

WHITHER THE 20th CENTURY? - 18 July 1966

Today, we will fall back onto the roots of the 20th century—the beginning of the Age in which we live. I have spoken of the precession of the equinoctial points both spring and autumnal, when the Sun appears to stand, respectively, in Fishes and Virgin. About the time of Christ, the vernal point moved from Ram to Fishes, but humanity carried on for a long time under the Ram impact, since the Earth and its inhabitants follow the law of inertia. It was only in 1413 that the Fishes impulse seemed to take hold, and humanity has since been working from the heliocentric viewpoint. It should really work with both the geocentric and heliocentric viewpoints. The geocentric—the phenomena as seem from the Earth—gives coordination from the fixed-star heavens, through the planets down to the Earth. For example, as Venus joins along with this, then it is associated with a relationship between the fixed stars and the Earth.

But Venus has a life of its own, which is a relationship to the Sun (or heart) of our solar system. From a Copernican (heliocentric) viewpoint, Venus can appear to be coordinated with the Sun in a different way. The heliocentric gives access to the life of the solar system, while the geocentric gives a relationship to the Earth. Integration into the solar system comes through the heliocentric. One can even conceive of the solar system as lemniscatory in form, but this does not concern us here.

Let us study the aspects at the time of 1413, according to the heliocentric. At that time, Saturn was in Bull and Venus was in Scorpion (below the plane of the ecliptic), where its descending node also was. This is the commencement of the Age of Pisces on Earth; but earlier, astronomically, it had already begun in the heavens.

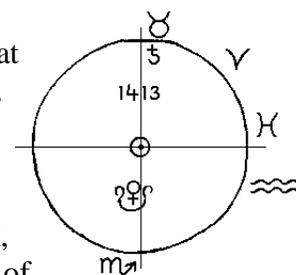
Approximately 2000 years before 1413, the vernal point was in Ram. That was during the Graeco-Roman Age, which commenced in 747 BC. If we go still further back, we come to the Egyptian-Chaldean Age, when the vernal point was in Bull. The Age of Pisces/Fishes is a reflection, in a sense, of the latter. These are all things to be studied, digested and considered, for everything from the Egyptian-Chaldean Age of Bull is reflected into our fifth Age of Fishes. Greek and Roman civilizations are the fourth Age, and therefore the center, of the seven civilizations, or Ages. Three preceded, and three will follow, so that the fifth Age reflects the third, the sixth the second, etc. We are now in the fifth Age since 1413. We have, therefore, this intimate connection with the Egyptian civilization, and it is our task to redeem certain impulses from that time.

In *Spiritual Guidance of Mankind*, Rudolf Steiner emphasizes the importance of our being aware that in the present civilization angelic beings are working who also worked in the Egyptian Age, though through Bull forces and also the opposite Scorpion forces. These same angelic beings went through their own Egyptian evolution and experiences. Some succeeded, and some did not progress through the fourth civilizations of Greece and Rome, nor through to this fifth Age.

What does it mean, when angelic beings “remain behind”? At the time of classical science, Kepler remarked that he had “stolen the holy vessels of the Egyptian sanctuaries, to work with them.” Saturn in Bull expresses this—especially with Venus opposite. Such configurations are a root aspect working through our civilization as a challenge. Will we redeem, evolve, and spiritualize that which hangs over us? Even their embalming as a means to preserve the physical body, which they gained through mathematical insight, came into our modern medical science.

Venus in Scorpion points to the autumn equinox during the Egyptian Age. It roughly corresponds with our Michaelmas, and it points to a position in humanity, by which we must evolve a new stand against the nature forces. Nature falls asleep at Michaelmas and progressively so into winter, leaving us to our solitude. It is essential that we celebrate the Michaelic Festival freed from all nature impressions, in order that we may evolve our own consciousness.

We must acquire a full understanding of death and evil. Scorpion relates to death and must be redeemed by Christ. The modern Age needs the Michaelmas Festival as a reminder to gain deeper understanding of death and evil, which have worked right through it, even into its economy.



Rudolf Steiner pointed out that a train on a track gradually destroys the track, but only as a side-effect, this is not its task. Similarly, this development of consciousness (the autumn perspective is approaching Advent) produces, as a side-effect, both death and evil. Only a new understanding can resolve this.

Let us now see how our 20th century is connected with this root position, which is written into the heavens as a challenge to this century. This is the original aspect of 1413, emphasized by Pluto and Uranus stepping into these positions in 1900. What does it say to us? It says that in the course of the 20th century, humanity must make a great effort to get hold of what was imprinted back in 1413. It is also a warning. Uranus in Scorpion challenges us, but Pluto in opposition (Bull) represents a tension. In effect, “If we don’t heed the warning, we must bear the consequences.” Pluto always stands for either spiritualization, or destruction.

In 1900 Rudolf Steiner first started to speak of Anthroposophy. This enables us to see its position in history. It is more than just an interesting esoteric movement that is not very urgent. He warned us repeatedly of our obligations, and he came to do so at a time of cosmic emergency. Uranus, associated with the spiritual beings in its sphere, echoes this. It was in the descending node of Venus, when Rudolf Steiner spoke esoterically into that Advent mood. Later, in 1925, Uranus arrived in Fishes, which was still in a winter situation, and it was toward this time that Rudolf Steiner spoke of as a looming emergency.

We know the result: Rudolf Steiner’s attempt to re-organize the social life of humanity, that is, *The Threefold Commonwealth*, was rejected. This is a root situation for this Age, but humanity fell back into organizing the social life into worn-out traditions of Rome and even of Egypt.

In 1945 Uranus traveled to Bull, opposite its 1900 position and to where Pluto had been. It is this that concerns the 20th century. Destruction after destruction must ensue unless we wake up. We are building the house of humanity entirely out of intellect (for example, atomic fission), and this house will destroy itself.

As we go through this Age, we find this axis, or alignment, accompanied by planets that are at a right angle to it, creating a square or Mars aspect of 90°. Then things happen, and then the question always returns, “Has the momentum been redeemed?” Has anything yet been produced that will lead humanity over into the Aquarian Age?

However, at the end of the 20th century, we see different aspects that can open new gateways into the next century. Here, you will note that Pluto will be in Scorpion, and the original axis will be activated. This century must attempt to break through to a new Bull. Look at its symbol (Fig.5c), at the head and horns of the Bull. In itself, it is seemingly superficial, but see it instead as a lower world into which a great cosmic world works from above—the Logos, which weaves into and organizes the lower world. The great Egyptian God, Ptah, is connected with this. He was said to have created the universe. How do we attempt its transformation? What we need is to understand the Logos, as well as the nature of physical matter and the atom. Physics cannot be held back—it is a necessity. But read the biographies of the great physicists, such as Oppenheimer, and you will find that at first they were greatly enthusiastic about discovering the secrets of physical matter. Yet, though they penetrated such secrets, everything was taken out of their hands and used to create havoc.

Let us look at this Bull symbol again. When we try to understand the spiritual essence of matter, this redeems the Bull forces. In 1945 Pluto represented our lack of understanding, because Bull should represent the world of matter penetrated by spiritual energy. In *Occult Science*, we hear that matter came from Ancient Saturn, evolved through Ancient Sun, and then Ancient Moon before it came to the Earth situation. It was created out of the Will of the Thrones. These Spirits of Will sacrificed their Will, which was transformed into warmth and densified into matter. All physical matter is the outcome of this sacrifice of the Will of the Thrones, which is imprisoned in the Earth. In atomic physics we release this Will.

We may be sure that these perspectives of the 20th century will continue, as well as the question, “How to re-direct them into healthier avenues?” Therefore, let us take it a step further. We have studied the heavens from a heliocentric viewpoint in 1413, and from that of the root axis working into our civilization. Let us again look at the heavens at the time of 1413 for illumination:

Fig. 5a

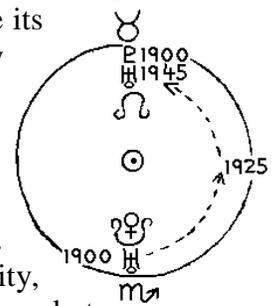


Fig. 5b

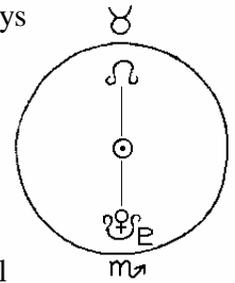
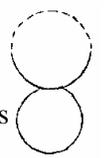


Fig. 5c - Taurus



Age of Pisces: 1413 _____ 3573

2,160 years

The Age of Pisces will last 2160 years. These years we shall measure as Sun years. Time is a relative matter of days and nights and of the Sun brought to its meridian. We can find the exact time of noon through the observatories—this being one unit of time. Another unit is the year. We know that the Sun will rise in the sky until June and then sink in the sky steadily toward December. This is another measurement of time connected with the cosmic rhythms. There are also other cosmic rhythms that play into this 1413 aspect. We can abbreviate those 2160 years in a manner we have done before. By such means of considering time, much can be seen in connection with the year of 1413.

In 1431 on May 30th, Joan of Arc was executed by the English. This is a fact of the modern Age that we cannot just ignore, doing what we like, without it working on into the future. The karma of this execution worked on in the sense of the transmutation of times: from 1413 - 1431 = 18.06 Sun years. Transmute into Saturn years: Sun years = 18.06 x 29.458 = 532 years; 532 + 1413 = 1945 (Hiroshima).

Where do we stand in this century? Let us look at the previous chart. The present position of Pluto and Uranus is between Lion and Virgin, as they are both in the tail of the Lion. Neptune is just in Scales. These planets move toward the autumn positions of the Zodiac. Neptune is already there. In an exalted sense, we must expect them to create a super-autumn situation. In a sense, they ignore the Earth. This aspect does not happen very often. In 1451, Neptune went through the autumn equinox, then Uranus in 1467, then Jupiter in 1479. This was the beginning of the Fishes civilization; and this aspect has not been repeated until now. It indicates that the last third of this century will be dominated by heavenly events that are autumnal in character. The higher forces of nature will recede, and we must even reckon with autumn storms, metaphorically.

However, in a natural autumn you prepare for winter and heat your house. You notice that something within you at Michaelmas is calling for a higher consciousness—an awakening from the summer sleep, which disperses the splendors of nature around us. We are recalled in autumn, as are the nature forces. The consciousness of the 20th century must also awaken to our true evolution. One almost senses that even the threat of atomic physics has been superseded by even more secret instruments of super-destruction. This autumn mood refers also to an occult nature in which we are equally involved.

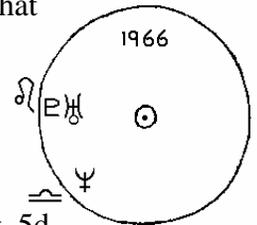


Fig. 5d

These are not pleasant perspectives, but we must see clearly in order not to be overrun by what might happen. What can we do? The more we are conscious of the potential of our Age, the more we are protected against mischief that could arise. We know that the “devil”, or Lucifer, does not like to be recognized. It is both our weapon and our protection to know and live with the rhythms we have been studying. It is immensely difficult to speak of such things, and it is a great responsibility. We should not approach such things out of pessimism, but we must be thoroughly realistic. We can be equally sure that there is help forthcoming. The perspective of Michaelmas is positive in a higher sense.

Answer to question:

In connection with Joan of Arc and 1945: Joan brought into this Age something that was needed for its development. Rudolf Steiner called this Age of Fishes, “The Age of the development of the consciousness soul.” In her time, the English were dissipating their forces on the French soil, so that they were unable to fulfill their task. Joan of Arc, through whom spoke the voice of Michael, drove them out of France, out of necessity. Thereby the English were thrown back on their own task—the formation of the empire through the discoveries of their seafarers, etc.

At the moment it would seem that the British empire has changed its character and lost its inner cohesion. Therefore something else should step in, though not atomic fission, whereby humanity will fall to pieces. In this age of atomization, one finds a tearing apart of matter and a struggle in every sphere. In Britain it is a struggle even to keep the Commonwealth together.

The death of Joan of Arc marks that moment in history that separated the English from the continent and led them back to their own development. But something new should now arise; the English should really start to evolve something in place of empire in order to stop this extending atomization of the world. What ought to arise should be a new kind of moral leadership, a spiritual empire—a spiritual being.