

PAINTING THE TOWN RED
‘A once in a lifetime event’³.

“And God-the-Mind, being male and female both, as Light and Life subsisting, brought forth another Mind to give things form who, God as he was of Fire and Spirit, formed Seven Rulers who enclose the cosmos that the sense perceives. Men call their ruling Fate.”

Corpus Hermeticum².

As the equinox was almost upon us (scheduled to occur at 7:20 AM AEST this morning - 23.9.09 - as stated in the ephemeris), the inhabitants of Sydney awoke to contemplate the strange and eerie scene around them and feel and smell the scent of dust in their nostrils. Doors had banged all night in the strong westerly winds. Outside the windows of our home we observed a thick pall of bright strawberry pink fog which also cast an eerie glow through the skylights (later in the day the television evening headlines announced that the spectacular red colour of the iron oxide dust had produced a really remarkable event). The sheen on the camellia leaves in the garden glowed with an unusual iridescent blue hue. I had seen nothing like it in my entire lifetime, and I was born in 1944 – what on earth could it be? My partner had the answer – a red dust storm. He had endured many of these during his year living and working as a pilot in Alice Springs back in the 1960s. But on going to bed last night after a spate of thunder and lightning it had been raining, albeit lightly, with reports of good rains out west and in the south, so what on earth was going on?

Listening to the ABC on radio we heard the announcer say, after referring to the dust storm, ‘It is the equinox. It occurred just 45 seconds ago – coincidence?’ It was 7:20 AM exactly. ‘Precisely my own query’, I thought, and the seeds of another article began to take shape in my mind.

We were due to leave at 7:30 to take my daughter to the airport to catch a 9:00 AM flight back to Brisbane, and having been assured that the airport was still open we set off as planned. En route we heard on the radio that at Broken Hill at 3:00 PM yesterday it had been as black as midnight in the worst dust storm the city had ever endured in its entire documented history. Shortly after arrival at the airport we received the not unexpected news that it had just been closed to all air traffic until further notice. So into the car to drive home again, en route receiving a call from my daughter’s father in law in Melbourne to say he had just heard that the dust had already reached Newcastle and was heading for Brisbane. On arrival back home my partner gave us the news he had just heard, namely that this was the worst dust storm to hit Sydney in 70 years. Later the evening news informed us that ‘it’s a first’ and that the last time Sydney had experienced a significant dust storm was in 1944 (the year of my birth, as I said), but that it had not been nearly as bad as this.

So, in fact, is it just a coincidence that this has occurred precisely at the equinox? Or is it fate – ‘as above, so below’? According to astrologer Liz Greene, the word ‘fate’ allegedly means ‘it is written’³. Was the picture written in the stars? Or the planets, as the case may be? So often in the past I have noticed the strange and unusual natural events occurring around the four important times of the year, astronomically and astrologically speaking, i.e. the two solstices and two equinoxes, and at times astrologically connected to these heavenly events by dint of earlier or later aspects made by transiting planets. I had often written articles about the phenomenon, two of which being ‘The Equinox Strikes Again’ about Cyclone Larry near Innisfail, Queensland, on 20.3.2006 at the time of the equinox, and another the previous year, ‘Kiss Me Kate, or the Taming of the Shrew’, about the triggering of the Cancer Ingress at the time of Hurricane Katrina at New Orleans on 29.8.2005. The charts for the moments of the four cardinal ingresses of the year appear to be a very important consideration.

So, therefore, I hastened to my computer to do the chart, and was actually intrigued to find that the Solar Fire program, contrary to the ephemeris, gave the moment of Ingress at Sydney as 7:07 AM rather than 7:20 AM. No doubt there is a reason for this but it escapes my mind at the present moment. The only problem is that the Solar Fire chart gives a late Libra Ascendant, whereas the chart based on the ephemeris time would give a Scorpio Ascendant, undoubtedly a significant difference for the purposes of interpretation, but never mind, there is still plenty else to go on.

Without going into too much of an in depth analysis of the chart in the manner of various other superior pundits in our midst here in Sydney, I would nevertheless hazard to offer a brief summing up. I note first that the 12th House Ingress Sun is in a partile (within a degree) square to Pluto in Capricorn in the Third House. Perhaps the cold dry earth sign could be seen to denote the dust, the third house the 1500

kilometre distance the dust was said to have travelled from its origin inland between Woomera and Lake Eyre in South Australia and the far west of this state, and the air sign the strong north westerly winds on which it travelled! Perhaps the 12th House is the unseen origin of the dust and the winds, hidden from our eyes and whipped up under cover of darkness, propelled in an easterly direction throughout the night towards the coast on a path of destruction, finally to wreak havoc on our heavily populated harbour city before moving out to sea, while a proportion had moved north towards another capital city, Brisbane.

I also note the First House Moon in fall in Scorpio while at the same time strengthened by its position in an angular house – a transformational time for the public, with a certain amount of difficulty involved? Also significant is the prominent Mars in fall in Cancer but strengthened by its position right on the Midheaven (the red dust and pink glow coming from the sky above us? I do see that Rex Bills gives Mars rulership of red sand, and no doubt the dust is just a finer version of that). Most telling of all however, would be to my mind the conjunction of Mercury Retrograde and Saturn at the exact degree of the previous 25° Virgo New Moon which was also partile conjunct Saturn, and which occurred only 5 days ago. Virgo, as I said, is known as a cold, dry, earth sign. (Rex Bills gives Saturn as ruler of sand generally, no doubt as being small particles of rock, and therefore presumably dust, which is also just pulverised rock)¹. Besides Mercury being known as the winged god, he is recognised as a potent trigger of other more important astrological aspects and synodic cycles. In my observance of exceptional natural events I have often found Mercury to be stationary or retrograde. Transiting Saturn, about 50' of arc applying to the lunation at the time it occurred, has today now moved half a degree closer to exactitude, whereas transiting Mercury retrograde is just 3' of arc separating from the position of Saturn at the time of the lunation.

Of equal importance no doubt must be the continuing opposition between Saturn and Uranus, which was exact on 15th September just four days before the New Moon. This was its third hit of the present series, with the 4th and final one to come next April. The first two occurred in November of last year and February of this year. The two planets are just outside a one degree orb today of the exact opposition but Mercury is only 40' from the exact opposition to Uranus in Pisces in the Sixth House, thus making sure that Saturn is still tied in and part of this picture. Interpreting these two houses in the usual way in a mundane sense, it appears that perhaps there might be issues to do with health and hospitals at this particular location due to the current difficult environmental conditions, and in particular problems for people with breathing difficulties. However, the situation could also perhaps be extrapolated to mean that Uranus, the sky god and planet of sudden and unexpected, not to mention unusual, occurrences, has played a part in whipping up the winds and the dust. Rex Bills gives Mercury as ruling winds, but Uranus as ruling strong winds. In the sign of Pisces perhaps Neptune's influence is felt to be the dust's insidious penetration into nooks and crannies, leaving nothing sacred from its onslaught.

So, to recap, basically what we have is a situation where we have recently seen the occurrence of the third hit of the Saturn-Uranus Opposition on 15.9.09, then the Virgo New Moon conjunct Saturn activated this four days later on 19.9.09, and finally transiting Mercury retrograde and Saturn activated this at the very time of the Libran Ingress (23.9.09) square to Pluto, all within an eight day period. In contemplating this astrological picture, surely it can be seen as a very potent formula for something remarkable to occur, and in the light of today's events, I do not believe I am mistaken.

Indeed, this natural event has been a highly unusual and unexpected one at this location, involving a huge amount of disruption to daily life (Uranus) and restriction of movement affecting the general public, as flights and ferries were cancelled (Saturn-Mercury Retrograde). Neither did other parts of the country remain unaffected, witness the fact that the dust and winds also badly affected both the nation's capital, Canberra as well as Brisbane, 1000 kilometres to the north, and with northern Tasmania was simultaneously experiencing strong winds and torrential rain, while snow was forecast on the Alps. No doubt it took the final trigger of the Libra Ingress, in particular with its exact square aspect to Pluto – perhaps 'the final straw which broke the camel's back' - to bring about the highly unusual weather events of today.

Lisa Kimpton, Sydney.
September Equinox, 23.9.09.

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Astrodata. (Charts for Sydney, N.S.W., Australia)

Saturn-Uranus Opposition 15.9.09. 10:50 PM.

New Moon 19.9.09. 4:45 AM.

Libra Ingress. 23,9.09, 7:20 AM.

Bibliography

1. **Bills, Rex E.** 'The Rulership Book: A Directory of Astrological Correspondences'. AFA. Tempe, Arizona. 1971.
2. **Greene, Liz** 'The Astrology of Fate'. HarperCollins. London, 1984.
3. Radio news report P.M. Wednesday, 23.9.09.