

Neptune's Sesquicentennial

OF COURSE NEPTUNE is immeasurably older than 150 years, but it was not until September 23, 1846, that it was “officially” discovered by the German astronomer Johann Galle, after other European astronomers (John Couch Adams and Urban Leverrier), noting irregularities in Uranus’ motion, assumed the existence of another “member” of our solar system and sent Galle pertinent data.¹ They were correct to within one degree of the new planet’s location, but wrong in another sense: this planet is not really a “member” of Earth’s solar system. “The Mystic...points to Bode’s law as vindicating his assertion that Neptune does not really belong to our solar system.”² One writer quotes Max Heindel, without giving the reference, that Neptune is “the embodiment of a Great Spirit from the creative hierarchies.”³

The dates of the discoveries of all three outer planets are informative, for they have much to do with their astrological message and meaning. Uranus was “discovered” in 1781, when the most important occurrence on earth was the American Revolution. And its ideals—brotherhood, freedom, New Age principles, etc.—are part of Uranus’ message. It is believed that Pluto was first glimpsed in 1930, which date coincides with the rise of modern dictatorships. In 1929 Mussolini strengthened his position in Italy by his Concordat with the Vatican. In 1930 Hitler began to be an important player in German politics after his astounding success at the polls.⁴ The Japanese military embarked on its aggressive adventures in 1931, culminating at Pearl Harbor a decade later.

So we ask, what was transpiring on earth at the time of the discovery of Neptune? In 1846 ether was first used in surgery; the same year saw “the introduction of gas lighting.”⁵ It is recognized today that ether and gas generally are “ruled” by Neptune, which has the lowest specific gravity of all the planets circling the Sun, so it is understandably related to such “nonmaterial” phenomena. But it also “correlates with the advent of socialism, spiritualism, and theosophy,”⁶ movements that protested the excesses of materialism. Neptune is also considered to be the planet of communism.⁷

Here’s something both fascinating and confirmative of some of the above. At the time of the American Revolution, Uranus was conjunct its own node by transit; the Russian Revolution of 1917, regarded as the date of communism’s actual taking root, coincided with Neptune’s transit over its node; and when Hitler seized power, Pluto hovered over its node.⁸ These three orbs can also be “related” in another way: Neptune was discovered in Aquarius, Uranus’ sign, and this occurred 84 years before Pluto “appeared”; it takes Uranus 84 years to orbit the sun.

There are compelling reasons for focusing our attention on Neptune at this time.

First it is one of the two most important planets of our century. “Coming events cast their shadow before.”⁹ And on January 1, 1900, popularly considered this century’s commencement, Neptune and Pluto were in Gemini and all the other planets were in Sagittarius, Capricorn, and Aquarius. This made a Seesaw pattern, in which both halves of the chart are of equal importance: Neptune and Pluto

equaled the other eight planets. In addition, from 1942 until almost the century's end Neptune and Pluto form a sextile. No two other planets this century sustain so long a relationship. It "is the key to understanding the twentieth century." The last time it occurred was from approximately 1460 to 1530, "the height of the Renaissance."¹⁰ World conditions then were somewhat similar to those now, though on a smaller scale and less intense.

Second, this is the Age of Pisces, ruled by Neptune. It is certainly well for esotericists to take an interest in the coming New Age, but surely the one in which we're living also deserves attention. Since it began approximately 495 A.D. and lasts 2160 years, "it is generally agreed that the Aquarian Age begins not later than the year 2655 A.D."¹¹

This may raise a question: what do the primitive early Dark Ages (from the 6th century on) have in common with our highly sophisticated time? There is an explanation. First, "since the middle of last century the Aquarian influence...has made itself felt because the Sun's orb...touches the cusp of Aquarius, and as a consequence we have had an unprecedented awakening of thought."¹²

To further understand changes within this Age of Pisces, it is necessary to consider the fact that it, as well as all the other zodiacal ages, is subdivided into three major periods, each characterized by one of the three signs of its element. Since Pisces is a watery sign, its three decans are Pisces, Cancer, and Scorpio. Because each age has 2160 years, a decan is 720 years. The Sun's movement through the constellations, determining the age and decan in which we live, is "a backward movement of the vernal equinox."¹³ It exited the constellation Aries and entered the constellation Pisces in the Scorpio (third) decan, which functioned as a "sub-ruler" of the sign from 495 to 1215 A.D. That span of time reflected qualities associated with Scorpio. What are they?

On the mundane level Scorpio, ruled by Pluto, has to do with wars.¹⁴ Pluto is lord of the "underworld."¹⁵ The period of the Dark Ages corresponds with the Scorpio phase of the Age of Pisces.

As a boy, the famous writer Robert Louis Stevenson, watched a man lighting street lamps one evening and said to his nanny, "Look, he's



Neptune

This powerful representation of the god of ocean tides and tempests might better bear his original Greek name, Poseidon. He bears the conch, symbol of the voice of authority, and the trident, indicating rulership of the fluid medium.

poking holes in the darkness." After the fall of the Roman Empire, approximately when the decan of Scorpio began, there was nothing with which to "poke holes" in Europe's abysmal darkness. Only in its extreme northwestern corner, Ireland, was there a semblance of cultural activity. In France, during the final years of the Scorpio decan, what is known as the Twelfth Century Renaissance occurred, a faintly foreshadowing what was just ahead.

That arrived in the 13th century, the onset of the real Renaissance, which did far more than merely "poke holes" in the darkness. 1215 marked the start of the Cancer decan. Cancer is ruled by the Moon, which influences fertility and birth; *renaissance* means rebirth! Events on earth were then definitely synchronized with this regenerating impulse.

It is noteworthy that 1215 A.D. was the year of the Magna Carta, in which England's King John was forced by the barons to issue promises that

marked the birth of a drive for the securing of individual freedom in the British Isles.¹⁶ Also at this time in Italy Francis of Assisi initiated a major rebirth of spirituality, which culminated three centuries later in the Protestant Reformation.

Adding 720 years to 1215 A.D. brings us to 1935 A.D., the time of the world-wide Great Depression. Dictators like Hitler and Mussolini “solved” poverty’s problems in questionable ways that reflected their personal characters. The “democracies” of the West had to use more “moral” methods. So, led by the U.S, they instituted the “welfare state.” It is definitely noteworthy that the most basic and far-reaching of all the laws enacted then was the Social Security Act of 1935. During that time the major emphasis in the U.S. chart was on Neptune, the only one of the heavy orbs transiting its natal position.

That was unfortunate. Why? “Neptune never delivers what it promises,” especially on the mundane plane.¹⁷

We’ve been witnessing this fact during the present decade. Undoubtedly millions have been helped by various welfare legislation, but there has been a dire downside. Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare, among other social programs, have spawned a passive, exploitative dependency on the public dole, discouraged individual initiative, and become enormous obstacles to balancing the U.S. budget, which, if not achieved, spells disaster.

A third reason for studying Neptune is to learn of its influence in one’s personal chart. “Neptune’s transits lead to muddle...It really takes a strong and sane man to control the Neptune in him.”¹⁸ Why? Perhaps the simplest reason is given by one of its key words, “nebulousness.”¹⁹ When the weather is described as nebulous, there’s a fog. In a fog, one cannot see. If one cannot see, one makes wrong decisions. And is there anything worse than that? Aren’t we all where we are because of the decisions we have made? In light of that understanding, can there be a wiser decision than to get acquainted with Neptune, and more generally, to study astrology? □

—A Probationer

THE NATAL CHART

The Houses are workshops of mortals,
The Cusp signs relate to the soul,
But Planets are Spirit in action
As onward the Life cycles roll.

Squares show us yesterday’s failures—
Obstructions and losses we earned
By over-indulgence in pleasure,
Or lessons despised and unlearned.

Sextiles and Trines reveal credits
For work we have faithfully done,
For services lovingly rendered,
For honors unselfishly won.

Equipment for all our endeavor,
By Elements and Qualities shown,
May help or retard our progress:
The choice remains always our own.

—Isabel Ambler Gilman

1. *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia*, page 590.
2. *Simplified Scientific Astrology*, Max Heindel, page 6.
3. *Astrology*, Louis MacNeice, page 68.
4. German unemployment was 25%, that’s why.
5. MacNeice, *op. cit.*, page 66.
6. *Astrology, The Divine Science*, Moore and Douglas, page 50.
7. Moore and Douglas, *op. cit.*, page 205.
8. *Astrology for the Millions*, Grant Lewi, pages 102, 126, 140. For information on the planetary nodes see *Here and There in Astrology*, Ivy M. Goldstein-Jacobson, page 51.
9. *The Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers*, Volume I, Max Heindel, page 427.
10. *Sex and the Outer Planets*, Barbara H. Watters, page 116.
11. *New Age Bible Interpretation*, Old Testament, Volume III, Corinne Heline, page 506.
12. *Simplified Scientific Astrology*, Max Heindel, page 135. See also *The Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers*, Volume II, Max Heindel, pages 351-353.
13. *Simplified Scientific Astrology*, Max Heindel, page 159.
14. *As Above, So Below*, Alan Oken, page 172.
15. *The Planet Pluto*, Fritz Brunhubner, page 6.
16. Britain considered this document so valuable that during World War II it was in the U.S. for safe keeping.
17. Barbara H. Watters, *op. cit.*, page 96. See also *Astrology*, Else Parker, page 121.
18. Louis MacNeice, *op. cit.*, page 66. See also *Simplified Scientific Astrology*, Max Heindel, page 152; Ivy M. Goldstein-Jacobson, *op. cit.*, page 45.
19. *The Modern Text Book of Astrology*, Margaret E. Hone, page 34.