

In the Sky

World Transits 2007–2012

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One could scarcely imagine a more vivid and dramatic expression of archetypal themes associated with the current Uranus-Pluto alignment than the unexpected wave of revolutions that tore through the countries of the Middle East and North Africa over the last two years. Protest, rebellion, revolution, social tumult and turbulence, the powerful drive for freedom at all costs, the sudden eruption of aggression and violence, the mass mobilization of individuals attempting to overthrow oppressive dictatorships and tyrannical governments—all these themes are reflected in the archetypal symbolism of the Uranus-Pluto complex.

The spirit of rebellion and revolutionary fervor that fuelled the Arab Spring has erupted in all corners of the world: in the camps of the Occupy movement scattered around many of the major cities of the developed world; in Madrid, Athens, and other European cities in protest against severe economic austerity measures in the wake of the financial crisis; on the streets of Moscow in protest against the Putin presidency; and farther afield in Tibet, China, Bolivia, and beyond, sometimes even in the face of brutal retaliation and barbaric treatment. Rising up against oppression, injustice, and the last bastions of prejudice in all walks of life, the spirit of the Uranus-Pluto complex is evident in a wide array of other prominent events and developments of the last years, too, powerfully disrupting and destabilizing old structures, inexorably calling forth human innovation and invention, stirring the dormant forces in the human psyche for good and for ill. Not only in the clenched fist of the freedom fighter and the banners and placards of the protestor but in a range of other ways in the

arts and sciences, for example, or in politics and technology, the powerful drives associated with the Uranus-Pluto combination have impressed themselves insistently on human experience contributing to the accelerated pace of change and desire for change impacting us all. Wherever one looks, the signature of the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex has been writ large across news headlines. In this article, we will explore some of the major correlations with the current alignment.

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In the last *Archetypal Eye*, published in 2010, Richard Tarnas described the major archetypal patterns evident in world affairs from 2007 through mid-2010, situating his analysis within the larger historical context of the Uranus-Pluto and Uranus-Neptune conjunctions of the 1960s and 1990s, respectively.¹ In this issue, we will focus primarily on events that have taken place since mid-2010. By that point a number of themes associated with the Uranus-Pluto alignment had decisively announced themselves on the world stage, each reflecting the combined meaning of the principles associated not only with that archetypal combination, but also with the larger Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square configuration (roughly 2008–2012). As we will see, the two-year period since mid-2010 has seen a further unfolding and, in some cases, an intensification and diversification of these themes across many different fields.

To begin, then, let us first review some illustrative historical correlations with each pair of planetary archetypes in the T-square (Uranus-Pluto, Saturn-Uranus, and Saturn-Pluto), and revisit some of the major events that have accompanied these world transits over the last five years. We will then look specifically at the events of the past two to three years, 2010–2012.

Review of Main Transits

Uranus–Pluto Square, 2007–2020

As we saw in the previous Archetypal Eye, we are witnessing the first quadrature alignment between Uranus and Pluto since the conjunction of the 1960s and early 1970s. The current square alignment indicates that the archetypal principles associated with these planets are in a powerful, mutually stimulating, challenging, and sometimes problematic relationship during this period. The Uranus principle expresses itself as rebellion, revolution, the urge for freedom and liberation; it is associated with the new, the avant-garde, the unusual, the countercultural, the experimental; it is related to sudden unexpected change and moments of breakthrough or breakdown; it possesses an electrifying, stimulating, and awakening quality that often serves to jolt and disrupt settled routines and ordinary states of consciousness; it is the principle of creative and technological innovation, the spark of creative genius. The Pluto archetypal principle is connected with instinctual drives, evolutionary transformation, death and rebirth; it possesses an inexorable, intense, compulsive, desperate, and relentless quality, driving things to extremes, destroying, purging, uprooting, and bringing the dormant and the suppressed to the surface so it can be released, transformed, and assimilated. It is the principle associated with power drives and power struggles, with titanic shifts and radical restructuring. It pertains to the underworld of the psyche and of society, to depth, to that which lies beneath the surface of things.

As Richard Tarnas's research has shown, during major alignments between Uranus and Pluto, such as the years around the French Revolution in 1789 and the decade of the 1960s, themes and impulses associated with the combination of the two corresponding archetypes become especially prominent in world affairs.² Thus, these times have often coincided with the empowerment of forces of rebellion and revolt, radical cultural change, the empowerment of minority and countercultural groups, the sudden release of repressed energies from the depths, the liberation of instincts and often primitive and uncivilized emotions, the bursting forth of desires for power and instinctual gratification, sexual emancipation, the breaking of taboos, and many other

related themes—all of which were evident in the sixties with the sexual revolution, the flourishing of rock and roll, the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and the rise of the youth counterculture.

Table 1 **Uranus-Pluto Alignments Since the 1780s**

Alignment*	Years
Opposition	1787–1798
Square	1816–1824
Conjunction	1845–1856
Square	1873–1880
Opposition	1896–1907
Square	1928–1937
Conjunction	1960–1972
Square	2007–2020

* 15-degree orb for conjunctions and oppositions; 10-degree orb for squares.

By themselves, Uranus-Pluto hard-aspect world transits tend to coincide with periods of socio-political and cultural upheaval and chaos, when impulses for radical change and more authentic, creative, or instinctually liberated ways of being cannot be restrained or held in check, and individuals find themselves caught up in or swept along by immense forces of change such as the titanic revolutionary impulse that impelled the overthrow of the centuries-old *ancien regime* and brought the downfall of the aristocracy during the French Revolution. These are periods of greater experimentation when people are willing to dare more, risk more, and abandon the rules, inhibitions, and cultural restraints that usually govern our lives in the pursuit of excitement, change, creativity, and freedom. The Uranus archetype serves to awaken and liberate the powerful latent instinctual drives associated with Pluto just as the Pluto archetype simultaneously empowers the experimental, revolutionary, and innovative impulses for change and freedom associated with Uranus. Often, the years of these alignments also bring leaps forward in technological progress and cultural evolution, as in the pioneering developments in aviation during the Uranus-Pluto opposition at the turn of the twentieth century and the

titanic leap forward in space exploration during the sixties.³ In sum, these periods are often characterized by a spirit of renewal, and by the impulse to bring forth a new world with the overthrow and radical rejection of the established order. The Uranus-Pluto alignment is the most significant world transit of the coming decade, forming the larger context within which all other world transits are taking place.

The following table shows the dates of the exact square alignments between Uranus and Pluto in this current transit, which, because of the planets' retrograde motion, will occur *seven* times between 2012 and 2015.

Table 2 **Exact Uranus-Pluto Square Alignments 2012–2015**

Date	Year
June 24	2012
September 19	2012
May 20	2013
November 1	2013
April 21	2014
December 14	2014
March 16	2015

Saturn–Uranus Opposition, 2007–2012

The second major planetary alignment of recent years was an opposition between Saturn and Uranus, in orb between September 2007 and July 2012. In contrast to the Uranus principle, the Saturn principle is associated with the old, the conservative, the traditional, the tried and tested, the established order, and the status quo. It is the impulse towards the preservation of existing forms. It is associated with time, old age, rigidity, defensiveness, and crystallization, but equally it finds expression as maturity, responsibility, discernment, enduring values, and practical worldly wisdom. It is also related to limits and boundaries, and to rules and codes of conduct, structures, institutions, governments, laws, and regulations. It is the principle of negation, denial, and judgment. It often manifests as delays, obstacles, blocks, and problems, and as repression, inhibition, and censorship.

During Saturn-Uranus alignments, experiences that break through, liberate, awaken, pointedly accentuate, or suddenly reverse the themes and characteristics associated with Saturn are often apparent. Thus, one might see sudden breaks in structures of all kinds—physical, psychological, sociological, and cultural—when old barriers and limits are challenged by changing circumstances and by impulses towards freedom and more authentic forms of expression. Indeed, as if to symbolically herald the transit, the beginning of this latest alignment between Saturn and Uranus was accompanied by the unveiling, on October 9th 2007, of Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth* art installation at the Tate Modern in London, featuring a large crack or chasm running through the floor of the building—an especially apt expression of the structural breaks and splits associated with the Saturn-Uranus complex.⁴

This archetypal pairing is associated with the acute crisis, the moment of breakthrough or breakdown, which sometimes takes the form of periods of economic and political instability and reform, as in the Black Monday financial crash of October 1987 occurring under a Saturn-Uranus conjunction. It is associated, too, with disruptions in the ordinary routines of living, sometimes as accidents, crashes, or industrial strikes—a theme plainly evident, as Tarnas noted, with the large number of high-profile accidents during the most recent alignment, including plane crashes or narrow escapes in Italy, Brazil, Holland, India, New York, and many other places.⁵

Table 3 **Saturn-Uranus Alignments Since the 1960s**

Alignment*	Years
Opposition	1964–1967
Square	1975–1977
Conjunction	1986–1990
Square	1999–2001
Opposition	2007–2012

*15-degree orb for conjunctions and oppositions; 10-degree orb for squares.

The Saturn-Uranus complex also manifests as the struggle between responsibility and individual freedom, as conflict between forces of

progressive change and conservatism, or as a revolt against oppressive authority and the established order—a theme well exemplified by the political revolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Block during the Saturn-Uranus conjunction of the late 1980s when both the physical structure of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet political structure were dramatically and unexpectedly broken down.

Saturn-Pluto Square, 2008–2011

In addition to these Uranus-Pluto and Saturn-Uranus alignments, in November 2008 Saturn entered a square alignment with Pluto, a combination that, as Tarnas has shown, is historically correlated with periods of immense tension, crisis, oppression, hardship, and “profoundly weighty events of enduring consequence,” such as at the start of the two world wars and at the time of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001.⁶ During these times, the instinctual drives associated with the Pluto principle give a visceral intensity and compulsive power to the range of experiences associated with Saturn. Hence, one often sees more extreme political conservatism, or even fascism, or there are widespread experiences of severe constriction, often in the form of poverty and scarcity—experiences that call forth great reserves of patience, resilience, self-control, and strength of will to endure. This archetypal complex is also related to the threat and sometimes the manifestation of extreme destruction, massive structural transformations, and apocalyptic scenarios. During these transits, life often takes on an oppressive intensity, or one has the sense that one is participating in momentous, destiny-changing events, as exemplified by the mood that gripped television audiences during the dramatic unfolding of the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, or the mood evoked by British prime minister Neville Chamberlain’s declaration of war on Germany in September 1939.

During Saturn-Pluto world transits, the Pluto principle often drives the contraction, limitation, and conservatism associated with Saturn to extremes, empowering and intensifying the sense of constriction, creating a near unbearable pressure. Thus, periods of history coinciding with alignments between these planets have often seen dire circumstances of material hardship, the depths of economic recession, a hardening of

political ideologies and views, and sometimes instances of puritanical witch-hunts and scapegoating. Yet the characteristic pressure often coinciding with these transits also brings forth the impetus to make crucial structural changes or to rebuild from the ashes following periods of destruction, laying deep foundations for the future. The Saturn-Pluto complex is associated with the destruction and transformation of the old and the obsolete, the forging and moral strengthening of the will, the purging and remolding of the character, the disciplining of the instincts and passions, and arduous undertakings of grave importance.

Table 4 **Saturn-Pluto Alignments Since the Second World War**

Alignment*	Dates
Square	March 1939–March 1941
Opposition	June 1946–September 1948
Square	December 1954–October 1957
Conjunction	March 1964–January 1968
Square	May 1973–May 1975
Opposition	December 1980–October 1984
Square	March 1992–January 1995
Conjunction	June 2000–April 2004
Square	November 2008–August 2011

* 15-degree orb for conjunctions and oppositions; 10-degree orb for squares.

Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-Square

These three sets of alignments together formed a T-square, operative between 2008 and 2011 (extending into 2012 given a wider, penumbral orb), in which the two planets in opposition, Saturn and Uranus, formed 90-degree square alignments with Pluto. This configuration indicates an exceptionally potent, complex, and dynamic alignment involving the three corresponding planetary archetypes, one that brought into relationship all the above impulses and themes in both extremely challenging and potentially creative ways.

As the archetypal Saturn is the principle of materiality itself, and therefore has much to do with material circumstances, relationships between the Saturn principle and the archetypes associated with the other outer planets can significantly impact material and economic conditions during the months and years of the corresponding planetary alignment: as we have seen, Saturn-Uranus is particularly associated with sudden economic reversals, economic instability, and financial crashes; Saturn-Pluto with deep recession, material hardship, intense experiences of constriction, and unrelenting pressure. When these Saturn transits occur in coincidence with the longer-term Uranus-Pluto alignment, as they have done over the last few years, the archetypes involved can serve to catalyze radical cultural, technological, and political change.

Remarkably, as Tarnas discussed in issue 2, the last time this particular T-square formed, involving the same three planets, was during the mass hardship and unemployment of the Great Depression in the 1930s.⁷ It was these conditions that helped to create a climate in which fascism could take hold as a major political force with the rise of Hitler and the National Socialist Party in Germany. Although not in a T-square formation, the three planets were also in major dynamic alignment in the mid-1960s. Similarly, the Reign of Terror in France, from July 1793 to July 1794, the most violent and bloody period of the French Revolution when the ruling Jacobins executed thousands of “enemies of the revolution” by guillotine, also took place under an alignment between these three planets. As these examples suggest, the concrete expression of this particular archetypal combination can take the form of political radicalism, extremity, and the relentless, often brutal drive for revolution, seeking freedom and instinctual gratification at all costs. In archetypal terms, during these periods the extremity and intensity associated with Pluto empowers not only the drive towards revolution (Uranus) but also the iron fist and enforcement (Saturn) to make the revolution succeed by the purging and destruction of the perceived enemy.

Although experiences coinciding with this three-planet T-square are undoubtedly challenging in many ways, they are also immensely creative, producing many consequential positive changes. Despite the immense upheaval and suffering accompanying these transits, developments during each of these periods laid foundations that supported the future development of the West and shaped the world as it is today. For all the terror and

bloodshed of the French Revolution, it established the democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity that have informed all democratic nations thereafter. And the intense struggle of the 1960s, of course, delivered momentous advances in civil rights for African Americans, women, and other groups—developments that continue to unfold today.

Table 5 **Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-Square Alignments**

Years	Alignments*
1873–1877	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturn opposite Uranus • Uranus square Pluto • Saturn square Pluto
1929–1932	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturn opposite Pluto • Uranus square Pluto • Saturn square Uranus
2007–2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturn opposite Uranus • Uranus square Pluto • Saturn square Pluto

* 15-degree orb for conjunctions and oppositions; 10-degree orb for squares.

From Financial Crisis to Austerity and Protest

Such archetypal themes have been plainly in evidence in our own time—a period, by all accounts, of tremendous crisis and turbulence taking place on many levels. Many of the defining events up to and including 2010—such as the global financial crisis, the 2010 Eyjafjallajökull volcano eruptions in Iceland with the ensuing mass flight disruption, and the BP oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico—expressed themes characteristic of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square alignment. In each case, we saw the same combination of principles at work, with similar themes expressed in different contexts: the unexpected crisis, widespread disruption, cracking and splitting, the unleashing of tremendous forces (geological, elemental, socio-political, financial), the extreme depth and gravity of the crises, the frustration and resentment they engendered. In the Icelandic volcano eruption in 2010, for instance, powerful forces in the depths of nature, previously buried or dormant (relating to Pluto), were suddenly and unexpectedly awakened (Uranus), spewing volcanic ash across great distances, forcing the closure of vast regions of air space

over Europe and causing unexpected disruption and frustration to millions of air passengers. Evident here were both the trickster-like disruptive qualities associated with Uranus and the experience of frustration of drive associated with Saturn-Pluto. Remarkably, this episode seems to have symbolically mirrored, at a geological level, what took place during the financial collapse of Icelandic banks during 2008: two eruptions of different sorts, with Iceland at the core of both.

The characteristic sudden crisis experience associated with Saturn-Uranus, the unexpected situation of high tension, was clearly evident from the beginning of the global financial crisis (following the chain of events set in motion by the sudden collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008). In the fallout from the financial crisis, we can see too the Saturn-Pluto complex's association with recession, poverty, and material hardship created by the high unemployment, negative growth, and the huge bank bailouts in Europe and the U.S., costing billions and billions of dollars, which have run up enormous budget deficits in many of the world's leading economic nations.

Here again we witnessed many characteristic themes of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square: existing structures and systems stretched to high tension or near breaking point; the desperate attempts to prop up a structure on the verge of collapse; the sudden awakening to a harsh new reality; the plunging of economies into the depths of recession and ruin; acutely restrictive material conditions with governments finding it necessary to introduce extremely unpopular austerity measures to counteract spiraling debts and to stabilize economies teetering on the brink of collapse; and, in Greece and Spain especially, widespread protest and revolt against these measures.

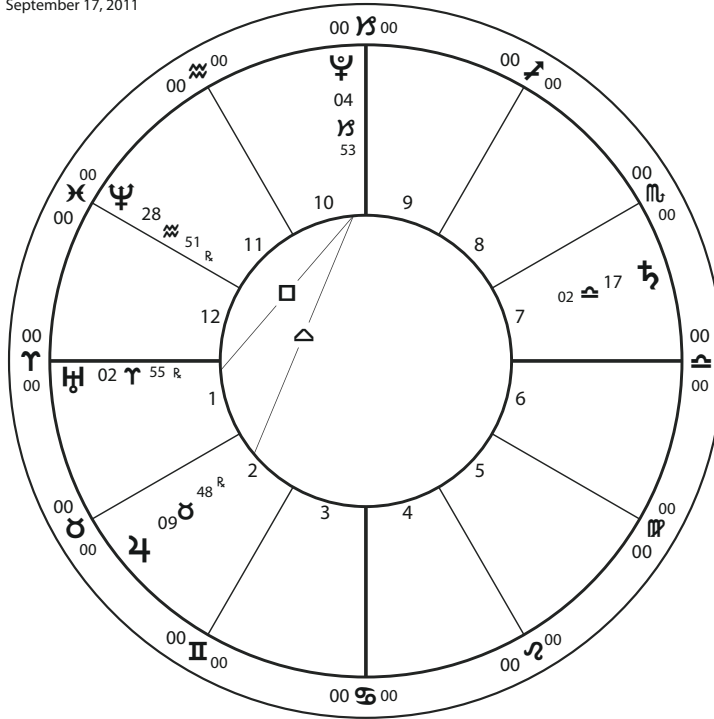
With high unemployment (especially among youth) and mounting national debts, the entire global financial system remains strained to near breaking point as countries struggle to come to terms with the burden of debt and enormous budget deficits. On the street, many people were suddenly faced with the prospect of years of toil and labor just to survive. This sense of facing an extreme unrelenting challenge calling forth all of one's moral and spiritual reserves, of confronting a seemingly insurmountable obstacle with apparently little hope for a brighter future or release from punitive measures, is characteristic of the Saturn-Pluto combination. To varying degrees, all the nations of the world found

themselves embroiled in a historic struggle not of their choosing, having to simultaneously support and transform collapsing financial structures and deal with severe financial restrictions.

Experiences occurring during the Saturn-Pluto and Saturn-Uranus alignments seem to have inflected and fed into events and experiences associated with the longer-term Uranus-Pluto alignment. For example, throughout the Western world, in a backlash against the bank bailouts, the energy and spirit associated with the Uranus-Pluto complex was potently carried forward by Occupy Wall Street and the Occupy movement, in a clear diachronic development of protest movements in the sixties seeking justice and fairness in the Western political and economic systems, and often seeking more radical and fundamental solutions than those proffered by the mainstream political parties. The idea for the movement was reportedly inspired in part by the Arab Spring. The movement itself began in September of 2011 as an encampment in Zucotti Park in Manhattan's Financial District, becoming the primary vehicle for protest against the banks' role in the economic crisis and the government's responses to it, as well as many other political issues, from campaign finance reform and filibuster reform to gay rights and marijuana prohibition, spreading to all the major cities, and many smaller ones throughout the United States, and to many other cities around the world. In the U.S., the new movement had the effect of definitively shifting the collective discourse away from the right-wing Tea Party, who had dominated cable news for the last few years. As we have seen, the impulse towards liberation and dramatic change is characteristic of Uranus-Pluto. The Occupiers also experienced a great deal of repressive violence from police in many cities throughout the country, which is characteristic of experiences associated with the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-Square, the larger configuration under which the protests took place (Saturn was moving towards its final outer orb at the end of 2011 and into 2012). Over the winter of 2011, the fiery enthusiasm of the Occupy movement died down somewhat as the Uranus-Pluto square temporarily became less exact, moving to six and seven degrees in December through March 2012. However, on May 1, as the Uranus-Pluto square moved back to three degrees, worldwide protests were held to mark the movement's planned resurgence.

Figure 1 **The Beginning of the Occupy Movement**

Occupy Movement Starts
September 17, 2011



Political Tensions, Turmoil, and Independence

As Saturn has gradually moved out of alignment first with Pluto and then Uranus, in Europe we continue to see widespread public protest against austerity fuelled by the perceived harshness of the measures, the oppressive economic circumstance, and the sense of desperation many people feel—with the theme of rebellion driven by desperation reflecting the archetypal combination of Uranus and Pluto. From the perspective of the current moment, one could say that the austerity measures put in place and initiated during the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square have established the context for the continuing Uranus-Pluto square, with the limitations, cutbacks, and controls (associated with Saturn) increasingly fuelling social unrest and turbulence (associated with Uranus-Pluto).

In Europe, among the countries most affected by the financial crisis—including Spain, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Greece—the levels of debt have reached such unmanageable proportions that their economies had to be rescued by emergency aid packages from fellow member states in the European Union, placing further strain on the economic resources and international relationships. Within the Eurozone, the particular focus of attention during the last two years has been on Greece. In late June 2012, as Uranus and Pluto moved into the first exact square alignment of this current transit, the volatile uncertainty and desperate circumstance facing the European Union and world economy at large reached a decisive point with the holding of two general elections in Greece in the hope of securing a mandate from the Greek electorate to commit to or reject the terms of the financial bailout deal offered by the European Union. With no clear winner in the first election, the prospect of a further delay in establishing an elected government caused immense anxiety in world markets. At the same time, during late June 2012, Malta and Spain both formally requested emergency loans from the IMF. During the second exact square in late September 2012, Spain formally requested a full bailout, crisis requiring the urgent release of deep reserves of monetary resources and wealth—one instance of the liberation of power associated with Uranus-Pluto.

Unsurprisingly, given the gravity of the situation, such crises have led many to seriously consider the consequences of a failure of the single European currency and the breakup of the Eurozone. This prospect has become an increasingly possible scenario, with the financial crisis seemingly requiring ever more radical solutions at the economic and political levels. In language especially befitting the T-square, the Eurozone crisis has been described as “a slow-motion car crash,” just as the brutal uprising and civil war in Syria has been similarly depicted as a tragedy unfolding in “slow-motion,” both characterizations reflecting the Saturnian association with an often painful slowness, the Saturn-Uranus theme of the crash, and the titanic revolutionary energies and social turbulence associated with Uranus-Pluto.⁸

Elsewhere, the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square coincided with an uneasy compromise in the United Kingdom between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in a coalition government. Initially welcomed by the British electorate, many have judged that the arrangement has become an increasingly incongruent and tension-ridden collaboration

between the parties, with the prospect of both moving towards more radical and opposing positions in the later years of the Cameron government. At best, the uneasy juxtaposition of conservative and liberal political persuasions has tempered the more radical policies of both parties (the Saturn principle here constraining the more radical character of Uranus-Pluto) yet each side, especially the Liberal Democrats, have been roundly criticized from within their own parties and beyond for giving too much ground.

Different circumstances have produced a rather similar situation in the U.S. where the reform initiatives of the first Obama administration were blocked at almost every turn by the Republican party, in staunch opposition to Obama's agenda. Indeed, in 2010–2012 the United States Senate witnessed what many commentators have described as the greatest political gridlock since the American Civil War. This lack of compromise resulted largely from an obstructionist Republican minority in the Senate, and particularly in its unprecedented use of the filibuster rule, which allows a minority to block legislation. Similarly, a number of initiatives to trim the regulatory powers of the state initiated by the Republican-led House have been thwarted and rejected by the Democratic-led Senate. In both these circumstances, the irresolvable juxtaposition of opposing tendencies saw impulses towards change associated with Uranus impeded, blocked, and negated—reflecting themes associated with Saturn.

In other countries, the Uranus-Pluto square has coincided with a more ardent drive for independence and freedom, intensified by the adverse economic climate. In September 2012, an unprecedented 1.5 million people took part in Catalonia's annual independence rally in Barcelona. As one commentator observed, "Spain's economic crisis, which has left one out of four people unemployed, has sharpened Catalonia's demand for fiscal independence from Spain, as well as political autonomy"—an example of exactly the kind of archetypal dynamics associated with the T-square noted above.⁹ Drives for independence have also noticeably strengthened over the last few years in Scotland, too, with the Scottish National party recently securing a referendum on independence from the U.K., to be held in 2014.

Extremism, Barbarism, and Violence

The Saturn-Pluto archetypal combination is sometimes associated with feelings of resentment, and the experience of damning judgment and even loathing, reflecting the combination of a Saturnian act of judgment with Plutonic extremity, intensity, and instinctual force. Throughout the period of the T-square, with Uranus also involved in the alignment, we have witnessed events that have suddenly drawn forth this such resentment, prompting a vitriolic lashing out against authority figures or other groups held responsible for frustration and suffering—experiences typical of Saturn-Pluto alignment periods when circumstances hinder or delay or prevent (Saturn) the fulfillment of instinctual drives for pleasure or power (Pluto). Such experiences, born of instinctual frustration, can easily lead to extremism and the hardening of divisions between different social and ethnic groups, as they did in the 1930s. One thinks of the vitriolic emotion displayed by some of the campaigners against Obama's health care reforms ("Obamacare") in the U.S. (attempting to connect the supposed socialism of Obama's policy with the national socialism of Nazi Germany) and in the British parliamentary expenses scandal of 2009 when the U.K. population expressed its disgust at members of parliament who were making unjustified claims for expenses to fund second homes and luxury lifestyles at a time when the general population were suffering under the impact of worsening economic conditions. Reflecting a motif often seen during Saturn-Pluto transits, this scandal led to the public humiliation of a number of high-profile politicians exposed for fraudulent claims to pay for all manner of goods, trivialities, and services that, as many commentators have noted, could hardly be deemed essential to the working life of a politician or deserving of public funding.¹⁰ Similar vitriolic anger has since been directed at the banking sector, held accountable by many for the global financial crisis.

Although on a different scale and level of intensity, we can discern many similar archetypal themes in these episodes to those evident during the French Revolution, themes all relating to the Uranus-Pluto complex (especially in combination with Saturn) and its association with revolutionary fervor: the destruction of old privileges; challenges to the authority of those in power; the vitriolic resentment against authority

fuelling drive for political reform; the downfall of many politicians; the sudden reversal of the ruling order when the power of the masses unexpectedly deposed those with authority over them; the reform of centuries-old laws and rules; the revolt of the politicians themselves turning against the Speaker of the House of Commons, forcing his resignation—the first such resignation in over 300 years in Britain.

More positively, of course, many of the crises occurring during the T-square have provided the impetus for essential, constructive change: the economic crisis has led to the reform of the global financial system, the environmental catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico has given increased urgency and impetus to moves to develop alternative energy resources and technologies, and the British parliamentary expenses scandal led to the reform of the expenses system and greater accountability of members of parliament to the electorate. Indeed, in some respects these positive outcomes are close to the essence of this three-planet combination: inventiveness, creativity, or reform stimulated by dire necessity, intense pressure, disruption, and frustration.

As noted, an activated archetypal Pluto, in combination with the Saturn and Uranus principles, is sometimes associated with political radicalization and extremism, such as that witnessed in Germany during the T-square and longer Uranus-Pluto square of the 1930s, with the punitive measures imposed on Germany after the First World War, followed by the Great Depression, creating the context in which the Nazi party could sweep to power. The reaction against these measures was prophetically anticipated by John Maynard Keynes in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), in which he warned that the “popular reaction in Germany, born of desperation and hysteria . . . would ‘submerge civilisation itself.’”¹¹

Many commentators have observed that a similar mass empowerment of extreme political viewpoints is not inconceivable in the current climate; indeed, it is evidenced already by the emergence of the right-wing “Golden Dawn” fascist party in Greece where levels of unemployment are approaching those in early 1930s Germany.¹² As one commentator notes:

We do not find ourselves today struggling with the aftermath of a catastrophic world war. Yet the situation in Europe poses risks that may be as great as they were in 1919. A deepening slump there

would increase the risk of a hard landing in China—on whose growth the world has come to depend. In Europe itself, a downward spiral would energise toxic political movements—such as the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, which won seats in parliament in the last election in Greece.¹³

In Russia, too, alongside an upwelling of anti-Putin protests by liberals, neo-Nazi extremism is reportedly on the rise with far-right nationalists or “skinheads” with a loathing for multicultural society perpetrating attacks on immigrant workers.¹⁴

Elsewhere, the situation in the Middle East and the relationship with the West remains volatile (not least because of the Syrian revolution and the Israel-Palestine conflict), seemingly poised to explode into violence, protest, and revolt at any moment, as we saw in September 2012, when an American-made film mocking the Islamic prophet Mohammed, published on YouTube, sparked a wave of violent protests at U.S. embassies and Swiss, U.K., and German embassies in Khartoum, Cairo, Tunis, Lebanon, Yemen, and Benghazi (killing the U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens)—this last incident later attributed to terrorism.

The brutal massacre of 77 people by lone terrorist attacker Anders Breivik on July 22, 2011 in Oslo and Utøya, Norway, further illustrated the catastrophic consequences of political radicalization, with Breivik’s warped ideology reflecting extreme xenophobic and Islamophobic views. Tragically, the last two years have witnessed a number of other eruptions of violence and mass murder around the world, including the shootings at the premiere of the Batman movie, *The Dark Knight Rises*, in Aurora, Colorado, and the knife attack injuring 22 children at a school in Henan, China in December 2012, followed the next day by the massacre of 26 people, including 20 children, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

While horrific incidents such as these are always present during any time period, reporting in the world media suggests a notable proliferation in the number of and prominence of such cases during the current Uranus-Pluto square, as one might expect given the archetypal context. The Pluto archetype symbolizes the barbaric, the primitive, the uncivilized, and the inhuman; it is associated with a compulsion that impresses itself with utter conviction such that all human qualities and moral distinctions can be lost in an upsurge of simmering forces from the depths of the unconscious. The Uranus principle can serve as the trigger,

the releasing agent that suddenly and unexpectedly brings such dark and destructive forces to the surface. The potential for the Uranus-Pluto energy to manifest as a liberation of the baser, destructive aspects of human nature was also demonstrated by the England riots of 2011 in London, Manchester, Birmingham, and elsewhere, exemplifying rebellion without a cause, and destruction and violence without reason, in a sudden eruption of instinctually empowered delinquency and rage.

Writing for the *Mail Online*, Robert Hardman captured well the threat of a collapse into extremism and barbarism in the title of his article from June 2012: “Drachmageddon? Middle-class poverty. Feral gangs. Neo-Nazis. In Athens they wait for the volcano to explode.” Hardman gives an especially apt summary of the dangers accompanying the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto archetypal combination, drawing on the Plutonic image of the volcano, poised to suddenly explode at any moment, combined with the high-tension situation associated with Saturn-Uranus and the Saturn-Pluto motif of Armageddon.¹⁵

In another archetypally pertinent analysis, well reflecting the dynamics of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square, political philosopher John Cray echoes Hardman’s warning:

The far right is on the march in many European countries, using its rights to attack minorities. The dictatorships of the 1930s are unlikely to return, but toxic democracies based on nationalism and xenophobia could emerge in a number of countries and be in power for long periods.¹⁶

Addressing a number of themes connected with the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex—tyranny, dictatorships, political extremism, and the freedom of the individual in mass society—Cray emphasizes the uncertainty, danger, and further assaults on freedom that often follow when a tyrannical regime is toppled and a democratic government put in its place. Mindful of the darker Plutonic forces that often stir when the old order is destroyed, he brings Saturnian judgment to bear on the concept of freedom, associated with Uranus, pointing to the problems that freedom can bring.¹⁷

Revolt Against the “Underworld”

As well as activating and releasing the dark depths of human experience, the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex is also associated with the themes of liberation *from* the “underworld” and rebellion against controlling powers and dark forces. These themes have taken on a number of different forms during the current Uranus-Pluto square, bringing to light the abuses of power and shady “underworld” operations of governments, drug cartels, financial institutions, and the press. Indeed, seismic shocks have been shaking one major organization after another: the European Union, national governments, the Catholic church, the banking industry, financial organizations, news and media corporations, the police. Uranus here corresponds with the experience of the shock, the jolt, the unexpected, the sudden, the revelatory awakening to abuses of power, and the need for radical transformation and restructuring—these latter themes associated with Pluto.

The most obvious example of seismic shocks initiating radical overhaul and restructuring is perhaps the banking industry, which, following the turmoil of the global financial crisis, has remained in crisis with the further revelations of the Libor (London Interbank Offered Rate) scandal involving the illegal manipulation of interest rates for lending between banks worth an estimating \$300 trillion. Investigations into illegal fixing are taking place in the U.S., Japan, Canada, the U.K., and Switzerland, with several major U.S. financial organizations filing lawsuits against the banks involved, including Barclays and Swiss bank UBS. In the wake of the scandal, the deputy governor of the Bank of England has described the Libor market as a “cesspit,” evoking a sense of a Plutonic underworld of corruption and manipulation.

Other scandals have reflected not only the abuse of power, but also sex, both connected to the Pluto archetype. In Italy during 2011, the sex and corruption scandal involving then prime minister Silvio Berlusconi came to a head when Berlusconi, in the wake of revelations of his infamous “bunga bunga” parties, was charged with having sex with an under-age prostitute.¹⁸ In February 2011, the scandal sparked widespread demonstrations on the streets of Milan, with protestors numbered in their thousands, angered by Berlusconi’s demeaning behavior towards women.¹⁹ This demonstration was accompanied by further protests by large numbers of women in 60 cities across Italy, and by smaller protests

in Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and France. Here again we see a number of themes specifically related to Uranus-Pluto: the unchecked expression of the sexual instinct, the surfacing of abuses of power, mass protest and rebellion, mass public outrage against corrupt authorities and institutions, and the empowerment of women.

Other scandals and abuses of power have been brought to light within a number of major organizations, ultimately contributing, one hopes, to the ongoing struggle to emancipate individuals from dark controlling powers and thus to create a freer, more enlightened society. Among the most shocking of these cases was the child sexual abuse scandal involving the late Jimmy Savile in the U.K, which directly implicated some of the country's most powerful institutions including the BBC, the National Health Service, and children's care homes. Savile, a former radio disc jockey, children's television presenter, charity fundraiser, and all-round celebrity, was accused of the sexual exploitation and abuse of hundreds of young teenage girls and boys, with alleged offenses stretching back over four decades. The revelations triggered the emergence of hundreds of accusations against him, as more and more people felt able, after many years of often secret trauma, to come forward and report abuses. To the shock of a nation, a picture emerged of the once widely popular figure as a "sexual predator" and pedophile.²⁰

The scandal, however, extended beyond Savile to the BBC at large. As news of the Savile allegations broke, a number of prominent female presenters at the BBC also made claims of suffering sexual assault, revealing a climate of exploitation of women by men in power, especially during the 1970s. This climate was characterized by some (in line with the diachronic sequence of Uranus-Pluto alignments) as the darker side of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Again, these developments can be seen as another instance of the "return of the repressed"—with Uranus-Pluto correlating with the unexpected surfacing of long-buried traumatic experiences, the liberation of the taboo aspects of experience, and the rebellion against powerful dark forces. The Savile scandal has been described as the worst crisis in the BBC for fifty years, exposing and deposing institutionalized power hierarchies in that organization in which certain figures were apparently untouchable.²¹ The aftermath of the Savile crisis had since initiated a "radical overhaul" of the organization and functioning of the BBC, indicative of the radically

transformative consequences of events and experiences associated with the Uranus-Pluto archetypal combination.

This scandal was preceded, during 2011–2012, by revelations of child sexual abuse in the Catholic church in Victoria in Australia, with over 600 confirmed cases of abuse by priests dating back to the 1930s, although campaign groups suggest the true figure might be nearer 10,000. This was the latest in a series of sexual abuse scandals within the Catholic church across Europe and the wider world, coming to light in coincidence with the Uranus-Pluto square, with the number of cases reaching “unimaginable dimensions,” according to the Pope.²²

Uranus-Pluto themes were also evident in the News International phone-hacking scandal, which dominated headline news during 2011–2012, and which sent reverberations throughout Rupert Murdoch’s media empire in the U.K., the U.S., Australia, and beyond. Again, to the fore here were issues of freedom and power, of unregulated power, intrusive power, bringing to the surface the sordid and baser aspects of human nature, and rebellion against the power of press barons.

Correspondences between Uranus-Pluto hard-aspect world transits and the rebellion against the power of press barons are apparent from the beginning of mass-circulation newspapers in the late nineteenth century. William Randolph Hearst, the inspiration behind Orson Wells’s *Citizen Kane*, and still the prime exemplar of the archetypal press baron, is widely recognized as the inventor of tabloid journalism in the 1890s (during the Uranus-Pluto opposition) during which time Hearst became embroiled in a “bitter circulation war with Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World*.”²³

Across the Atlantic, the figure widely credited for establishing the popular modern press in Britain was Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe), who founded the *Daily Mail* in 1896 and the *Daily Mirror* in 1903—the former achieving a daily circulation of one million at the turn of the twentieth century. “Originally pitched at female readers,” according to James Curran and Jean Seaton in *Power Without Responsibility*, “it was reinvented in 1904 as a mass-market news pictorial and reached a circulation of 1.2 million by the outbreak of World War I.”²⁴ After 1905, the authors continue, “Harmsworth steadily built his newspaper empire, climaxing in 1908 with his acquisition of *The Times*. He became the archetypal ‘press baron,’ using his papers to attain influence over the government.”

Following Northcliffe's death in 1922, the British press was dominated by four men: Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Rothermere (Northcliffe's brother), William Berry (Lord Camrose), and Gomer Berry (Lord Kemsley). In the 1930s, during the Uranus-Pluto square of that time (which was part of a larger T-square with Saturn during the early 1930s), Rothermere and Beaverbrook used the power of the press to critique, campaign against, and almost oust Stanley Baldwin from his position as leader of the Conservative Party following his election defeat in 1929. This episode drew the well-known riposte from Baldwin: "What the proprietorship of these papers is aiming at is power, but power without responsibility, the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages"—the references to the drive for power and prostitution evoking a clear sense of the Plutonic underworld.²⁵ The issue of power without responsibility and the unregulated freedom to wield such power are recognizable expressions of themes associated with Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto, which were in a T-square alignment at the time (the speech was delivered on March 17, 1931).

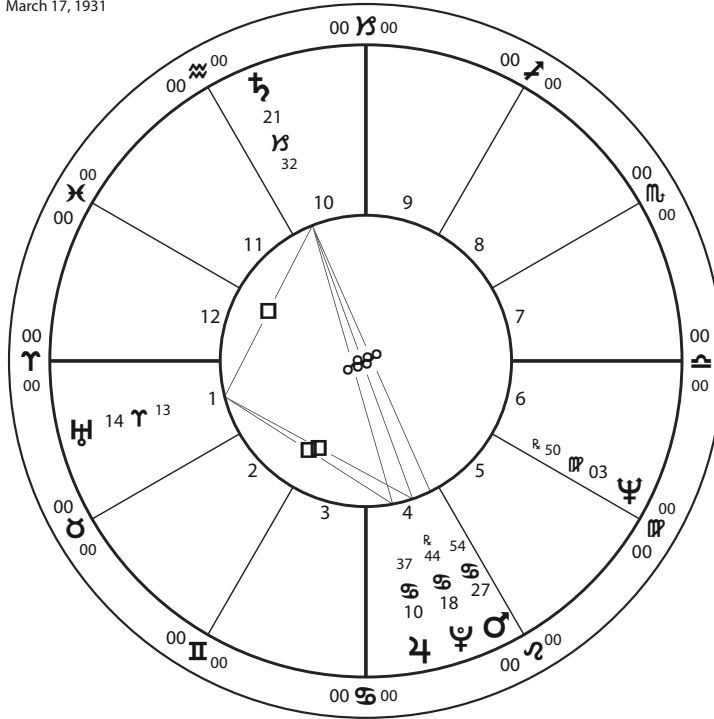
Northcliffe and the other British press magnates were characterized by historian Piers Brendan as "mad, bad, dangerous-to-know beasts in the newspaper jungle who did what they wanted"—a wonderfully Plutonic description.²⁶ The period of the 1930s, featuring the war of the press barons, was dubbed "The Devil's Decade"—a name reflecting the unmistakable Plutonic character of these years, corresponding astrologically with major hard-aspect alignments involving Pluto throughout the decade and in broad synchronistic parallel with the discovery of the planet in 1930. Again, terms now used to describe the mass-market newspaper industry such as the "gutter press" are especially archetypally apt, reflecting Pluto's relationship to the murky depths of human nature, the taboo, the debased, and the scatological.

It was during the next Uranus-Pluto quadrature alignment, the conjunction of the 1960s, that Rupert Murdoch rose to power and the tabloid press came to dominate mainstream news reporting. Also during the late sixties in the U.K., Cecil King, then chairman of the parent company behind the *Daily Mirror*, tried (and failed) to use his newspaper to bring down the Harold Wilson government.

Figure 2 **Stanley Baldwin Speech of March 17, 1931**

Stanley Baldwin Speech

March 17, 1931



The current Uranus-Pluto square has witnessed a venomous uprising against the power of the press, with News International publications, including *The News of the World*, found guilty of hacking into cell phone messages, violating the privacy of numerous high-profile celebrities, political figures, and, alarmingly, also targeting the victims of crimes, such as the parents of murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler. In the U.K., day after day, well-known public figures were called to give evidence to the Leveson Inquiry, including Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Hugh Grant, Sienna Miller, J. K. Rowling, Piers Morgan, and Rupert Murdoch himself. Headline news bulletins were dominated by revelations emerging from the inquiry, exposing the murky underworld of the mass media (one questioner in the House of Commons likened Murdoch's enterprise to the mafia) and the unchecked power of media empires, with covert influence over government. The scandal thus prompted a heated

debate about the unregulated freedom of the press and had powerful repercussions throughout the News International group. Ultimately, in July 2012, it led to the resignation of Rupert Murdoch as its director.

Here in the phone hacking affair, as well as in the BBC Savile crisis and in the Catholic church abuse scandal, one can readily discern the archetypal Pluto and its association with purging and the transformative cleansing by fire—with the “fire” in these cases provided by the eruptions of the general public’s rage and recriminations directed against the organizations and individuals responsible. As C. E. O. Carter and Stephen Arroyo have pointed out, the Pluto archetype functions rather like a boil on the skin, forcing to the surface impurities which need to be released, with the archetypal Uranus here acting as the releasing trigger.²⁷

Governments, too, have also been subject to destabilizing revelations of this kind. One especially significant form of the political activism and rebellion associated with Uranus-Pluto has come through Wikileaks, founded by Julian Assange, which in November 2010 released more than 250,000 American diplomatic cables, 100,000 of which were marked “secret” or “confidential”—an excellent example of the use of technology (Uranus) to empower the masses, with the leaked cables triggering uprising and protest (the Wikileaks reports are known to be a contributory factor in the Arab Spring). This unexpected and disruptive eruption of secret information correlates with the Uranus-Pluto themes of bringing to light that which is hidden or taboo, the revolt against powerful controlling forces, and the empowerment of the individual, and—reflecting the Saturn alignments to these planets—the judgment of the leaks as irresponsible and the attempts to enforce a clampdown on the restricted information.

The Pluto archetype, frequently associated in astrological texts with the controlling power of mafia underworld operations, is also connected more generally to depth and to that which is literally buried or underground. The dramatic increase in the number of underground tunnels used for drug smuggling discovered between Mexico and the U.S. is therefore an especially apt expression of the Uranus and Pluto archetypes in combination, as are the heightened efforts to break up the control of drug barons in Columbia and to disrupt production and smuggling operations. Over the course of the last year alone, three major drug barons have been detained by the Columbian authorities.²⁸

Individual Freedom of Expression

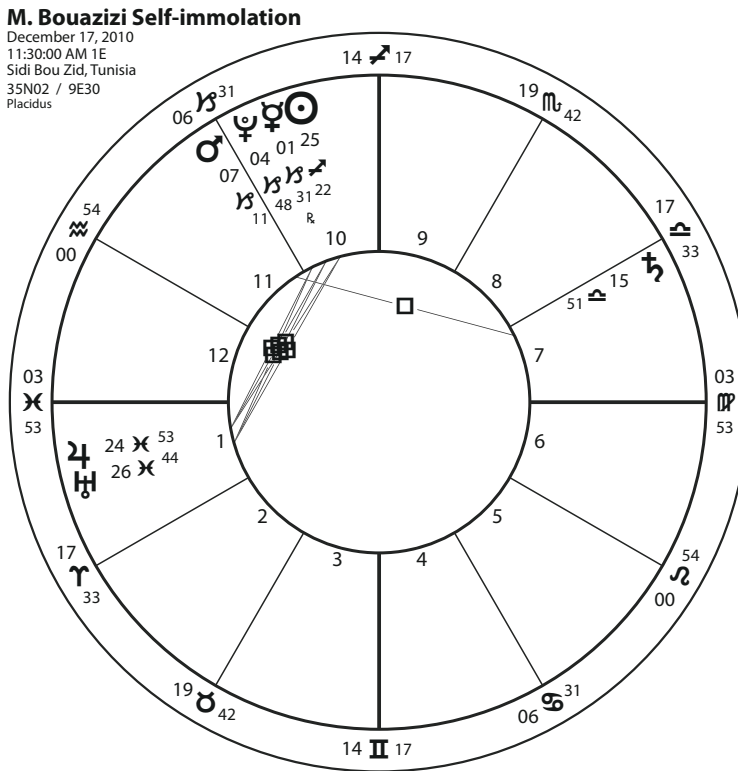
As these scandals indicate, during Uranus-Pluto quadrature alignments, individuals often feel more empowered and driven to freely express themselves, sometimes regardless of the consequences or even in the face of oppression. The story of the remarkable courage of Malaya Yousafzai, the girl blogger shot in the head and neck by Taliban militants in October 2012, is a fine example of this commitment to individual freedom of expression. In 2009, Malaya's blogs came to the world's attention for documenting life under Taliban rule in her hometown in Northwestern Pakistan and speaking out against the oppression of women and the prohibition of female education—the drive for freedom, individual rights, and equality for women are all experiences connected to the Uranus-Pluto complex.²⁹

The issue of freedom of expression was also especially prominent in the widely reported plight of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot, whose songs champion issues such as feminism and gay rights. In February 2012, the all-female group staged a “guerrilla” performance in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior, in protest against the Russian Orthodox Church leader's support for Vladimir Putin in the presidential elections. Three band members—Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina, and Yekaterina Samutsevich—were subsequently arrested, charged, tried, and imprisoned, although Samutsevich's sentence was later overturned. The prosecution of the three women came to the attention of the wider world, triggering a wave of criticism of the Russian authorities and sympathetic support for their case; indeed, their right to freedom of artistic expression was supported by a number of prominent figures in music, including Paul McCartney, Madonna, and The Red Hot Chili Peppers.³⁰ This particular case strikingly reflects a number of Uranus-Pluto themes: religious rebellion, the championing of the rights of minority groups, radical political protest, feminist empowerment, civil rights issues, and rebellion against oppression. Moreover, the name of the group—Pussy Riot—is itself strikingly befitting of the Uranus-Pluto complex's association with the sexual (Pluto) and revolutionary (Uranus), as well as the empowerment of women.

An exceptionally potent and tragic enactment of archetypal themes associated with Uranus-Pluto is to be found in the phenomenon of self-

immolation—setting oneself on fire as an extreme form of political protest—which rose to prominence in the 1960s under the previous Uranus-Pluto hard-aspect alignment, the conjunction. Under the current Uranus-Pluto square alignment, it was an act of self-immolation by Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia on December 17, 2010 (see figure 3) that is seen as the primary trigger for the revolution in Tunisia and the wider Arab Spring (whose beginning is often dated as December 18, 2010).³¹ Since 2011, self-immolation has also been used by Tibetans in desperate protest against the continued Chinese occupation of Tibet.³²

Figure 3 **Self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi; Start of Arab Spring**



Such acts well reflect the extremity and intensity of feeling associated with the experience of the archetypal Pluto, here suddenly and dramatically unleashed as the ultimate act of rebellion. Fire is a classic symbol of the instinctual empowerment and burning passion associated

with the Pluto principle, which often possesses a destructive or self-destructive power. In combination with the Uranus principle, this power sometimes manifests as the ferocious drive for freedom, the drive to overthrow restriction whatever the cost. In these examples, the mortality, resistance, and oppression relate to the archetypal Saturn, with the Saturn-Pluto complex often associated with extremes of pain and suffering in this agonizing form of death.

Similarly emboldened energies and intensified drives towards greater authenticity and individual freedom often manifest in campaigns for individual rights and political equality. Two such examples that are specifically related to the archetypal dynamics of Uranus-Pluto and Saturn-Uranus alignments—confronting homophobia and the drive to gain equal rights for homosexuals—have both made headline news over the last few years. In the U.S., “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the law which made it illegal for homosexual members of the U.S. military to be open about their sexuality, was repealed in September 2011 during the current Uranus-Pluto square—a diachronic development of the Gay Rights movement that began in earnest with the Stonewall riots in 1969 during the previous quadrature alignment of Uranus and Pluto, the conjunction.³³

Like the military, sport is often pervaded by deeply entrenched prejudices, and here too the powerful drives for authentic freedom of expression associated with the Uranus-Pluto complex have been in evidence. Notably, a number of prominent male sports stars in different fields have recently “come out” while still actively involved in their sport, most notably Wales rugby union captain Gareth Thomas in December 2009.

Pluto is specifically connected to the taboo, those aspects of experience deemed incompatible with the prevailing values and thus pushed down into the unconscious, or hidden in the dark shadows. Homosexuality has been described as “sport’s last taboo,” and the type of experiences occurring during Uranus-Pluto transits helps to bring the taboo, the repressed, and that which lies in the depths, to the surface, liberating it, rebelling against it, and thus winning through to greater freedom. As we have seen, this complex is thus connected with the “return of the repressed.”

The trend was evident at the very start of the current Uranus-Pluto square alignment, when, three years after retiring, former NBA basketball player John Amaechi openly admitted he was gay. Gareth Thomas’s own

announcement was subsequently followed by similar moves from figures in other sports, including cricketer Steven Davis in February 2011 and Puerto Rican featherweight boxer Orlando Cruz in October 2012—all these fields traditionally dominated by stereotypically macho attitudes and prejudice.³⁴

Also making headline news during recent years has been the hotly debated issue of same-sex marriage, the legalization of which is a further step in the liberation of homosexual men and women seeking equal rights in law. Earlier in 2012, the campaign received an altogether unexpected boost when, on May 9 (during a Sun-Jupiter conjunction as well as the longer-term Uranus-Pluto square), in response to a comment made by American vice-president Joe Biden, President Obama announced his support for same-sex marriage, the first sitting president to do so, after claiming that he was “evolving” on the issue for the previous few years.³⁵

Uranus-Pluto Themes in the Arts and Culture

According to Tarnas’s research, a prevalent theme associated with Uranus-Pluto is the empowerment of women and minority groups whose voices and creative works have been, and often still are, underrepresented or stifled in the mainstream culture.³⁶ The energy associated with Uranus-Pluto often does much to further the interests of such groups, liberating the repressed, empowering cultural minorities and outsiders, impelling them to fight for freedom and equality.

In the last few years, in a diachronic development of women’s liberation in the sixties, women have dominated the music industry (a pattern associated with the successive conjunction and square of the Uranus-Pluto combination in its titanicly liberating and emancipatory guise). According to *Billboard* magazine, based on sales of both albums and singles, the top five artists of 2009 were all women (Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, and Miley Cyrus) or a group with a prominent female singer (Fergie of The Black Eyed Peas). In 2010, three of the top five artists were women, with Lady Gaga and Taylor Swift ranking first and second, respectively. In 2011, the top four artists were women: Adele, Rihanna, Katy Perry, and Lady Gaga. Furthermore, Beyoncé and Adele hold the record for the most number of Grammy Awards won in one night by a female artist (six), Beyoncé in 2010 and Adele in 2012.

Adele's *21*, released in February 2011, spent over eighteen weeks at number one on the Billboard Charts in the U.S., one of the longest running albums in the top spot, and has sold more than ten million copies to date. Lady Gaga, meanwhile, set the record (30 million and counting) for the most followers on Twitter.

A similar pattern can be observed in the film industry. In an article for the BBC news website, Krystina Nellis points out that, in 2012, for the first time, three of the year's top ten films had a female protagonist: *The Hunger Games*, *Snow White and the Huntsman*, and Disney's *Brave*. Dan Jolin of *Empire* magazine suggests this development might reflect a gradual trend redressing the balance in favor of casting women in the role of hero, going some way to rectifying the longstanding bias towards depicting heroes as male.³⁷

Disabled people have also risen to greater prominence during the current Uranus-Pluto alignment, not least through the runaway popularity of the television series *Glee*, which featured both disabled and homosexual characters just as it portrayed a greater diversity of physical appearance and expressions of individuality amongst its cast, in this respect breaking the mold of the stereotypical teenage television show. The trend towards the empowerment of disabled people was also carried forward by the London 2012 Paralympics—the largest event of its kind to date—which showcased the supreme athletic talents of disabled people around the world. Significantly, South African sprinter Oscar Pistorius, replete with artificial “blade” legs, became the first Paralympic athlete to take part in the Olympic games itself, running alongside his able-bodied competitors in the 400 meters, offering glimpses of a possible bionic future in sport.

Elsewhere in the world of sport, the Uranus-Pluto associations with race issues, exemplified by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, has been especially prominent, dominating headline news. In the English Premier League, for example, Uruguayan soccer player Luis Suarez (of Liverpool F.C.) was found guilty by the English Football Association of racially abusing Frenchman Patrice Evra (of Manchester United). This incident was followed by a long-running saga involving the then England captain, Chelsea player John Terry, accused of racially abusing Queens Park Rangers player Anton Ferdinand. Both cases helped to bring to light the wider issue of deep-rooted racism in soccer and energized renewed initiatives to stamp it out. These episodes also mobilized black soccer

players, disillusioned with the football authorities' attempts to combat racism, to consider forming a breakaway players football association.

Meanwhile, in the area of water sports, the Uranus-Pluto complex was evident in a very different form as a new record was set by Garrett McNamara in Portugal in May 2012 for the surfing of a giant wave—reflecting both Uranus-Pluto's association with titanic achievements and unleashed elemental power, and the Mars-opposition-Neptune alignment of the time, a combination that is often associated with activity in water, surfing, riding the waves, and going with the flow. Neptune represents the flow, the water, and Mars the athleticism, the action, the effort, the individual will.³⁸

Returning to the arts, the current period of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square saw the release of the hugely popular *Twilight Saga* films. The literary figure of the werewolf correlates precisely with certain core meanings of the Uranus-Pluto combination including the sudden unexpected metamorphosis into an animal form and the sudden eruption of violence and sexuality. Unsurprisingly, given the archetypal flavor of the complex, this latest portrayal of the werewolf falls in a diachronic sequence of similar artistic creations occurring during earlier hard-aspect alignments of Uranus and Pluto. Bram Stoker's 1897 novel, *Dracula*, published during the Uranus-Pluto opposition of 1896–1907, was one of the first and most prominent portrayals of werewolves in fiction. Similarly, the first portrayal of an anthropomorphic werewolf in film was in 1935's *Werewolf of London* during the immediately following Uranus-Pluto square of 1928–1937. During this same alignment in 1933, Guy Endore published *The Werewolf of Paris*, perhaps the most popular werewolf novel of the twentieth century. A film adaptation of Endore's novel, *The Curse of the Werewolf*, was produced in 1961 during the following Uranus-Pluto conjunction of 1960–1972, and it was during this alignment, too, that Christopher Lee's *Dracula* series was released (1965–1970). Completing the diachronic sequence to date, the first novel of Stephanie Meyer's wildly popular *Twilight* series (also named *Twilight*) was published in October of 2005 when the current Uranus-Pluto square first moved within the penumbral 15-degree orb. The following three novels were published over the next three years as the Uranus-Pluto square moved into tighter orb. The similarly popular film adaptations, with five films in the *Twilight Saga* released at the rate of one

per year between 2008 and 2012, culminated in the final film, *Breaking Dawn Part 2*, released a few months after Uranus and Pluto reached the exact square alignment. Not all novels and films involving werewolves were produced during Uranus-Pluto alignments, of course, but, as one can see from the correlations described above, among the most significant, defining, and initiatory portrayals occurred during these alignments. Indeed, both the creation and the successful reception of these films is perhaps attributable in part to the archetypal flavor of the zeitgeist during these times.

In another genre of literature, the 2011 publication of the erotic novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E. L. James (real name Erika Leonard), which was inspired by the *Twilight* series, broke the record for the fastest-selling paperback, to date selling 40-million copies worldwide. The novel, depicting the relationship between college graduate Anastasia Steele and businessman Christian Grey, features BDSM sex (bondage, dominance, and sadomasochism), with the elements of punitive control and domination especially associated with Saturn-Pluto and the liberated, uninhibited expression of sexuality associated with Uranus-Pluto, as well as the more unusual forms of sexual expression. The book, dubbed “mummy porn” due its supposed popularity among adult women, also challenges, in Uranian fashion, conceptions of which groups of people are likely to indulge in sexually explicit material.

From an archetypal perspective, the release and widespread appeal of *Fifty Shades of Grey* reflects the diachronic sequence of Uranus-Pluto correlations with the awakening of sexuality and erotic liberation, most recently with the sexual revolution of the 1960s. The book and its two sequels have contributed significantly to a dramatic increase in interest in erotic literature—a development that has itself been described in language befitting the Uranus-Pluto complex. In 2012, it was reported that the entirely unexpected “boom in erotic fiction” was “cannibalizing” the book market. Indeed, in early August of that year, in the U.K., eight of the top ten best-selling novels were in the erotica category.³⁹

Fifty Shades of Grey originally came to prominence through the internet, rather than through traditional publishing channels, and thus reflects a trend that is now radically transforming the publishing industry at large. The rapid emergence of E-books and self-publishing possibilities has initiated a democratization of the book industry, transferring power

from the major publishing houses to smaller presses and independent authors. Indeed, in a blending of these developments, it has been noted that the availability of E-readers such as Kindle, Nook, and Kobo, enabling the downloading and reading of books electronically, gives readers a freedom to discretely read whatever they choose without fear of social judgment. With no physical book in hand, people can read even the most controversial and risqué of works privately, even when riding the bus or subway or in other public venues.

The empowerment of the archetypal feminine and sexual freedom are themes both strikingly evidenced by the creation and recent unveiling of two pieces of large-scale public artwork in the U.K. The first of these is “Northumberlandia: The Naked Lady of Cramlington” in England, which is the “largest landscape replica of the female body ever seen in the world,” comprised of 1.5 million tons of rock, soil, stone, and clay.⁴⁰ The artwork, designed by postmodernist and landscape architect Charles Jencks, and carved by the men who work in Cramlington at the largest open-cast mine in the U.K., moved from the design through the development phase in exact coincidence with the Uranus-Pluto square (2005–2012). The figure is “a reclining female form . . . a quarter of a mile long,” the length of seven football fields and taller than an eight-storey building at her highest point.⁴¹

Similarly striking is Damien Hirst’s 66-foot sculpture of a nude pregnant woman (“Verity”), unveiled during October 2012 in Ilfracombe, England.⁴² The statue, with one side “vivisected,” revealing the inside of the woman’s body and the fetus in her womb, has received a mixed reception from local residents, described as a “monstrosity,” an “affront to public decency,” and “soft porn masqueraded as art”—all these reactions elicited by the radically new, jolting, or even shocking forms of creative expression associated with the Uranus-Pluto complex.⁴³ Both works of art well reflect the Uranus-Pluto themes of the empowerment of the feminine and a more liberated attitude to nudity, as well as the heightened creativity and inventiveness often seen during Uranus-Pluto alignments.

On a lighter note, the signature of the Uranus-Pluto combination has also been evident in the craze for altering signs on the London Underground, with pranksters changing place names on the Underground maps so they read like amusing malapropisms (Shepherd’s Bush changed to Shepherd’s Pie, for example). In this form of subversive

rebellion against the boredom and routines of the daily commute one can see the Uranian trickster in the Plutonic underground, as it were, reflecting a more superficial side of the Uranus archetype: the need for novelty, new stimulation, excitement, and change for change's sake.⁴⁴

Often, themes associated with Uranus-Pluto are inflected by themes associated with other planetary alignments in orb at particular times. For example, the combination Uranus-Pluto themes with Jupiter-Neptune themes was captured by the following report on a Dutch Big Brother reality television show that was purportedly planned to be set on the planet Mars: "It's either one of the biggest hoaxes in history conjured up by a group of richly deluded young fantasists or a brave attempt to challenge the boundaries of space travel and beat Nasa and co at their own game."⁴⁵ The Uranus-Pluto topic of space exploration and the new mission to Mars was combined with the unrealistic dream of the "richly deluded young fantasists"—a perfect expression of themes associated with the Jupiter-Neptune opposition of that time, which is particularly connected to big hoaxes and widespread cases of deception, an expression of Neptunian illusion and deception with Jupiterian excess and amplitude.⁴⁶

The Ecological Crisis and Nuclear Energy

Although the global financial crisis has been center stage in the media over the last few years, during the T-square the ecological crisis was again brought decisively to the forefront of the world's attention with the dire BP oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico. In archetypal terms, this disaster, like the volcanic eruption in Iceland, saw the sudden unleashing of the powers of nature—in this case oil incessantly gushing forth from the ocean depths causing widespread devastation to ecosystems, animal life, and adversely impacting the livelihoods of many people in surrounding areas. Like the financial crisis, the oil spill, unsurprisingly, led to widespread condemnation of and resentment towards those responsible.

The ecological crisis, and the prospect of energy shortages with the depletion of fossil fuel resources, pushed the issue of nuclear energy back into the spotlight. "After three decades without starting a single new plant, the American nuclear power industry is getting ready to build again," reported Matthew L. Wald in the *New York Times* in October 2008. "Not

since 1973,” he continued, “had anybody in the United States ordered a nuclear plant that was actually built.” As Tarnas points out, the development of the nuclear power industry has coincided precisely with Uranus-Pluto hard-aspect world transits. The Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the 1960s and early 1970s passed out of alignment in 1972 just as the first phase in the construction of nuclear power plants came to an end; and the beginning of the current Uranus-Pluto square coincided with a new phase in the proliferation of nuclear power plants in many places around the world. In the context of the urgent problems presented by the energy crisis and climate change, nuclear power was suddenly and unexpectedly back in fashion, seen as a viable solution—indeed, by some commentators as the only viable solution—for generating the energy needed for the coming decades with looming scarcities in oil and natural gas supplies. In the fall of 2008, there were twenty-one companies seeking permission to build thirty-four new reactors, and on February 16, 2010 president Obama approved financial help for the construction of two new reactors in Georgia.⁴⁷

In the U.K., too, in January 2008 the then Labour government committed to build a new generation of power stations on the site of old ones, approving proposals for ten new reactors in November 2009. While some countries remain committed to curtailing the use of nuclear power, since 2007 many other countries have also disclosed plans for new nuclear power stations, including Sweden, Italy, Romania, Finland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Switzerland, and Croatia.⁴⁸

The archetypal dynamics underlying this trend well express the Uranus-Pluto complex. The Uranus planetary archetype relates to technology and invention, to the new and the sudden shift, and to the principle of awakening and liberation. The archetypal Pluto, as we have seen, is associated with immense elemental power, to that which is buried beneath the surface, to titanic forces of destruction and creation. Thus, the combination of these principles during alignments between the two planets is associated with the liberation (Uranus) of the immense powers of nature (Pluto), with the empowerment of technology, and with the use of technology to access or wield immense power and energy. At the psychological level, as we have seen, during alignments between these planets, the human psyche often finds itself swept along in the drive to embrace the new or to contemplate a more radical course of action. Thus “going nuclear” has been embraced by many in positions of power as a

radical solution to the energy crisis, perhaps blind to the longer-term consequences of dealing with nuclear waste, pushed deep underground, to be dealt with by future generations. In the views of some commentators, the nuclear option (relating to Pluto) has been forced upon us by the urgency and gravity of the energy crisis and the ecological crisis—reflecting both the Saturn-Uranus association with the urgent crisis and the Saturn-Pluto themes of scarcity of resources and grave external circumstances pushing one in a certain direction out of the force of necessity.

At the same time as countries were committing to nuclear power, however, during the T-square there were also renewed efforts and new initiatives to limit, control, and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons, prompted by the specter of the development of Iranian and North Korean enrichment and missile programs. These initiatives, too, are entirely consistent with the meaning of the three planetary archetypes—the Saturn principle manifesting here as control and negation of the new challenges (Uranus) posed by nuclear weapons (Pluto). Much of the initiative for this came from Obama's pledge to aspire towards a nuclear-free world outlined in his speech in Prague on April 5, 2009:

The existence of thousands of nuclear weapons is the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War Today, the Cold War has disappeared but thousands of those weapons have not. In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up. More nations have acquired these weapons. Testing has continued. Black market trade in nuclear secrets and nuclear materials abound. The technology to build a bomb has spread. Terrorists are determined to buy, build or steal one. Our efforts to contain these dangers are centered on a global non-proliferation regime, but as more people and nations break the rules, we could reach the point where the center cannot hold.⁴⁹

This was borne out, on the day of Obama's speech, by North Korean rocket launch tests, followed in May 2009 by underground testing of new nuclear warheads whose power was sufficient to trigger an earthquake. In 2010, the specter of a nuclear conflict appeared again, with worsening relations between South Korea and North Korea over the North's alleged involvement in the sinking of a naval vessel in March of that year. The

commitment to reduce the number of warheads in the U.S. national security arsenal led to a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the U.S. and Russia, and a global ban on nuclear testing to “cut off the building blocks needed for a bomb,” and thus to prevent countries such as North Korea and Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Obama’s Prague speech was pervaded with Saturn-Uranus-Pluto themes. In the following passage, for instance, he speaks of the liberation (Uranus) from fear and fatalism (associated with the Saturn-Pluto complex):

Some argue that the spread of these weapons cannot be stopped, cannot be checked—that we are destined to live in a world where more nations and more people possess the ultimate tools of destruction. Such fatalism is a deadly adversary, for if we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then in some way we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable. Just as we stood for freedom in the 20th century, we must stand together for the right of people everywhere to live free from fear in the 21st century. And . . . as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act. We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it, we can start it.

True to his word, in Prague, on April 10 2010, the U.S. and Russia signed an agreement to cut nuclear warheads by 30% to 1550 missiles, superseding the Moscow agreement of 2002.

The nuclear power issue took a dangerous and unexpected turn during March of 2011 with the earthquake-tsunami-nuclear crisis in Japan, when flood water from the tsunami incapacitated generators, cutting power to cooling systems, causing the reactors to overheat. Again, as in the other major crises discussed above, we saw here the unleashed elemental power of nature (Pluto) throwing the world into a sustained crisis (Saturn-Uranus), with the situation at the stricken Fukushima nuclear plant poised on a knife-edge as workers and governments desperately tried to keep the situation under control, and to prevent potentially deadly radiation leaks of the kind experienced at Chernobyl in the 1980s (during a Saturn-Uranus hard-aspect alignment). In archetypal terms, this disaster was yet another manifestation of themes associated with the T-square: the unexpected expression of the forces of nature, the

splitting open of the earth and the ensuing titanic rush of the tsunami triggering mass devastation and loss of life, the breaking apart of structures, and the desperate measures to control the situation sustained over a long period of time.

Technological Innovations and Breakthroughs

Developments in the area of nuclear power were, of course, just one of many significant technological advances over the last few years. Periods of Uranus-Pluto hard-aspect alignments are often associated with radical advances in technology, reflecting this planetary combination's archetypal association with the titanic empowerment of invention, innovation, and new technology across all walks of life.

The Rise of Mobile Computing and Proliferation of Social Networking

Several developments in technology have both increased and expanded the importance of computing and the internet in the last several years. The release of Apple's iPhone in mid-2007 initiated a veritable explosion of new mobile computing devices, including tablet computers, smart phones, and personal digital assistants. Seen as the logical heir apparent of the first telephone (invented by Alexander Graham Bell under the last Uranus-Pluto square of the nineteenth century) and adumbrated by the high-tech devices envisioned in television shows such as *Star Trek* under the last Uranus-Pluto conjunction, smart phones and other mobile devices have represented a major advancement in computing. So revolutionary has been the rise of smart phones and other mobile devices that it represents not just a change in the magnitude of the breadth of the internet's reach, but a qualitative shift in the way technology impacts daily life. As the name implies, mobile devices have allowed individuals constant access to each other and to the internet, granting access to information at any time and place. Beyond continuous access to data, mobile devices have also represented a major shift in the manner in which we interact with computers. With their reliance on touch screens and speech recognition software, mobile devices, many analysts suggest, represent the third major revolution in computer user interface design,

taking individuals beyond text and graphical user interfaces which dominated computing in the last quarter century.

Concurrent with the rise of mobile technologies, and to a certain extent facilitated by these devices, has been the advance of social media and networking sites on the internet, best represented by the sites Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. While many social media sites like Facebook were founded slightly before the current Uranus-Pluto square, their exponential growth and establishment as worldwide phenomena occurred during the alignment. From mid-2008 through mid-2011, the number of users of Facebook skyrocketed, from 100 million users to just under 800 million users worldwide.⁵⁰ A similar pattern of staggering growth of microblogging site Twitter can be seen in roughly the same time period. While it took approximately eighteen months for Twitter to add its first 500,000 accounts, by 2011 Twitter was adding 500,000 accounts on a daily basis.⁵¹ Correspondingly, to give a sense of how popular the video-sharing website YouTube has become, by 2012 more video content is uploaded to the site in an average month than has been generated by the three major U.S. television networks in the past sixty years.⁵² Put another way, as of 2012, there is so much content on YouTube that it would take over 1,700 years—or over twenty average lifetimes—to view it all.⁵³ We can see the exponential rise of social media and networking as not only being an expression of the sharply accelerated technological shifts that accompany Uranus-Pluto alignments, but the nature of these sites, which rely almost exclusively upon user-generated content, can also be seen as the radical empowerment of individual expression, a hallmark of the archetypal Pluto empowering and intensifying the archetype of Uranus.

Social and Economic Repercussions of Technological Advancements

As technological change does not occur in a vacuum, the extreme growth of computing and social media as noted above has led to major demographic, social, and economic changes across the globe. The current Uranus-Pluto square can be seen as the second major hard aspect between these two planets since the inception of the Technological Revolution that began under the Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the 1960s. Like the major Uranus-Pluto alignments that punctuated the Industrial Revolution

(namely, the opposition of 1787–1798 opposition, the square of 1816–1824, and the conjunction of 1845–1856) the most recent conjunction and square of these two planets has birthed extreme socioeconomic changes and marked epochal shifts in society and commerce. If, as technologist Andrew McAfee suggests, the Industrial Revolution was aimed at overcoming the limitations of our individual muscles, then the Technological Revolution is the attempt at overcoming the limitations of our own brains.⁵⁴ With the extraordinary increase in computing power has come dramatic and far-reaching changes in work and social life.

While the growth of the internet and the World Wide Web in the first phase of its expansion (under the most recent Uranus-Neptune conjunction) was primarily driven by developed, fully industrialized countries, the most recent wave of growth under the current Uranus-Pluto square has predominately been seen in developing and emerging markets and nations. Internet usage has erupted in countries like India, Nigeria, Russia, China, and Iran in the last several years. In China alone, more internet users have emerged between 2007 and 2010 than exist in all of the U.S.⁵⁵ Concurrently, even with the internet's rapid evolution, as marked by social media and mobile devices, the percentage of American adults that access the internet has been relatively fixed during this time frame.⁵⁶ As Richard Tarnas notes, Uranus-Pluto alignments are often characterized by mass demographic shifts, and the emergence of new populations of internet users will likely continue to unfold during the current Uranus-Pluto square.⁵⁷

Equally as dramatic as the demographic shift of internet users is the influence technology has had on commerce. While ecommerce may have been birthed during the recent Uranus-Neptune conjunction, the development of ecommerce during the current Uranus-Pluto square has seen a shift from ecommerce as an innovation and novelty to ecommerce as a business necessity and a means of survival in today's retail landscape. The several advantages afforded by ecommerce—twenty-four-hour convenience, instantaneous comparison shopping, and extraordinarily large selection of products, to name a few—have changed shopping dynamics worldwide, and with it, have simultaneously birthed new patterns of commerce while destroying older modes of business. Online ecommerce giants such as Amazon and eBay have revolutionized retail shopping and, in their ascent, have inadvertently destroyed brick-and-mortar competitors.

Computers and technology have not only transformed retail and shopping but have changed the dynamics of the workplace and patterns within the workforce. During the current Uranus-Pluto square, the rise of cloud computing (where software, databases, and platforms exist in remote networks shared by multiple companies) has, in essence, uprooted the traditional office space. An older model of business—whereby employees arrive in one location during set time intervals—is being steadily replaced by a decentralized workforce run by telecommuters, data centers, contractors, and outsourced, virtual employees. Just as mobile devices have liberated the computer user from being restricted to accessing information in a particular time and place, technologies such as cloud computing are emancipating workers and companies from traditional geographic and time-bound constraints.

Beyond decentralizing the workplace, computers and technology are also significantly changing the workforce. Robots and automated machines are quickly replacing manual human labor in many service sectors such as motor vehicle, metal, and food production. Even in the heart of the most recent recession, shipments for robots increased in every region of the world.⁵⁸ The image of robots replacing humans in jobs with menial, repetitive tasks has been one that has gripped the public's imagination for several decades now. However, with the increase in computing speed and power, the lower cost of memory and storage, and ever-increasing complexity of computer programming, robots and computers are no longer just taking over simple, unskilled jobs but also labor requiring some degree of advanced skill and specialization. For instance, simple news articles, such as news briefs and financial reports, are now being “written” in large part by sophisticated computer programs that mimic human reasoning and intelligence.⁵⁹

Besides being an omnipresent diversion and a favorite form of procrastination, social media and networking has changed the fabric of our social and work lives, often in unforeseen ways. As mentioned above, unmonitored uploads to YouTube can quickly ignite a firestorm of protest and dissent thousands of miles away. A tweet on Twitter can spell the abrupt downfall of a promising politician (such as with former New York congressmen Anthony Weiner), and inappropriate Facebook uploads can be the cause for immediate dismissal from one's place of employment (such as the case of Lindsey Stone and Jamie Schuh).⁶⁰ In more positive,

life-affirming ways, thousands of otherwise disenfranchised individuals are finding each other through online groups, finding a haven in a virtual world where new ideas and new modes of expression can be voiced and articulated. Rapid interaction through social networks gave protestors information about how best to counteract security forces during uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, and as the Arab Spring revolutions rose, social media carried, as one researcher put it, “a cascade of messages about freedom and democracy across North Africa and the Middle East.”⁶¹ As many commentators suggest that no technology is either inherently positive or negative, the many-to-many format of social media networks is unique among broadcast media and this arrangement—in conjunction with near-instantaneous transmission of messages—makes social media a potent agent of change and distinctive in its ability to act as a forum for democratic ideas and communication.

Genetics and Evolution

The Human Genome Project, in which the entire mapping of the human genome was completed, was an immense endeavor spanning over thirteen years (1990–2003) and costing nearly four billion U.S. dollars.⁶² If ever a technology best captured the Promethean qualities of the Uranus archetype, it is the harnessing of the very spark of life that the field of genetics promises. However, so expensive and time-consuming was the initial sequencing of human DNA that we might compare it to a caveman spending weeks with two flint stones to provide one single spark of fire. In the last few years, though, as geneticist Richard Resnick notes, a veritable revolution in genomics has occurred. Spurred by advances in both computer speed and analyzing techniques, the cost for analyzing the human genome has dropped one hundred million fold since the initial first sequencing, and the time needed to analyze a human genome now takes only a few weeks.⁶³ Under the current Uranus-Pluto square, the pragmatic possibilities of genetics—some undoubtedly positive, others debatably dangerous and with unknown consequences—have arrived.

Recent advances in genomics allow us to reach back into the far distant past as well as catapult us into an unknown future. Although it was long suspected that some humans have Neanderthal DNA, the first hard genetic evidence for this interspecies breeding was found in 2010.⁶⁴ This

discovery constitutes an awakening to the co-mingling of the “ape like” Neanderthal with the modern, advanced *Homo Sapien*. Not only does this portrait of a “hybrid human” perfectly capture the juxtaposition of the Pluto archetype, with its emphasis on the biological and the evolutionary, and Uranus, with its characteristic association with quantum leaps into new and original forms, but it fits into the diachronic pattern of Uranus-Pluto alignments with what Richard Tarnas calls the “motif of chthonic awakening.”⁶⁵ During Uranus-Pluto alignments, we often witness revelations and heightened interest in the primal, instinctual, and biological side of human nature. Arguably the most famous example is Darwin beginning to write *The Origin of Species* during the Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the mid-nineteenth century. However, such themes were also prominent during the conjunction of the 1960s, with humanity’s primate origins portrayed in popular films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Planet of the Apes*, both released in 1968.

Beyond greater understanding of humanity’s origins, the current genomic revolution is also generating far-reaching consequences in medicine. With the cost of genome mapping now affordable for the average family, a personalized genome portrait allows one to predict with far greater accuracy than ever before statistical probabilities for diseases like certain forms of cancer, Alzheimer’s, Diabetes, heart disease, and hundreds of other conditions. With such a powerful prognostic tool in hand, personalized genetic portraits are lowering the need for invasive surgeries, extending lifespans, and permitting more targeted diagnostic interventions. Genetic portraits are the cornerstone of a larger revolution within healthcare called “personalized medicine” in which, as the name implies, healthcare decisions and interventions are customized and tailored to the individual versus large population sizes.

While personalized medicine may appear wholly positive and ethically unproblematic, the consequences of other possibilities afforded by advances in genetics are far more open to debate. Genetic technology holds out the promise of creating the “food of the future,” in the form of synthetically produced meat, grown in a laboratory. More prevalent, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have gained greater traction within the food supply market during the current Uranus-Pluto square, as controversy has heightened surrounding their safety in recent years. Proponents suggest that production of virus-resistant GMOs has become

a necessity in order to feed an ever-increasing global population. On the other hand, detractors believe that the effects of GMOs on human health and environmental impact are unknown, and that results of a relatively small sample size of studies are dubious regarding their objectivity.⁶⁶

Similar concerns have been raised regarding biological engineering. In 2010, the first self-replicating life with synthetic DNA was created.⁶⁷ Just as lowering costs of human gene mapping have led to real-world solutions based on human DNA, plunging costs of DNA synthesis have allowed for tremendous advances in cells to self-replicate. We have also recently entered uncharted territory in regards to human biological reproduction, with the technological manipulation of the gene sequence now making possible “three-parent babies.” Such a development reportedly has the potential to instigate an irreversible mutation in the DNA of offspring conceived by this method.⁶⁸

Nearly two-hundred years after Mary Shelley published *Frankenstein*, the hypothetical moral dilemmas inherent in her cautionary tale have been realized. While the ethical quandaries surrounding bioengineering and GMOs are complex and varied, perhaps at the root of these arguments is the same conundrum that Shelley so masterfully articulated: tampering with nature can bring about unforeseen consequences. As the archetype of Pluto is not only intensifying the creative, emancipatory qualities associated with Uranus during the current alignment, it is fitting that the present configuration is a square between these two planets, bringing about the more problematic, complicated implications of these archetypes.

Subatomic Research

In perhaps no other technological field is it easier to witness the mutual activation of the Uranus and Pluto archetypes than in subatomic research. Not only do we observe Uranus emancipating and acting on Pluto, in the sudden awakening of nature’s hidden depths and the probing into the unseen and elemental, but we also can easily discern Pluto stimulating Uranus, in profound breakthroughs and radical leaps of insight and understanding. Fittingly, major advances in physics have occurred under Uranus-Pluto alignments, and the current square alignment is no exception.

On July 4, 2012, CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) scientists found a particle that was consistent with the predicted existence of the Higgs boson particle (often casually referred to as the “God Particle”). While there are at least thirty-six confirmed subatomic particles, the Higgs boson has taken on special significance in the pantheon of tiny, elementary stuff as the existence of the particle is assumed to be the producer of the Higgs Field—a quantum field responsible for giving all elementary particles their masses. So significant is the discovery of the Higgs boson that it is not only the culmination of over forty years of research, but, according to science popularizers like Sean Carroll, the discovery of the Higgs boson concludes the search for knowledge of particles initiated by the Greeks 2,500 years ago and completes what is known as the Standard Model of particle physics.⁶⁹

Not only is such a groundbreaking discovery an example of scientific breakthroughs that typically occur under Uranus-Pluto alignments, but the search for the Higgs boson itself can also be seen as representative of Uranus-Pluto dynamics. The machine used to discover the Higgs boson, the Large Hadron Collider, is a \$9 billion behemoth that lies deep underground beneath the border of France and Switzerland. The cost, the size (it is the world’s largest machine), and its underground, hidden existence perfectly encapsulate the titanic, colossal, and subterranean qualities of Uranus-Pluto phenomena. Moreover, while there were certainly some dangers associated with operating the Large Hadron Collider, there were some rumors—some humorous, others to be taken seriously—that the machine could threaten to destroy the planet in a cataclysmic, nuclear meltdown. The sense of threat—either real or imagined—captures the monumental, elemental forces that can be unleashed during Uranus-Pluto alignments.

While the Higgs-Boson discovery corroborates, and in sense completes, a highly significant model in physics, an equally compelling series of recent experiments threatens to undermine one of the most celebrated theories in the field. In September 2011, European scientists from the OPERA project announced what many commentators are calling the most significant discovery in physics in the last half-century (if it is corroborated by further experiment): neutrinos that appear to be moving slightly faster than light, a finding that would contradict Einstein’s relativity theory, which posits that nothing can travel faster than the speed of light, and most likely would pro-

duce a fundamental revolution in physics on the order of relativity and quantum mechanics. If these results are confirmed through further study, OPERA's discovery would constitute a diachronic development of the original formulations of relativity theory and quantum theory during the Uranus-Pluto opposition at the turn of the twentieth century (1896–1907).⁷⁰

Technological Power Struggles

The same combination of impulses associated with Uranus and Pluto is also evident in what might be described as new technological power struggles. Like the Space Race of the 1960s, during the current alignment there has been a tremendous drive to develop technology that is quicker, more immense, and more powerful, inexorably pushing back the limits of accomplishment in titanic feats of technological ingenuity. Among the most prominent examples of this phenomenon is the race to develop the world's most powerful supercomputer (measured in terms of calculations per second)—a race which has significantly intensified in recently years with two U.S. models, IBM's Sequoia (in July 2012) and Nvidia's Titan (in November), overtaking the previous leader, Fujitsu's K computer in Japan. Other supercomputers have been developed in China (which had the most powerful model in 2009), Germany, France, and Italy.⁷¹

Meanwhile, Russia's investment in new technology to create something like its own version of Silicon Valley has also been compared to the U.S.-Soviet rivalry of the 1960s. With the development of the Skolkovo Innovation Center, as James Melik reports, "Twenty miles west of Moscow, a new technology race, rather like the space race of the 1960s, is opening up."⁷² Both these examples are illustrative expressions of the empowerment of the new and the technological, but also the use of technology to exert power, reflecting the coming together of Faustian drives associated with Pluto and the Promethean quality of the Uranus archetype.

Aviation and Space Flight

Perhaps the most compelling technological example of diachronic patterns under Uranus-Pluto alignments occurs within the fields of aviation and space flight. The opposition of Uranus and Pluto of 1896–

1907 witnessed the birth of modern aviation with the fateful first flights of Wilbur and Orville Wright. The conjunction of Uranus and Pluto of 1960–1972 observed the extraordinary breakthroughs that propelled the Space Race, culminating in the lunar landings of the late 1960s and early 1970s (recently brought back into public consciousness with the death of Neil Armstrong). Lodged between these two alignments was the Uranus-Pluto square of the 1930s. While perhaps not as impressive in terms of technological and scientific advances, this alignment saw developments and innovations that would prove to be instrumental to both aviation and space flight. Within aviation, the mid-1930s saw a rapid advance in commercial flight, with the inaugural flight and production of the Douglas DC-3 airliner and the rapid development of the jet engine. Within modern rocketry, the 1930s witnessed the proliferation of rocket technology in Germany under the direction of Wernher von Braun and the expansion of rocketry programs in Russia. As is the case of the current Uranus-Pluto square, the developments in aviation and space flight may not be as groundbreaking as those under the previous conjunction and opposition of Uranus and Pluto, but the rapid advances in aviation and space flight under the current square certainly provide evidence for a continuation of a potent diachronic pattern.

During the current Uranus-Pluto square, for example, efforts have been made by the U.S. military to develop a hypersonic jet, capable of traveling at speeds of Mach 5 and above. On August 15, 2012, a test flight of the hypersonic Waverider attempted to achieve Mach 6, although this test, like the one before it, failed due to a faulty component. The Waverider project is reportedly “one of several currently under way to create a hypersonic aircraft.”⁷³ If successful, these projects have the potential to make commercial hypersonic air travel a reality by 2050, making possible flights from Paris to Tokyo in two and a half hours.

As the square alignment of Uranus and Pluto in the 1930s saw a rapid commercialization of the breakthroughs of the first airplane pioneers, this current square alignment is witnessing the initial advancements of space tourism and commercial space flight. Spearheaded by celebrity entrepreneurs like Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos, commercial spacecraft companies have been rapidly emerging in recent years after the U.S. government proposed a set of rules for space tourism in late 2005.⁷⁴ While actual privatized flights have been few and far

between—reserved only for the extremely wealthy—the price tag for such an adventure has been dropping, and companies like Virgin Galactic and XCOR Aerospace have several hundred reservations for flight and anticipate full operations in 2013.⁷⁵ What may seem like a novelty for the adventuresome and well-to-do is actually predicted to become a legitimate industry during the coming decade, as the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration is predicting space tourism to be a booming, billion dollar industry over the course of the next ten years.⁷⁶

During the 1960s, the Space Race was dominated by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. However, just as the current Uranus-Pluto square has seen a mass migration and demographic shift in internet users across the globe, the current Uranus-Pluto square has seen space programs expand and proliferate, with the Space Race becoming largely an international phenomenon. The current Uranus-Pluto alignment has witnessed not only the birth of several space agencies (Belarus, Mexico, Venezuela, South Africa, and the U.K., to name a sampling) but also the development and extension of several other well-established programs.⁷⁷ China and India, for example, have annual budgets well in excess of one billion U.S. dollars, and China recently sent its first female astronaut, Liu Yang, into space in the summer of 2012 and hopes to complete a functional space station before the end of the decade.⁷⁸ India's space program witnessed its first unmanned lunar mission in 2008 and has a Mars orbiter launch slated for 2013.

While NASA has curtailed its programs due to budgetary constraints, its recent unmanned lunar and Martian missions have proved fruitful in further understanding the composition of the solar system. In 2010, NASA discovered water on the Moon by hitting the surface inside a deep crater with rockets. This discovery makes it much more likely that life can exist on other planets because life as we know it requires liquid water. Equally as important, the existence of significant quantities of water on the Moon make missions and ultimately manned stations on the Moon more probable, due to the lack of needing to transport water.⁷⁹ After nearly a year of space flight, NASA's Curiosity rover landed on Mars in August 2012, joining Opportunity rover in NASA's large-scale Martian exploration. Upon reaching Mars's orbit, the rover began the most complex entry, descent, and landing for an unmanned space mission, involving a complex network of parachutes, rockets, and skycranes. So

technically precise was the Curiosity landing that it only missed its targeted approach by 1.5 miles—after a nine-month, 352-million-mile flight.⁸⁰ Not unlike the lunar missions before it, the Curiosity rover has sent images of rock formations in the Martian landscape, which suggest that the presence of water was likely at some point in Mars's formation. Perhaps more compelling, in April 2012 a group of scientists announced that, using the relatively new tool of cluster analysis to analyze data from the 1976 Viking mission to Mars, the evidence seems to suggest that there is microbial life on the planet, though more investigation must be done to confirm this finding.⁸¹ Together with the recent discovery of frozen water at the poles of Mercury, these findings tentatively suggest that the building blocks of life might be present throughout the universe, with immensely significant implications for our future evolutionary prospects.

Although lacking the pragmatic significance of the preceding phenomena, but just as exemplary of the Uranus-Pluto archetypal combination as any of the above, is the case of Felix Baumgartner, the Austrian skydiver, who, on October 14, 2012 dove an estimated twenty-four miles to earth. In a single jump, Baumgartner set records for a manned balloon flight parachute jump from the highest altitude and for the greatest free fall velocity (reaching speeds of over 800 miles per hour).⁸² Just as numerous records were set in a single jump, several characteristics of Uranus-Pluto alignments also converged on the event: technological breakthroughs in aviation and space flight, the extreme experience of sudden descent, and the act of pushing beyond and through previously assumed limitations. Finally, to mention a technological vector to Baumgartner's feat, the streamed video of the event on YouTube set a record for most watched live stream with eight million viewers. In many ways, Baumgartner's astonishing plunge, redolent of the widely viewed Apollo Moon-landing of the 1960s, captured much of the positive spirit of possibility of the Uranus-Pluto complex, providing an inspiring collective focus for people around the world.

The Jupiter-Uranus Conjunction: Birthing the Revolution

Between March 2010 and April 2011, Jupiter moved into a conjunction with Uranus, thereby forming part of the T-square with

Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto. Among other things, the energies associated with the Jupiter-Uranus alignment seem to have served as an archetypal catalyst for the events unfolding during the longer-term Uranus-Pluto alignment, much as they did in the 1960s, when the triple conjunction of Jupiter, Uranus, and Pluto during 1968–1969 coincided with what Tarnas describes as “the peak and full amplitude of the decade’s characteristic events,” including the triumphant culmination of the space program with the Apollo Moon landing, the height of the student protest movement, and a series of unprecedented countercultural mass music festivals such as Woodstock.⁸³

The most recent Jupiter-Uranus alignment coincided most strikingly during the early months of 2011 with the Arab Spring, the dramatic wave of revolutions across the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa, including Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain.⁸⁴ If one needed persuading of the value of astrological world-transit correlations for illuminating historical trends, one could hardly hope to find a more compelling example than this. Even those of us who knew beforehand of the Uranus-Pluto alignment’s association with revolution would probably not have anticipated such a dramatic wave of revolutionary protest on this scale. One report of July 14, 2012 identified around fifty separate revolutions, cases of social unrest, and protests that were then taking place in a large number of locations around the world.⁸⁵ From Cairo and Damascus to Beijing and Moscow, during the current Uranus-Pluto square vast numbers of people have been nerved to express their disapproval, anger, and desire for change, even in countries in which one would not have expected such mass outpourings of rebellion—which is perhaps what makes this current wave of revolutions most striking. In a further expression of the diachronic sequence of periods of major revolution—1789, 1848, and the 1960s—this was a vivid expression of the archetypal dynamics of Uranus-Pluto, birthed and brought to a dramatic climax in coincidence with the Jupiter-Uranus transit.

As we have seen, the Uranus-Pluto complex is associated with an accelerated pace of life, often characterized by a sense of urgency and a more intense experience of the desire for change. Saturn-Uranus, however, often correlates with delays in the pace of change, placing obstacles in its way, blocking, impeding, restraining. And during Saturn-Pluto

alignments, we noted, circumstances can feel unbearably oppressive, extremely restricted—life can be experienced as an intense contraction, with no prospect of release. In stark contrast, the Jupiter-Uranus combination is associated with moments of euphoric release, liberation, the outpouring of creative energy and inspiration, the dizzy rush of excitement and optimism, the unexpected and successful revolution, the sense of euphoric victory, positive breakthroughs, and leaps forward; it often coincides with the green light for change, and with the birthing of new opportunities and possibilities for progress and reform.

During the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction, such themes were vividly exemplified in Cairo and Tunis following the toppling of the old regimes, with the ecstatic sense of freedom and the euphoric celebration greeting the exciting new births and new beginnings for the countries. These successful revolutions marked moments of crowning glory of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto theme of the empowerment of young people, associated with Uranus, against the old order associated with Saturn—even as in places like Egypt the difficult revolutionary struggle still continues to unfold.

Jupiter-Saturn Contrasts

The period of the *Jupiter-Uranus* conjunction, typically defined by the quality of exciting and unexpected liberation that is associated with the Jupiter-Uranus archetypal complex, provides a sharp contrast with the events, mood, and focus of the later period featuring a *Jupiter-Saturn* opposition (February 2011–March 2012). During this later period, news headlines significantly shifted to more practical concerns of government and economic considerations, such as reports of the slow pace of economic growth and recovery, of restricted growth, of the effort to balance the books and dealing with budgetary constraints, of working hard to achieve growth and cutting back on excess, of eliminating wasteful spending, of the distribution of wealth, and of other debates as to how much or how little to regulate—Jupiter associated with free market forces, growth, opportunity, wealth, excess, perhaps greed; Saturn with regulation, control, structure, moderation, and so forth. During this alignment and thereafter, as befitting the character of the Jupiter and

Saturn archetypes, announcements of positive economic figures were followed inevitably by less encouraging news. Growth, pertaining to Jupiter, was typically of a Saturnian character—"negative growth," "slow growth," and the like—with politicians willing to express no more than cautious optimism about future prospects, seeing improvement and upturn as possible only through being circumspect, facing the problem, being realistic. Such attitudes reflect the pragmatic philosophy often associated with the Jupiter-Saturn complex. The problem (Saturn) over the last months and years has been how best to restore economies to growth (Jupiter), with debates focused on whether to create growth or enforce austerity, spending or cutting back—choices reflecting the oscillation between the archetypal Jupiter and Saturn, as it were.

During that time, many governments increasingly preached the value of a commitment to a long-term vision, of slowly rebuilding, and making steady progress. Both Barack Obama in the U.S. and David Cameron in the U.K. were born during major alignments of Jupiter and Saturn, which perhaps makes them well-suited to dealing with such conditions (Obama has natal Jupiter conjunct Saturn, Cameron natal Jupiter trine Saturn). Following Obama's election victory in November 2012, one commentator re-titled Obama's political philosophy as the "tenacity of hope"—an apt expression of Obama's own Jupiter-Saturn complex, reflecting the dogged perseverance (Saturn) required to actualize the optimistic aspiration and hopeful vision (Jupiter). Similarly, in an interview with *60 Minutes* in September 2012, when asked what he has learned from previous presidents, President Obama stated: "Whenever I look at the history of presidents I deeply admire, the one thing that I'm always struck by is persistence. It's a quality that's underrated. Being able to plow through, being able to stay buoyant in the face of challenges."⁸⁶ This Jupiterian "buoyancy" when faced with Saturnian "challenges" expresses much of the tone of Obama's presidency: cautious optimism, slow and steady progress, compromise for the greater good, and moving inexorably forward against great resistance.

The Jupiter-Saturn archetypal combination is also reflected in the number of long processes of international law and extradition cases coming to prominence during the period of the corresponding world transit, such as the case involving American student Amanda Knox and Italian Raffaella Solicito in the Meredith Kercher murder retrial in Perugia, or the long

battle to extradite Wikileaks founder Julian Assange from the U.K. to Sweden to face sexual assault charges—among a number of other prominent extradition cases. The Saturn archetype is associated with laws, rules, and structures of government. It is also connected, as we have seen, to time, slowness, delays, blocks, and long struggles. In astrology the Jupiter principle has traditionally been connected to foreign countries, journeys overseas, and the wider world of international relations. These cases thus well express the combination of both archetypes.

Compared to the longer-term Uranus-Pluto transit, though, the relatively quicker Jupiter transits (and to a lesser extent Sun, Mars, and Venus transits) provide additional detail and definition without altering the overall archetypal picture of contemporary world affairs, which, as we have seen, will remain dominated until 2020 by archetypal themes associated with the Uranus-square-Pluto alignment.

The Psychodynamics of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-Square

As will be evident from this illustrative survey of world news over the last few years, the combination of the markedly diverse and sometimes conflicting archetypal energies associated with the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square and Uranus-Pluto square manifested in a wide range of ways across all aspects of life. Indeed, themes reflecting combinations of the archetypes associated with these planets are expressed not only in world affairs but, more immediately, in the experiences of individual lives. Even those of us not directly caught up in revolutionary uprisings or any other of the more overt cultural expressions of the Uranus-Pluto complex will have encountered something of the archetypal themes and energies associated with these world transits—in our relationships, in family and working life, perhaps, and in the depths of inner experience—especially if these planets are also prominent in our personal transits.

In the deep psychological experience of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto complex, one can find oneself subject to the containing or blocking of immense energies in a confined psychological space—a veritable Hadron-collider type energy that can effect radical psychological transformation. The archetypal complex is especially associated with the frustration of instinct by circumstance, promoting a maturation of one's sense of freedom; and with the

awakening, containment, and purging of compulsive drives. It is also connected to transformation at the edge, to painstakingly slow rebirth experience, and to the experience of being repeatedly taken to one's limits, and beyond, as old structures are progressively broken down and dormant energies liberated, contained, and released.

Given these associations, it is perhaps unsurprising that—as Tarnas notes in his world transit article of 2010—two of the major contributors to our understanding of deep psychological transformation were born during Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-squares: C. G. Jung in 1875 and Stanislav Grof in 1931. In Jungian terms, Saturn is associated with the structure of the ego-complex, based upon the self-preservation instinct; Uranus is connected with the impulse to break free of the common crowd, the urge to go one's own way in life, as well as the breakthrough experience of the sudden emergence of unconscious contents into the field of consciousness; and Pluto is especially connected with instinctual compulsion, the primitive, uncivilized drives associated with the shadow archetype, the descent into the underworld of the unconscious, and the death-rebirth process that is fundamental to individuation.⁸⁷ In Grofian perinatal psychology, as Tarnas's research has shown, specific phases of the death-rebirth process are explicitly connected to the planetary archetypes associated with Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto—Saturn pertaining to the experience of entrapment in the womb during birth contractions, Pluto to the fetus's intense life and death struggle in the birth canal, and Uranus to the birth moment and the sudden liberation into a bright new world.

Perhaps, then, in coincidence with the recent T-square and ongoing Uranus-Pluto square, we can observe something of these psychodynamics at work in our collective experience, driving cultural evolution and effecting something like a death-rebirth process on a civilizational level. In a collision at once creative and destructive, liberating and oppressive, in our own time these archetypal powers seem to be bringing about a dying of the old order, marking a critical transitional phase of modernity and the industrialized economy of the modern world, as a prelude, one hopes, to the emergence of a new order, a new way of being. Indeed, many observers, sensitive to the larger trajectory and deeper telos shaping human experience, wait in anticipation of the emergence of the new out of the ashes of the old, of a renewal beyond the turmoil and decline we now see before us. Periods of Uranus-Pluto alignments, as we have seen, are often

characterized by an embrace of the new, the experimental. Thematically, the zeitgeist of these periods often favors the radical, the countercultural, the new paradigm, and the aspiration to give birth to a new world.

In such times of transition, the archetypal astrological perspective furnishes us with the ability to find meaning within the seeming chaos and flux of events, to view the current crises in a wider context, and to attune to a larger evolutionary trajectory. Through archetypal astrology, we can more readily discern the universal determinants, the grand lines, and the great recurring cycles shaping our individual and collective destinies. This insight and awareness can help us to participate more consciously, perhaps more skillfully, with the unfolding course of history. The degree of conscious awareness we can bring to this process, as Jung stressed, can be decisive.

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