

# THE OUTER PLANETS



## ALIGNING WITH THE CHANGE GODS

CSICOPS is the Committee to Scientifically Investigate Claims of the Paranormal. As the name suggests, they are a single-eyed division of the Reality Police. The Change Gods prefer the metaphysically parallel group CSICON, the Committee for Surrealist Investigation of Claims of the Normal. CSICON offers \$10,000 to any “normalist” who can produce “a perfectly normal person, place, or thing—or even an ordinary sunset, or an average day.”

Whereas Saturn describes the personal and collective script that we have all been assigned, the planets beyond Saturn (or “trans-Saturnian”) teach us how to transcend and further rewrite these scripts. Self-possessed Saturn gets us to the clarity of level zero in the Gurdjieffian system (see page 80). Allied with what the outer planets represent, we begin to explore the clear zones of creative power. Pluto, Neptune, and Uranus are the Change Gods, the forces of dynamic transformation who hold the keys to personal and social liberation. We dance with them now to generate energy with which to vitalize the inner gods of individuality. The task of these outer-planetary gods is to liberate us from being unconscious subjects of laws that govern the collective and initiate us into being con-

scious agents of evolutionary intelligence. We have defined evolutionary intelligence as the most ingeniously lively and cooperative possibilities of mutual aid available at any moment.

These Change Gods will do whatever it takes to liberate us from the constraints of our conditioning so that we may exercise our full imaginative freedom. This sometimes results in a bumpy ride. The name Pavlov should ring a bell. He was the Russian scientist who experimented with conditioned response in animals. When there was a flood in his laboratory, none of the surviving dogs retained the least trace of their conditioning. And so it is with us when we undergo startling disruption.

When we have been stripped of familiar certainty, the Outer Planet parts of us rejoice: "At last, these humans have run out of plans—now we can work with them!"

Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto describe collective weather patterns. We all suffer under the illusion that the issues we confront are private. Yet even in isolation we are connected. We are all swimming in the same ocean, subject to the same tides and currents, undergoing similar challenges and exhilarations. Overcoming the illusion of isolation allows us to hearken back to an archaic memory of community where there is no such thing as a private problem.

Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto want us, individually and collectively, to become them, or at least to become their agents. "Change! Dissolve! Transform!" they exhort us.

When Uranus shatters an old pattern of familiar misery, we first become awakened; then we become awakeners, agents of Uranus.

Neptune dissolves our old visions and values to allow new visions to come alive; we then become visionaries.

Pluto is the Lord of the Underworld, the domain of death, rebirth, initiation, and transformation. When Pluto works us over, we first become transformed; then we become agents of transformation.

OUTER PLANETARY CONJUNCTIONS AND  
PERSONAL-SOCIAL EVOLUTION

When any two of the three outer planets come together in the sky (an event referred to as a conjunction), their union heralds a time of great changes, from massive cultural upheavals to potential evolutionary leaps.

In the twentieth century, there have been only two outer-planet conjunctions. The first of these, between Uranus the awakener and Pluto the transformer, presided over the whole 1960s and was particularly emphatic from 1964 to 1969. This conjunction describes the sixties as a wedding of their forces creating a distinctively tumultuous, raucous, crazy, disruptive, experimental, awakening, and vibrant time.

Those of us who lived through the sixties found it to be a powerfully resonant time. People who were born then have this Uranus-Pluto pattern in their charts and embody these qualities. They *are* the sixties. As this generation comes into its full stride around the turn of the millennium, they begin to contribute their Uranus-Pluto gift of transformative originality to the collective. No matter how conventional or straight they appear on the surface, underneath everything, they are seething with intense perceptions.

This generation entered traditional educational structures that were completely unprepared for them, later giving rise to the misdiagnosis of what sociologists and educators call attention deficit disorder. This is the culture's misunderstanding of an evolutionary nervous system—a new form of pattern recognition that our culture does not yet understand—that begins to enter our culture through people born in the sixties. Often, kids labeled hyperactive or diagnosed with ADD are intuitive and psychic.

The Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the 1960s would describe that generation as having fewer filters, thus receiving more information

per minute, or per square inch of space, than is the "norm." The amount of information they are processing is initially overwhelming, until they get the hang of it.

Having sixties consciousness is like being a shortwave radio set, stepping out the door, and receiving radio waves from Mars, continually deluged with snippets of information, insight, ideas, psychic feelings, and nuances. Mainstream culture had no way of understanding, let alone educating, those subject to this torrent of perception.

Until now. This sixties generation is astrologically described as being in the process of transforming the mainstream culture that had misunderstood it. An astrological pattern lives in a whole generation, yet is fully expressed by relatively few, just as many seeds are released, but only a few bloom. But by speaking to these latent parts of our psyche through this astrological language, we aspire to increase the ratio.

The twentieth century's second powerful outer-planet conjunction extends throughout the 1990s. During this decade, Uranus, the same god of revolution, disruption, freedom, intuition, and awakening who presided over the sixties, dances with a new partner, Neptune, the god of mythology, dreams, vision, and yearning.

Neptune and Uranus conjoin every 171 years, describing a time when the old visions, lacking in vitality and having degraded into belief, no longer have the capacity to inspire. They send forth a call to reignite the culture with fresh mythology and the social action, art, and theater to bring that mythology alive.

This is the first time in human history that we have known about the conjunction of Neptune and Uranus, because up to and during the last conjunction, in the 1820s, Neptune had not yet been discovered. The metaphorical implication is that this is the first time in human history that we are being invited to co-create myth consciously. Our instructions from here to eternity are to wed vision (Neptune) to social activism (Uranus) and create a society based on Visionary Activism.

Although sixties culture gave lip service to spirituality, the world of social change and spiritual practice were not really wedded then—they just lived together, like everybody else. The sixties “revolutionary,” having not done the inner work necessary to resolve authority issues with Daddy, was still prone to what Swami Beyondananda calls “Tantrum Yoga,” preferring to be “right” than to be effective. Our challenge in the nineties is to transform that latent revolutionary into an artist of social change.

The social change artist forms an experimental collaboration between the gods within and the gods without. Examples of successful, spiritually driven social change abound. Through prayer and community organization, native peoples on the Hawaiian island of Molokai have effectively stopped all development projects since 1972. On the Big Island of Hawaii, spiritual activists sought to stop the destruction of virgin rain forest that was threatened by a governmental proposal to build a geothermal power plant. In January 1983 they invoked their presiding deity, Pele, the goddess of the volcano, and offered themselves to her as agents to protect their sacred land. Pele erupted in dramatic plumes of violet-orange outrage on the proposed site of the plant, hours before the court date to decide the matter. Pele decided the matter by convincing all parties that the site would be too dangerous. On subsequent occasions, Pele has erupted through her people in community uprisings that have included the actions of native children who have successfully stopped destructive projects. An eleven-year-old Hawaiian friend of mine was arrested at one such event near Kapoha, in which she said that the police were unnerved and softened by the cries of their neighbors—“Hey, have you forgotten you’re Hawaiian?”—as well as the sincerity of the children they arrested. The words *Aina a ke akua I noho ai*, one meaning of which is “The goddess is the land,” are carved near Pele’s home on Kilauea Iki; it is a credo taken completely to heart by the native people who live on her land.

The Mohawk Indians in Canada were informed of a proposal to build a golf course on their ancestral burial grounds. To prevent the development, they staged a sit-in blocking the bridge to Quebec City in 1994. When the army arrived with tanks and tear gas to remove them, the Native Americans invoked their gods. Just as the soldiers lobbed the tear gas at the protesters, the wind shifted, blowing the tear gas back at the soldiers. As the soldiers fled their tanks, the Native Americans climbed into the vehicles and chased the soldiers off their sacred land.

### CONCENTRATE ON THE VISION

The outer planets invite us to entertain the possibility that physical truths are metaphysical guidelines. To ensure safe passage when traversing a narrow bridge, do not look down, but only at where you are going. Thus, a crucial instruction to social change artists is: Concentrate on the vision. Neptune and Uranus say, "If you tell us what you want your life to look like, what you want it to feel like, we will be your booking agents. We will transcend apparently impossible obstacles and we will connect you at the right time, at the right moment, with everything you need to attain your goal." Focus on *what*, not on *how*.

We could all, no matter how disparate our viewpoints, probably agree on a vision of what we want the world to look like: cities blooming, everyone well fed, sacred stewardship of nature. It's when we get to *how* that we go to war. "How" contains the illusion of scarcity: "No, there's not enough for my city to bloom if your city blooms as well." Initially concentrating on "how" limits the imagination to the visible portion of the spectrum of possibilities, which is nearly always depressing. The Reality Police often take the form of depression masquerading as "realism." If we begin with "what," on the other hand, previously invisible pathways of limitless possibility open up and enchantment prevails.

Neptune says, "Dream, immerse yourself in reverie," while Uranus says, "Wake up." Together, they tell us to cultivate an internal state of *alert trance* as our ideal navigational mode. When we are driving on a crowded freeway, we do not want to be too alert or we would be paralyzed by the terror of the situation. Of course, neither do we want to be too spaced out. We need to be just sufficiently alert, in meditative reverie, to respond appropriately, contribute grace, and survive the modern world.

Neptune is god of the sea, governing water and dreams. Uranus is the god of revolution and constant experimentation. Pluto is the god of all hidden transformative processes. When we enter their domain, we are entering the pre-artificially lighted world, the oracular world, which is full of shadows and ambiguity. Neptunian dream reverie particularly does not like sharp, high contrast, of which television is the exemplar. Whereas film is reflected light, TV is literally shot at us as projected light, with much less capacity for visual subtlety. Studies have shown that the more we watch television, the less dream time we have at night.

We live in a world of toxic mimics. Much of the plastic used in food packaging contains toxic estrogen mimics. If we are deficient in our own estrogen, we will absorb the toxic mimic. If we are deficient in iodine (which we can absorb from eating seaweed or iodized salt), we will absorb radioactive iodine. By analogy, if we are not sufficiently full of our own Neptunian imaginative vitality, we will be vulnerable to absorbing the toxic mimics that popular culture provides. For want of a mythology, we have its toxic mimic, the soap opera of celebrity culture. A mythology invites us to be active participants. Celebrity culture is really an oxymoron, because it engenders passivity and cultivates nothing but envy and teenage yearning. Instead of participating in Uranus's real revolution, we settle for "a revolution in hair care products."

We must strive to be full of our own Pluto, to have a passion for positive intrigue, or we will be kidnapped by *faux* Pluto's petty—

and often dangerous—intrigues. Without a mission, we risk being drawn to street action (or some white-collar variation); without a clan, we risk being drawn to gangs; without a spiritual community composed of autonomous individuals, we risk being drawn to cults.

In the ensuing chapters, each Change God will offer us further strategic principles with which to navigate the wild waters of the modern world. As Choquosh, a Native American storyteller, says, “The elders have sent me to you today to tell you that *now* is like a great rushing river. And this great rushing river will be experienced in many ways. There are many who try to hold on to the shore; there is no shore. The shore is crumbling. The instructions are: Push off into the middle of the river; keep your head above water; see who else is in the river with you; and celebrate.”

In this millennial time, the rushing river only picks up its pace.