forth everything in the world by vomiting them up. The Judeo-Christian account supposes a patriarchal God created the universe in six days. For the Hopi, Tawa (the Sun God) and Spider Woman (the Earth Goddess) created everything together, by dividing themselves into many gods. These are myths, which most people do not take literally.

Scientific explanations about creation are stories too, based on impersonal, mathematical formulas. Not surprisingly, they yield impersonal results. They imply that we live in a cold, impersonal universe built on chance, numbers, and unfeeling laws. Their models are more sophisticated than traditional stories, partly because they pepper them with evidence. Evidence is good. However, when it comes to the creation of the universe, it doesn't make them any truer than traditional accounts. This is especially true if we interpret the traditional ones figuratively.

Intelligent Design

Intelligent design (ID) is the view that "certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection." Believers say that ID is a scientific theory and stands on equal footing with current scientific models about the evolution and origin of life.

In contrast, most of the scientific community view intelligent design as unscientific. The U. S. National Academy of Sciences believes that intelligent design "and other claims of supernatural intervention in the origin of life" are not science because they cannot test them by experiment. Yet, scientists have already admitted that they cannot test their theories about what happened at the moment of creation. This would rule out creation belonging to the domain of science.

Religions must have their doubts too. Most have different beliefs about creation. Not all of them can be correct. What we have then is an unsolvable mystery, open to many mathematical and allegorical explanations. This is not to discredit either fact or faith — both are helpful, but both have limits. Humans *lack the capacity* (for now at least) to know how creation happened. Believers in both religion and science may resent this claim, which is natural. The need for certainty is an essential part of our human make up. Faith is certainty without proof. This is why we have faith: to give us certainty where there is none.

There is little reason why Darwinian evolution and ID cannot peacefully co-exist. A creator could easily code the universe with an underlying, cosmic DNA strand. The strand would contain instructions that would make forms evolve using a Darwin-type evolutionary scheme. However, if Creationists insist that the *Christian* God made the universe, then we are talking religious politics, a different matter altogether.

With that said, let's look back at least 5,000 years in human history. Then, the ancients were aware of the planets that were visible to the naked eye, from Mercury to Saturn. The social order during this period (and still today) was one of Empire. It uses a top-down control system with a handful of elite ruling the land. *Control* was the operative word. We will call this patriarchal era the *Saturn Regime*. The Ancient Greeks were the first to vary briefly from this system with their experiment in democracy. Like most new experiments, it was imperfect: slavery was popular and the system excluded women from the political process.

Let's now fast forward to the modern period. Remember that all forms of social organization reflect the spiritual condition of the state.

The Modern Planets

Uranus, the Awakener (1781)

On March 13, 1781, the noted British astronomer, Sir William Herschel discovered Uranus, the first modern planet. Two years later, on April 11, 1783, the U. S. Congress officially declared an end to the Revolutionary War. A new order was born. A similar event soon followed in Europe, the French Revolution. Uranus, ruler of Aquarius, focuses on altruism and the freedom to express one's uniqueness. Perhaps this is why Americans adopted the image of the "rugged individualist."

The populist revolutions that swept the New World and Europe reflect the ideas of liberty and equality. They marked the birth of the *Uranian Partnership*, which was the first major challenge to the Saturn Regime. Total globalization (centralized and vertical control of all the earth's resources and markets) is the dream of the Regime. In contrast, Uranian uses localized and horizontal organization, which resists saturnine control.

Uranus is a rebel dedicated to humanitarianism rather than religion. This may explain the separation of Church and State issue at the founding of the U. S. The Awakener defends the underdog. In line with this, the Founding Fathers of the new country proclaimed that everyone had the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness — that all men are created equal. Slavery existed and the system excluded women from the political process, but they laid the groundwork for a true democracy. Over the years, we made progress. Democracy began to grow. (Note that in form the U. S. began as a republic. In language, especially that of the Bill of Rights, it professed democracy.)

Democracy represents a new step in human evolution, one in which each individual has a say in his or her social destiny. People work together as partners and owners rather than paid cogs in the production machine. They are equals under the law, and their systems operate publicly, which limits corruption. Partnership stimulates the creative instinct and frees the spirit. It provides security and promotes self-respect and self-worth to everyone. It builds strong and caring communities.

Even today, many doubt that people can organize themselves as equals ("horizontal" organization). For them, horizontal organization is idealistic and impracticable. They believe that only strict, top down ("vertical") organization is viable. Yes, there will always be hierarchies. Some people have superior creative powers, leadership skills, ambition, or wisdom. When working within a horizontal organization, people express their gifts more fully. They excel and rise to the top because they are working for themselves and the community. The Regime has developed to the point where many people now work for the profit of stockholders. The stockholders could live anywhere in the world and never meet the workers.

Within Uranian Partnerships, people have little reason to compromise their integrity to climb the corporate ladder. Horizontal structures are looser, warmer, organic, and effective. They provide a fulfilling environment and enrich the quality of life. Work can be meaningful.

Conversely, Saturn compresses and hardens the personality. This compression hinders our true expressions, so we make do with inauthentic but "appropriate" behaviors. After a while, we forget that we are pretending, and we become strangers to ourselves. We wonder why people do not understand us.

The Regime promotes people who are skilled at controlling others. They can be corrupt, hypocritical, or heartless, but sometimes management or political leaders consider that a strength. Many seek power for their own gain and have little concern for the needs or desires of society or for preserving the environment. They view individuals as commodities or resources, just like minerals or oil. Want a job? Visit the Human Resources department. How much you are worth is equal to how much money and assets you have. The poor, then, are worthless, while the rich are godlike. Of course, not all of the rich are against equality. Some leaders of industry and government are remarkable, striving to make the world a better place.

The Uranian Partnership measures one's value by his or her contribution to the commonwealth, not one's net worth. If we applied this standard to the Saturn Regime, things would look much differently. Many of the "most valuable" people would actually be a liability, because they have a detrimental affect on the commonwealth.

The creation of the U. S. was a significant advance in human social organization and consciousness. Currently, the U. S. administration is undermining that foundation of freedom, including the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. For human evolution, this represents a step backwards. Nonetheless, agents of Uranian energies continue to push for justice. Man creates laws and can change them as well.

Neptune, the Mystic (1846)

On September 23, 1846, Johann Gottfried Galle discovered Neptune, ruler of spirituality. Two years later, the Fox sisters popularized spiritualism in the U. S. Under the Regime, spirituality was wrapped tight in the cloak of religion. Like the nature of Saturn, the cloak was usually stiff and dogmatic. The priest class, applying the standard top-down organizational model, declared themselves to be *the* divine mediators. Only they could chat with the gods. They amassed fortunes through their positions. They were the elite.

The emergence of Neptune into humanity's consciousness represented the loosening of organized religion's grip on spiritual affairs. The Pentecostal, Mormon, and Jehovah's Witnesses religious movements were born around this time. However, the birth of these unusual Christian sects is not what makes Neptunian energies important. (A greater number of sects flourished in the Renaissance.) With the arrival of the Mystic, what happened was this: People realized that they could make spiritual connections outside the confines of religion.

Neptune also rules compassion. In the 1840's, the government finally passed regulations making it illegal for employers to beat their employees. A few years later, they abolished slavery as well. While Uranus added the humanistic touch to democracy, the Mystic added the spiritual.

While both Uranus and Neptune act to counter the Saturn Regime's limitations, they do so in their own way. Uranus is explosive and shocking. Neptune's energy diffuses saturnine structures. (Neptune's ability to diffuse relates to its association with gas. Gas lighting came into use in the 1840s.)

Also, as the Uranian birth of democracy in the U. S. was not ideal, fraud riddled Neptune's "direct-contact-with-Spirit" movement at the outset. The point, though, is that the Mystic opened the door to alternate ways of perceiving and relating to spirit.

Pluto, the Transformer (1930)

Clyde Tombaugh discovered Pluto on February 18, 1930. Astrologically, this planet completes the process of discombobulating the reality structures of human consciousness that Uranus started. No astrologer will deny Pluto's power and intensity. Ruler of the underworld, death, and destruction, Pluto represents inexorable change. It calls humanity to look inward and discover what lurks within its subconscious. It can be frightening, but Pluto does not mind. The Transformer presses deep-seated buttons.

On July 6, 1945, the U. S. detonated the world's first true weapon of mass destruction, the atomic bomb. While the discovery of Pluto happened 15 years prior to its detonation, this delay shows how this planet works on the human psyche. It impacts the subconscious and, over time, the results of the impact rise to the surface of awareness. As an analogy, imagine a ray (Pluto's energy) beaming down into the sea (our consciousness). It dislodges "crust" (deep-seated issues) attached on the bottom (our subconscious). Once dislodged, it slowly rises to the surface (our awareness). There, we can see and transmute it.

Perhaps one of the "crusts" that Pluto has brought to the surface of our collective consciousness is how inhumane we can be. Historians may remember the 20th Century as the most murderous and barbaric century in human history, which included dropping atomic bombs on civilians (200,000 people died a fiery death in 3 seconds). In that century, the war machine killed over 100,000,000 — one hundred million — people, mostly non-combatants. Unfortunately, killing civilians is the trend. The peace movement formed in response to this madness. Incidentally, the rest of nature did not fare much better.

Plutocrats start wars and profit from them, but they (and their friends and families) rarely fight in them. They view the peace movement as an obstacle — an enemy — that tries to prevent them from reaching their goals. Their goals are usually the acquisition of raw materials located in other countries. They use bribery, intrigue, assassination, or military intervention to secure "our" resources. For many, these ruthless practices are no longer acceptable. They are not only spiritually devolutionary, but now threaten the very survival of the species. We can destroy all civilization in under an hour with our nuclear arsenals. Or, we can rip apart Nature to the point that its life-supporting structures fail.

Transits

Through 1965 and 1966, Uranus and Pluto were in *conjunction* three times. (A conjunction takes place when two planets simultaneously occupy the same degree of a sign.) This was a "first time" conjunction in the sense that it was the first time we were aware of it. (We did not know about Pluto during previous conjunctions.) It was a moment of considerable social change. The following year (1967) produced the "Summer of Love" and the release of the century's most revolutionary music album, "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band" by the Beatles. The hippies ushered in the first international peace movement. Yuppies yelled publicly about the wrongdoings of the multinationals. On the dark and messy side, several high-level assassinations took place, and we saw large-scale riots burn their way through major cities across the U. S. The Establishment was rocked.

These were some results of the Awakener and Transformer getting together. Persons born during this conjunction should have a powerful impact on world affairs once they assume control. They are now entering their 40's.

Uranus and Pluto will again form an aspect three times, from June 24, 2012 to April 21, 2014. This time, the aspect will be a *square* — a "hard" aspect. Squares usually cause more tension and upset than conjunctions and foreshadow upheaval, especially when the outer planets are involved. The extent of stress between the forces of the Old and New will determine the extent of the upheaval. If the people have reclaimed a good part of their sovereignty, then those energies may express themselves in positive and constructive ways. If the plutocrats have tightened their stranglehold, though, we can expect violent eruptions. The mechanics of this process resemble the workings of an earthquake. Several mini-quakes can relieve the pressure between tectonic plates. When this happens, we avoid large-scale quakes (and the resulting destruction). If the pressure builds without release though, the results can be cataclysmic.

Chiron, the Healer (1977)

Chiron (Greek: "hand") is a planetoid in the outer solar system that orbits between Saturn and Uranus. Charles Kowal discovered it on November 1, 1977. Mythologically, Chiron was a master of the healing arts, an astrologer, and a respected oracle.

Barbara Hand Clow associates the discovery of Chiron with the flowering of "channeling, divination, body/mind healing, homeopathic medicine and multi-dimensional perceptual skills." These qualities resemble Neptune's spiritual make up, except that Chiron is more grounded and precise in the application of these skills.

Symbolically, we can interpret the location of Chiron (orbiting between Saturn and Uranus) as an important healing link for the Old and the New. It may help temper the transition from "domination through force" to "mutually beneficial cooperation." The spirit of domination does not give up its power, prestige, and luxury easily. But the cat of democracy is out of the bag. The Uranian spirit will continue to express itself and make its demands throughout the world.

Recent Events — The Twenty-First Century

Eris, Bringer of Discord (2003-2006)

Eris is a dwarf planet slightly larger than Pluto. The team of Mike Brown, Chad Trujillo, and David Rabinowitz discovered it on January 5, 2005 from imagery dating to 2003. They assigned its name on September 13, 2006.

In mythology, Eris was a Greek goddess, the personification of discord or strife. While this doesn't bode well on the surface, this celestial body does have some intriguing astrological significance. Because the orbit of Eris is highly inclined, it only passes through a few traditional constellations ("Signs") of the Zodiac. In astrology, constellations act as "color filters" (and as other modifiers) for planetary energies. The sign of Leo for instance would act as an orange filter with all the accompanying symbolic attributes.

Eris is now in the constellation Cetus, representing the gates and gateposts of the underworld. None of the traditional astrological bodies have transited this constellation, so we are being exposed to uncharted energies and filters. The planet will stay in Cetus until 2036, when it will enter the sign of Pisces. Only then can we plot Eris in a traditional natal chart, because our charting systems use only the 12 traditional signs (Aries through Pisces) for planetary placement. Eris entering Pisces represents the spiritualizing affects of Pisces on that planet's energy. Symbolically, the planet is moving from the underworld into the state of oneness. It signifies a positive, spiritual resolution to the transition.

On both the individual and collective levels, moving from one state of consciousness to another can be traumatic. In social terms, it represents a change in how we organize ourselves. We can expect to see discord (and we are seeing it now) as the Old and New become more polarized. The rich are consolidating their financial power; they are becoming richer, while the poor grow in number.

The Old once believed it was inevitable that it would rule the world. For the last few years, a dark hand has been passing over the earth. The Old was making its move — and still is — working frantically behind the scenes. Only those asleep in the Old fail to sense this. Recently, though, reality has been setting in on their plans. Their vision is not sustainable. Discord visits the Regime. However, if the Regime manages to win the struggle, then we will have aborted a spiritual — and perhaps physical — evolutionary transformation. If the Force is with us and the New wins, then we will enter a new phase in human/spiritual experience.

Fewer Planets: Pluto Demoted (2006)

In 2006, it looked as if we were going to add several new planets to our solar system. Instead, the authorities reclassified — downgraded — Pluto from a planet to a dwarf planet. This happened on August 24, 2006. No new planets were added. Most people greeted the news unfavorably. Eris, incidentally, was responsible for Pluto's demotion. Eris is larger than Pluto, and that made scientists to reconsider the definition of a planet.

Symbolically, the reclassifying of Pluto could have one of two meanings: It could either negate some of Pluto's destructive power, or it could upset the balance and create intense havoc. The planet also rules Big Business, represented by capitalism in the corporate structure form. The lessening of Pluto's status could indicate a weakening of corporate power. This would provide relief from its relentless assault on the planet and democracy in the pursuit of profit.

One of the more exciting interpretations though is this: just as the discovery of Uranus marked the entry to the Modern Planets, Pluto (now a Kuiper belt object [KBO]) marks the doorway to the Kuiper belt. Ironically, the existence of the Kuiper belt was first suggested in 1930, the same year Pluto was discovered., with the first KBO being discovered in 1992. We have cataloged over 800 KBOs so far, opening us to a new wave of possibilities. Also on the lighter side, two new KBOs were announced in July 2005, nicknamed "Easterbunny" and "Santa."

More Stars; New Moons; Extrasolar Planets

The known population of the Milky Way galaxy within 33 light-years of Earth has risen by 16 percent during the past six years (since 2000). We have been discovering new, local stars at an incredible rate. Probably no one has investigated the astrological significance of this. Usually, though, more light is good.

We have been adding dozens of new moons to our astronomical catalogues. Astrologically, the moon represents the emotional body. If, for example, your Moon is in a water sign, then you will be very emotionally sensitive. If the moon occupies an air sign, then the emotions will not play as dominant a role in interpreting reality. Moons of other planets may color the emotional aspects associated with the planet. In human terms, it could subtly broaden the palette of our emotional responses.

In 1997, we detected 17 new moons for Uranus, making the total 27. In early February 2003, researchers found 23 new satellites orbiting Jupiter, bringing the total to 63. (In 1950, it had 12.) Also in 2003, Neptune added five more moons, bringing the total to 13. Two years later in May 2005, Hubble found two new moons orbiting Pluto. In that same year, astronomers uncovered 12 new moons around Saturn, bringing its number of natural satellites to 46 (up from 9 since 1950).

Hubble also photographed a pair of previously unknown rings encircling Uranus. The largest one is double the diameter of the planet's previously known rings. This discovery could temper the explosive nature of Uranus.

Extrasolar planets are planets that orbit stars other than our Sun. In October 1995, astronomers found the first extrasolar planet circling a sun-like star. Since then, astronomers have been discovering them at an exceptional rate. As of November 11, 2006, we have spotted 209 of them. We also have found perhaps the oldest planet in the universe, estimated to be 13 billion years old. Extrasolar planets may symbolize the expansion of human consciousness to cosmic levels. Discovering incredibly old planets may indicate wisdom.

Astrologically speaking, these discoveries are exposing our psyches to an avalanche of unexplored energies. It is probably too soon to understand the full impact that this is having.

Conclusion

How you see the outcome of this transitional period is determined by whether you are an optimist or a pessimist. For the optimist, the transition is a success, and we make a spiritual leap. For the pessimist, the drive for freedom is squelched, and we revert to a rule harsher than feudalism. Whichever vision we choose to believe — or any other one for that matter — we choose on faith. Psychologically, optimism is superior for one's health, energy levels, and attitude, so why not?

Several interpretations of what is happening on the world stage are floating around. Here is a short list:

* Many Christians believe the End Times Biblical prophecy. One of the prophecy's conditions is that we must have tried all forms of government before the Second Coming of Christ can happen. However, we have never tried a worldwide democracy. Maybe *that* is the Second Coming of the Christ Consciousness.

* Materialistically, we have predictions of ecological collapse. Ozone depletion, global warming, ocean death, mass extinctions, desertification, are some of grim signs painted on the horizon. John Prine, in his touching song, *Paradise*, sums up our attack on nature. Here is the chorus followed by a verse.

"And daddy won't you take me back to Mulenberg county
Down by the Green River, where Paradise lay.
Well I'm sorry my son, but you're too late in askin'
Mr. Peabody's coal train has hauled it away.

"Then the coal company came, with the world's largest shovel
And they tortured the timber and stripped all the land.
Well they dug for their coal till the land was forsaken
Then they wrote it all down as the progress of man."

Others envision worldwide financial chaos when the dollar, unable to maintain confidence because of abuses by governments and banks, collapses. In parallel, the skyrocketing debt incurred by maintaining the military and the costs of wars are unsustainable. The system could cave in on itself by its sheer weight. The worse possibility, though, is that we would blow up everything with nuclear weapons. Ban the bomb!

* People mention the Mayan calendar prediction: "Time will end" in 2012 — the year at which their calendar ends. This could be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on what "No time" is like.

* On the outskirts, some believe that ETs will arrive en masse and make everything right — or enslave us all.

* Others see this period as one of transition. We are standing on a precipice looking into the abyss. Whether we jump or circumstances push us, will we tumble in or sprout wings and fly? Individually, each of us will take a stand, either actively or passively, that supports his or her version of the story. We cannot know if our stand will be a deciding factor in the outcome. In any event, it is empowering to know that you have done your best, regardless of the results. Who knows: maybe you *are* the one who makes all the difference. You never know (think Gandhi).

* Lastly, some believe that we need a global shift in consciousness for the Uranian Partnership to work. We could trigger this shift by reaching a "critical mass" in consciousness, or we could just take a natural evolutionary step. Either way, a leap of consciousness would resolve many problems and give us a fresh perspective on working together. One of the most effective ways to help reach critical mass is to follow your spirit without hesitation, and let it move you forward.