

The Starfire Messenger



A Free Weekly Newsletter

From Esoteric Astrologer Maureen Richmond, M.A.

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Neptune in Pisces and the Manipulation of Public Opinion

The last six months have seen the drastic imposition of a mental and emotional vise-grip on the people of the planet to a degree of totality previously only imagined by science fiction writers. Worldwide, people have been verbally (and in some cases physically) bludgeoned into accepting and believing that certain death stalks the streets, the shops, their homes, and parks, that very few and preferably no one at all is to be allowed near, and that civic virtue demands the termination of gatherings, sports, religious observations, musical performances, singing, outdoor

recreation, indoor recreation, political freedoms, entrepreneurial community businesses, and every other behavior known to express authentic human nature, relieve stress, and affirm joy.

Instead, the people of the world have been informed that a “new normal” now reigns, a world order in which only the wealthiest few individuals and corporate techno-giants are allowed to financially profit, and no questioning of the official paradigm is permitted, especially as regards the planned injection of the entire world population with unknown gene-altering substances under the design of highly commercialized and profiteering pharmaceutical industries which have failed time and again to demonstrate any dedication to either science or altruism. Meanwhile, citizens worldwide have been corralled into the forced wearing of uncomfortable and dehumanizing face coverings, in spite of the fact that no incontrovertible scientific evidence proves the efficacy of such a practice. It’s all been done in the name of protecting the public from a respiratory virus which, according to statistics reported by the World Health Organization on September 10, 2020, is 97% survivable. Clearly, the severity of the disease and the severity of the measures imposed in its name are not equivalent: the second is absurdly more odious than the first.

With only a mentally-tough minority questioning this lopsided paradigm, the bulk of Humanity has been cornered into a strangulated mental universe bounded and defined by the constant broadcasting and publishing of disturbing but uncontextualized statistics meant to horrify and frighten the wits out of anyone viewing. Government and mainstream media around the world have converged on a common project: the presentation to the public with what seems to be a terrifying scenario, in which a disease over which they have no control is devastating the world, leaving a hopeless submission to extreme government edicts as the only option. Dispassionate examination of statistics proves otherwise.

There can be little doubt that deliberate manipulation of the world population through the manufacture and dissemination of fear and negative expectation is the core of the present world situation, the engine of destiny hiding behind the scenes, yet perfectly obvious through the tell-tale results of its actions. Manipulation of the public mind is always relatively easy for those with the advantages of power and position, but it's even more readily achieved when the public mind is in a receptive state. Astrologically, receptive states are symbolized by the water signs and by Neptune, God of the Waters. Thus, while transiting Neptune passes through the sign of Pisces, the collective of Humanity is more receptive than usual, and thereby, more vulnerable to manipulation. This is the case 2011 through 2026 while idealistic Neptune travels through watery and amorphous Pisces. During this time, clear judgement is hampered, but the tendency to easily believe is enhanced. Hence, the period 2011 through 2026 represents a time during which the collective of Humanity is signally prone to and inclined toward a debilitating gullibility. The period 2011 – 2026 thus presents easy pickings for those who would dominate, shape, and manipulate public opinion for their own purposes.

Starfire Messenger warned about this vulnerability of the public mind in June 2018, first describing the power of Neptune in Pisces:

“...the down-side of Neptune manifests as the inability to make necessary distinctions and hence the failure to exercise good judgement. Good judgement is a characteristic we all need to cultivate, but New Age pop psychology has often downplayed the importance of this human attribute, if not outright repudiated its rightful role in spiritual consciousness. How many times have we heard it said that a person ought not to judge? Many. If this admonition is taken to mean that we should not leap to unwarranted conclusions or evaluate the thoughts and deeds of others without consideration for extenuating circumstances, yes, it makes sense. But, if it's taken to mean that a truly spiritual person has no need of making any evaluations whatsoever, then here comes trouble. It's just this sort of sleeping at the wheel or abdication of all personal

responsibility which constitutes the downside of the Neptune archetype. At this level, the individual expresses the otherwise beautiful flowing nature of Neptune in a distorted way as a sort of spineless moral collapse.

Total lack of good judgement leads many a person into a place we call gullibility. Gullibility is a naïve willingness to believe anything one is told. It's a state of mind which bypasses good common sense and heads instead for a child-like intellectual innocence which leaves the door open for predators to rush in. The willingness to see exemplary character where there resides compelling evidence to the contrary is a manifestation of the downside of Neptunian influence. That's why we ought to keep our wits about us whenever the powers of Neptune are at work. We should keep our thinking caps at the ready, no matter how blissful and euphoric our experiences of the moment may be.

Neptune takes us into the world of inner images, of dreams, of intuitions, past life memories, pictures from the past, impressions, the vague and the ambiguous. These are rich stores for mining in the field of meaning, and we just might find treasures which, just like the Holy Grail, answer all our deepest inner questions. Even so, we should hang on to elements of structure, reason, and discipline. This will prevent us from becoming lost in the mists of Neptune as they rise and swirl while Neptune is in Pisces, 2011 - 2026. With Neptune, there's always the potential for indulgence in delusions, astral over-reactions, unnamed anxieties, creeping suspicions, unfounded and exaggerated fears, and downright paranoia. Reality-checks are just the thing to counteract the nameless fears potentially generated by Neptune in Pisces."

[Edited for use in September 2020]

One of the forces taking advantage of the receptive public mind during 2011 – 2026 is the social media website, *Facebook*, which through its promotion of one-sided narratives and censorship of dissenting voices has emerged as a major mover in the creation and maintenance of the covid 2019 terror. Two years before covid appeared, *Starfire Messenger* commented on *Facebook* and its founder Mark Zuckerberg, stating:

“Anyone keyed into the news these days is aware of the shocking revelation that *Facebook* not only knowingly carried on a lucrative commerce with Russian agents seeking to influence the American presidential election of 2016, but also harvested copious amounts of personal information from its unwitting American users and funneled this information for pay to digital marketing companies supporting the Trump presidential campaign. For this stunning performance of ethical nonchalance, Congress has called *Facebook* co-founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg to testify and explain the actions of his company. Meanwhile, Zuckerberg has embarked on an insipid mea culpa campaign of studied chest beating and unconvincing apologies which so far has impressed no one, for the simple reason that it all seems so obviously insincere.

At the time Zuckerberg’s corporate organization contracted with Russian influence peddlers and Trump’s promotion and support companies, Zuckerberg’s net worth stood somewhere around \$70 billion. The mind is hard put to see why an individual already drowning in dollars to this degree would find need to sell his soul in exchange for a few more greenbacks, but that’s precisely what it appears Zuckerberg did. Let’s have a look at his astrology to see whence originates such craven disregard for the integrity of the American political process on one hand and mindless rush to the money on the other. While we’re at it, we’ll check on Zuckerberg’s upcoming influences and see whether his gamble was worth the risk.

Born on May 14, 1984, Zuckerberg is a sun sign Taurus with Venus in that sign as well. That pretty much says it all right there, given classic issues associated with this sign. As is widely recognized, Taurus is associated with the creation and maintenance of wealth. Perhaps not surprisingly, the sign of Taurus plays a prominent role in the astrology of high-rolling real estate dealer Donald Trump, who has this sign on the Midheaven or overhead point of his chart. In its lesser manifestations, Taurus can be deeply materialistic and attached to personal advantage. That’s the distinct temptation under this sign.

However, this is not the whole story on Zuckerberg, so let’s dig deeper. Zuckerberg also has the Moon, Mars, Saturn, and Pluto all in secretive Scorpio, the lunar north and south nodes at 7 degrees of brainy

Gemini and casual Sagittarius respectively with Uranus close by in mid-Sagittarius, Mercury in very late Aries, and Jupiter and Neptune in business-savvy, sophisticated Capricorn. Zuckerberg is thus primarily a mix of Taurus, Scorpio, and Capricorn. As *Starfire* readers know, every astrological influence presents an invitation to tread one of two ways – the high road or the low. The high road of Taurus leads to dependability and productivity; that of Scorpio to penetrating insights for the solution of deep dilemmas; and that of Capricorn to upright and ethical behavior based on respect for social and spiritual standards. No problem here.

Oh, but the low road! That's the thing, for the low road associated with each of the signs emphasized in Zuckerberg's astrology presents soul-numbing temptations which can ensnare those lacking discrimination and weak on spiritual values. Running right down into the gutter of life, the low road of Taurus leads to carnality, indulgence, cupidity, greed, and excess. Likewise, the low road of Scorpio empties out into the chilling land of deceit, underhanded machinations, influence-peddling, plotting and scheming for the manipulation of others, and secretive action carried out in the dark of night under the cloak of stealth. For its part, the low road of Capricorn ushers the individual straight to the grim world of hardness of heart, miserly ways, usury, hard terms brought to bear on others, and the elevation of the profit motive above all other considerations. Here is the siren song of self-satisfaction, intrigue, and amorality which has called and captivated many.

Zuckerberg comes from privilege. Born to wealthy and well-educated parents, he attended an exclusive private prep-school, excelled in academics, and then landed comfortably at Harvard. The ultimate ivy-league bastion became his launching pad for *Facebook*, which he inaugurated with the collaboration of fellow cutting-edge preppie types. In his college days, Zuckerberg experimented as well with other social media prototypes, one of which was a particularly brutal item that blatantly rated college dorm residents for their degree of sex appeal and displayed the resulting ratings to the entirety of the dorm community. Clearly, even the college-aged Zuckerberg felt no compunctions against using his fellow beings as fodder for his plans.

As readers might guess, there are astrological indicators of Zuckerberg's shameless opportunism. In his astrological profile, the Sun at 24 degrees of Taurus opposes Mars at 20 degrees of Scorpio. When unrestrained, Sun opposite Mars can lead to aggressive, competitive, and even coarse or bestial behavior. It begets a rough-and-tumble personality, ever ready to engage in combat, and not the least bit compassionate toward the opposition. It inspires raw, raucous behavior and uncultured carnal appetites."

This personality profile sounds like that of another opinion-shaper, the infamous Bill Gates, the subject of *Starfire* commentary in April 2020.

Born on October 28, 1955 in Seattle, Washington, possibly around 10 pm, Bill Gates is a Sun sign Scorpio. Scorpio is a sign known for its shrewd analytical ability, as well as for its capacity to operate under cover of darkness and secrecy for long periods of time, rising like the scorpion at what it judges to be an opportune moment to strike suddenly and with force for the attainment of its objectives. As with all astrological archetypes, Scorpio may manifest as either the light face or the dark; it is always up to the individual as to which path will be taken in the uses of the talents and abilities conferred by a sign.

According to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey, the function of the sign Scorpio is to test the individual severely and to drive out from the hidden places in the subconscious any tendencies toward manipulation of others, cruelty, or abuses of power. Incarnation under this sign is therefore not an easy experience. Affecting all levels of the personality, Scorpio goes to work confronting the striving seeker with ingrained patterns operating at the three levels of personality functioning – the physical, emotional, and mental.¹ At the physical level, the Scorpio influence dredges up deep attachments to sexuality as gratification and manipulative power, exposes the tendency toward laziness and sloth, and reveals the temptation to hoard money rather than circulate it for the good. At the emotional level, the Scorpio influence dramatizes the ways in which fear, hatred, and desire for power twist the psyche and lead the seeker along regressive

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 205.

paths. At the mental level, the Scorpio influence demonstrates the damaging nature of intellectual pride, dishonesty, and intentional cruelty.

Obviously, Bill Gates is presented this lifetime with all of these spiritual challenges. Most notably, as the Bailey material points out, hoarding of money, intellectual pride, and intentional cruelty are typical problems associated with the Scorpio influence. As the world's most wealthy private person, Gates surely qualifies as a hoarder of money, even though he does indeed spread some of it around. He still controls an outsized amount, thus keeping more than circulating. Further, he tends to project himself into the world as an unquestioned thought leader, intellectual light, and futurist. His appearances at TED talks and in televised interviews reveal an individual who is ready to take the role of planetary authority on whatever topic he chooses to engage. He shows no shame or hesitation whatsoever in projecting himself into a father-knows-best role over developing nations, and indeed, the entire planet. This might suggest that intellectual pride is indeed in the picture.

Gates also has Venus and Saturn in close conjunction, an aspect present in the astrological birth chart of Donald Trump as well. Gates has his Venus-Saturn conjunction in the early 20s of Scorpio, while Trump has his in the late 20s of Cancer. The important commonality here is that both of these very wealthy and influential individuals have comfort-oriented Venus conjunct ambitious Saturn. Saturn in its worst manifestations can be a skin-flint Scrooge; Venus in her worst can be cupidity, greed, and self-indulgence. With these two archetypes merged in the charts of both these privileged individuals, the suggestion is that they are similar in some regard, neither of them long on compassion for the other person, and both of them given to getting theirs first, whatever the desired commodity may be.

Here are the positions for the Bill Gates birth chart:

Sun 5 degrees Scorpio

Moon 8 degrees Aries (based on approximate birth time of 10 pm)

Lunar North/South Node 18 Sagittarius/Gemini

Mercury 17 degrees Libra

Venus 20 degrees Scorpio

Mars 10 degrees Libra

Jupiter 28 degrees Leo

Saturn 22 degrees Scorpio

Uranus 2 degrees Leo

Neptune 28 degrees Libra

Pluto 28 degrees Leo

Ascendant 27 degrees Cancer (for approximate birth time of 10 pm)

Midheaven 5 degrees Aries (for approximate birth time of 10 pm)

Gates is in fact intensively competitive, as is revealed by his Moon in often confrontational Aries tightly opposite just as frequently pugilistic Mars. This configuration would shrink from no fight. True, pacific Neptune does square the Ascendant, giving Gates a softer, approachable projection. But under that, no. It's the domain of strategic Scorpio, aided and abetted by the aggressive Aries Moon and the steely Venus-Saturn conjunction. Yes, he is capable of great self-discipline as a result of all of these factors, but on the other side of it, much fellow-feeling is apt to be lacking. This is a chart which would not mind taking charge of the lives of other persons and running rough-shod over the rights of others to think for themselves.

With Uranus, Jupiter, and Pluto in the wealth and celebrity sign of Leo, Gates is surely tempted this life to play the role of the special golden-boy who can do no wrong on account of charm and magical ability to get things done. However, the deeper meaning of these placements is that this lifetime, he is being tested on the issue of right management of talent and power. This test is marked definitely in his chart by the fact he has Jupiter conjunct Pluto, an arrangement signifying the amplification of the power principle. In the spring of 2020, Jupiter is conjunct Pluto in the sky, affecting everyone, including Gates. Thus, under the Jupiter-Pluto conjunction of Capricorn in 2020, Gates is being invited to see just how far he will let himself go with his own Jupiter-Pluto conjunction. Some would say he's already gone way too far, suggesting that his private foundation

will assume the role of a world governing agency, dispensing vaccines and enforcing policies worldwide that will be expected to carry the force of authority.

Gates has almost always gotten his way in life. Will this continue? Currently [in early 2020], transiting Saturn at 1 degree of Aquarius opposes his natal Uranus, suggesting that 2020 will see him attempt radical leadership but will also throw him some obstacles to his personal wishes and insistences. In the next year, Saturn will square the natal Sun of the Gates chart. This suggests that even though Gates is already positioned by his purchase of power at the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control, matters may not go entirely as he wishes. Why or how could this be? Saturn in Aquarius: the power of the people and the imperative for the greater group process. Saturn in Aquarius says that the time is upon us to acknowledge the importance of inclusion and power-sharing. This is not a message particularly welcome in the chart of Bill Gates.

So who is Bill Gates? He's a stealthy Scorpio who has positioned himself on the world stage by dint of hard and unrelenting effort, yes, but also one who in a pinch is likely to do whatever is to his personal advantage. With his Venus function severely restrained by his ungiving Saturn function, he's like Trump in that. They speak each other's language a bit too much. Gates lives in Xanadu 2.0, an enclosed geodesic domestic system by a picturesque lake far from crowding and pollution; Trump in a gilded penthouse before he called the White House home. The symbolism speaks for itself. If these two fellows had been concerned about the homeless and disadvantaged before the Era of Corona, they had unusual methods for so saying. Now Gates wants to make sure all those at the bottom of the economic rung are brought into the world banking system, from where they can be monitored and checked for vaccinations. It's all for their own good, he would argue. And after all, he would have us understand, he knows what is better for them than they do. Saturn in Aquarius might have something to say to Gates about that.

Of note is the arresting fact that both Zuckerberg and Gates have a concentration in the sign of Scorpio, where Zuckerberg has

Moon, Mars, Saturn, and Pluto, and Gates has Sun, Venus, and Saturn. Scorpio energies unrestrained by the values of soul consciousness can lead to some pretty awful terrain, including deceit, disregard for the rights and feelings of others, deliberate mental cruelty, and willful manipulation of others, for unpurified Scorpio is well known to produce predatory behavior worthy of the most arch of villains. For such as these, the prospect of a receptive and vulnerable prey is too much to resist.

This is precisely the trouble to be avoided during the Neptune in Pisces period of 2011 – 2026, which brings back an echo of the now-departing Age of Pisces with its emphasis upon blind faith and willing obedience to authority. As Neptune in Pisces reactivates that tendency and thus brings it up for re-evaluation, there is much to be learned about the difference between automatic submission to seeming authority and right spiritual receptivity. That right receptivity is to be rendered unto the soul, the Solar Angel, the Guardian Angel, and the Elder Guides of Humanity, not unto those who would profit on the anguish and despair of those over whom they exert undue influence.

The simple truth is that the years 2011 – 2026 represent a passage during which the public is prone to manipulation on the basis of its proclivity to readily and easily believe, whether this be in regard to news stories or to the interior character of other human beings. Even if flawed, most people are basically good and loving, and naturally hesitate to see the worst in others. This is a beautiful thing of the human soul, but perhaps a luxury which can't be indiscriminately indulged during the time of Neptune in Pisces, 2011 – 2026, when the world population is under threat of being fooled by its own goodness on one hand, and by the abject perfidy of shameless profiteers on the other.

Analysis and Predictions for the Week Ahead

The Moon wanes through Wednesday September 16, becoming New on Thursday September 17 at 6 am CDT. The psychic atmosphere of the planet might be serene, were it not for Rx Mars, Venus square Uranus, and Mercury square Jupiter and Pluto this week. As it is, **the Rx condition of red-hot and fiery Mars in urgent Aries** has sparked many threatening conditions: for example, the raging forest fires in the western third of the U.S., yet another fire at the site of an earlier explosion in Beirut, and the emerging conflict between the people and their armed oppressors (such as in Victoria, Australia). The astrology of the week serves to intensify all existing tensions, driven by many squares and mollified by only a couple of sedating trines.

Monday September 14 starts out with a bang as the Moon conjuncts Venus in bold Leo and squares Uranus in stolid Taurus, 1 am – 5 am CDT, pitting unrestrained creativity and romance against demands for stability and continuity. Conditions around us change abruptly and the unexpected emerges. We also feel the Sun at 23 Virgo trine Pluto at 23 Capricorn, giving us order and method with which to persevere against and in the midst of upheaval. We carry on in spite of newly emerging conditions.

Tuesday September 15 brings the exact square of Venus at 10 Leo to Uranus at 10 Taurus, radically altering social connections and changing the ways we create affinities and linkages. Atypical associations thus arise, connecting us with different parts of the social sphere. The Moon enters Virgo at 1:37 pm CDT, setting a new wave of intentions in motion for wellness, organization, and service.

Wednesday September 16 looks like a bit of quiet before yet another storm. The practical and orderly Virgo Moon trines Uranus in Taurus and Jupiter in Capricorn 6 am – 7 pm CDT, making for a nice long interval in which productivity comes easily. Then it's sleepy time 8 – 10 pm CDT when the Virgo Moon opposes trance-like Neptune in disembodied Pisces.

It's the very end of the lunar cycle and everything in nature turns slows down.

Thursday September 17 gets wild again. The New Moon takes place at 6 am CDT in the 25th degree of Virgo, releasing new life energies and initiating trends. The Sun at 25 Virgo trines Saturn at 25 Capricorn, helpfully settling matters of work, employment, career, and daily routine. Mercury in legalistic Libra squares Jupiter in hide-bound Capricorn; attorneys rule as law suits proliferate on the world stage. Then the Moon gets in the act, entering litigious Libra at 1:56 pm CDT.

That Libra Moon takes over on **Friday September 18**, when it is square Jupiter, conjunct Mercury, square Pluto, and square Saturn from 5 pm CDT through 7 am CDT on **Saturday September 19**, this bringing onto the world stage a bevy of legal actions of import to the lockdown and business closure situation. The Moon then enters Scorpio at 1:33 pm CDT on **Saturday September 19**, shifting gears to the rigors of undercover research and the complications to be found in covert matters.

Sunday September 20 sees the Moon in Scorpio interact with the Venus-Uranus square remaining in the zodiac from earlier in the week. Thus, 6 am – 5 pm CDT on Sunday rocks and reels as the Moon in secretive Scorpio opposes excitable Uranus in resistant Taurus and then squares indulgent Venus in privileged Leo, thus rattling emotions and serving to inform all that matters are not as they might have seemed. That's not all: Mercury squares Pluto today, emphasizing the theme of hidden matters and the inquisitive thrust required in order to go where the information exists and mine it. Deep questions prompt thorough examination of documents, evidence, and all forms of relevant information. The Moon sextile Jupiter and trine Neptune 5 – 10 pm CDT helps to organize intuitions and get a fix on the right steps ahead, while emotions are stabilized even in the midst of potentially unsettling discoveries.