



## Pluto in Sagittarius Activates the Pluto in Leo Generation (1938-1958)

### By Divine Design

It is time to “take stock,” so to speak, not Enron stock, but Plutonian stock. We are now slightly more than half-way through Pluto’s passage through Sagittarius (1995-2008). What has happened so far, and what can we intend?

As the furthest planet from the Sun of our solar system, Pluto’s 248-year orbit both carves out the limits of solar—or heart-centered—experience, and offers the enormous space within that orbit as both subject of contemplation and field of psychic and spiritual expansion.

Pluto symbolizes the life force itself. It is the arousal of sexual energy in humans, animals and nature—spring quickening from winter to summer with the soft green power of grass blades thrusting to the sun through concrete. It is the ebbing of the life force—autumn surrendering green into gold and orange, falling into winter, that downward pull of gravity which through aging and the ravages of disease, sinks us back into earth. Pluto’s power is so great that it is known as the planet of extremes and their ultimate connection, flowing from one to the other, the mysteries of the emergence and decomposition of forms, of transmutation, death and re-birth.

Pluto’s passage through each of the twelve signs of the zodiac presents humanity with new challenges and new opportunities. Sagittarius is the third and final intuitive fire sign (after Aries and Leo); its view is lofty and abstract, ruling over the fields of philosophy and religion. These large perspectives on life are rooted in mental constructs which lie so deep within our minds that we do not know them; rather, we think we are them.

Any sign Pluto occupies requires transformation related to that sign. Pluto’s journey through Sagittarius forces humanity to undergo a rite of passage to reconfigure its fundamental ways of perceiving the underlying belief systems of religion and/or philosophy. This rebirth into higher realms of thought follows upon, as night does the day, our Plutonian plunge into the depths of the thinking processes controlling our minds, so that we become aware of how our brains are hard-wired. This

plunge feels like death. Not only our overt prejudices, not only our secret judgments, not only our identity, but our very existence itself seems predicated on the rock-hard solidity of fundamental assumptions.

As we allow these deeply unconscious beliefs to surface, as we consciously choose to melt them down, we release our terrified separation, to become less divisive, more inclusive, open to the breathtaking expansion of perspective which awaits us.

This year and last, as Pluto moves through the middle degrees of Sagittarius, it crisscrosses over the U.S. Ascendant. Look to what is happening here in this country and you will see where Pluto has chosen to focus. The views of the U.S. from inside and outside this country are extreme: The U.S. is both the world’s hero (from the U.S. government’s and the political and religious right’s point of view) and the world’s devil, or scapegoat (from the point of view of most of the rest of the world).

What happens in the near future in the U.S. is worth contemplating, as it shows the nature of the seeds that are sprouting in this new millennium. At the millennium moment, midnight, January 1, 2000, Pluto in Sagittarius was conjunct Chiron (actually a comet, discovered in 1977). Chiron symbolizes the wound and the healing of the wound. The wound which afflicts the U.S. is its smugly confident view that the rest of the world is separate from and lesser than itself. This subtle and not so subtle arrogance has offended and deeply hurt other nations and peoples. If the U.S. can heal itself, if it can rise to the occasion by humbly acknowledging that it is one among many, each separate but equal, all together united, so will the U.S. show the way for the healing of humanity.

Given the phenomenon of 9/11 and the unfolding Enron debacle which throws into high relief what may be the systemic corruption of capitalism—I think we can all agree that the Plutonian drama in the U.S., this tragic and exhilarating meltdown of who we thought we were, of who is good and who is bad, even of what is real and not real, is proceeding with such surprising and breathtaking momentum that we are tempted to call it

divine design. Just what this continuing Plutonian process might portend I hope to address. But first, let us begin with a simple personal story.

When I was a child, I knew what good and bad were. The rules were clear. Good was obeying my parents' rules. Bad was disobeying them. If I disobeyed I knew it, and knew I would be punished. Usually, I feared the punishment more than I wanted whatever was forbidden. I was no Eve; I was a good little girl.

In first grade, religion class, I dutifully memorized the answers to the questions of the *Baltimore Catechism*. There was only one answer, so again, the rules were clear.

*Who made you?*

"God made me."

*Why did God make you?*

"God made me to know him and love him and serve him in this world and to be happy with him forever in the next."

"God" was Big Daddy in the sky. Harsh and exacting obedience, but usually fair, like my human daddy. If I obeyed the rules, I would be a good girl and my parents and God would love me.

As a little girl, I don't remember any "temptations" that would lure me into being bad, except when siblings took or wrecked something that was "mine." In the dark and on my knees, I would confess and ask forgiveness for "fighting with my brothers and sisters." And more rarely, for "hating my parents," for some imagined slight.

I was a fundamentalist Christian. I made decisions as to how to act based on a mythological construct that I had been taught from early on. This life was preparation for the next. Depending on my "free will," I could choose either heaven or hell as my next and permanent abode—or purgatory as the way station to heaven. "God" was invisible, but my imagination conjured him vividly as the stern and all-seeing watcher from above. God's foe, the "Devil," tempting me to fight, sat on my left shoulder, whispering in my ear, though I could usually brush his advice aside.

There was only one thing about my Roman Catholic faith that disturbed me. And it was big, a real doozy. My best friends Mitzi and Mary were not Catholic, which meant they could not go to heaven. Their unfortunate fate did not sit well with me, as it obviously wasn't fair. But my strong mental training trumped even this incipient emotional disturbance.

Fundamentalism is attractive, for it makes good clear sense of the buzzing booming confusion of the world. It straightens out the chaos and messiness of experience by enclosing it within a clear framework so that there are defined limits to what one thinks, does and says. Fundamentalism is like a playpen, a small bounded area safe from the possibly dangerous results of natural curiosity.

Fundamentalism is a childhood religion, immature, and ultimately, simple-minded.

Fundamentalism is not confined to religion, but shades over into economics and politics. The capitalist "free-market system" as the only one worth pursuing is one example. The thinking patterns and speeches of President Geo. W. Bush are another, for they are fundamentalist in both tone and content. Witness his dualistic descriptions of nations as good or evil, his clear and seemingly certain knowledge of who those "evil nations" are, and the "axis of evil" into which they are supposedly aligned. The solution to him, and to the majority of the U.S. population still entranced by 9/11's plunge into collective fear, national self-interest, and the personal reflex to obey, is obvious: rally around the flag, boys, and smoke them devils out!

An essential and perhaps defining characteristic of fundamentalism—whether religious, economic, or political—is that it curbs and restrains natural instincts. But instinctive energy does not go away, just as the "evil" in the world is not eradicated no matter how we may try to eliminate it. Indeed, Gandhi's prophetic "an eye for an eye just makes the whole world blind," comes true as millions of Iranians rally to protest within days of that nation being included in the so-called "axis of evil."

What we call "evil" is that which we do not accept in ourselves. So we project it out, onto others, "them." And we hate them, try to jail or kill them, or at best, "tolerate" them. (Toleration is a mask for contempt.)

The attempt to compress, ignore, deny, or eradicate any kind of energy turns that energy sour and mean; it naturally seeks to escape the oppression, and turns on that which would kill it. Thus we have "evil" acts by others whose energy has been forcibly repressed or denied, treated as if their very existence does not count.

What we call "evil" is the result of energy which has not been acknowledged, honored or embraced. Evil is the direct result of dualistic, polarized thinking which projects evil out onto the Other, and does not recognize two seemingly opposite ideas as parts of the same whole.

Our civilization is built upon fundamentalist dualistic thinking. Like our computers, our minds are hardwired into on/off switches. This switching system is gradually, from birth on, incorporated into our daily experience, to result in a profound split between the mind and the body which Descartes identified in his famous "Cogito ergo sum." The "I" is identified with the "mind" which thinks, elevated "above" the body which it treats as a mere object, a machine.

For me, aside from the huge horrible fact that my friends couldn't go to heaven, as a child my particular brand of fundamentalism was not difficult to adhere to, and it offered a certain comfort, because things were so

clear. I did not have to think, and I rarely had a “bad conscience.”—But, of course, that is not really true, because the one huge horrible fact meant that in order to “believe” what I was taught, I had to violently refuse my instinctive emotional response. Rather than being full and whole-hearted, my relations with my little friends had to be invisibly screened, held off, by the mind.

This capacity to hold off one’s emotional response usually gets fouled up at puberty. I was no exception. The Plutonian power of the life force surged through my body like an oncoming tide, and “I”—the ego that had been so carefully trained to make decisions depending on clear rules about what was good and bad—struggled mightily to stay in charge.

Temptation was constant. Simply catching a glimpse of my boyfriend set my pelvis thrumming. There was nothing “I” could do about it. My mind was drowning in a sea of emotion. Whereas before I had been a mind, now I was a body. I hated myself. I felt ashamed and disgusted and guilty. Valiantly, I tried to stuff my emotions back into the box. So determined was “I” to be “good” that “I” succeeded, at great cost. Not only my emotional body suffered from not being allowed to express its natural growth and development, so did my physical body: my menstrual periods did not begin until I was 16 years old, and were rare and scanty until my first child, when I was 21.

I was one of the few women in my generation for whom natural childbirth was an option. The nine months leading up to and including the birth of my first child changed me forever, and I would say now, was my first truly religious experience, in the original definition of “religio”—“to bind back.”

During pregnancy I felt terrifically real, connected, alive—for the first time in my life. The process of physically harboring the conception and growth of an infant bound me back to the body, its divine instinctive life which has been present for millions of years on this planet and which expands and contracts like a tide, spewing seed and ovum into fertile mud sprouting shoots of all forms of life up and out and back again, into itself. Little Sean’s emergence into the world through the gates of my bloody thighs plunged me into the Plutonian mysteries of birth and death.

Birthing spelled the death-knell for my fundamentalist self, of all that I had been brainwashed to believe—though it took decades to fully acknowledge and embrace this transformation and to come into balance. From then on, rather than obeying any outside person or force or system, I gradually shifted my focus to attune to the life force within—what it needs now, what it is seeking to express through me.

All fundamentalist systems that I am aware of repress

this basic energy of life, of aliveness, of sex. The sexual power erupts at puberty, twisting its serpentine path into every cell of our body, so that puberty is a life-changing experience for every person alive. And yet very few of us are supported in that momentous initiation.

It is interesting to note that animals do not wage war. That they do not seek power over others, except to ensure their own momentary survival. I notice my two cats, how they play—and how they fight! Fighting and playing are two aspects of one reality, and the one shades into the other. I get the distinct impression that the “fighting” end of this continuum is fun, too, that they are, in effect, sharpening their claws and instincts on each other, exercising the divine aliveness which quivers through their sleek muscles as naturally as their breathing.

And I notice how dogs come to terms with each other, sniffing and posturing, and generally showing each other “who is boss” through spontaneous ritual and pantomime.

And I feel personally supported by the presence of the wild animals that co-inhabit this Teton Valley—elk, deer, lion, bison, moose, bear, fox, coyote, wolf, raven, eagle, hawk—all of whom instinctively keep to their rightful places in the hierarchy of life—if we would only let them. We can look to animals, and to the animalian instinctive knowledge that our own bodies will share with us, if we only ask. Our bodies are the source of divine direction, so that we may find ways to cooperate with each other, and reduce our tendency to politely compete and/or openly fight.

The competition built into fundamentalist capitalism is, to me, a cynical economic system, an admission that we have forgotten our instincts. That we have lost contact with our deeper minds, which are securely rooted in the body, and naturally seek other bodies to hold, to protect and cherish, to caress.

The gathering focus on the Goddess as the Great Mother, ruling over birthing and deathing, and all heartbeats in between, presents us with the direction we need to go as a civilization: towards balance between male and female. Many commentators have noticed that where women are respected and educated as equals, their contribution to society helps to balance the testosterone levels in sexually frustrated young men so that they are not so warlike. Women are the carriers of the race, they birth and nurture and feed the children which, as we all know, are our only hope for a peaceful future. In daily lives as invisible weavers of human relations and human industry, women instill culture and values.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, we find George W. Bush, with a Mercury/Pluto conjunction in Leo in the first house of his birthchart. I remember first seeing that conjunction during the presidential campaign and shud-

dering. What was that about? In the opening months of his presidency, he seemed to be projecting that conjunction onto advisors like Cheney and Rumsfeld, hawks whose warlike view of the world, buttressed now, I imagine, by Viagra, has not shifted since Bush pere's administration.

Pluto, as ruler of the fixed sign Scorpio, was in Leo, another fixed sign, for the generation which includes George W. Bush (those born between 1938-1957). I imagine that includes most of my readers here. Our entire Pluto in Leo generation is naturally inclined to hold a strong and stubborn (fixed), even paranoid (Scorpio), and prideful (Leo) focus. When, as with George W. Bush, Pluto is closely coupled with Mercury, also in Leo, and placed in the first house, this conjunction expresses directly through the personality and is focused, unless evolving, on communicating fundamentalist ideas.

The unconscious tendency, with Pluto conjunct Mercury, is to think in extremes: it is no wonder that Bush sees the world in terms of a clear demarcation between "good" (us) and "evil" (them). September 11, 2001 changed him. Within days he had switched projecting this dynamic and powerful aspect onto others and instead began to identify with it. Notice his tendency now, to use the pronoun "I" in projecting American force; he personally identifies with America and has taken on a bloviated imperial stance.

This sudden and startling conversion into George II is not so astonishing to contemplate when we remember that he was born a Cancer, on July 4, the U.S. birthday. The September 11th attack on our shores galvanized the Cancer Sun of both the president and the nation: we recognized our vulnerability and he took on the archetypal role of protective parent.

Fundamentalist fanaticism of all kinds squeezes the heart into the mind. It trains people to suppress their instincts for life and unite all aspects of themselves into a single-minded way of seeing and acting. We should not be surprised that suicidal terrorists lurk everywhere, as they are the exception that proves the rule, the radical fringe of a fundamentalist mindset which afflicts world civilization.

I am of two minds when I think about George Bush. On the one hand I wince at his imperial attitude now, his simple-minded good/evil certainty; on the other hand, I am in awe of how, in the wake of 9/11, the archetypal power rose up and bound him and his nation into the Cancerian drama. And Cancer, the sign of the family, of love and bonding and nurturance and protection of the young and the old and the otherwise vulnerable, has its blindness, as do all signs. The blindness of Cancer is its tendency to be clannish, to protect what is considered "our family" and to ignore the rest of the world.

But Cancer is also the sign of the Great Mother—and the Statue of Liberty, remember, is a woman. This archetype of the Great Mother is not something than an individual human can take on with impunity. Unfortunately, at this point, Bush has conflated his ego with the archetype. But Bush is not the Great Mother—or Great Father; no individual is. One way of defining a fanatic is that he or she personally identifies with an archetype, ignoring his/her vulnerable and flawed humanity.

Finally, I wish to address my fellow members of the Pluto in Leo generation, we who woke up the world in the '60s with our rock star egos, our intense pulsing needs for sex and creative self-expression. Now, 40 years later, as Pluto in Sagittarius trines (in harmony with) our original Pluto in Leo placement, let us hope we have become not just older, but wiser. For it is time that we enter more deeply into the meaning of this generational placement. Leo, besides being the sign of the ego, is, when evolving, the sign that rules the heart. In this continuing millennial seed moment, it is time to open our hearts. Time to become heroes, by manifesting the Leo courage (coeur=heart) of our generational birthright. Rather than squeezing our hearts into competing unreal uptight mental ideologies, thereby setting our civilization up for a collective heart attack, let us loosen our hearts, and allow the mind to sink from the head into that two-beat rhythm which pulses through us all. For as we open our hearts, we channel the full force of Pluto to transform first, ourselves, and then, the entire human family.

As the U.S. seems to be the most affected by this Pluto in Sagittarius transit, so the U.S. is the natural leader of the world, and the Pluto in Leo generation is naturally configured to offer its Leo leadership to the U.S. in this role as exemplar of a new way of thinking and of being. A way which includes, rather than excludes, a way in which all religions and all ways of seeing the world are recognized as creative expressions of the divine will, of divine design.

George W. Bush needs us. He needs us to allow him the space to open his own heart; he needs us to show him the way.

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