Essay

# THE URANUS/PLUTO IN VIRGO GENERATION: 1962-1968

*Welcome to Planet Earth,* 1986

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## Introduction

Coming in over my car radio on the six o'clock evening news, July 14, 1986, as Pluto reaches its station, this item: "6000 young people between 15 and 24 committed suicide in 1985, three times the number during 1982."

In 1982 Uranus was in the early degrees of Sagittarius. By 1985 Uranus was moving across 14-17 degrees of that sign, directly squaring (90 degrees away from) the position of a rare and profound Uranus/Pluto conjunction which occurred during the years 1962-1968. The children born during that conjunction, who have that conjunction seeded deep in their collective psyche, those souls who streamed into the earth plane during that revolutionary time — were, in 1985, between 17 and 23 years of age.

Transit Uranus squaring natal Uranus/Pluto in 1985: an extraordinary generational signature was coming alive, and thousands of these children were killing themselves.

Sometime on a cold winter Wyoming night in early 1986 a report came in on the police radio. Teenager . . . disorderly . . . disturbing the neighbors . . . landlord called in. The police car swings around, heads north, accelerating.

Flashback to a few minutes earlier. The teenager in question is short, muscular, 17 years old. A recent high school dropout, he is sitting on the single remaining chair in the living room of what had been his first apartment out on his own. Now the room is empty, except for broken glass and plaster littering the floor. The boy is wasted, spent. He leans over, his arms dangling to the floor. In one hand he clutches an obviously deadly medieval looking crossbow; in the other, he holds an arrow. There is a glazed look in his eye.

He begins to raise the crossbow up off the floor. As he does the landlord suddenly bursts through the door into the room. The boy sits directly across from the door, and he seems to be aiming an ancient crossbow and arrow directly at the landlord's face.

Frightened out of his wits, the landlord panics, backs out of the room, slams the door and runs to call the police.

Five minutes later the police arrive. Cautiously, they kick open the door, to find the boy now standing, facing them, feet apart, tensed, defiant, slit-eyed. The crossbow is aimed at his own open mouth, and his finger is on the trigger, ready to fire.

A sergeant the boy has encountered on a previous occasion begins to quietly talk to him. No response. The finger stays on the trigger. The sergeant persists: "If you miss, you'll damage yourself, be a vegetable, is that the way you want to live for the rest of your life?"

The boy moves the crossbow a few inches, so that it no longer aims at his face. The sergeant continues, pleading. Finally, the boy pulls the trigger, releasing the arrow, which pierces the ceiling. Sighing, he drops his hands to his sides, crumples in obedience to these adult, uniformed authorities he has always hated.

The boy's name is Andy, and his mother Todd is a friend of mine.

Three years ago Todd asked me to read the birthcharts for herself and her family. At that time Andy's explosive energy was still nascent. She had a hard time accepting what I had to tell her about his future, the violence inside him, his coming need to let that out.

This article focuses on the “astrological signature” of Andy and others like him, born during a revolutionary time, and destined to play principal roles when that revolution comes of age. As these young people grow into maturity, so will the seed planted within them at birth sprout, take root and flower.

Between 1962 and 1968 two planets, Uranus and Pluto, came together in the sky for the first time in 115 years. Both these planets travel in orbits which lie at enormous distances from the Sun. Their cycles are of great length, and signify slow moving collective processes, mass conditions and events. Each successive conjunction between these two “outer” planets sounds a new note in the heavens — and in our inner lives.

Uranus/Pluto: During these conjunctions the energy of sudden radical change (Uranus) and massive, total transformation (Pluto) unite, fuse. This last time, between 1962 and 1968, these planets met in Virgo, ruled by Mercury. The planet Mercury governs the mind and the nervous system. Placed in its own sign Virgo, mercurial energy is particularly strong, and signifies service and healing, using the concrete, technical, practical, analytic mind.

Here on earth, the Uranus/Pluto years are now known as “the ‘60s,” a time which ignited a slow moving, but accelerating, and inexorable social and cultural shift. The revolution in consciousness, initiated then, is transforming the ways we perceive and order both our world and our function within it. And the fruits of this revolution will ripen as the children born during it mature.

In this article, I investigate the astrological signature of this generation, how it has already begun to make its mark upon the world. I then place this group within the larger sociological context of its birth. The “’60s,” and discuss the astrological signature of “the hippies” who made that decade famous. The hippies were the parents of the Uranus/Pluto generation; their role in the Uranus/Pluto drama continues to this day and beyond. Indeed, the nature of the ongoing relations between these parents and their children will be critical for many years to come. This generation is truly an endangered

species. Deprived of any real support among adults who do not understand them, these young ones may well self-destruct.

## Some Characteristics of the Uranus/Pluto Generation

These young people, now 17 to 23 years old, are extremists by nature, and must be recognized as such. For some of them this intensity will remain muted, buried — perhaps forever, or perhaps until some inner or outer event sparks them into action. For others, like Andy, intensity is a fact of life.

"He was contemptuous of the educational system since first grade. It was hard for me to argue with him, since he was usually right!" says his mother. "He ran away from school the very first day. In one door and out the other."

Now 18 years old, Andy was born in 1968. His birthchart shows Uranus and Pluto conjunct in Virgo, sextile (60° from) Sun, Mars and Midheaven, all conjunct, in Cancer, and sextile Moon which is conjunct Neptune in Scorpio. Six out of ten planets, plus the Midheaven, all related through one geometrical pattern in the sky. Six planets crosslinking, synergizing — this is a major energy system, known in astrology as a "minor grand trine."

Both the Midheaven and three of these planets (Sun, Moon, Mars) are personal, individual. Because they are personal, they are usually experienced consciously. The other three (Uranus, Neptune, Pluto) are collective, generational.

Generational energies are those of the long-cycled planets, so long that we cannot hope to complete even one cycle of them during one lifetime. Therefore we cannot see how they work as a whole, cannot understand them. What we cannot understand we usually are not aware of. These planets work underground, they activate unconsciously, causing us to think and act in ways we do not understand.

Most people experience the energies of the collective in this indirect manner. Blindly, unknowingly, they enact the unconscious urges of their generation. For most

people in any given generation, the outer planets exist as more or less “dumb notes” in their birthcharts. People like Andy however, are different. Andy’s personal energies connect/collide with his collective energies in a very direct manner through the “aspects” made among them. On a very personal level, he enacts the unconscious energies of his generation, tunes into those winds. His experience typifies what his particular generation is all about. His life serves, in a sense, as an archetype or catalyst — good or bad — for others born during the same time.

Like Andy, many of those with personal planets linked directly through aspects to collective planets are designed to live lives which are decidedly not “normal.” They transcend the norm. They set new standards. The lives they lead carve out new forms of cultural behavior in the future — or they can. And they will, if they are consciously understood and appreciated.

These same people can also go in the other direction. Overcome by the impersonal forces seeking expression through their personalities, they descend into chaos, hell. Especially is that true of this generation. It’s as if each of them, at his or her root, has a nuclear bomb buried deep inside, waiting to detonate.

The Bomb is inside them, and they are restless, irritable, extreme. Utilizing speed and cocaine to put their physical beings into overdrive, they unconsciously attempt to match the power of their inner life. Failing that, they use liquor and sleep and even do unusual exercises to numb the intensity, to take the edge off the constant inner irritation.

Andy is one member of an entire Uranus/Pluto generation. A generation which harbors an extraordinary energy, deep inside. The energy of brilliance, genius, cutting through old, outmoded forms with laser swiftness and power. An energy so swift, so incisive, so powerful, and so oriented towards emergency, intensity, that only sudden massive transformational shifts will do. And when such shifts occur, this generation will be both its agents’ provocateur and the ones cool enough to be able to manage the crisis.

People like Andy are gifts to the world; they are capable of more, much more, than usual. They are also much more likely than others not so gifted to go off the mark. Great

gifts are double-edged, they carry with them great danger. There really is a fine line between genius and insanity; between leading a fulfilling life of significant accomplishment, and ending it all in one significant act of self-destruction. The more conscious Andy and others like him become of the great forces lying within them, the more they can learn to use those forces productively and in an integrated manner.

Andy's way of using the Uranus/Pluto energy is typical of some gifted members of this generation. Typical in another way is my son Sean, now 22 years old. Like Andy, Sean is also an extremist. Long ago, he learned how to focus the Uranus/Pluto energy. Rather than having it swell to the bursting point — and explode, Sean channels it outward — in a precise, focused laser beam stream.

Once, when Sean was 12 years old I found him in his room one day, ironing his dollar bills . . . (Uranus and Pluto in Virgo, an earth sign, materialistic). Then, when he was 17, he started playing computer games . . .

"Hey Mom, I got over a million points! Come on down and watch me play!" Sean is excited. After weeks of daily practice, he has just broken through another personal barrier. I walk down to the game room with him. Enter the buzzing, ringing, blinking, clanging atmosphere. Kids everywhere, mostly boys, all gathered around these noisy machines, most of their games imitating some imagined technological version of past, present, or future wars.

Sean leads me to the game called "Asteroids." The boy who is playing backs off in deference to Sean, acknowledged top dog. Sean puts in his quarter and begins to dance, his feet, fingers and eyes precisely attuned to darting blipping lights on the screen. The lights fly faster than I can see. His own rhythm is entrained with the lights. I get dizzy simply watching him.

Sean was born in 1964, another member of the Uranus/Pluto generation. He has that conjunction in the 7$^{th}$ house, opposite Saturn in Pisces in the first house, sextile Neptune in Scorpio in the 9$^{th}$, trine (120°) Mars, Mercury, Jupiter in the 3$^{rd}$. Sean is more disciplined than Andy (his Saturn opposes his Uranus/Pluto). Normally a silent,

somewhat repressed boy (Saturn in the first), Sean comes alive to dance with the other, in the form of an electronic machine (Uranus/Pluto in Virgo in the 7th).

Sean has fully seven out of ten planets in a single energy system — four of them personal, the other three collective. Sean is another one to watch. Since he has direct personal ties to the collective energies of his generation, the structure his life takes, the experiences that he attracts and how he learns from them, will all be paradigmatic of the Uranus/Pluto generation.

Andy is now living with relatives in another city in Wyoming, working hard digging graves for a cemetery! He is grateful both to the system which showed him his limits by putting him in jail, and to his parents who sent him next on a NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) expedition, where he tested his mettle against the forces of nature.

Sean went on to be kicked out of that game room for holding up the same machine with one quarter for five hours, and then entered Carnegie/Mellon University, where he majored in computer math and now designs robots.

So far we have looked at two individuals who exemplify the energies of the Uranus/Pluto generation. Remember, however, this is an entire generation we are talking about, a stream of souls who all entered the earth plane within the same time span, and who respond as one to the same collective winds. And already, we are beginning to see certain types of social phenomena associated specifically with this generation.

The most obvious example is their music. I list a few of their favorite bands: AC/DC, Back in Black, Metallica, Ride the Lightening, Kill 'em All, Master of Puppets, Judas Priest, Turbo, Screaming for Vengeance, and Hell Bent for Leather.

Get the picture?

Uranus/Pluto in Virgo. The first such conjunction in over a century. The last one occurred just prior to the United States Civil War. These children are gifted with a terrible energy, they are geniuses, and they can also destroy.

The Uranus/Pluto kids, both in their music and their fashions (orange spiked hair, outrageous color and dress combinations) seem to emphasize shock value (Uranus) over any other. Their philosophy is nihilistic. They have contempt for the past, and as for the future, their motto is punk: “There is no future.” Already, they are radical critics of the society they grew up in (Virgo) and undercut its values, to the root (Uranus/Pluto).

Those young people who can identify with their music, use it to express their emotions, are lucky. Others are more introverted, and thus perhaps even more caught up personally in what this music is saying. Thus, for the past several years we have been hearing about the strange rashes of teenage suicides which take over whole communities, leaving the survivors with a mixture of sadness and horror. Closest to home for me was an epidemic on the Wind River Indian Reservation near Shoshoni, Wyoming last year where 19 young Native Americans died within weeks, most found hanging from the ceiling with their belts around their necks.

At the other end of the spectrum are the young computer experts called “hackers.” Displaying a near-symbiotic relationship with their machines, they lock themselves in their rooms and work behind the scenes (how Virgo!). These members of this generation have learned to harness their Uranus/Pluto energies so well and so finely that their technical (Virgo) methods baffle the best minds in the Pentagon as they access secret defense codes. No electronic network is secure from their masterful reach, as was shown recently by the young hacker, “Captain Midnight,” who interrupted a midnight television show to send his greetings.

I like to think we can look to the hackers and the “hacker ethic” to see one creative positive direction to which Uranus/Pluto leads. Hackers seem to be eccentric types (Uranus) with no respect for authority (Uranus, Pluto). They believe in the dissemination of information (Virgo) as a free object, are rapid and collaborative in their brilliant technical efforts (Uranus, Pluto, Virgo) and are constantly experimenting (Uranus) and improving (Virgo) upon previous efforts.

## The Transits to Uranus/Pluto

That we are already beginning to see collective phenomena associated specifically with this generation is not surprising. Since 1981, transit Uranus has been traveling through the sign of Sagittarius, square (90°) to its original position at their birth. Squares and other critical aspects (especially 0, 90 and 180°) activate original birth positions which otherwise lie latent, as tendencies. Uranus will not pass out of Sagittarius until early 1988, and especially those born in 1967 and 1968 will experience the direct square from Uranus until that time. The period of time of the square from transit Uranus is difficult for these young people, as their original explosive tendencies heat up even more than usual.

During the time Uranus has been in Sagittarius this generation has been forced to register for the military draft, or lose student loans. What will happen next? Indeed, what will happen next year?

What will take place during 1987, when transit Saturn, now in early Sagittarius, hits the middle degrees of Sagittarius, crossing the same points transit Uranus has been on this year and last, again squaring the original Uranus/Pluto conjunction?

Saturn is known as the planet of manifestation, bringing in what has been waiting in the wings. As a shorter cycle than Uranus, it could be the trigger which reveals the intent of draft registration. If the U.S. Government does have plans to draft these young people, I would expect it to be announced during the coming Saturn transit.

Saturn requires us to make choices, to decide. This Saturn transit — with or without the draft — may put this generation in touch, at least temporarily, with the self-discipline, long range planning, and sense of responsibility that will hopefully click in for good later on.

## The Parents of the Uranus/Pluto Generation

The Uranus/Pluto Virgo generation is perhaps the most interesting and valuable living on the planet today, perhaps the most crucial in this entire century. The century of the earth changes. The century the ancient Egyptian and Mayan calendars, the Hopi and Nostradamus prophecies lead up to. The earth changes beginning to occur now, at the very end of the second millennium, A.D. Now, when these children are in their late teens and early 20s — physically mature, but mentally, emotionally and spiritually still adolescent. They have not reached their Saturn returns yet. They do not have the self-discipline and responsibility we associate with that planet's first return to its own natal place at 30. They must be protected until they do.

And that is the job of their parents, the generation which, during the '60s, was both birthing these children and rebelling against the establishment at the same time. We must continue to protect our children, even though the rest of the culture would call them nearly grown up now. We must protect them, not so much because we are their biological parents, as because we are their spiritual guides. They need us. And we need them.

Only we don't know it.

We don't understand our children. They seem like alien beings. They don't have our gentleness, our loving ideals, our vision of a more harmonious and unified world. And no wonder. Our unconscious signatures are vastly unlike.

For us, born during the '40s, coming of age during the '60s, the following outer planetary positions were in place at birth: Pluto in Leo (we are the "me" generation). Neptune in Libra (love, peace, dope). Uranus in Gemini (new, revolutionary ideas). These three are all air and fire (visionary and idealistic), and are related to one another through what is called a minor Grand Trine (sextiles between Uranus and Pluto, Pluto and Neptune; linked to a trine between Uranus and Neptune — the "psychedelic" aspect, which encourages the vision and the validity of what we call "alternate realities.")

Our teenage children have their unconscious planets in earth (Uranus, Pluto in Virgo) and water (Neptune in Scorpio). They are more grounded, realistic, not to mention cynical and materialistic than we ever were. As I heard Arlo Guthrie, an old '60s hero, sing recently in concert: "My teenage kid said to me the other day, 'Hey, man, your universal love is a drag!!!"

We became revolutionary in the '60s, actually acting out our ideals — draft card burning, demonstrations, sit-ins —but this action was temporary. Fundamentally, we are dreamers, visionaries. This is our gift to the world.

For our children, however, the energy for radical action is permanent. They were the ones who came in then. The energy of that time burns in their bones. The energy of rebellion, disruption, chaos, radical critique and destruction of existing personal and cultural forms. We had no patience then. And we birthed children then who have no patience, who want to "burn down the house" (from lyrics to a song by the Talking Heads), NOW.

These children are the first products of the detonation of the nuclear family which began in earnest within a few years of the emergence of so-called "female liberation." We women liberated ourselves from our kids' fathers, we uprooted our kids and began a restless gypsy life of falling expectations. Chronically distracted, desperate, exhausted, we moved from one tiny apartment to another; shuttling our kids back and forth between their fathers and ourselves. According to Lee Copenhagen, "juvenile investigator" for Teton County Sheriff's office in Jackson, Wyoming: "The '60s ideal of equality has made it so Dad no longer wears the pants. Both parents are gone, too busy working, making money. Family just isn't the priority anymore. There isn't any support at home. Parents aren't there. Grandma isn't there. The parents say: 'I don't know what to do [about their troubled kids], I can't handle it.' There isn't anybody teaching the kids how to solve problems, how to learn to make responsible decisions."

Of the kids he deals with: "The smarter ones fight the system, the others just bounce off walls."

I ask Lee, what can we do? “Believe in them. Let them know that. Pound it into them. Keep bending over backwards, giving them another chance. But things are so crazy.” Lee grins, “How can we tell a kid to get his shit together when he’s never seen anybody with his shit together?”

Much of what I’ve been saying here doesn’t sound too optimistic. And it isn’t. These young people are riding a fine line; their energies are so powerful that only the wisdom which comes from experience will enable them to express those energies creatively. And that wisdom still lies years in the future, consequent upon their Saturn return.

Yet, for the first time in history, we can no longer take the future for granted. Our children are right. Perhaps there is no future. And no past either. If the past is seen as something to build on. Our children live with a sense of collective failure; they do not believe in the organizations which are supposed to hold the world together.

If there is to be a future, then we are going to have to create it. And that future will exist to the extent that we come to terms with our past, and forgive.

Ultimately, our children’s signature is one of forgiveness, healing: Virgo. Through Uranus and Pluto, that healing will be radical, explosive, transforming, purifying — through sudden emergencies, requiring total shifts in perception, perfect coordination of body and mind, and a psyche tuned to the need of the moment, now, right now.

Meanwhile, it is our responsibility as their biological and spiritual parents to help keep our Uranus/Pluto children from destroying themselves before they come of age. We have the vision of the future. They have the energy to carve that vision into matter. Without them an essential evolutionary step is not taken.

Let us appreciate our children. Let us encourage them to eventually express that extraordinary energy with direction and focus. Let us help them recognize how special, how very precious they are, not just to us, but to the entire planet.