

World Transits 2000–2020

An Overview

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There are few frames of reference more illuminating of individual and collective archetypal dynamics and psychological conditions than an archetypally informed knowledge of current planetary positions. In the following pages I would like to set out an overview of the major world transits of the outer planets that I believe are most relevant for understanding our current historical moment. In particular, I want to review both the most significant longer-term planetary alignments leading up to this era and, more recent, those that have unfolded since *Cosmos and Psyche* was completed five years ago, in 2005. On that basis, we can deepen and extend that book's brief anticipatory analysis of the extraordinary convergence of planetary configurations of the 2008–12 period. This article is therefore continuous with the chapter "Observations on Future Planetary Alignments," from the final section of *Cosmos and Psyche*.¹

The Outer-Planet Conjunction Series: The Presence of the Past



If we can, for a moment, adjust our archetypal telescope and zoom out to a wide-angle historical perspective, we can see that our moment in history is taking place in the aftermath of three great conjunctions involving the three intersecting cycles of the outer planets Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto—the "ambassadors of the galaxy," as Dane Rudhyar evocatively described them. We are, of course, living in a time when new celestial bodies at the outskirts of our solar system are being discovered at

a rapid pace, as are extrasolar planets in other systems. These discoveries and revisions are challenging long-established astronomical assumptions and transforming the old planetary classifications and definitions. As a new body of evidence, they represent a peculiarly apt astronomical development for our postmodern age, with its pervading awareness of the complex multiplicity and fluid indeterminacy of reality and the radically interpretive, provisional nature of our knowledge. They are also making more permeable the boundary between our solar system and the encompassing galaxy. That being said, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto are currently the only celestial bodies in our solar system discovered in the modern era for which we have virtually universal consensus in the contemporary astrological research community concerning their archetypal significance and, equally important, for which we have such an extensive body of historical and biographical correlations empirically supporting those archetypal identifications.



The three great outer-planet conjunctions that immediately preceded and, archetypally speaking, still permeate our age are the following:

Neptune-Pluto conjunction	1880–1905
Uranus-Pluto conjunction	1960–1972
Uranus-Neptune conjunction	1985–2001

Each of these periods set in motion tremendous cultural transformations that continue to inform and impel the current age, each doing so in ways that closely reflect the specific archetypal principles associated with the particular planets involved. The years given in each case reflect a 15° orb, which the body of evidence summarized in *Cosmos and Psyche* points to as the approximate archetypally operative orb for outer-planet axial world transits, that is, the conjunctions and oppositions.²

The first of these great conjunctions, the **Neptune-Pluto** conjunction of 1880–1905, represented the completion of   the 500-year Neptune-Pluto cycle that had begun at the turn of the fifteenth century and that saw the voyages of global discovery and conquest and the emergence of the modern era in the West—the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Copernican and Scientific Revolutions, the Enlightenment, the democratic and industrial revolutions, the European people’s colonization of most of the world, the ascendancy of

the West as a global power—and the emergence of what Morin and Kelly have called the Planetary Era: “a new era . . . that involved an unparalleled increase and stabilization of communication and exchange between inhabitants of all of the world’s continents.”³ The 1880–1905 period of this most recent Neptune-Pluto conjunction that began the next 500-year cycle in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the well-named *fin de siècle*, ushered in that profound cultural and historical metamorphosis in the collective modern psyche—from Nietzsche’s “death of God,” the discovery of the unconscious, and the first world parliament of religions to the emergence of quantum-relativistic physics, the similarly radical transformation of the arts, and global multicultural demographic and social shifts—which began the historical process that ultimately “wiped away the horizon,” to use Nietzsche’s phrase, of Western civilization’s metaphysical universe.⁴ At a deep psychological level, one can recognize here the beginning of the descent of the modern Western ego that had first been constellated and then followed its solar trajectory over the preceding five centuries.⁵ As with other Neptune-Pluto axial alignments that coincided with the often subterranean destruction and seeding of great cultural world views, as at the end of the Roman Empire and start of the Middle Ages, the period of this conjunction essentially brought into being the underlying matrix of a new cultural epoch: in this case, the radically more complex, relativistic, indeterminate, multicultural and multiperspectival postmodern age. (All this can be seen as having been given a kind of electrically charged surge in revolutionary impact and historical visibility when one takes into account the additional major world transit of Uranus moving into opposition with both Pluto and Neptune at the turn of the twentieth century, which began during the later stages of this Neptune-Pluto conjunction.)

The second of the great outer-planet conjunctions immediately preceding our era, the **Uranus-Pluto**   conjunction of the 1960s and early 1970s, coincided with that volcanic eruption of revolutionary and emancipatory impulses, accelerated historical change, social and political turmoil, and heightened creativity and innovation in all spheres of human activity that has shaped the global zeitgeist ever since. Much like past axial alignments in the Uranus-Pluto cycle, such as the French Revolutionary epoch of 1787–98, though in this most recent case with greater global extent and intensity,

the 1960–72 period brought an overwhelming and often violent collective drive to make the world radically new. The worldwide anti-colonial independence movements, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the civil rights and black power movements in the U.S. and South Africa, the sexual revolution, feminism and the women’s movement, the empowerment of youth and the counterculture, the student and antiwar movements, the gay liberation movement, the environmental movement, the space race and computer revolution, the global agricultural revolution, the widespread radically secularizing and liberalizing religious impulses, the psychedelic revolution, the creative revolutions in virtually all the arts and sciences, social mores, fashion, language: there was scarcely any field of human experience that did not undergo rapid and radical change during that era, a decisive shift that has continued to shape the subsequent decades up to the present moment.

Finally, the **Uranus-Neptune** conjunction of the 1985–2001 period coincided with a different, generally more subtle though pervasive cultural shift, growing from the preceding transformations but adding its own particular character—the global dissolving of boundaries, “revolution by dissolution.” This epochal change began at the geopolitical level with *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the nonviolent revolutions that took down the Berlin Wall and ended the Cold War, and extended into the new millennium with the planet-wide transformation of human experience produced by the personal computer, digital, and Internet revolutions, with incalculable effects on global culture, commerce, politics, the arts, and social mores. To mention only a few of the major social and technological changes during these years that reflected the distinctive themes of the Uranus-Neptune complex: the rapid multiplication and interpenetration of information sources and communication media, the extreme acceleration of computer processing and of fiber-optic and satellite connectivity, the ubiquitous dissemination of mobile phones and email, search engines and social networks, downloads and DVDs, the enormous multiplication of cable television stations, the opening of radically new cosmic vistas and understandings through the Hubble telescope and its continuing flood of images, the advances in and proliferation of photographic manipulation and music sampling, the extreme rapidity of shifting images and narratives in television and film, and the 24/7 digital world that now permeates,



mesmerizes, and interconnects the lives of millions as never before. So also the biotechnology and pharmacology revolutions, with the immensely complex ramifications these advances have produced in the environmental context as well as subjective human experience, health, and ethics, from the psychopharmacological medication of children, youths, and adults and performance-enhancing drugs for athletes and elders to new possibilities of genetic manipulation and cloning in plants and animals, including human subjects.

The late-twentieth-century era of the Uranus-Neptune conjunction also saw the full emergence of postmodernity in the public consciousness, with the widespread dissolution of old epistemological certainties and cultural assumptions, and the increased fluid complexification of personal identity with a new sense of multiple realities, multiple selves, multiple religious and philosophical commitments, multiple online personas, and so forth. Public awareness of various esoteric, mystical, meditative, gnostic, mythic, archetypal, and imaginative discourses entered more pervasively into the collective psyche, disseminated by the popular media (for example, the Harry Potter series, *The Da Vinci Code*, *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy) and widely viewed television programs (the Joseph Campbell interviews with Bill Moyers), as well as by scholarly writings, conferences, and academic programs. A common theme during this period was the growing recognition of an *anima mundi* and the soul dimension of human life, often connected with a new transpersonal consciousness of the collective human psyche and of a Gaian planetary being. Countless books, symposia, and workshops reflected a general impulse towards the spiritualization and re-enchantment of everyday life, of science, of nature and the cosmos. An intensification of diverse spiritual impulses and religious movements was evident throughout the world, ranging from rapidly spreading mass Pentecostal revivals, heightened Islamic religiosity, and widespread popular interest in Buddhist meditative disciplines to large-scale Ecstasy raves, phantasmagoric collective ritual festivals such as Burning Man, and the international spread of South American ayahuasca rituals. In general, the collective psyche during these decades was permeated with an unprecedented ambience of global multiculturalism, metaphysical pluralism and flexibility, the rise of holistic, participatory paradigms in many fields from physics and medicine to psychology and philosophy, and the spread of a greater empathic consciousness of global interconnectedness with the diversity of humanity and the entire Earth community.

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We can readily observe today how almost every significant trend set in motion during these three previous transformational epochs remains vividly alive and consequential in our own time. This cumulative presence of the past, with the influx and integration of successive archetypal wave forms entering collective human experience, is a continuing reminder to us that the conventional astrological tendency to analyze history or individual lives in more punctuated or atomistic terms, with exact planetary aspects seen as marking discrete periods of a particular character that begin and end in the manner of light switches being turned on and off, is profoundly inadequate. Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy is perhaps the best theoretical frame of reference for understanding the ways in which each era, each event, and each individual represents a creative concrescence or composition of the entire past experience of the human community and of the cosmos into a new concrete particular actuality—which in turn becomes part of the continuing and ever-evolving basis for the next novel concrescence, as shaped and inflected by the next convergence of archetypal wave forms and complexes then being constellated. C. G. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious of course provides an initial psychological framework for better understanding these historical and cultural developments, especially when combined with Stanislav Grof's transpersonal psychology and its radically expanded cartography of the unconscious. Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphic fields and Ervin Laszlo's theory of the A-field provide further helpful frameworks that draw on the natural sciences, while additional crucial insights are provided by Christopher Bache's theory of the species mind and Jorge Ferrer's theory of participatory enactment.⁶

As a simple thought experiment for discerning the cumulative presence of the past relative to the sequence of these three most recent outer-planet conjunctions, one merely has to consider a typical popular film of the past few years—filled with special effects and computer simulations, multiple and virtual realities, multiple and virtual identities, metaphysical indeterminacy, multicultural references and contexts, magical and mythical themes, the frequent rendering of non-ordinary states of consciousness and mystical and otherworldly realms, the general

ethos of emancipation and transgressive excitement, freedom of sexual expression and language, sudden eruptions of violence and manifestations of the underworld, the ubiquitous role played by technical innovation and instant electronic communications and sources of information, the high value placed on rapidly shifting imagery and disjunctive montage, narrative unpredictability, and ambiguous, disruptive recontextualizing of plot and character—to recognize how much the cultural phenomena that specifically emerged during these preceding conjunctions (including the emergence of the powerful collective maya-creating film medium itself during the Neptune-Pluto conjunction of 1880–1905) permeate and constitute the present moment. A similar thought experiment can be conducted with regards to the daily life experience of anyone reading these words in 2010, how much each day’s activities, communications, and states of consciousness have been shaped, at once liberated and colonized, by the personal computer, the Internet, and the mobile phone; how much the current ideas, ideals, and range of existential options have been informed by the cultural impulses and social movements of the 1960s; and how much the deeper metaphysical, psychological, scientific, artistic, technological, and geocultural substrate of our current moment dates to the turn of the twentieth century.

The Saturn Opposition Series: The Immediate Context

In the wake of these major cyclical beginnings and archetypal waves leading up to the turn of the millennium, the first decade of the twenty-first century has been marked by a rapid sequence of three consecutive Saturn opposition alignments to these same three planets:

Saturn opposite Pluto 2000–2004

Saturn opposite Neptune 2004–2008

Saturn opposite Uranus 2007–2012

Since the end of 2000 and especially from September 2001 to the present, there has been a sustained tangible intensification of Saturnian qualities in the global zeitgeist, a pervading atmosphere of gravity, adversity, stress and tension, crisis and conflict, conservative reaction,

contraction and limitation, necessity and finality, the bottom line, deficit, depression, failure, the weighty consequences of error, conditions that press things to their conclusion and define them in their finitude. In each case, these underlying Saturnian motifs have been given both greater collective significance and specific qualitative inflections by the respective presence of each of the outer three planetary archetypes in sequence.

Thus we can discern during this decade certain common themes taking different forms, with Saturn—the principle of hard reality, challenge, and crisis—expressing itself at a heightened level more or less continuously but in different modes depending on which outer planet it then opposed: very generally, with Saturn-Pluto in 2000–04, a sustained crisis of power and violence; with Saturn-Neptune in 2004–08, a sustained crisis of vision and disillusionment; and with Saturn-Uranus in 2007–12, a sustained crisis of change and destabilization. We might also recognize in each case the distinctive presence of the relevant elemental domains associated with the same three outer planetary archetypes—during Saturn-Pluto, crises involving fire (the fiery devastation of September 11 and the World Trade Center, the “shock and awe” invasion of Iraq, terrorist bombings throughout the world from Bali to Madrid); during Saturn-Neptune, crises involving water (the Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans, melting polar ice caps, rising sea levels, record floods and droughts, oceanic dead zones, sharply increased awareness of the emerging global water crisis); and during Saturn-Uranus, crises involving air, space, and electricity (the epidemic of major airliner, military jet, and helicopter accidents, space travel and satellite accidents, widespread telecommunication breakdowns, massive electrical outages and power plant explosions, the emergence of long-term electricity crises in many countries along with pressures to restructure electrical grids and transmissions on a global scale, mass lightning strikes like the enormous storm of simultaneous lightning strikes across California in June 2008 that caused over a thousand wildfires). Of course, these simple correlative patterns belie a much more richly multivalent expression of each archetypal complex. And here as well we can recognize how much the current global situation in 2010 is a direct outgrowth of the archetypally relevant events that took place during the first two of these three Saturn alignments, with Pluto and then with Neptune, just preceding the present time during the third of these alignments, Saturn with Uranus.

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The widespread empowerment of conservative, reactionary, and repressive forces during the 2000–04 **Saturn-Pluto** period was central in defining the background of the current intensely conflictual zeitgeist and geopolitical atmosphere, beginning with the Bush-Cheney administration in the U.S. produced by the Supreme Court fiat in late 2000, the election of Vladimir Putin in the same year in Russia, and the role played by Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda in shaping events from 2001 on. The organized use of terror and violence by fundamentalist and reactionary forces on both sides of major conflicts throughout the world; the resulting collective trauma, devastation, and mass death; the scapegoating and vengeance, splitting and projections that rigidly divided the world into simplistic good versus evil categories; and the systematic use of torture, mass imprisonment, and extreme, often Orwellian policies in the name of national security—all constitute continuing legacies that directly or indirectly shape the present moment.

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On the individual level, one merely has to consider what is taken for granted today as permanent standard, highly restrictive and time-consuming airport security measures when flying from any airport in the world to another, compared with air travel at any time in the twentieth century—that is, at any time prior to 2001 and the Saturn-Pluto opposition—to discern the continuing tangible presence of that powerful complex. Similarly, the enormous complex of secret national security operations in the U.S. initiated by the Bush-Cheney administration in the wake of 9/11, now involving over 3,000 government organizations and private companies in 10,000 locations, continue to operate in 2010 undiminished and without oversight.⁷ In terms of the duration of these alignments, the major wars and international conflicts which have so regularly begun in close coincidence with Saturn-Pluto quadrature aspects—World War I, World War II, the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli wars, the India-Pakistan conflict, the Vietnam War, the Iran-Iraq War, and most recently the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the “War on Terror” itself—generally continue long after the initial coinciding alignment is over. So also the distinctive Saturn-Pluto theme of the “end of an era,” the widespread sense that history has undergone a kind of traumatic contraction, an encounter with immensely grave events and mortal dangers

that ended an age of relative security, innocence, or naïveté. During this 2000–04 period an atmosphere of grim *realpolitik* in the face of ineluctable historical forces of conflict and peril established itself in a way that did not loosen its grip after the alignment ended.

Yet, balancing out the many shadow manifestations of the Saturn-Pluto complex were deep positive changes in the collective psyche: a more grounded and experienced realism in the face of an intensely challenging world, a decisive strengthening of focus on matters of depth and gravity, a maturation of sensibility from an earlier condition of relative self-indulgence, decadence, and inflation; existential courage and force of will in facing danger and death, moral courage and depth of insight in facing the shadow within one's own national psyche and behavior, or confronting the shadow within one's own religion or within the civilization as a whole; the widespread increase in awareness of human environmental devastation and the mass extinction of species; individual and collective determination to shoulder major historical tasks, undergo necessary hard labors, and forge enduring structures and foundations. In these positive respects and others, the consequences of the enormous influx of the Saturn-Pluto complex into history and the collective psyche during the 2000–04 alignment have not ceased.

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The shift of archetypal emphasis from this period into the 2004–08 **Saturn-Neptune** opposition was conspicuous from the moment Saturn first reached and stationed at 15° before exact alignment in November 2004. The Saturnian atmosphere of the decade continued but metamorphosed from the Plutonic intensities and concerns of the immediate post-9/11 years into a more diffuse and subtle, less tangible form, often more passive, and more concerned with matters of vision, hope, trust, deception, and illusion. The widespread global reaction of incredulity and disillusionment in the wake of George W. Bush's re-election in the U.S. in that month, and the bitter disappointment and dazed depression that overcame approximately half of the American population, marked a clear beginning of the general mood of social malaise that pervaded the next several years. The following months brought the Asian tsunami with its tidal wave of tragedy and anguish, followed by Hurricane

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Katrina and the catastrophic flooding of New Orleans with a similar gestalt of death and loss through water, floating corpses and contaminated water, globally transmitted images of suffering, helplessness, spiritual anguish, and government paralysis—along with, in both cases, an outpouring of private compassion, aid, and charity for those in need—all highly characteristic expressions of the Saturn-Neptune complex.

The widespread crisis of public confidence and diffuse malaise in the U.S. that characterized these years was redolent of the public mood during the Carter administration when Saturn and Neptune were in square alignment during the 1978–80 period—an historical precedent that was frequently alluded to during the second Bush term. Another diachronic pattern was visible with the characteristic sense of collective psychological and often physical exhaustion and debilitation, disillusionment, and low morale that accompanied these years of the Iraq War (2004–08)—of being caught in a quagmire, with a seemingly never-ending sorrowful daily-news dirge of innocent lives lost, families devastated, soldiers physically maimed and psychologically traumatized, because of a wrongful war begun under false pretenses—all strikingly similar to the collective mood during the later years of the Vietnam War during the exactly preceding Saturn-Neptune opposition of 1970–73, or that during the Korean War in 1951–53 during the Saturn-Neptune conjunction before that, or in Europe during the later years of World War I in 1916–19 during the Saturn-Neptune conjunction prior to that.

These diachronic patterns in history were matched by various synchronic manifestations of the same complex during this period, as a mood of profound public discontent and loss of faith in government, accompanied by a sense of collective detachment and skepticism with a generally passive collective response, was widely reported as permeating the social and political mood of many other nations as well, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Ukraine, Canada, Mexico, and India. A characteristic summation within the American context was David Brooks's December 1, 2005, *New York Times* article, "The Age of Skepticism," with its insightful discussion of the public mood of disillusionment, weariness, disbelief, cynicism, pessimism, and crisis of confidence.⁸

Another major cultural theme of the 2004–08 period was the distinctive Saturn-Neptune polarization between religion and secularism—"faith-based and reality-based" cultural views, creationism

and evolution, intensified fundamentalist belief and intensified rationalist skepticism (overlapping the division, in the American political context, between “red states” and “blue states,” a major news topic during precisely these four years). Here the dialectic between the two archetypal principles can be seen in its characteristic multivalence: Saturn bringing rigidity, division, and conflict to the Neptunian dimension of vision, belief, and the metaphysical imagination; Saturn and Neptune combining on each side of the conflict to constellate conservative religiosity on the one hand and metaphysically constrained scientism on the other; and finally Saturn and Neptune sharply polarizing with one side of the conflict associated with characteristic expressions of Saturn and the other side with characteristic expressions of Neptune, with Saturn as concrete reality, empirical science, and skeptical judgment versus Neptune as spirituality, religion, metaphysical realities, and illusion, with each side viewing the other side as living in a delusional world of their own construction. A flood of influential and widely discussed critiques of religion emerged during the years of this transit: Richard Dawkins’s *The God Delusion* (published in 2006), Daniel Dennett’s *Breaking the Spell* (2006), Sam Harris’s *Letter to a Christian Nation* (2006), Christopher Hitchens’s *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007), and Bill Maher’s film *Religulous* (produced in 2007–08). These works continued the Saturn-Neptune skeptical tradition of Hume, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Weber, Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, Foucault, and others.

The distinctive positive Saturn-Neptune motif of confronting illusion and unmasking deception was evidenced during the 2004–08 period in the many news reports and the growing public recognition throughout the second Bush-Cheney administration in the U.S. and the Blair administration in the U.K. that the Iraq War had been started under false pretenses, with deliberate deception, disinformation, and distortion of the available data having been deployed to sway public opinion concerning “weapons of mass destruction” in the buildup to the premeditated war. Similarly typical of this complex was the widespread skepticism and public awareness of “credibility gaps” mediated by increased irony and satire in the public media, continuing the tradition of major satirical masters of the past born with Saturn-Neptune aspects like Jonathan Swift and Mark Twain. This was visible in the American context with the influential role played in public life by *The Daily Show*

with Jon Stewart and the *Colbert Report* with Stephen Colbert. The basic impulse at work was to reveal the sharp contrast between image and reality, between the carefully constructed appearance, whether by political or corporate spin, and the darker actuality this appearance attempted to conceal. This trend reached a memorable climax with Stephen Colbert's illusion-shattering performance at the White House Correspondents' Dinner on April 29, 2006, in the presence of President Bush and over 2,500 journalists and government officials, and later viewed by millions of people via the Internet.⁹

Many other characteristic Saturn-Neptune themes, both negative and positive, were evident during this period (including the positive fact of disclosing and confronting the negative symptoms of the complex, as also happened during the Saturn-Pluto period just discussed), involving issues of truth and deception, drugs, water, contamination and pollution, viral epidemics and vaccines, widespread fear and anxiety often involving invisible or intangible threats, and so forth. Fraud and plagiarism in scientific research, journalism, and nonfiction publishing such as histories and memoirs were discovered and became major topics of public concern, as for example the case of James Frey, whose memoir *A Million Little Pieces* was exposed in January 2006 as fraudulent by *A Smoking Gun* and who was then confronted by his previous supporter Oprah Winfrey on her widely viewed program.¹⁰ International anxieties were prominent concerning the avian flu epidemic, the contamination of various products from China such as infant milk formula and toys, and epidemics of food poisoning such as salmonella outbreaks. Similarly dominant topics of public concern were the methamphetamine and prescription drug abuse epidemics, the disclosure of negative side effects and deaths caused by widely prescribed drugs, fraudulent marketing by pharmaceutical companies, and numerous athletic drug scandals and the consequent tainting of athletic performances at the highest level such as the Olympics, the Tour de France, and American major league baseball, causing an unprecedented degree of public distrust in athletic achievement along with a sharp increase in drug testing and anti-doping initiatives. A study by the U.S. Substance Abuse Administration and Mental Health Services Administration and the Center for Disease Control found that between 2004 and 2008 there was a 111% increase in emergency room visits involving prescription drug abuse.¹¹ Here too can be mentioned the

poisoning of political candidates and enemies both literally (presidential candidate in the Ukraine, Russian dissident in London) and by deceptive political advertisements (Swift Boat Veterans for Truth).

The intensified public awareness of increasing ocean pollution, widespread media attention to the dangerously high levels of air pollution in Beijing prior to and during the 2008 Olympics, and more generally the sharply increased awareness of the emerging global water crisis and unprecedentedly widespread shortages of clean water, is similarly reflective of the Saturn-Neptune complex. The international airport security prohibition of liquids as potentially dangerous weapons, instituted in the summer of 2006, reflects this same complex. So also the disclosure of and widespread negative public response to plastic-bottled water's misleading marketing and harmful environmental impact. Other typical Saturn-Neptune themes were visible in the many widely discussed books and articles on such topics as health and illness, hospitals and medical care, psychotherapy and psychopathology, euthanasia and hospice care, the rising prevalence, prevention, or treatment of depression, insomnia, chronic fatigue syndrome, suicide, psychological trauma in returning Iraq War veterans, Gulf War syndrome, and so forth.

In addition to the pragmatic and compassionate response to these and other such conditions, this period saw many of the major positive Saturn-Neptune themes we recognize in the biographies of those born with or undergoing transits involving this planetary combination: a strengthened collective impulse to confront without illusion the gap between the ideal and the actual, seeking to transform institutions and cultural practices to better reflect one's spiritual and moral aspirations, quiet and modest service and sacrifice on behalf of others and of higher ideals, the practice of engaged spirituality, a renewed affirmation of spiritual and religious traditions and practices that foster compassionate action in the world, and the undergoing of dark nights of the soul out of which is forged a more self-transcending spirituality and grounded commitment to the greater good. Here too could be mentioned the large number of books, films, and television and radio programs during this period devoted to the lives and contributions of individuals born with these planets in major aspect who exemplified many of the themes cited above (in America, for example, Robert Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln being especially conspicuous in both scholarship and the media at this

time, and specifically with respect to their having undergone sustained psychological suffering and disillusionment that played a critical role in their subsequent service to history and embodiment of spiritual ideals).¹²

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The last of the three consecutive Saturn oppositions to the outer planets during the first decade of the new millennium is **Saturn opposite Uranus**, from the fall of 2007 to the fall of 2011, with a final station just within the 15° orb in the summer of 2012. The distinctive themes of the Saturn-Uranus complex, especially in hard aspect, have been intensely, almost overwhelmingly prominent during what has so far elapsed of this period (I am writing in the spring and summer of 2010, about midway through the transit): sudden unexpected problematic events, crises and schisms, accidents and errors, structural breakdowns and collapses, crashes of stock markets and airliners, technological and electronic breakdowns, a pervasive atmosphere of crisis management and mindset of crisis prevention; and more generally, a taut conflict between the conservative and the liberal or progressive, the reactionary and the radical, authority and rebellion, stability and disruption, change and the resistance to change, freedom and repression, the old and the young, the status quo and the new, with highly polarized societies and politics, protests, strikes, crackdowns, and civil unrest. And this brings us to the T-square with Pluto.

The Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-Square of 2007–2012: The Convergence of Three Planetary Cycles

The extreme intensity of the various characteristic Saturn-Uranus phenomena during this particular alignment is undoubtedly connected to the fact that the current Saturn-Uranus opposition is taking place in a T-square alignment with Pluto, a more rare three-planet configuration whose historical correlations consistently involve events of markedly greater transformative, destabilizing, and often destructive power. This Saturn-Uranus alignment has coincided with the beginning of the longer Uranus-Pluto square which also began in 2007 (10° orb for the square)

and which will extend until 2020; and also, in the shorter term, with the Saturn-Pluto square which began in the fall of 2008 and will last through most of 2011. The convergence of these three cycles in the 2007–2012 period represents the dominant archetypal dynamic of the current moment. Because the longest-lasting of these alignments is the Uranus-Pluto square, we will address its significance and correlations before we explore in more detail the Saturn-Uranus opposition, the Saturn-Pluto square, and finally the full T-square configuration.

Uranus square Pluto	2007–2020
Saturn opposite Uranus	2007–2012
Saturn square Pluto	2008–2011

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The **Uranus-Pluto** square of 2007–2020 is the first major hard-aspect or dynamic alignment of the Uranus-Pluto cycle since the conjunction of the 1960s. While this transit is still at an early stage, we can see already many of the most distinctive manifestations of the Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex in current events: the intense acceleration of the pace of change, the intensified cultural ferment, the increased social and political turmoil internationally, the empowerment of emancipatory and revolutionary movements, the political activation of youth, the empowerment of women, the empowerment of ethnic minorities, the radicalization of political movements and ideologies across the spectrum, the activation of a collective will to power in various forms, the new sexual revolution, the increase in “extreme” and “radical” impulses in various phenomena (from extreme sports and extreme oil drilling to radicalized political movements), the unleashing of the elemental forces of nature in various senses (the tangible increase in signs of extreme climate change, volcanoes and earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes, tsunamis and floods, undersea oil eruptions, mining disasters, the return of nuclear power and the heightened danger of proliferating nuclear weaponry); and sharply accelerated technological and scientific advance with major social and environmental repercussions.



All these phenomena reflect the mutual activation of the two relevant archetypes: first, Pluto→Uranus, that is, Pluto acting on Uranus, with the Plutonic principle empowering, compelling, intensifying from the depths and on a mass scale the Promethean principle of change, liberation, rebellion, innovation, creativity, the sudden and unexpected, speed and instantaneity, technology and technological breakthrough, cultural paradigm shift; and conversely, Uranus→Pluto, Uranus acting on Pluto, with the Promethean principle awakening, liberating, in sudden, unexpected ways, often technologically mediated, the Plutonic-Dionysian principle of nature's depths, of elemental and evolutionary transformative energies both destructive and regenerative, the underworld of the instincts, the libido, the will to power, chaos, birth and death.

As is usual with the diachronic patterns of correlation observed for outer-planet cycles, most of the specific manifestations and trends already visible early in the current Uranus-Pluto alignment are closely connected, both in their shared archetypal qualities and in their historical development, to events of the 1960–72 period during the last Uranus-Pluto conjunction. A paradigmatic example is the unprecedented historical phenomenon that took place in 2008 during the first U.S. presidential election to occur during this alignment, in which the two leading candidates during the election's primary season were a woman and an African-American, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. The tremendous groundswell of popular support for these two candidates directly reflected the unprecedented advances made during the 1960s by the feminist and civil rights movements, two of the most significant social movements of that decade. The election of Obama in November 2008 was of course a profoundly revolutionary development, allowing the U.S. to in some sense reclaim its nobler inheritance of evolving freedom, and owed its reality to the struggles and achievements of the civil rights movement decades earlier. We can also see in this election another important motif of Uranus-Pluto periods and of the 1960s in particular, and this was the decisive political activation and empowerment of youth, who played a crucial role in Obama's election. (One can compare this with the relative quiescence of younger voters in every previous U.S. election since the elections of 1972 and 1968, during the last Uranus-Pluto conjunction, when young people were highly active in the campaigns of Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy, and George McGovern.) The situation in Iran in 2008–2010

illustrates the same dynamic in a very different context, with the sharply increased political activism on the streets of young people and particularly of young women, who played a leading and courageous role in massive protest demonstrations there.

Historically, during Uranus-Pluto alignments of past centuries, the French in Paris have tended to be at the forefront—and more specifically at the barricades—of revolutionary activity (1968, 1848, 1789, 1648). Remarkably, in the months after Uranus and Pluto had first moved within 12° of exact square alignment in 2005 during the opening penumbral period of the transit, there was indeed a sudden explosion of massive urban rioting throughout France by immigrant youths, with the burning of thousands of vehicles and attacks on police stations, violent disturbances that eventually spread to all the major urban areas of the country and caused the declaration of a national state of emergency. During the following spring in France large demonstrations by many left-wing and progressive organizations occurred in support of immigrant rights, while simultaneously in the U.S. there took place enormous Hispanic demonstrations across the country also on behalf of immigrant rights, some as large as the March on Washington in 1963, with many describing the phenomenon as “a new civil rights movement.”

These events turned out to be early outliers of the global wave of political and social protest and turmoil that now characterizes the daily news reports from countries around the world, much as in the 1960s, as demonstrations, riots, strikes, and violent eruptions of mass protest have taken place and continue to do so in country after country, from Tibet, China, India, Burma, and Thailand to Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, and Greece. A far more turbulent atmosphere of widespread political unrest with strident demands for change and reform pervades the international landscape than existed a few years earlier. It brings to mind again the zeitgeist of the late 1960s reflected in the Rolling Stones’ “Street-Fighting Man” of 1968:

*Everywhere I hear the sound of marching charging feet, boy.
Cause summer's here and the time is right for fighting in the street, boy.*

On a more elemental level, we can see the sudden eruption and awakening of the Plutonic underworld in the increase in global climatic disturbances, and in the extraordinary wave of catastrophic earthquakes (Haiti, Chile, Mexico, Japan, Tibet, Sichuan China), volcanoes (Iceland),

monsoons (Pakistan), mudslides with mass fatalities (China), and unusually destructive hurricanes, tornadoes, and storms (Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Massachusetts), destructively rising sea levels and glacier melting, as well as the catastrophic deep-water oil-rig explosion with its long-unstoppable gushing of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico. We can also recognize the theme of human-directed unleashing of the forces of nature in the sudden resurgence of the nuclear power industry, which had stopped expanding after its period of power plant proliferation during the conjunction of the 1960s and early 1970s, and also in the increasing spread and development of technologies utilizing other sources of energy such as wind, water, and solar.

We see too the resurgence of another diachronic Uranus-Pluto theme from previous alignments, the awakening of the voice of nature (Uranus→Pluto) through the ecology movement and heightened ecological activism (from Thoreau's writings during the 1845–56 Uranus-Pluto conjunction to the birth of the environmental movement during the following conjunction of 1960–72 with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the passage of unprecedented environmental and endangered species legislation, the first Earth Day, and the rise of both deep ecology and radical ecology all during that period).

In yet another expression of Plutonic-Dionysian liberation, we can mention here the ongoing emergence of what has been called “the new sexual revolution,” which is taking many forms including the rise of the hook-up culture among the young, sexting, anonymous sex, the significantly earlier entrance into sexual activity by very young adolescents, Internet-facilitated sexual disinhibition, the rise of polyamory, and the significant increase in sexual activity among elders. In many of these phenomena, much as in the 1960s' sexual revolution, there is a recursive mutual activation of the two planetary archetypes: on the one hand, the Promethean (and often technologically mediated) liberation of the Dionysian, awakening the libidinal forces of nature (Uranus→Pluto); and on the other, the Plutonic empowerment of the Promethean forces of change, youth, novelty and innovation, technology, rebellion, and emancipation (Pluto→Uranus), each vector catalyzing the other in a recursive loop.

While the current Uranus-Pluto alignment is the first major-aspect alignment to occur since the conjunction of the 1960s, it is the first square to occur since the 1930s (the square of 1928–37 being the closing square

of the cycle that ended with the 1960s' conjunction). The intrinsic nature of the square alignment seems to intensify a quality correlated with destabilizing stresses, jarring events, power struggles, and increased concretizing, crisis-producing tendencies. In this respect, the 2007–2020 period can be said to resemble a combination of the 1960s and the 1930s in the constellated archetypal energies involved, but in the ecological, cultural, and political context of the twenty-first century. Given the length of this transit and the historical record of previous correlations, we would seem to be looking at a period of more than a decade and a half of worldwide intensified emancipatory and transformative activity, sustained social and political ferment and turmoil, environmental upheaval, heightened cultural and technological innovation, accelerated social change, and so forth, through and beyond the year 2020. But in the shorter term, through 2012, all these phenomena are profoundly affected by the additional heightened presence of the Saturn principle in direct multivalent interaction with the Uranus-Pluto complex.

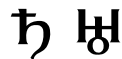
For example, in the American context, which continues to have such far-reaching effects on the rest of the world, the tremendous energies of change and reform that were so prominent and widely celebrated at the time of the election of Barack Obama to the presidency were from the beginning sharply constrained by the intractable exigencies of the 2008–09 financial collapse and deepening recession, the continuing reality of two wars, and the consequent lack of sufficient money or political resources to support the investments in energy, the environment, health care reform, education, and the overall revolution in values that Obama sought to enact. Similarly, there has been increased public interest in and planning of major new space exploration, in a diachronic reactivation of the great age of space exploration during the Uranus-Pluto conjunction of 1960–72: new plans have been announced by NASA and the Obama administration for developing the rocket capability to bring astronauts to an asteroid by 2025 and then on to Mars a decade later. But the financial constraints of the present time limit the speed with which the plan can be implemented, and require the grounding of the space shuttle fleet, which have caused a firestorm of controversy. Similarly, the development of high-speed trains in the U.S., reflecting Uranus-Pluto's association with powerful technologies and extreme speed, is being delayed by financial obstacles as well as entrenched corporate and political resistance. The

same dialectic between Uranus-Pluto on the one hand and Saturn on the other is currently visible in the increased drive in the gay liberation movement in support of same-sex marriage, and the increased resistance to this among more conservative and older Americans, with gains and setbacks happening almost simultaneously in the 2008–10 period.

Especially reflective of the intensely activated Saturn principle is the extent to which virtually all of Obama’s policy initiatives, despite his decisive election victory, have been stridently opposed and obstructed from the first month of his presidency by conservative and more extreme right-wing forces, as well as by forces of entrenched corporate and political power such as powerful lobbying groups, the insurance industry, the oil industry, the coal industry, the automobile industry, the banking industry, the Republican party, the Tea Party movement, Fox News commentators, and such anti-democratic procedural traditions as the Senate filibuster rule which essentially permits an obstinate minority party to block the passage of all significant legislation. In its first two years the Obama administration has in many ways been in a state of “Prometheus Bound.” This externally imposed political constraint has been enforced by the daily reality of the administration’s being in a state of constant crisis management, obliged to deal as level-headedly as possible with one acutely critical situation after another—crises that were usually the consequence of decisions and actions that took place during previous administrations, and that are often overwhelmingly challenging, even intractable, and unpredictable in their outcome. Essentially the same dynamic exists in countries, communities, and individual lives throughout the world. And this brings us to the Saturn-Uranus opposition and the Saturn-Pluto square.

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The **Saturn-Uranus** archetypal complex characteristically expresses itself in several different but overlapping and mutually activating, circularly reinforcing (recursive) ways. First, there is a tendency for certain polarities to constellate with greater oppositional force and tension than usual—between the established structures of the past and the unpredictable impulses of the new, between order and change, old and young, past and future, status quo and novelty, the forces of conservative resistance and the forces of restless rebellion, and



the like. These constellated polarities can then move and evolve in several possible directions. There can be a buildup of problematic tension within an overly confining, rigid, closed, or outmoded system until there is a sudden unexpected breakdown, collapse, disruption, explosion, rebellion, protest, strike, schism, civil disturbance, civil war, culture war, generation gap, separation, divorce, psychological breakdown, health crisis, financial bubble burst, stock market collapse, bridge collapse, technological failure, computer crash, electrical outage, transportation or communication breakdown, political crisis, and the like.

Conversely, there can be an intensified assertion of the impulse for change, freedom, the new, rebellion, overthrow of established structures, sometimes taking the form of a drive for immediate change, freedom at any cost, reckless innovation, unpredictable technological initiatives, unregulated financial activity; until there is a sudden constraining response by established authorities, a crackdown, a backlash, a suppression of the rebellion, an oppressive re-assertion of control, a systematic effort to inhibit unorthodox ideas or actions, attempts to censor or restrict Internet freedom or cell phone use, a reactive restoration of parental or marital authority or psychological or political stability or doctrinal orthodoxy; or a corrective instituting of financial control mechanisms, or of biogenetic-pharmaceutical-agricultural-industrial-technological regulation, or of major airline safety or air traffic control reforms, and the like. Especially with the ongoing Uranus-Pluto square, the cycle of radical protest followed by violent crackdown, followed in turn by more radicalized protest, can be seen played out repeatedly at this time, as in Thailand, Iran, Kashmir, and Tibet.

There is also the more complex mutual interpenetration of the two archetypal principles that tends to take place during Saturn-Uranus alignments: Here we see conservative, reactionary, or right-wing parties or leaders defining themselves as the force of freedom and rebellion, as with the Tea Party movement in the U.S., with a generally right-wing anti-progressive ideology (Saturn), yet consciously adopting the methods and style characteristic of the radical protest movements and demonstrations of the 1960s (Uranus). The name “Tea Party” itself reflects the interplay of the two principles, simultaneously employing an image from history and the past (Saturn), associated with the country’s eighteenth-century founding fathers, yet also calling for liberty and rebellion (Uranus). The

upsurge of libertarianism more generally in the 2007–10 period of the present opposition represents just such a conflation of the two impulses.

Saturn and Prometheus are essentially combined in the phenomenon of *resistance*—entrenched dissidence, unbending defiance of authority, contrariness, at once rebellious and obdurate. Such resistance can take the form, for example, of the French Résistance against the Vichy government during the Saturn-Uranus conjunction of 1943–44 leading to the liberation of Paris, or of a paradigmatic life-long Soviet dissident like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn born with the Saturn-Uranus opposition; yet it can also take the form of the Confederacy rebelling against the Union to start the American Civil War during the Saturn-Uranus square in 1861, so as to uphold the freedom of slave-owners to own slaves: a movement defining itself as a rebellion on behalf of liberty, yet in its consequences oppressive, rigid, narrow, inflexibly fixed in its rebellious stance and tyrannical in practice. The Bolshevik Revolution during the Saturn-Uranus opposition in 1917 represented another conflation of Promethean emancipatory revolution and Saturnian oppressive authoritarianism; so also the Jacobin revolutionaries and Committee of Public Safety during the French Revolution—rigidly, austere revolutionary—followed immediately by the conservative Thermidorean Reaction in direct response, both during the Saturn-Uranus square of 1793–96. The current government in Iran, claiming the mantle of revolution while prohibiting revolutionary protest in the streets of Tehran, exemplifies the same dynamic. Another form of the Saturn-Uranus complex visible in the current period is the impulse towards obligatory freedom, being forced to be free, as was arguably exemplified by the French Parliament’s condemnation in 2010 of the full-face veil worn by Islamic women, the burqa, and its passage of a law making the veil illegal to be worn in public even voluntarily.

We see a related inflection of this tension in the concern with the shadow side of democratic liberty, the “tyranny of the majority,” foreseen by the great social philosophers John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville, both of whom were born with Saturn conjunct Uranus. Current expressions of this motif are observable in many contexts around the world involving majority populations attempting through democratic means to restrict, exclude, or deport minority populations, as in the case of Arizona with Latino immigrants in the U.S., or the French move to deport the Roma or Gypsies, or various European populist parties’

attempts to restrict the presence of Islamic culture in their countries. Many of the above examples also reflect the simultaneous presence of the Saturn-Pluto complex, increasing tendencies towards conservative reaction, punitive legalism and rigidly enforced boundaries, fear-driven exclusion, negative projection onto the “other,” and scapegoating.

One major expression of the multivalent Saturn-Uranus complex coming into the collective consciousness at this time involves Uranus’s association with freedom and choice, and Saturn’s association with constraints and burdens, the two principles experienced in this instance as mutually constellating in the same individuals. This was visible in the many recent research articles and news stories during this transit addressing the widespread phenomenon of “choice angst,” both among college-age students (most of whom at this time happened to have been born during the Saturn-Uranus conjunction of 1986–90), and more generally among women in their twenties and thirties: the burdens of increased freedom, having too many choices, fears of making the wrong choice, the higher stress levels reported by students contemplating the many consequential options available to them after graduation compared with earlier generations, and by young women with an unprecedentedly large range of existential choices, specifically between career and motherhood. “Choice is inherently stressful, and women are being driven to distraction.”¹³ The *New York Times* article, “Blue Is the New Black,” September 19, 2009, by Maureen Dowd (herself born with Saturn square Uranus), ends with the characteristically paradoxical comment from a female professor at Wharton: “We’re happy to have our newfound abundance of choices, she said, even if those choices end up making us unhappier.” Again, such a tension and angst is in general present in modern societies all the time (and has been called “the modern disease,” a term that in itself combines Uranus and Saturn in its characterization of the downside of modernity and progress). But it is typical of Saturn-Uranus transit periods that such tensions are especially brought to the surface, made conscious and articulate, experienced and observed more acutely, and widely discussed.

Indeed, Saturnian and Promethean impulses are always at work at all times, but at those times when Saturn and Uranus move into major hard-aspect alignments those principles tend to become especially dialectical and taut in their mutual interaction. The preeminent philosopher of the dialectic, Hegel, was himself born with Saturn and Uranus in square

alignment. During the same year and alignment was born Beethoven, who expressed the tension between the two principles in the context of music rather than philosophy, achieving a profound synthesis between the classical and the revolutionary.

An especially vivid and momentous set of manifestations of the Saturn-Uranus complex was visible in the U.S. presidential election of 2008, which took place on the very day that the Saturn-Uranus opposition first reached exact alignment after it had approached ever closer throughout the campaign. This example demonstrates the remarkable sequence of multivalent enactments of the complex, taking different forms as time progressed: First, there was the initial conflict between the two avatars of the two great emancipatory movements of the 1960s, Obama and Hillary Clinton, whose simultaneous success ironically placed the two kindred Promethean impulses in tension with each other. In this case, the Saturn impulse was expressed as the conflict between complementary emancipatory rebellions, the division within the common Promethean realm of civil rights and women's rights movements, of African-American and feminist liberation. After Obama's victory in the primaries, the dialectic shifted to a new form in which one party's candidate embodied Saturn, the other's embodied Uranus. This polarization between the Republican and Democratic candidates, McCain and Obama, could scarcely have been more stark or more conspicuously reflective of the two principles involved: on the one hand, McCain, the *senex* figure, unusually old for a presidential candidate (over seventy), conservative, white, supportive of an aggressive war policy and unilateral international action in the service of heightened national security, supported by the right wing and by generally older voters, a man whose election would restore an earlier conservative mode of government—all Saturn; by contrast, Obama, unusually young, progressive and liberal, African-American, from a new generation, striving for a radically new post-racial and bipartisan kind of society, critical of the war and seeking to engage both allies and enemies in dialogue and multilateral decision-making, supported by the left and by generally younger voters, whose election would in itself embody an unprecedented revolution—all Uranus.

Yet this simple polarity is precisely what was reversed at a characterological level as the election campaign progressed and there occurred another major Saturn-Uranus event—the financial crisis triggered

by the stock, bond, and housing markets' collapse and the catastrophic failure of the country's major banking institutions. The candidates' differing reactions to this crisis brought out essentially opposite qualities: Obama being widely seen as maintaining a cautious equilibrium, informed and grounded, prudent, managerial; McCain suddenly and unexpectedly calling off his campaign ostensibly to deal with the emergency, being widely seen as erratic and unpredictable, unprepared for handling the financial complexities of the crisis, volatile in temperament, impulsive and at times reckless, long known as an inveterate prankster. These reversed archetypal qualities were similarly suggested by their choice of vice-presidential candidates, Obama predictably choosing the older, highly experienced Joseph Biden, McCain unexpectedly choosing the young, uncertain, relatively inexperienced Sarah Palin. Similarly, McCain and Palin, both conservative, presented themselves as "mavericks" who would bring "true change" to Washington, a kind of cross-dressing of Saturn figures in Uranian costume. We see the reverse archetypal cross-dressing in the public persona of Stephen Colbert, who was born with Saturn opposite Uranus, and who is essentially a progressive (as well as a creative trickster) in reactionary conservative costume.

We can recognize many other examples in which a complicated interplay between the two principles has taken place during this same alignment, as when the movement for same-sex marriage in 2008 activated an equally strong movement to restrict marriage to heterosexual couples, resulting in the passage of Proposition 8 in California—paradoxically a conservative initiative in a liberal state that received crucial support from otherwise progressive African-Americans, themselves long the victims of oppressive social and political structures, who were simultaneously voting for the more liberal candidate Obama while voting to constrain the rights of another minority.¹⁴ The Saturn-Uranus complex was present here also in the theme of the unexpected and paradoxical result, the inherent contradiction. A related but different expression of the same complex in the same arena during this time was when the ordination of gay bishops in the Episcopalian Church produced an equally forceful backlash by conservative Anglicans, resulting in a growing major schism in the church worldwide—*schisms*, like divorce, separations, civil wars, ruptures of all kinds, being one of the most characteristic expressions of Saturn-Uranus hard-aspect alignments. Separatism in the political sphere is widely visible, as for example in the separatist New Flem-

ish Alliance party's winning of the most votes in the 2010 parliament election in Belgium, pressing for the independence of Flanders. A surge in separatist movements in many other countries is evident—India, China, Spain, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, the Middle East, many parts of Africa. Sharp divisions and controversies emerging in various diplomatic conferences and other gatherings are typical, as with the intense conflict at the world climate talks in Copenhagen in December 2009 between rich and developing nations, between the U.S. and China, and between those parties pressing urgently for the necessity of radical change and those creating insuperable obstacles and resistance.

The characteristic Saturn-Uranus theme of generational conflict between old and young shows several signs of being activated in the current period as well. This was of course a major theme during the last Saturn opposition to Uranus in the mid-1960s (with Pluto involved then as well), with the tremendous groundswell of rebellion against the “Establishment” and the older generation by the young baby-boom generation, expressed in the counterculture and antiwar movements, in music and politics, in language and social mores, and in widely heard slogans and songs (the “generation gap,” “Don't trust anyone over thirty,” “My Generation,” “hope I die before I get old”). Several current expressions of this dynamic include the widely observed radical differences between young and old in the use of electronic technologies and high-tech communications, social networking habits, sexual mores, voting tendencies on progressive social issues such as gay marriage, educational habits involving online sources and lax citation, favored music genres, sampling in the arts, and so forth. In the U.S. and Britain in the past three years there have been many books, articles, and programs focusing on “boomer resentment” by younger generations, involving accusations of selfish individualism, crippling government deficits, environmental destruction, and looming crises in social security, pensions, and health care costs caused by the ageing of the massive older generation. In Europe several of the Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Spain, and Greece are noteworthy for having vast numbers of unemployed young adults, with no prospects of jobs and being forced to live at home with their parents, while the older generations retain more or less institutionally guaranteed employment, thus blocking opportunities in the young of possible employment, professional advance, or their own housing.

Numerous other distinctive Saturn-Uranus themes have been visible over this period, such as the sharply increased occurrence of highly consequential mistakes and flaws: the extraordinary frequency and magnitude of accidents (airliners, trains, streetcars, buses, submarines, satellites, Olympic skiing and luge crashes, Tour de France bicycle crashes), explosions (factories, oil rigs, insurgent bombings), major mining disasters (China, Colombia, Chile, West Virginia), fatal military errors (drone attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan accidentally killing large numbers of civilians), technological malfunctions (the failure of the Large Hadron Collider nine days after beginning operations, requiring a year of repairs and the installation of new safety mechanisms),¹⁵ air traffic control errors, pilot errors, train conductors and bus drivers texting at the time of accidents (the Uranian technology implicated in the tragic Saturnian result), the wide public attention and public legislation addressing the dangers of cell phone use, texting, and Internet viewing while driving (“Driven to Distraction,” a major series of articles by *The New York Times* in 2009–10); the sustained failure by not only the banking industry to recognize the disastrous outcome of their mortgage and derivatives policies but also virtually the entire economics profession to recognize the imminent financial catastrophe (“How Did Economists Get It So Wrong,” Paul Krugman, *The New York Times*, September 6, 2009), the essential error in judgment and vision by the chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan as he admitted before Congress that his free-market ideology had a fundamental flaw that contributed to the financial crisis, and repeated mistakes by all four U.S. presidential and vice-presidential candidates during the campaign with their many widely discussed errors and gaffes.

Also relevant here is the theme of “train wreck”—not only literally, as in the massive train accidents with many fatalities that occurred during this transit such as occurred in India and California, but also used frequently in the media as a metaphor for describing the train wreck of a celebrity’s life, the train wreck of a politician’s career, or the train wreck of the financial markets. The “perfect storm” metaphor is another such widely used metaphor, particularly emphasizing the unlikely convergence of events (and also reflecting the presence of Pluto in the configuration and the activated complex). Even the Saturn-Pluto phenomenon of terrorism, as in 9/11, is affected by the simultaneous presence of the Saturn-Uranus complex as in

the failed terrorist attack attempted in New York City's Times Square in May 2010; and even more pervasively in the failed terrorist attack attempted on the Amsterdam-Detroit flight in December 2009, which was marked by mistakes on both sides and at every stage, by the bomber and the technology, by intelligence services, and by airport security, with many calling for a thorough revision of the flawed air travel security structure.

Yet here too should be cited the compensating positive Saturn-Uranus theme of accident prevention, crisis prevention, safety regulations, engineering intelligence, anticipating and containing the negative trickster. Thus during this time we see not only major bridge collapses (the St. Paul, Minnesota bridge across the Mississippi River) but massive preventive bridge repairs requiring several-days' closure (the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge). While, like a collective version of the mythic Fall of Icarus, there have been an extraordinary number of high-profile mass-fatality airline accidents during this Saturn-Uranus opposition, such as those involving Air France, Air India, and Ethiopian Airlines, there have also been extraordinary accident preventions as in the memorable event of Captain Chesley Sullenberger's successful landing of U.S. Airways Flight 1549 into the Hudson River in January 2009. Sullenberger, who was born with Saturn and Uranus in close square (in a T-square with Mercury), had spent his life as an airline safety expert and instructor, accident investigator, and innovator in the field of airline safety. The Saturn-Uranus complex expressed itself here not only in the fact of the crisis itself, the unexpected collision with birds upon takeoff and the potential crash of the plane, but also in the response—the well-prepared captain's fast-thinking, resourceful crisis management, the air safety training and accident prevention protocols—all expressing the positive Saturn principle in dealing with the Uranian theme of the unexpected and with the Uranian field of aviation. An earlier, collective expression of this positive Saturn-Uranus complex in the face of technological catastrophe was the enormous successful deployment of computer programmers during the Saturn-Uranus square of 1998–99 in the months prior to January 1, 2000, all working to prevent a massive global collapse of communication and transportation technologies because of the Y2K flaw in earlier decades' computer programming.

But the sheer quantity of major plane and other transportation accidents involving large numbers of fatalities during this Saturn-Uranus opposition has been striking, including the plane crash in Russia in April 2010 that

killed many of Poland’s top political, military, and church leaders on their way to honor the 22,000 Polish soldiers massacred in the Katyn forest seventy years ago in 1940 (during the Saturn-Pluto square of 1939–41)—this most recent tragedy considered the worst disaster to befall Poland since World War II. It would seem to be on account of the involvement of Pluto in the present configuration, squaring both Saturn and Uranus, that all these Saturn-Uranus events, trends, and themes have appeared measurably more intensified, in mass and depth, quantity and quality, sometimes to a catastrophic and even apocalyptic magnitude, compared with the usual cyclical alignments of Saturn and Uranus alone. One has only to compare the typical Saturn-Uranus financial crisis such as the dot-com bubble bursting in 2000 during the most recent Saturn-Uranus square, or the “Black Monday” global stock market crash in October 1987 during the preceding Saturn-Uranus conjunction, with the current sustained global deep recession, the worst since the Great Depression. Much of that greater sustained gravity, massive hardship, poverty, and failure reflects the Saturn-Pluto square itself, about which a few words can be said here before addressing the T-square more comprehensively.

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In general, the **Saturn-Pluto** square of 2008–11 can be seen in the conspicuous arousal and empowerment of conservative and reactionary forces in the political life of many countries since the fall of 2009, even as the more progressive Uranian-Promethean impulses towards change, innovation, reform, and the future are being impelled and empowered as well. Not only has the Pluto principle intensified the Saturn-Uranus dialectic’s various inherent tensions and conflicts, but the Saturn-Pluto complex on its own terms brings with it a distinctive set of qualities involving intense contraction and weightiness, intensification of division and hostile conflict, greater ambience of threat and danger, tendencies towards authoritarianism and tyranny, totalitarian impulses, mass unemployment and economic hardship, organized violence and oppression, mass suffering and death, historical trauma, grave endings, scapegoating and projection of shadow, rigid or rigorous discipline, extreme capacity for sustained effort and systematic organization of resources, and the will to confront situations of mortal danger and moral

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darkness, whether the shadow within or evil without. Typically, the zeitgeist of Saturn-Pluto periods has a distinctly darker and graver character than that of other periods, as the beginnings of the world wars, the Great Depression, the early Cold War, and 9/11 illustrate. (In May 2010, for example, a major four-part documentary mini-series was broadcast on IFC television entitled, “Fear,” “War,” “Greed,” “Disaster.”)

The current sharply increased tensions between Israel and Palestine, and between the U.S. and both Russia and China, are highly characteristic of the Saturn-Pluto cycle, whose quadrature alignments coincided with the beginnings and the succession of crises and violent contractions of both the Cold War and the series of Middle Eastern wars from the 1946–48 conjunction on. During the present square, in addition to the continuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, representative Saturn-Pluto events include the Georgian War with Russia in 2008, the Gaza War in 2008–09, North Korea’s sinking of a South Korean ship in 2010, Israel’s commando seizure of a flotilla of humanitarian aid ships headed for Gaza in 2010, and continuing threatening nuclear developments in countries like North Korea and Iran. Other Saturn-Pluto themes observable now include the intensification of terrorist activity and suicide bombings worldwide, from Mumbai and Baghdad to Fort Hood, Texas; massacres, rampages, mass rapes, and torture, as in Guinea and the Congo (and with torture in interrogations again being defended by U.S. ex-vice-president Cheney and the Bush administration’s legal advisor John Yoo); the decisive resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the heightened activity of Al-Qaida in Pakistan; intensified anti-Islamic sentiment in the U.S., especially as expressed by fundamentalist Christians (for example, the threat to burn the Koran by a minister in Florida, the drive to prohibit an Islamic center from being built in Manhattan near Ground Zero); the increased enforcement of draconian shariah laws and punishments in several Islamic countries; and the eruption of ethnic cleansing against the Uzbek population in Kyrgyzstan (compare the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia during the Saturn-Pluto square of 1992–94).

The Saturn-Pluto theme of scandals, involving either corruption or sex, has been highly characteristic of the current period, involving a remarkable number of prominent politicians (governor of New York, governor of Illinois), sports figures (Tiger Woods, the Pakistani cricket

team), and entertainment figures (Mel Gibson; David Letterman, with the additional Saturn-Pluto theme of attempted blackmail; the arrest of Roman Polanski). Especially significant, however, has been the form it has taken in the Catholic Church. The priest sex abuse scandal, with its atmosphere of profound sin and corruption, weighty moral judgment, “J’Accuse” statements (compare Zola’s letter in 1898 during the Dreyfus scandal), has registered with explosive force in the wake of an enormous flood of accusations throughout much of Europe against the Church hierarchy, up to the highest levels of the Vatican, for covering up sexual abuse by innumerable pedophilic priests and allowing them to continue to work in other congregations where they perpetrated abuses on still more children. This continues the diachronic pattern seen with the Catholic Church scandals that first fully emerged in the U.S. during the preceding Saturn-Pluto hard-aspect alignment, the opposition of 2000–04. A paradigmatic example of the same diachronic theme of profound judgment of moral corruption in the Church, Martin Luther’s epochal posting of his Ninety-five Theses on the church door of Wittenburg, publishing his judgment of the Vatican’s moral corruption in promoting indulgences, took place during the Saturn-Pluto conjunction of 1517.

We recognize the familiar themes of the Saturn-Pluto complex as well in the resurgent influence in the political realm of entrenched power with an anti-progressive agenda—large corporations, insurance companies, Wall Street financial institutions—in shaping public policy and government decisions. The unprecedentedly conservative composition and decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in the current period under Justices Roberts and Scalia, and its activism in supporting the interests of large corporations and various conservative Republican goals while overturning gun control and voting reform legislation, are also reflective of the Saturn-Pluto complex. The heightened impulse to erect barriers and enact restrictive or draconian laws can be seen in Arizona’s April 2010 passage of its sweeping and controversial anti-immigration law. Another instance of the same complex was Iran’s internationally condemned sentencing of a woman accused of adultery to death by stoning. So also Utah’s execution of a death-row prisoner by firing squad in June 2010, after requests for stays of execution were rejected by the Supreme Court and the state governor, bringing widespread criticism of both the mode of execution and more generally the continuing U.S. death penalty.

Here too can be mentioned another characteristic Saturn-Pluto phenomenon, the intensified awareness of the mass extinction of species, and of the “war between man and nature,” expressed in so many forms from three Bengal tigers suddenly attacking and mauling their trainer when he accidentally stumbled during a performance (Germany), a killer whale killing its trainer (Sea World in San Diego), and a bull goring Spain’s most famous bullfighter, to conversely the killing of 200,000 dogs in Bali for rabies, or the deaths of innumerable ocean creatures from drastic overfishing, catastrophic oil spills, the destructive effects of sonar weaponry, massive garbage pollution, and extreme climate change. The increased public recognition of animal cruelty at this time, and the growing law enforcement recognition of the link between animal cruelty and other forms of violence such as domestic abuse and murder, represents another expression of the Saturn-Pluto complex in its bivalent form—both the shadow of cruelty and the increased moral awareness and response.¹⁶ We see this same dynamic enacted in Spain, in the historic decision by Catalonia in 2010 to ban bullfighting as a form of cruelty.

Saturn-Pluto periods are marked by the collective experience of intensified limitations, resource depletion, famine, the experience of loss, deprivation and deficiency, but also by the sustained, organized, disciplined engagement with these problems. The archetypal combination of Saturn and Pluto is expressed also in the collective experience of arduous labor, heavy lifting, rebuilding from the rubble—after the earthquake, after the economic collapse, after the war. Exemplary of this bivalent complex as well is the current sharply increased awareness of the looming energy crisis and the increasing scarcity of fossil fuels, which when combined with the Uranus-Pluto impulse of accelerated technological innovation lends itself to the rapid development of alternative energy sources. Similarly, as with previous Saturn-Pluto periods such as the 1981–84 period of acute collective consciousness of the global nuclear danger at the height of the Cold War, we see again now an increased awareness as well as reality of dangerous nuclear proliferation in the world, whether through current nuclear powers becoming more threatening (North Korea), bellicose nations developing nuclear weaponry (Iran), or terrorist groups seeking nuclear capabilities to launch attacks (Al Qaida). And, reflecting the other side of the same Saturn-Pluto complex, we see new determination and organized efforts to develop initiatives that will limit nuclear weapons, such

as Obama’s speech in Prague in 2009 calling for a “world free of nuclear weapons,” the U.S and Russia signing a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in 2010, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review held at the UN with 189 nations in May 2010.

But perhaps above all, we recognize the familiar atmosphere of the Saturn-Pluto complex in the current period’s tangible sense of historical contraction and gravity, of overwhelmingly powerful impersonal forces shaping individual and collective fate, most conspicuously in the global ecological and economic crises.

* * * *

The convergence of these three world transit cycles, Uranus-Pluto, Saturn-Uranus, and Saturn-Pluto, all mutually interacting, constitutes the current dominant planetary configuration of our time: the **Saturn-Uranus-Pluto** T-square of 2008–11, with an approximate penumbral orb from 2007 to 2012 when one or more of the three alignments are in tight orb. One could summarize, in a very condensed form, the underlying force or meaning of the T-square as: *volcanically intense evolutionary pressures to radically reconfigure existing life structures*—at every level, individual and civilizational, internal and external, relational and ecological, philosophical, political, social, economic, industrial, agricultural, technological. The T-square configuration is, on its own terms, apart from which planets are involved, one of the most challenging and energetically charged configurations. When one factors in the specific archetypal principles associated with the three planets that comprise the current alignment—the immensely powerful, massive, enduring, gravely consequential, unpredictably and eruptively destabilizing, potentially destructive and profoundly transformative nature of the Pluto, Uranus, and Saturn archetypal complexes in mutual interaction—we can appreciate, in principle as well as concretely, how enormously challenging our moment in history is.



This is especially so because of the vast accumulation of historical and ecological developments that, as the T-square has come into alignment, are now converging to constitute a profoundly precarious state of the planetary biosphere unprecedented in human history. Given both the historical and global context and the supercharged archetypal dynamism

of this rare configuration, one cannot but regard the current five-year period as one of the most volatile turning points in history, a dramatic threshold of evolutionary transformation through which human civilization must pass. It is as if a kind of civilizational ego death crisis is being precipitated as a necessary step in a possible larger evolutionary unfolding. Depending on the collective response to this crisis, there is the potential for a radical restructuring and regeneration of humanity's participation in the Earth community. Conversely, one can discern here all the dynamics necessary, psychologically compelling as well as externally actualized, to fuel apocalyptic fears and predictions.

The dynamic tensions involved in this complex have already clearly manifested themselves during the 2007–10 period in the form of many distinctive problematic outcomes we find in other cases of this rare three-planet alignment. This is the first T-square involving these three planets since the 1929–33 period, which brought the Wall Street stock market crash, the beginning of the Great Depression, the collapse of economic and political structures throughout the world, intense drive for radical reform, the empowerment of fascist movements and totalitarian governments, and mass protest demonstrations that often turned violent. Yet while similar themes and events are clearly present today, the situation is not precisely the same, since among other factors much was learned from the enormous policy mistakes made during the earlier T-square, and the various international and national government regulatory responses to the present crisis have so far averted the worst economic outcomes seen in the 1929–33 period. However, with a kind of ineluctable momentum, the present global economic crisis does seem to be continuing and in some respects deepening, and in fact is coming to resemble another, less acutely catastrophic but longer worldwide depression which began in 1873.

Strikingly, the only other Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square in the past two centuries took place during the 1873–76 period, when there was indeed the one other global financial crisis and stock market collapse with worldwide long-term economic, social, and political repercussions comparable to our own time. Over the past two years, leading historians and economists have specifically pointed to just these two periods as representing the only other cases in modern history when such global financial crises have occurred. Beginning in 2008, the British historian Niall Ferguson of Harvard has written and spoken of the present global

economic crisis as specifically resembling these two earlier global economic collapses, those of 1929–33 and 1873–78 (though of course without citing this astrological correlation, which is obviously not on the radar screen of the modern academic world).¹⁷ In the same vein, in June 2010 the Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman wrote in *The New York Times* an article entitled “The Third Depression”:

Recessions are common; depressions are rare. As far as I can tell, there were only two eras in economic history that were widely described as “depressions” at the time: the years of deflation and instability that followed the Panic of 1873 and the years of mass unemployment that followed the financial crisis of 1929–31. . . . the Long Depression of the nineteenth century [and] the Great Depression of the twentieth.”¹⁸

Again, the periods of 2007–12, 1929–33, and 1873–76 represent the only periods in which a Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square configuration has taken place in the past two centuries.¹⁹ In terms highly reflective of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto complex, Krugman then describes the “stunning” policy failure of the “harsh austerity” measures being demanded of debt-ridden countries like Greece, Ireland, and Spain by “hard-liner” European policy makers, and in the U.S. by Republicans in Congress—“savage cuts” in public spending, steep raising of taxes—which will, he argues, deepen the depression, pave the way for deflation, and be self-defeating. This policy failure, Krugman concludes, represents

the victory of an orthodoxy that has little to do with rational analysis, whose main tenet is that imposing suffering on other people is how you show leadership in tough times. And who will pay the price for this triumph of orthodoxy? The answer is, tens of millions of unemployed workers, many of whom will go jobless for years, and some of whom will never work again.

The presence of Uranus in the T-square with Saturn-Pluto lends a quality of suddenness and unexpectedness to the collapses, as in the stock market, housing market, and banking industry failures. It also injects the theme of errors and upsets, rapidity of change, unexpected outcomes disrupting established plans and assumptions, the presence of the trickster (Uranus), but now with grave and enduring, deeply transformative and destructive

consequences, austerity and hardship (Saturn-Pluto). This combination can also greatly heighten the volatility of markets, as in the roller coaster ride of the Wall Street averages during the 2008–10 period, including the “wildest day in Wall Street history” on May 6, 2010, triggered by a computer glitch associated with the unprecedentedly high-speed computerized trading that now constitutes 70% of Wall Street stock market activity.

The complex recursive nature of multiple events and causal factors all thematically related to the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex is noteworthy: For example, the sudden eruption of a volcano in Iceland (Uranus-Pluto) causes the most massive stoppage of air travel since World War II (Saturn-Uranus), stranding millions of passengers throughout the world, and producing incalculable disruptions of human activities along with major economic losses. Similarly, unregulated financial markets and reckless investment and banking activity in New York and London produce a worldwide economic crash (Saturn-Uranus), which causes severe austerity measures to be imposed on debt-ridden countries like Greece (Saturn-Pluto), which lead to massive street protests in Athens and the fire bombing of a bank causing three deaths (Saturn-Uranus-Pluto), producing both a warning from the president of Greece for the people to pull back from the “abyss” of social chaos, and widespread uncertainty in global financial markets about international economic stability and possible defaults in Greece and other debt-burdened countries like Spain, Portugal, and Italy—thus producing a major downturn on Wall Street.

Another characteristic expression of the three-planet T-square is the widely observed phenomenon in elections of unexpected three-way races, as in several recent U.S. elections in which a third candidate introduced a split into either the right wing, as with a Tea Party candidate opposing an incumbent Republican, or into the left, where a more liberal-progressive candidate opposed an incumbent Democrat. The very geometry of the three-component configuration seems to be reflected in the three-component political dynamic. And the nature of the archetypal forces involved tends towards a mood of extreme anti-incumbency, an anti-establishment impulse to rebel against whoever is currently in authority. One of the most dramatic expressions of these dynamics was the most recent election in the U.K., in which the three-party division of the vote resulted in the rejection of the incumbent Labor party under Gordon Brown and an unprecedented, and even celebrated, coalition government of the Conservative party under David

Cameron with the Liberal Democrats under Nick Clegg, with a widespread sense among the British people of historic change and almost euphoric creative possibility (this latter quality highly characteristic of the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction that began in the spring of 2010).

Until such an unexpected resolution of fundamental conflicting forces emerges, either spontaneously or through some kind of transcending act of will or insight, the dominant atmosphere of historical periods during Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-squares is more typically that of being daily confronted with overwhelming intractable problems, impossible to solve under current conditions, increasing in intensity and number, often compounding themselves in combination, a perfect storm of negative factors converging, with the larger zeitgeist infused with a pervasive sense of seismic instability, danger, and uncertainty. Thus we witness during the present period the chronic ambience of crisis management such as that faced, with often relentless intensity, by the Obama Administration, the European Union, the United Nations, various international humanitarian organizations, and countries dangerously on the brink of collapse such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. All this also translates into more local civic contexts, such as the continuing deep legislative and budgetary crisis in the state of California, itself one of the largest economies in the world—a complex conflict of economic, social, and political forces that is at this point both completely intractable and unsustainable.

At the individual level, such tensions can express themselves in powerful stresses within the individual psyche as well as within personal relationships and marriages—conflicts between career and family, for example, unsustainable multiple obligations and conflicting pressures, increased financial constraints and increased necessary expenses, the feeling that “something has to give.” At times, particularly with the presence of the overwhelming instinctual and potentially destructive energies associated with Pluto, the tensions of the Saturn-Uranus complex can reach the critical extreme of violent psychological breakdown. Thus we see the international epidemic of individuals suddenly undergoing a psychological collapse and erupting in a shooting or stabbing rampage against many people known and unknown to the perpetrator—in China (often against groups of children), in the U.K., in the U.S.

Such violent psychological breakdowns can also happen at the collective level, as with the fiery explosion of hatred and ethnic cleansing

that erupted in Kyrgyzstan against Uzbeks in 2010. Eruptions of murderous violence within prison populations have been frequent at this time, as have been mass gang wars, as in Chicago and through much of Mexico. Perhaps the most critical of all is the current wave of unspeakable atrocities being perpetrated by independent rebel militias under warlords moving in a huge swath through central Africa, the Congo, the Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, and Uganda. In terms of diachronic archetypal patterns, *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad was published in 1898–99 during the Saturn-Uranus opposition to Pluto of those years. In this instance, as in that of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto triple conjunction in 1852, we see not only the depiction of human cruelty but also the moral confrontation with that shadow which can result in widespread public awareness, popularly driven international interventions, emancipatory consequences, and enduring improvement in the human condition. Comparable initiatives in Africa, both through courageous reporting, books, and documentaries and through non-government agencies and international interventions, are similarly active at the present time.

We see earlier diachronic expressions of such violent mass eruptions in the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square of the mid-1790s that coincided with the immensely destructive Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, or during the Saturn opposite Uranus-Pluto of the mid-1960s that coincided with the comparable mass eruption of destructive energies in the name of revolution in China under Mao during the Cultural Revolution. (We see a diachronic reflection of the latter in 2010 India in the insurgency of over ten thousand Maoist forces causing widespread death and destruction across a vast swath of rural India in its attempt to overthrow the Indian government.) In the U.S. during the mid-1960s there was a wave of fiery violent race-driven eruptions through many major cities such as Los Angeles, Newark, and Detroit, and in over 120 cities in the summer of 1967 alone. It was during a similar Saturn-Uranus-Pluto period of revolutionary turmoil in Britain (the English Civil War or Great Rebellion) and in Europe generally, in 1648–51 under the Saturn-Pluto conjunction opposite Uranus, that Thomas Hobbes wrote and published his *Leviathan* with its paradigmatic description of the state of nature as a violently lawless chaos, *bellum omnium contra omnes* (“a state of war of all against all”), and thus the need for an authoritarian government to control social disorder.²⁰

Chaos and lawlessness mixed with underworld elements have also been visible in the sudden rise of piracy along the African coast at this time (the “Golden Age of Piracy” having begun in the 1650s). An especially horrific expression of this same tendency is the nearly apocalyptic situation in the Mexican border towns south of the U.S. where many thousands of brutal killings by drug gangs and cartels have taken place during this period. Even within the tamer arenas of American town hall meetings discussing health care reform, in the summer of 2009, it would seem to be the presence of the Plutonic element that has particularly brought to democratic political discourse such visceral intensity, to the point of screaming, rage, and demonization. The conflict between right-wing and left political ideologies, between conservative reaction and progressive reform, reflects the Saturn-Uranus opposition, but the surprising visceral intensity and primal rage reflects the Uranus-Pluto and Saturn-Pluto complexes, the latter especially observable in the expression of resentment and loathing. These same qualities pervade right-wing talk radio and cable television commentaries, Internet blogs, public comments on news sites, and Tea Party demonstrations. Similarly reflective of this complex is the astonishingly high number of death threats to Barack Obama (averaging forty a day, far more than for previous presidents), reminiscent of the violent atmosphere and history-changing assassinations of the 1960s. In all these phenomena we see the disturbing awakening of the collective Plutonic Id in a highly polarized, conflict-constellating, reactive and vengeful form:

*Hey! My name is called Disturbance.
I'll shout and scream, I'll kill the king, I'll rail at all his servants.*²²

Yet the contrasts between these earlier Saturn-Uranus-Pluto periods and the present instance are important, and suggest the extent to which a genuine collective moral evolution has taken place. The rages of the Tea Party demonstrators and right-wing Fox News and talk radio commentators are a far cry from the murderously violent racial conflicts, white backlash, and destruction of cities that took place in the U.S. in the mid-1960s. Similarly, as problematic as it continues to be, the American and NATO pursuit of the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2009–2010 stands in sharp contrast to the American pursuit of the war in Vietnam in the 1964–68 period. The greater presence under President Obama, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, and General David Petraeus of self-questioning tentativeness,

attempted care with respect to the civilian population, and desire to minimize destruction, as tragically flawed and inadequate as these have been in execution, are a significant improvement on the immeasurably more destructive miscalculations and callous tactical military actions during the Vietnam War under President Lyndon Johnson, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, and General William Westmoreland.

The present situation in China during the years of the current T-square is especially instructive in these respects. The extreme acceleration of the pace of change in China during this era—unprecedentedly rapid social and economic development, industrialization, urbanization, technological advance—is highly characteristic of Uranus-Pluto periods, as is the rapid emergence of a country to a new level of international power. Yet with the additional presence of Saturn in the complex during the period of this T-square, the reactive repressive measures of the government and the traumatic stresses to China's social fabric and political dynamics are also highly visible: the epidemic of thirteen suicides in six months by workers in a single electronics factory amidst protests of backbreaking, rigidly enforced, underpaid labor, catalyzing widespread labor strikes; the epidemic of murderous rampages by mentally disturbed men targeting young children in schoolrooms; the eruptions of ethnic violence and rioting in Xinjiang province between Uighurs and Han Chinese, as well as the violent Tibetan protests and Chinese crackdown in Lhasa; the government's attempts to suppress Internet freedom and censor search engines like Google, initiate various forms of cyberattack, hack into email accounts of human rights activists; and so forth. Yet in comparison with the horrific levels of violence and repression that swept through China during the Cultural Revolution beginning in the mid-1960s, the social and political situation in 2010 China is vastly improved. Paradoxically, however, the very advances of modernity cited above, in this most populous country of the world, are contributing to a different crisis of immense proportions, not only within China itself but globally.

For much of the world, by far the most public attention to and private awareness of phenomena relevant to the current T-square has revolved around the global economic crisis, the sudden fall of national economies around the world, and the hardship involved for countless individuals—a collective experience that very much continues the diachronic pattern of the two earlier Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-squares of

1873–76 and 1929–33. Yet from a longer evolutionary perspective, as devastating as these earlier Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-squares proved to be in economic, political, social, and human terms throughout the world, something more is at stake in the present era. This graver dimension involves the global environmental crisis, extreme climate change, the mass extinction of species, and the current unprecedented magnitude of human population and industrial-technological impact on the ecology of the Earth. Though the more immediate concern of the human community has generally focused on those manifestations of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square that involve the economic and geopolitical crises cited above, on the planetary level it would seem that the most consequential drama now taking place is ultimately ecological.

In the discussion above of the Uranus-Pluto square, we mentioned the radical increase in intensity and frequency of extreme climate phenomena and natural catastrophes, including disasters in which human activity played or may have played a role—mining disasters, deep-sea oil disasters, catastrophic earthquakes and hurricanes, tornadoes and monsoons, volcanic eruptions, destructively rising sea-levels. The presence of Saturn in the T-square with Uranus and Pluto during most of the more recent events cited seems generally to correlate with the increased problematic quality, crisis-producing intensity, and frequency of these phenomena. Saturn with Uranus-Pluto adds the elements of greater gravity and negativity, more enduring consequences, effect on human structures and constructions, mortality, disease, hardship and hard labor, defeat and sorrow, error and failure, bringing past actions to concrete consequence, concretization (Saturn)—all on a vast, deep, massively overwhelming elemental scale (Pluto), happening suddenly and unexpectedly, with unpredictable and disruptive outcomes, radically changing lives and environments (Uranus).

The 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil rig explosion and catastrophic oil spill is an especially vivid expression and metaphor of the larger archetypal dynamic at work, gravely symbolic at multiple levels: the immense and for months unstoppable hemorrhaging of millions of gallons of crude oil from nature's depths, like a great wound to the Earth revealing the sorcerer's apprentice-like limits and hubris of human technological knowledge and confidence in its capacity to control nature, the many engineering mistakes and failures both before and since the explosion, the

criminally unprepared-for accident, and the interrelated issues of corporate exploitativeness and accountability and government regulatory failure and corruption. We see the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto archetypal complex playing itself out in the fiery methane explosion surging from below that consumed the oil rig and killed the workers, the vast destruction of wildlife in the sea and on the shorelines, the disruption of the marine food chain with consequences that could last many decades, the economic and human losses associated with the demise of a large bioregion's entire way of life—all incalculable and still ongoing. The Gulf oil disaster has catalyzed a greater collective sense that human life and its encompassing biosphere are fundamentally imperiled. And more generally, the extraordinary frequency and intensity during the past three years of natural catastrophes and extreme weather, extreme heat and extreme cold, images of dying animals and rapidly rising statistics of extinct and endangered species: all have contributed to a rapidly deepening awareness of the dire plight of the planet.²¹

Thus this 2007–2012 T-square seems to represent a moment of critical consequence for the future of humanity. Certainly many informed observers have been aware for a long time that a radical change had to happen in our civilizational structures and modus operandi if we are to exist in a sustainable relationship with each other and with the larger Earth community. This now seems to be the time when such a change is being especially impelled and accelerated. The future of the human species and of the Earth is at stake, and in this respect the T-square seems to mark a planetary crisis of consciousness, pressing towards either a collapse or a radical restructuring of an entire mode of civilization and cultural world view.

The Jupiter Conjunction Series

World transits of Jupiter to the outer planets, while much briefer and not in the same category of collective historical impact as all those discussed above, are significant and tangible, as the extraordinary pattern of Jupiter-Uranus cycle correlations recounted in *Cosmos and Psyche* suggests. In general, during Jupiter world transits a more expansive, elevating impulse tends to enter into the collective psyche, often counterbalancing Saturnian

impulses and magnifying or being activated by the archetypal principle associated with whatever planet Jupiter is then aligned.

Jupiter-Pluto conjunction January 2007 – October 2008

Jupiter-Neptune conjunction February 2009 – March 2010

Jupiter-Uranus conjunction March 2010 – April 2011

To give one example of the **Jupiter-Pluto** conjunction, with Pluto's archetypal association with mass crowd phenomena, intensity, power, and politics: The period of the Jupiter-Pluto conjunction coincided with the entire unusually lengthy U. S. presidential campaign which began in early 2007 and climaxed in the election on November 4, 2008, during the final penumbral weeks of the alignment. (The 15–20° penumbral orb adds approximately one month before and after the dates above.) Many characteristic Jupiter-Pluto phenomena during that period can be cited: the unprecedentedly large crowds that attended the major campaign rallies, particularly Obama's, including the final night of the Democratic National Convention in Mile High Stadium in Denver and Obama's speech in Berlin before a crowd of 200,000 (compare Woodstock and the other mass rock festivals in 1968–69, during the triple conjunction of Jupiter-Pluto with Uranus); the atmosphere of high political drama and political enthusiasm that infused the campaign from the tight race between Obama and Hillary Clinton to the days leading up to the election itself; and finally the enormous victory celebration on election night in Chicago's Grant Park. In that event can be discerned typical Jupiter-Pluto themes such as the "regal" quality (CNN's word) of Obama's presence and of the event, the majesty of the music, and the vast numbers of people throughout the world in the ensuing hours who by all accounts experienced a profound upwelling of collective emotion—a sense of joyful triumph and a surge of feeling from the depths to the point of tears, in witness of what seemed to be a world-historic, transformative moment in the moral evolution of the human community.



The Jupiter-Pluto complex's association with celebratory expansiveness and mass power was also highly evident in the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics: its spectacular magnitude, the enormous tableaux in the vast stadium, the thousands of performers, the

billions of people watching worldwide, the ambitious assertion of global embrace and benign imperial power, the overall atmosphere of intensely enthusiastic celebration. So also the widely publicized beginning of operations in September 2008 of the gigantic and hugely ambitious and expensive Large Hadron Collider, whose every descriptor carried the stamp of the Jupiter-Pluto complex: the largest machine in the world, over seventeen miles in circumference deep in the ground and spreading across the borders of two countries, the collaboration of over ten thousand scientists and engineers from hundreds of laboratories and universities and over a hundred countries, costing billions of dollars, celebrated jubilantly by scientists worldwide, expected to set world records of high-energy acceleration and advance human understanding of the deepest laws of nature, with hopes to discover the Higgs boson theoretical particle known as “the God particle,” etc. (The Large Hadron Collider also reflects of course the longer and larger context of the Uranus-Pluto square and its specific archetypal energy—the technological power and speed of the world’s highest-energy particle accelerator, recreating the potent cosmic conditions immediately after the Big Bang with potentially revolutionary consequences for scientific knowledge.)

The **Jupiter-Neptune** conjunction first entered into penumbral range at the time of Obama’s presidential inauguration in January 2009 and was in orb for the first year of his administration, and was archetypally evident in the widespread atmosphere of hope, elevated idealism, and social compassion that accompanied the Obama family’s entering the White House and beginning what for many seemed to be a new era of good will and higher possibility. The shadow side of the Jupiter-Neptune complex was similarly visible in criticisms accusing Obama of excessively lofty idealism, rhetoric over reality, and charismatic image over substance. Obama himself was born with Jupiter and Neptune in major aspect (in a T-square with his Sun and Mercury), and his life, speeches, and writings have been filled with calls to higher aspiration, “the audacity of hope,” the fulfillment of dreams (his first book, *Dreams from my Father*), and efforts on behalf of the larger good of humanity and a more inclusive national identity that would heal past conflicts and hatreds—all characteristic of the Jupiter-Neptune complex. Obama’s entering the presidency at the time of a great economic crisis and social distress but bringing new hope and efforts for




alleviating that crisis and distress, including initiating universal health care reform, brought many references by historians and journalists to parallels with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's entrance into the presidency in 1933 at the depths of the Great Depression. Remarkably, Roosevelt too was born with Jupiter and Neptune in major aspect to his Sun, and he too entered office during a Jupiter-Neptune conjunction, in 1933—at the end of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square of 1929–33, and with the continuing 1930s' Uranus-Pluto square that coincided with a sustained period of accelerated cultural transformation, radical reform, and mass movements amidst deep social and political instability. (The great difference between Roosevelt's and Obama's situations is that Roosevelt became president at the *end* of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square, when the economic and social crisis had reached extreme depths, compared with Obama's election which came nearer the beginning of that configuration and at the beginning of the crisis. Roosevelt's election took place in the wake of sustained catastrophic unemployment and poverty, ubiquitous bread lines and riots, which provided a mandate for immediate and far-reaching progressive legislation that was not given to Obama, whose legislative and executive power has been thereby greatly constrained.)

Another Jupiter-Neptune phenomenon of 2009 was the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Obama, which similarly carried the bivalent positive and negative expressions of that complex. The award was criticized by many as undeserved, as excessive praise ungrounded in real achievement, a sign of a kind of “Euro-celebration” of the election that gave “the impression that he is the focus of a global cult of personality” (*Washington Post*);²³ but was viewed by many others and by the Nobel Committee as a gesture of hope and idealism concerning the future against the backdrop of a violently polarized world, and a recognition of the initial radical improvement in international political relations introduced by Obama's more dialogical and mutually respectful engagement with the rest of the global community. Another expression of the same archetypal impulse was the enormous outpouring of international aid and compassion to Haiti in the immediate aftermath of its devastating earthquake.

Other phenomena reflecting the Jupiter-Neptune archetypal complex include the easing of federal medical marijuana laws in the U.S. by the Obama administration, which was widely embraced by the mainstream media and set in motion an extraordinary increase in the number of active

marijuana dispensaries (by December 2009 almost 1,000 marijuana stores operated in Los Angeles alone, the majority having opened within the year, during the conjunction). Here too could be mentioned the government approval and successful conducting of new research in the therapeutic use of psychoactive substances such as MDMA, psilocybin, and ayahuasca in the U.S., Switzerland, Canada, Spain, Israel, and Jordan. In the area of cultural and intellectual life, the publication of C. G. Jung's *Red Book* was an event that received extraordinary cultural attention internationally, from Zurich and London to New York and San Francisco, and represented a high-culture honoring (Jupiter) of the Jungian domain of the archetypal psyche (Neptune)—the imagination, dreams, visions, myths, the numinous—deeply engaged and given rich embodiment in the image-filled leather-bound manuscript that had been kept private for almost a century.²⁴



And in the artistic sphere, the enormous success of James Cameron's film *Avatar*—with its extraordinary technical realization of a virtual world, seen by unprecedented numbers of people throughout the world, projected onto vast theater screens with three-dimensional vividness—strongly carried the Jupiter-Neptune archetypal meaning, like a collective cinematic dream. With its narrative embodying values of a spiritual, mystical, sacramental, idealistic character, with its depiction and facilitating a state of *participation mystique* in nature and in the theater, and with the theme of a healing marriage between opposites, *Avatar* was a striking, immensely influential manifestation of the Jupiter-Neptune conjunction.²⁵ It carried this against the archetypal backdrop of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square, present in the titanically destructive incursion and battle involving the mechanized industrial and military technologies of modern civilization seeking to destroy the primal tribal and natural community of ensouled life. Cameron's previous film of comparable success, *Titanic*, with its own set of Jupiter-Neptune motifs richly imagined and depicted, coincided with the immediately preceding Jupiter-Neptune conjunction of 1997.

The **Jupiter-Uranus** conjunction is unfolding now as of this writing (summer 2010), lasting approximately from  March 2010 to April 2011. Already certain characteristic correlations are clearly visible, such as in the category of major scientific breakthroughs, the announcement by Craig Venter and his team having created the first fully functioning, reproducing cell controlled by synthetic

DNA;²⁶ in the area of human achievement, thirteen-year-old Californian Jordan Romero becoming the youngest person ever to climb Mount Everest; in the category of new and celebrated, highly popular technologies, the introduction by Apple of the iPad; in the area of political and social innovations, the 2010 U.K. election with its first ever televised debates, and the buoyant beginning of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition widely celebrated as both a “huge surprise” (NPR) and an epoch-making revolution in the history of British politics; and in social legislation, the successful passage by the Obama administration of universal health care reform after many decades of failed attempts.²⁷

The fact that Saturn is opposing Jupiter and Uranus throughout the Jupiter-Uranus transit and beyond into 2012 certainly indicates major constraining factors that will affect any of the usual Jupiter-Uranus phenomena. These can slow down the innovations and rebellions, or prevent them or try to prevent them; or appropriate them in the service of conservative or reactionary agendas; or move them into the area of judicial process, subject to trials and court judgments, legislative procedures and bureaucratic obstacles; or, finally, provide a greater foundation and rigor that will help the breakthrough endure as a permanent enrichment, rather than be a briefly overcelebrated flash in the pan. That being said, in general the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction is intrinsically one of the most reliable indicators of cultural, political, technological, intellectual, and psychological expansions and creative breakthroughs, sudden awakenings, new beginnings, and celebrated milestones, many of which only emerge into the public eye with the passage of time.²⁸

Concluding Remarks

All of these world transits are taking place against the background of the century-long **Neptune-Pluto** sextile that   will continue into the middle of the twenty-first century. Reflecting a sustained confluent dynamic between the two great archetypal principles, the spiritual and imaginatively aspiring energies associated with Neptune and the evolutionary elemental energies associated with Pluto, this extremely long alignment that occurs early in each 500-year Neptune-Pluto cycle may provide a certain stabilizing

undercurrent and encompassing context of deep consciousness evolution amidst the turbulent field of forces that are more conspicuously present.²⁹

The next longest of the current world transits is the Uranus-Pluto square alignment, which will continue through the year 2020. Even without the current T-square involving Saturn, the Uranus-Pluto combination is itself intensely dynamic and unpredictable, profoundly transformative, and potentially both destructive and emancipatory, so the next decade is likely to continue to unfold at a very high level of human and planetary drama. That being said, these next ten years will no doubt to a crucial extent be defined by what happens during the current T-square, which would seem to represent a kind of eye of the needle for this stage of human evolution.

It is striking that the two psychologists of the twentieth century who in the eyes of many brought forth the deepest comprehension of the human unconscious that shapes human behavior and destiny, and who most profoundly grasped the nature of the archetypal death-rebirth process in the human psyche, C. G. Jung and Stanislav Grof, were born during the two prior Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-squares respectively, Jung in 1875, Grof in 1931. Each provides crucial insights for helping the human community through this threshold of transformation which in so many ways resembles a kind of initiatory crisis.³⁰ From Grof comes the recognition of the titanic destructive and transformative energies of the perinatal unconscious that are intrinsic to the transpersonal death-rebirth process, tied to the necessity of undergoing a fundamental collapse of the old matrix, a death of the old order—the necessary loss of the womb, the expulsion from the garden, the destruction of the old identity, ego death—for the possibility of both biological birth and spiritual rebirth.³¹ From Jung, two passages from his writings eloquently reflect the essential dynamics, the immense challenge, and the potential significance of the current T-square. One is addressed to the individual level, a personal letter in 1945 to Olga Frobe, his longtime friend and the founder of Eranos; the other to the collective level, from “The Undiscovered Self” in 1956.

Bollingen, 20 August 1945.

Dear Frau Frobe,

. . . There can be no resolution, only patient endurance of the opposites which ultimately spring from your own nature. You yourself are a conflict that rages in itself and against itself, in order

to melt its incompatible substances, the male and the female, in the fire of suffering, and thus create that fixed and unalterable form which is the goal of life. Everyone goes through this mill, consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or forcibly. We are crucified between the opposites and delivered up to the torture until the “reconciling third” takes shape. Do not doubt the rightness of the two sides within you, and let whatever may happen, happen. The apparently unendurable conflict is proof of the rightness of your life. A life without inner contradiction is either only half a life or else a life in the Beyond, which is destined only for angels. But God loves human beings more than the angels.

With kindest regards,
Yours sincerely,
C. G. Jung³²

[A] mood of universal destruction and renewal...has set its mark on our age. This mood makes itself felt everywhere, politically, socially, and philosophically. We are living in what the Greeks called the *kairos*—the right moment—for a “metamorphosis of the gods,” of the fundamental principles and symbols. This peculiarity of our time, which is certainly *not* of our conscious choosing, is the expression of the unconscious human within us who is changing. Coming generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and science. . . . So much is at stake and so much depends on the psychological constitution of the modern human.³³

To many of us observing current events and the long unfolding of human history, the great archetypal cycles of history appear to be embedded in and informed by an evolutionary dynamic and *telos*, one that I believe is visible in the evidence recounted above and, in a more substantial way, in *Cosmos and Psyche*.³⁴ The discoveries of Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, and the emerging understanding of their profound archetypal significance and historical correlations, mirror this long, now accelerating evolutionary drama of humanity’s awakening to new cosmic horizons

and archetypal dimensions.³⁵ Transformative evolutionary forces are fully in play now, energies that we can participate in but that are far more powerful than we can control or predict. The past and the future seem to be converging in our time with extraordinary intensity. Clearly some form of creative intelligence informs the whole, yet just as clearly the human future is radically uncertain, contingent both on human choices and on larger forces beyond our power, beyond our awareness. An old age of the world is passing away, and a new one is struggling to be born.

Notes

1. Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View* (New York: Viking, 2006), 465–483.
2. For axial alignments of the outer planets, a penumbral area between approximately 15° and 20° before and after exact alignment is also suggested by the evidence, reflecting the larger wave pattern of the corresponding archetypal complex as it is constellated in the collective psyche and reflected in relevant cultural and historical phenomena. See also Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 148, reprinted below in Appendix I: Orbs for World Transits of the Outer Planets.
3. Sean Kelly, *Coming Home: The Birth and Transformation of the Planetary Era* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2010), vii. See also Edgar Morin, *Homeland Earth: A Manifesto for a New Millennium*, tr. S. Kelly and R. Lapointe (Kresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1999), 5 ff.
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1882), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), 181.
5. See Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 43–45.
6. Stanislav Grof, *Psychology of the Future* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001); Rupert Sheldrake, *The Presence of the Past* (New York: Crown, 1988); Ervin Laszlo, *Science and the Akashic Field* (Inner Traditions, 2004); Christopher Bache, *Dark Night, Early Dawn* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000); Jorge Ferrer: *Re-Visioning Transpersonal Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001).
7. See Hendrik Hertzberg's summary in the *New Yorker* of the *Washington Post's* three-part series "Top Secret America" (http://www.newyorker.com/talk/comment/2010/08/02/100802taco_talk_hertzberg).
8. David Brooks, "The Age of Skepticism," *New York Times* (<http://select.nytimes.com/2005/12/01/opinion/01brooks.html>), December 1, 2005.
9. Stephen Colbert's performance, White House Correspondents' Dinner, April 29, 2006, recorded by C-SPAN (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-869183917758574879#>). Colbert's speech was at its core a Saturn-Neptune phenomenon, both in its basic comic stance of ironic praise for Bush—pretending to be a right-wing commentator who saw Bush as his hero and agreed with the administration's philosophy—and in its direct confrontation of the Bush administration's spin and

propaganda: that is, employing illusion to reveal a delusion. The speech was filled with Saturn-Neptune themes and metaphors: the president celebrated for never letting reality affect his views, “reality has a well-known liberal bias,” the “No Fact Zone” philosophy; the Bush administration described as the sinking Titanic, with further metaphors like the half-empty glass with undrinkable water and global warming’s melting glaciers; the press praised for not covering depressing reality of these years and urged instead to write a novel about a courageous reporter who stands up to the administration (“you know—fiction!”); narrow religiosity (“I believe there are infinite paths to accepting Jesus Christ as your personal savior”); and America in crisis after crisis rebounding to show it was capable of “the most powerfully staged photo ops in the world.”

The Colbert performance, with President Bush visible sitting a few feet away, many hundreds of powerful Washington politicians and journalists in the audience, and many thousands of overjoyed Internet viewers in the days immediately afterwards, was widely credited as having played a major role in the 2006 mid-term elections that took Congress from the Republicans. The *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich called the speech a “cultural primary,” the “defining moment” of the election (“Throw the Truthiness Bums Out,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 2006), while journalist Dan Savage described it as “one of the things that kept people like me sane during the darkest days of the Bush years”—using characteristic Saturn-Neptune themes of darkness and sanity to make his point (Interview, October 21, 2009, *The Stranger*). The speech seemed to many to have been the first major instance in the public consciousness that someone had successfully penetrated the Bush administration’s bubble of denial, delusion, and spin. Here we see the Saturn-Neptune complex on both sides of the gestalt—on the one hand, the rigidly defended state of deluded belief and propaganda, obsessively filtering out potentially intrusive information that might intrude on the idealized quasi-religious self-image in sharp contrast to the actual events and consequences visible to the rest of the world (Saturn’s rigid boundaries deployed to protect the Neptunian delusion); and on the other hand, the sane, grounded Saturnian confrontation of hard reality and factual information against the Neptunian illusion and deception, bringing the critical eye for shadow, the ironic judgment that reveals the darker reality behind the superficial, deceptive image.

10. Characteristic of the public response, and of both the negative and positive aspects of the Saturn-Neptune era it occurred in, was the reaction of *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, herself born with the Saturn-Neptune conjunction: “It was a huge relief, after our long national slide into untruth and no consequences, into Swift boating and swift bucks, into W.’s delusion and denial, to see the Empress of Empathy icily hold someone accountable for lying.” “Oprah’s Bunk Club,” *The New York Times*, January 28, 2006.
11. Julie Steenhuisen, “Pain Drugs Abuse Requires Urgent Action: CDC,” *Reuters* (<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE65G4P920100617>), June 17, 2010.
12. The 2004–08 Saturn-Neptune opposition provides an interesting test case for the issue of world transit orbs. In mundane astrology, the general tendency has long been to assume a small orb for outer-planet alignments, no more than 5°, and to mainly emphasize the year or years that the alignment was exact. For example, the Uranus-Pluto conjunction was exact in 1965–66, whereas it was within a 15° orb from 1960 to 1972. The historical record of the era of the 1960s and early 1970s suggests how inadequate such a narrow orb is for comprehending the archetypally relevant events. We can see this easily in retrospect, as with the many other waves of

archetypally relevant synchronic events during other outer-planet alignments discussed in *Cosmos and Psyche*.

But the analysis of this Saturn-Neptune opposition of 2004–2008 that appears near the end of *Cosmos and Psyche*, which summarized the early correlations that had taken place as of that moment, was written in January 2005, just two months after the alignment had first reached 15°, with three additional paragraphs written in the first week of September 2005 when the manuscript was in final galleys, when the alignment had first reached 10°. If one reads now that ten-page section of *Cosmos and Psyche* (469–478), it is clear in retrospect that most of the major Saturn-Neptune themes were already visible in the immediate aftermath of the first 15° station in November 2004 with Bush's second election and the Asian tsunami in December 2004, and of Hurricane Katrina in August–September 2005 just as the alignment reached 10°.

In essence, everything in *Cosmos and Psyche* concerning this Saturn-Neptune opposition was written about events that occurred before that opposition had even begun according to the conventional assumptions of mundane astrology, and a full year before it first reached exact alignment. I believe this wider 10–15° orb for the outer-planet alignments reflects the nature of archetypal wave patterns emerging in the collective psyche—ebbing and flowing, cumulatively concentering—rather than the more atomistic and punctuated activation assumed in much conventional astrological theory and practice.

For further detail on the Saturn-Neptune complex, see my two-part article “The Ideal and the Real” in the previous issue of *Archai* (137–158) and in this issue (105–128).

13. Marcus Buckingham, Gallup poll researcher (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/20/opinion/20dowd.html>)
14. See Bill Streett's exploration of this topic elsewhere in this issue (“Queer Parallels: Saturn-Uranus World Transits, Milk, and the Struggle for Gay Rights,” 213–228).
15. An identical pattern was visible with the initial malfunction of the Hubble Space Telescope during the Saturn-Uranus conjunction of 1990 because of severe distortions in its main mirror, requiring a ten-day space repair mission to correct it before the telescope, three years later when Uranus and Neptune were exactly conjunct, could begin to transmit its unprecedentedly sharp photographic images.
16. Charles Siebert, “The Animal-Cruelty Syndrome,” *The New York Times Magazine* (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/13/magazine/13dogfighting-t.html>), June 7, 2010.
17. The following excerpts are from two interviews with Niall Ferguson in 2008 and 2009. Niall Ferguson, NPR interview, “Talk of the Nation,” November 24, 2008 (<http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=97395387>):

Host: “As we look at this financial mess, a lot of people would say, well there's one stark lesson that we could all turn to, the Great Depression.”

Prof. Ferguson: “Yes, it's certainly getting to the point that—that's the point, the obvious analogy to draw, that there's certainly been no financial crisis of this magnitude in my lifetime. And I think most people who have had long careers on Wall Street spanning 25 or 30 years have no point of reference in their own experience. Of course, this isn't exactly like the Great Depression. It would be very surprising if we ended up with 25 percent unemployment or a 30 percent contraction of gross domestic product. But I think it's clear that the preconditions, the starting point, is remarkably similar in the sense that we have got a major crisis not only in the American banking system but in the western banking system. We've had dramatic declines in asset prices, housing in particularly

[sic] stock market prices. And the authorities are battling to implement lessons that we thought we'd learned from history. We thought we'd learn what the Fed should do in a crisis like this. And we thought we'd learn from John Maynard Keynes what the Treasury should do and they're doing it. The scary thing is, that the results aren't really as good as we might have expected. It's as if the Great Depression wants to happen anyway despite a completely different policy mix.

“. . . Many, many banks failed in the crises of the [past]—of 1873 for example, which was a global financial crisis. One has to remember the extent to which as today, by the late 19th century, the world economy was highly integrated, and a crisis in 1873 could cause people to lose their savings as far away from the South as Berlin, which was one of the great epicenters of that crisis. . . . We often forget the term Great Depression was first used from the mid-1870s through to the mid-1890s and it referred to a depression of prices, particularly agricultural prices. Food prices were being driven down by the increasing integration of global grain markets, the falling cost in transportation, and so forth. And this was very bad news indeed for farmers because they often had relatively large debts in relation to their assets. As the prices fell, as deflation set in, the real burdening—the real burden of these debts increased. So I do think it's useful, Chase, to look back to that period, and I sometimes ask myself when we talk about the next Great Depression, should we in fact be looking at that Great Depression rather than the '29 to '33 experience?”

“An Interview with Niall Ferguson” posted on www.niallferguson.com, June 14, 2009 (<http://www.niallferguson.com/site/FERG/Templates/ArticleItem.aspx?pageid=209>):

“When it comes to equity markets, I am extremely skeptical when anyone tells me we've reached the bottom. There were 11 bear market rallies between 1929 and 1934 and it is terribly easy to be seduced by supposed green shoots. The media in particular will respond to noise. They will turn a blip into a sign of recovery. You have to look at the fundamentals of excessive debt. You have to look at extreme difficulty of causing a recovery in consumer demand in highly leveraged societies and realize that for that very reason this is very different from anything we've lived through.”

Q In historical terms, is there any period you would compare this to?

“I don't think it's like the '29 to '33 period partly because the policy response has been so completely different. In the depression of the early '30s the monetary and fiscal authorities practically everywhere did the worst possible things: They tightened monetary policy and tried to balance the budget. We're not making those mistakes. Full marks to Ben Bernanke for learning the lessons of the great depression. At the same time another eminent economist, Larry Summers, is ensuring that Keynesian policies are applied so let's assume that the combined effects avoid a great depression of the early '30s style.

There is another possibility, which goes back to the 1870s. There was a great depression that began in 1873 with a financial panic: bank failures on both sides of the Atlantic. It was a very protracted depression. Economic performance and prices declined for about five and quarter years right up until 1878. . . . That seems to me a possible scenario.”

18. Paul Krugman, “The Third Depression,” *New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/28/opinion/28krugman.html>), June 28, 2010,

19. In addition to the mass unemployment and poverty caused by the economic depression that began in 1873, the late nineteenth-century rise of the rabid form of European anti-Semitism that led to Nazism and the Holocaust received a powerful catalyst in the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time of the 1873 stock market crash, which was widely blamed on Jewish bankers and stockbrokers as scapegoats. See, for example, Peter Gay's analysis and the 1873 cartoon caricatures of Viennese stock brokers in *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1988), 15 ff. and in photographs after 106). We see a diachronic upsurge of this phenomenon in contemporary Islamic anti-Semitism, as well as in the activation of traumatic collective Jewish memory in the U.S. in the wake of the Bernie Madoff and Goldman Sachs financial scandals. See Michael Kinsley, "Is Criticism of Goldman Really Anti-Semitism?" (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126310251>).
20. See Appendix II: The Saturn-Uranus-Pluto Complex, for relevant passages from Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, on past Saturn-Uranus-Pluto configurations in history.
21. See "From Climate Change to Climate Shock: The Result of a Perfect Eco-Political Storm" by Jim Garrison, president of the State of the World Forum (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jim-garrison/from-climate-change-to-cl_b_701126.html).
22. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, "Street-Fighting Man," from the Rolling Stones album *Beggars' Banquet*, 1968.
23. Quote from the *Washington Post* in "Obama Nobel Peace Prize for what?" by Brad Knickerbocker, *Christian Science Monitor* (<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2009/1010/obama-nobel-peace-prize-for-what>), October 10, 2009.
24. Sara Corbett, "The Holy Grail of the Unconscious," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 16, 2009 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/20/magazine/20jung-t.html>).
25. In a more modest genre of popular culture, the shadow side of the Jupiter-Neptune complex was well embodied in the final episode of the longest-running daytime drama in history, "Guiding Light," described with droll appreciation by Gail Collins in the *New York Times* (September 19, 2009):

"Guiding Light," the longest-running daytime drama in history, breathed its last on Friday. This may be the beginning of the end for soap operas. And since it's being replaced by "The Price Is Right," there's really no way you can spin this as a step forward.

"Guiding Light" certainly did its best to provide a happy ending. In the final episode, several couples got married in rapid succession and two young women announced that they had gotten into Berkeley. The whole cast had to race from one of the weddings to wave goodbye to them, because they both had to leave the very minute they were accepted. (The University of California has become way too spontaneous.)

A long line of former residents walked in to announce they were moving back to town forever. Then everybody went on a picnic. Many Champagne toasts. "This isn't supposed to happen. . . . I'm getting everything I wanted," a woman told her partner. A man holding a baby got a dream job as a coach. Another man with a baby got a job in construction. Then Josh and Reva, major characters of many decades' standing, met at a lighthouse and drove off together in a truck.

The whole thing had an air of unreality, and this was only in part because 72 years of tears and trauma ended in the greatest explosion of bliss since the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. . . .

26. The potential shadow dimension of this event is carried in the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square symbolism also constellated at this time, as seen for example in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: A Modern Prometheus* of 1818 during the Saturn-Pluto square Uranus configuration—a technological advance in service of the human will to power in its attempts to control nature, the attempt at the artificial invention and manipulation of life.
27. Rob Gifford and Lynn Neary, "Britain's Coalition Government Starts On Priorities," National Public Radio (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126791923>), May 13, 2010.
28. See Tarnas, "Hidden Births," *Cosmos and Psyche*, 349–351.
29. See Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 481–482.
30. I have explored this perspective in the epilogue of *The Passion of the Western Mind*, in several passages in *Cosmos and Psyche* (26–49, 484–492), and in the essay "Is the Modern Psyche Undergoing a Cosmic Rite of Passage?" published in the Jungian anthology *The Vision Thing: Myth, Politics and Psyche in the World*, ed. T. Singer (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) and *ReVision Journal* (Winter 2002); also available online at <http://cosmosandpsyche.com/Essays.php>.
31. Grof's perspective on the current state of the collective psyche and humanity's future is summarized in "Consciousness Evolution and Human Survival," the final chapter of his *Psychology of the Future* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 293–321.
32. From *C.G. Jung Letters Vol. I: 1906–1950*, ed. by G. Adler and A. Jaffe, Princeton University Press, 1973, 375. I discuss this letter through the lens of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto complex in *Cosmos and Psyche*, 265–266.
33. Jung, C. G., "The Undiscovered Self" (1956), in *Collected Works of Carl Gustav Jung*, Vol. 10, tr. R. F. C. Hull, ed. H. Read et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) pars. 585–586. I have retranslated the German "*Mensch*" as "human" rather than "man" to accord with current English usage. (But see also my discussion of gender and language in *The Passion of the Western Mind* [New York: Random House, 1991], 468–469.)
34. This point has been brilliantly developed by Sean Kelly, in the final pages of his just published *Coming Home: The Birth and Transformation of the Planetary Era* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2010), 165–178.
35. See Dane Rudhyar, *The Sun Is Also a Star: The Galactic Dimension of Astrology* (New York: Dutton, 1975); and *Birth Patterns for a New Humanity* (1969), reissued online as *Astrological Timing: The Transition to the New Age* (2001) at http://www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/at/at_tcpv.shtml. Gerry Goddard further developed this perspective in his essay "Uranus, Neptune, Pluto: Our Contemporary Evolutionary Challenge," published online by *Centre Universitaire de Recherche en Astrologie* (<http://cura.free.fr/xxv/25god2.html>).

Appendix I: Orbs for World Transits of the Outer Planets

(*Cosmos and Psyche*, 148)

In the course of examining thousands of historical events and cultural phenomena over the years, I found that archetypally relevant events consistently began to coincide with conjunctions and oppositions of the outer planets when the planets first moved within approximately 20° of exact alignment, gradually increasing in frequency and intensity and then, after exactitude was reached, decreasing in a wavelike continuum. From the time the planets reached 15° of exact alignment, the archetypal complex appeared to be fully active, with the frequency and intensity of observed correlations especially robust. For purposes of simplicity and clarity, in the detailed survey of the evidence presented in these chapters, the years I have specified for each period as coinciding with outer-planet conjunctions and oppositions reflect the smaller 15° orb. Beyond that point, however, was a penumbral range, up through about 20°, during which correlations could regularly be observed that I will cite and specify as such when relevant.

I should also clarify here that the periods coinciding with these alignments did not mark years in which the characteristic historical events and cultural trends suddenly turned on and then off, when the alignment was over, like bivalent light switches. Rather, the periods in question seemed to represent times when continuing, usually long-developing trends came to a boil, as it were; when a certain heightened stimulus or concrete fruition brought specific categories of cultural phenomena to conspicuous expression, causing those tendencies to emerge more explicitly and dramatically into the collective consciousness. From that more decisive point of inception or climax, those cultural tendencies then continued to unfold in diverse ways in subsequent years and decades after the alignment was over.

In general, the observed correlations suggested something more like fluidly interpenetrating quantum wave patterns rather than discrete atomistic Newtonian events. The dynamics appeared to be complex, holistic, and probabilistic rather than simple, linear, and reductively deterministic. The correlations were most intelligible if they were regarded not as mechanistically causal in character but rather as multidimensionally archetypal and synchronistic.

Appendix II: The Saturn-Uranus-Pluto Complex

The following two sections from *Cosmos and Psyche* provide further background for understanding the current Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square. The first section examines several historical precedents involving those three planets in hard aspect, while the second passage, written in 2004–05 before the current T-square began, suggests its potential upcoming manifestations.

From “Historical Contrasts and Tensions,” 220–223

While the archetypal complex associated with Uranus-Pluto alignments consistently expressed itself in the form of radical emancipatory and revolutionary impulses, Saturn-Pluto alignments tended to coincide with the emergence of “radical conservatism.” The common factor in both tendencies, the *radical* component in each complex, seems to reflect the characteristic quality and vector given to any complex by the presence of the Pluto archetype. The nature of the Plutonic-Dionysian principle is to press towards greater intensity, to the extreme, to be compelling, deep: radical as *radix*, root, grounded in the depths, drawing on the power of the underworld, driving whatever it touches to an overwhelming potency that has a compulsive, destructive, even self-destructive potential.

But what happens when two planetary cycles associated with such different archetypal complexes coincide or overlap during the same period? I found that when the shorter-period alignments of the Saturn-Pluto cycle (three to four years in length) coincided with longer-period alignments of the Uranus-Pluto cycle (generally twelve to thirteen years), as took place in the middle of both the 1960s and the French Revolutionary period, complicated archetypal tensions were strongly in evidence. A sustained three-planet configuration of this kind, when Saturn opposed the Uranus-Pluto conjunction, occurred during the critical period of 1964–67 (extending partly into 1968). These years coincided not only with the outbreak and escalation of the war in Vietnam under Lyndon Johnson but also with widespread urban riots and violent civil disturbances throughout the United States (Los Angeles,

Detroit, Newark, and over 120 other cities) and the Cultural Revolution in China under the Red Guards, among many other similar phenomena in those critical years throughout the world from Central and South America to Africa and Indonesia.

In such periods there seemed to be constellated a dynamic tension, dialectic, and synthesis of the three distinct archetypal complexes: the more revolutionary, rebellious, innovative impulse associated with Uranus in various compromise formations with the more limiting, contracting, and controlling impulse associated with Saturn, with both impulses empowered and intensified, often violently, by the principle associated with Pluto. Alignments of these three planets in hard aspect were consistently associated with periods of intensified emancipatory and revolutionary activity as well as intensified efforts at order, control, conservative reaction, and repression, all combining to produce a state of extreme tension and crisis. The schisms both in society—generational, political, cultural—and in the world tended to be exacerbated, as in the “generation gap” that emerged during this period in the 1960s (“Hope I die before I get old,” The Who, *My Generation*, 1965). More generally, it was in these years that there arose the “culture wars” that still drive the tense divisions within the social and political body of the United States.

Especially problematic in such eras was the extreme intensification of both widespread revolutionary upheaval and violent authoritarian repression in a tightly bound dialectic, mutually activating each other. Sometimes these opposing impulses were present simultaneously in the same political movement or historical phenomenon, often with catastrophic consequences, as with Mao’s Red Guards during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, who rampaged through the countryside in a destructive frenzy of repressive “revolutionary” activity.

When these same two cycles overlapped during the French Revolution to form another such multi-planet alignment of Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto, this configuration took place in 1793–96 in precise coincidence with the Reign of Terror. Again, this was an era that was simultaneously intensely revolutionary and intensely repressive, as in the dictatorial powers arrogated by the Committee of Public Safety led by Danton and then Robespierre with his “revolutionary puritanism.” Unprecedentedly rigid control over the nation was attempted through a regime of conformity and fear. Neighbors and family members were pressured to

inform on each other, and there were hurried trials for the accused and death sentences for those found guilty. Women's societies were suppressed, and leading women of the revolution such as Olympe de Gouges were imprisoned and then guillotined. In less than one year between September 1793 and July 1794, over 25,000 suspected enemies of the revolution were beheaded by guillotine in the public squares, including finally Danton and Robespierre themselves. The entire period of the triple alignment was marked by scarcely imaginable massive social turmoil, orgies of unbridled violence, and the killing of hundreds of thousands of the French people by its own revolutionary army. The later part of this same period of the three-planet alignment brought the conservative Thermidorean Reaction, which in revulsion against the Terror undid many of the democratic reforms of the earlier part of the Revolution and initiated a period of retribution against the radicals. Here too can be seen a further expression of the two opposing tendencies, revolutionary and conservative, producing a tense compromise formation.

Besides the configuration of the mid-1960s, there was one other period in twentieth-century history when these three planets—Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto—moved into an alignment constituted entirely by hard aspects. This took place from late 1929 to 1933, when the longer Uranus square Pluto that lasted through most of the 1930s was joined at its start by Saturn in what is called a T-square formation (formed by two planets in 180° opposition and a third planet in 90° square alignment with both). The three planets first moved into an exact midpoint configuration, with Uranus halfway between Saturn and Pluto within 1°, in late October 1929 in precise coincidence with the Wall Street stock market collapse on October 29, “the blackest day in stock market history,” that precipitated the first stage of the Great Depression, and helped to set in motion the tumultuous political upheavals that unfolded throughout that decade.⁴ The longer Uranus-Pluto square then continued on through the Thirties, coinciding with that decade's widespread social and political turmoil, catalyzing of mass movements, rise of radical political philosophies and parties, intensified labor unrest, student strikes and demonstrations, unleashed mob violence, and mass immigrations.

The convergence of all three planets in hard aspect in the 1929–33 period appeared to be correlated with historical events that reflected the characteristic themes of all three relevant planetary cycles: the *Saturn-Pluto*

cycle, with its intensification of authoritarian and totalitarian impulses, mass hardship, economic failure, and the other phenomena discussed in the present section; the *Uranus-Pluto* cycle, with its sustained social and political unrest, mass movements, empowerment of radical political programs, and mass demographic shifts, which we observed in the preceding chapters; and a cycle we have not yet examined, *Saturn-Uranus*.

Historical periods in which Saturn and Uranus moved into dynamic aspect were marked by certain distinctive themes that were readily intelligible in terms of the archetypal principles associated with these two planets: the exacerbation of tensions between authority and rebellion, order and freedom, structure and change. Often the two archetypal principles combined and interpenetrated in contradictory ways: repressive revolution, erratically unpredictable authority, and so forth, as evident during the Terror in revolutionary France and the Cultural Revolution in communist China just mentioned. Especially frequent with this cycle were crises and the sudden collapse of structures, crashes and accidents, grim awakenings, and sudden breakdowns, whether political, economic, or psychological.

Such phenomena regularly coincided with hard-aspect alignments of the Saturn-Uranus cycle; with the additional presence of Pluto in the more rare three-planet configuration, an especially massive, overwhelming, sometimes catastrophic dimension was typically constellated. In the 1929–33 period, the widespread political and economic destabilizations (Saturn-Uranus) suddenly catalyzed a full range of characteristic Saturn-Pluto phenomena: widespread financial failure, poverty, and traumatic personal hardship on a vast scale throughout the world and the rapid ascendancy of authoritarian and totalitarian forces—in Germany, the empowerment of Hitler and his anti-Semitic policies after the collapse of German liberalism and the Weimar government; in the Soviet Union, intensified repression by Stalin and the immense disaster imposed on the Ukraine by his policies of compulsory collectivization, mass starvation, gulag imprisonment, exile, and the forced displacement of millions; the aggressive assertion of fascist militarism in Italy and Japan; and the rise of fascist and communist political movements that pressed for power in many other countries. Economists are still unable to adequately account for the sudden mass collapse in 1929–33 that shook the world's structures to their foundations and had so many long-term consequences. It was also during this period that the first splitting of the atom occurred, in 1932 at the Cavendish

Laboratory, which represented another form of structural breakdown with the sudden release of titanic energy with consequences that extended far into the future. This was the only T-square of Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto in the twentieth century.

I found that individuals born during this configuration in this critical period of 1929–33, as also during the similar three-planet alignment of the 1964–67 period, seemed to experience with special acuity the challenges and tensions of these dynamically interacting forces in the course of their lives. In an extremely varied range of ways, the circumstances of their lives seemed to require them to hold the tension and negotiate a highly complex clash of opposites, sometimes (as with Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, both born when the T-square was near exact in 1931) on a large scale and with enduring consequences.

From “Observations on Future Planetary Alignments,” 479–483

If we can judge by past experience, the most significant and potentially dramatic configuration on the horizon is the convergence of three planetary cycles that will produce a close *T-square* alignment of *Saturn*, *Uranus*, and *Pluto* during the period 2008–11. The last time that these three planets were all simultaneously in hard aspect was from 1964 to early 1968, when Saturn opposed the longer Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the 1960s, and when both revolutionary and reactionary impulses were intensely constellated and complexly interpenetrating in the collective psyche. This was the period of greatest polarized tensions and convulsions during that tumultuous decade, when there was a rapid acceleration of cultural change and stressful development. The preceding hard-aspect configuration in the twentieth century involving these same three planets was the T-square that occurred between 1929 and 1933, at the beginning of the long Uranus-Pluto square that extended through the 1930s. We examined several other such periods in earlier centuries.

Historically, as we have seen, the archetypal dynamics during eras in which these three planets were in such a configuration have been especially powerful, challenging, and transformative. The forces involved seem to demand, as well as bring forth the possibility of, a deepened capacity for the creative resolution of intensely opposing forces—the old and the new, the past and the future, order and change, tradition and innovation, stability

and freedom. A general atmosphere of power struggle is typical. Underlying tensions between established social authority and newly empowered countercultural impulses tend to be exacerbated. So also the generational tensions between old and young, and the political tensions between conservative and progressive. A quality of accelerated maturation is usually notable in the collective psyche. Entrenched assumptions and expectations confront the unpredictable and the disruptive. Whether the result is a destructive encounter between forces of revolutionary change and forces of rigid reaction or a pragmatic synthesis of creative innovation and resolute discipline in recognition of irrevocable new realities depends on factors beyond what can be seen astrologically. Such periods have generally been marked by critical events and cultural phenomena that both climax and catalyze longer-term processes. International tensions and geopolitical divisions can intensify, so that radically new approaches are required to resolve long-standing antagonisms and conflicting values. Issues surrounding the unforeseen consequences of technological development tend to rise to public consciousness. In the current global situation, it appears likely that large-scale ecological as well as political and social structures will be affected during this period, with an increased urgency to resolve problems involving the allocation and preservation of the world's natural resources.

Yet much will depend on what steps are taken during these next years, and what kind of awareness—both collective and individual—is brought to bear on the challenges now facing the human community. As I have emphasized throughout this book, an extremely wide range of archetypally relevant “scenarios,” as the futurists say, is possible for any such alignment, reflecting different potential inflections of whatever archetypal forces are at play. These different scenarios and inflections in turn reflect that irreducible multivalent indeterminacy that resides in the very nature of archetypes. Some may view the observed consistency of correlation between patterns of human experience and planetary movements as evidence that history has, in some essential way, already been determined in its basic outlines, if not in every detail. Such a conclusion, I believe, reflects simplistic assumptions about causality and determinism lingering from the modern (and premodern) mindset. It may also reflect deep psychological tendencies, collective as well as personal, rooted in unconscious feelings of helplessness and victimization. Rather than reinforcing a sense that one is bound by a definite fate, however,

knowledge of upcoming world transits, like the knowledge of one's personal transits and natal chart, can open the possibility of a more informed and creative response to the archetypal forces at work at any given time. Numerous unpredictable factors are at work in co-constituting the events to come: the long-developing and still shifting and pliable historical trends, the spontaneous social and political responses to newly emerging conditions, the state of the collective moral conscience, the extent to which the constellated energies are unconsciously and blindly acted out or consciously engaged and assimilated—and no doubt many other trans-empirical factors beyond our ken, such as perhaps karma and grace.

Even in astrological terms, indeterminacy and creative unpredictability are part of the archetypal pantheon, as essential manifestations of the Uranus-Promethean principle. All periods involving major Uranus alignments tend to constellate these themes in concrete events, each cycle doing so with different inflections according to the second planet involved. The Jupiter-Uranus conjunction of 2010 and early 2011 will take place during the peak of the T-square, and is likely to coincide with unexpected new beginnings, expansive impulses, and creative breakthroughs of many kinds that will shape the larger whole—some immediately visible to public awareness, some of a more hidden nature that fully emerge later.

A crucial role will be played during the years of the T-square and beyond by the coming to power of the generation born during the Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the 1960s and its aftermath. So will the coming of age of the generation of children born during the Uranus-Neptune conjunction just ending. Moreover, for many years to come, the sustained infusion into the collective psyche of the idealistic cultural impulses, creative visions, and spiritual awakenings that emerged during that long Uranus-Neptune era will continue to unfold its consequences for many years into the future, often in new ways that cannot now be predicted. Finally, the very knowledge of the powerful archetypal dynamics involved—the foreknowledge of the planetary alignments, their timing, and their potential significance—could provide us with an important further level of insight and self-awareness by which we might better navigate this critical transition in our world's history.

Nothing is certain, or at least nothing can be said to be certain. When it comes to the future, we are all seeing through a glass darkly. Yet some glasses are perhaps less opaque than others. Given the consistent pattern of

correlations involving these planets in the past, it does seem reasonable to prepare for the possibility that the years of the upcoming Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square configuration will present the human community with major challenges on many fronts. The Uranus-Pluto square that will continue through 2020 could well represent something like a combination of the 1930s and the 1960s in a twenty-first-century context, a sustained period of enormous historical change requiring humanity to radically expand the scope of its vision and draw upon new resources and capacities in ways that could ultimately be deeply liberating. Whatever form this coming era will take, I believe that the great global transformations and emancipatory movements that have coincided with the long sequence of axial alignments of Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto surveyed in this book, as well as the deep human suffering and moral evolution that took place during the Saturn-Pluto, Saturn-Neptune, and other such challenging alignments, have prepared the world to enter this critical threshold with a collective awareness that could make a significant difference in its outcome. . . .

Our postmodern age of ceaseless flux and irresolvable complexity, for all its metaphysical disorientation, and despite the collective entrancement produced by the mass media and corporate marketing, has nevertheless brought forth new conditions and possibilities that could prove invaluable for our future. As a result of the many extraordinary changes—cultural, psychological, spiritual—that have unfolded in the past half-century, the collective psyche has undergone a pervasive and in certain respects deeply benign transformation that cannot easily be measured and yet, for all its subtlety, is no less pregnant with historical significance. The rapid dissemination during this era of a fundamental new openness to the perspectives and realities of different cultures, eras, religions, races, classes, genders, sexual orientations, age groups, even different species and forms of life has been an essential characteristic of our time. It is perhaps not too much to say that, in this first decade of the new millennium, humanity has entered into a condition that is in some sense more globally united and interconnected, more sensitized to the experiences and suffering of others, in certain respects more spiritually awakened, more conscious of alternative future possibilities and ideals, more capable of collective healing and compassion, and, aided by

technological advances in communications media, more able to think, feel, and respond together in a spiritually evolved manner to the world's swiftly changing realities than has ever before been possible.