

Uranus-Pluto: Correspondences in the 2010s

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As we move through the seven exact passes of the Uranus-Pluto first-quarter square from Aries to Capricorn from 2012-2015, the correspondences with events in real life are mounting up, almost wherever we care to look. The ramifications of those events have not yet spawned any obvious crises that dramatically affect the general populace, at least not here in America, but those consequences are virtually guaranteed in the years ahead, whether slowly and gradually — in sporadic fits and starts — or suddenly and dramatically — in profound and shocking global eruptions.

Astrologically, decoding this seminal event involves four factors, the first of which are Uranus and Pluto as significant outer-planet symbols (yes, I understand that Pluto is no longer classed as a “planet” in technical astronomy, but it has not been demoted from full planetary status in astrology — far from it). Second is their action together in a shared cycle. Third is the quarterly phase change active now, which happens to be a waxing first-quarter square. And last is the sign position occupied by each planet during the transit, in this case Uranus in Aries versus Pluto in Capricorn. Combining the essential meanings of those four factors gives us an exhaustive set of possible correspondences for this period and beyond in the collective evolution of civilization.

In collective terms, Uranus’ symbolism implies awakening into awareness by being jolted out of habitual, conditioned, or otherwise automatic modes of behavior or judgment. This is achieved through sudden shocks and unexpected, revolutionary challenges that hit humanity like lightning bolts. We cannot know from Uranian symbolism alone whether that sudden awareness will take the form of mature consciousness that becomes permanent or merely a willful shift into the temporary revolutionary fervor of “out with the old, and in with anything different.” The latter is more common, the former more rare, but both are possible, and either may lead to the other.

Pluto's symbolism is best explained through either natural or psychological correspondences. The release of inconceivable energy in nuclear fission is one example. Whether that fission takes the destructive form of a weapon (nuclear bombs) or the seemingly benign form of an energy source (nuclear reactors), the specter of invisible toxic radioactivity is ever-present. Pluto is a dangerous arena where even angels fear to tread. Volcanic eruptions are another example, caused by the pressure of invisible magma pushing up from within the earth's molten core and eventually exploding through fissures between tectonic plates. The paradox of volcanic eruptions is that they destroy and create — life-sustaining environments can be devastated by an eruption, both locally and, in extreme cases, globally, but this process is how new land is created that will eventually support renewed life. As an astrological symbol in the collective, Pluto is associated with the revelation (eruption) of immensely powerful forces previously hidden from view that signal "death and rebirth," or profound endings followed by new beginnings. Pluto takes no prisoners and says, "We have reached the end. Enough is enough. Everything must now be revealed."

Combining these two outer-planet symbols (i.e., transpersonal wild-cards) through their shared cycle implies a long-term, evolutionary process of sporadic shocks and unexpected challenges arising from the seemingly sudden welling-up of primal forces that are always present, but which we ordinary don't see or experience directly, and which then foment a revolutionary leap away from a collapsing status quo.

Since the Uranus-Pluto cycle inherently involves destruction, is it inevitably tragic? Not necessarily. Profound endings are often difficult and may result in deep grief, but not always. Sometimes, an ending may also bring relief and an almost giddy sense of freedom and new possibilities. Or both poles may coexist simultaneously: suffering and joy — grieving for the past and excitement about the future. It's important to note that Pluto and Uranus are not cruel. They operate from a "higher," transpersonal level of reality, and they are simply not concerned with individual feelings or ego-identities.

The Uranus-Pluto cycle has two durations that alternate: roughly 113 years or 142 years. The alternating lengths are caused by Pluto's extremely elliptical and eccentric orbit, where it appears to move through the zodiac slower one century, then much faster the next. In the pragmatic time-frames of astrology, the two cycle lengths indicate that Uranus and Pluto move through quarterly phase changes (major transits) relative to each other in either 30 years or 50 years approximately. The dates of the past six Uranus-Pluto quarterly activations plus three yet to come are listed below. The first five happened during a slow phase of Pluto's cycle, so the quarterly transits from Uranus occurred closer together:

1847-1854 – Conjunction (new-phase)
1874-1880 – Waxing square (first-quarter)
1898-1905 – Opposition (full-phase)
1928-1937 – Waning Square (last-quarter)

1961-1970 – Conjunction (new-phase)
2007-2020 – Waxing Square (first-quarter)
2043-2052 – Opposition (full-phase)
2070-2077 – Waning Square (last-quarter)

2100-2107 – Conjunction (new-phase)

The four quarterly phases of the cycle (or any astrological cycle) can be understood through numerous metaphors. One way that works is gleaned from our real experience with Mother Nature's temperate-zone seasons in gardening or farming: Spring (new phase conjunction, when ground is prepared and seeds are planted), Summer (first-quarter waxing square, when we work in the fields to protect the growing plants while they approach maturity), Autumn (full phase opposition, when we harvest and reap whatever was sowed and reached fruition), and Winter (last-quarter waning square, when we disconnect from the previous nine months of effort, lie fallow, and gradually shift our attention toward anticipation of and preparation for the next spring-to-come).

Knowing which phase we are entering during any particular Uranus-Pluto quarterly transit is critical to understanding its meaning.

Finally, the symbolic implications of the zodiac signs through which Uranus and Pluto are moving during the transit activations should be considered, since these will further define the tone and arenas of dramatic change. Below are the signs in which the past six Uranus-Pluto quarterly transits took shape:

1847-1854 – Conjunction (at 29-30° of Aries)
1874-1880 – Waxing square (at 23-26° of Taurus and Leo)
1898-1905 – Opposition (at 16-20° of the Gemini-Sagittarius axis)
1928-1937 – Waning Square (at 21-25° of Aries and Cancer)

1961-1970 – Conjunction (at 17-18° of Virgo)
2007-2020 – Waxing Square (at 7-16° of Aries and Capricorn)
2043-2052 – Opposition (at 4-8° of Virgo and Pisces)
2070-2077 – Waning Square (at 6-9° of Capricorn and Aries)

2100-2107 – Conjunction (at 8° of Taurus)

During the conjunction (new phase/spring), the two planets conjoin in the same sign. During the waxing square (first-quarter phase/summer), the two planets are in perpendicular signs of the same mode (cardinal, fixed, or mutable). During the opposition (full phase/autumn), the planets are moving through opposite signs of the same mode that form a polar axis. Then, during the waning square (last-quarter phase/winter), the planets are again in perpendicular signs of the same mode.

The conjunction and opposition are unified in their zodiacal implications, either through a single sign or an axis of two. The waxing and waning squares are conflicted, linking two signs that are naturally antipathetic or mutually exclusive (meaning that they do not harmonize or play well together).

Actual History

The Uranus-Pluto transit that occurred at the beginning of the 20th century (1898-1905) was an opposition within the Gemini/Sagittarius axis.

The opposition indicates that revolutionary upheavals would be the harvest of developments that began back at the conjunction (in the mid-19th century, 1847-54, which was the gestation period for the second wave of the Industrial Revolution). The Gemini/Sagittarius sign axis implies that communication, knowledge, and travel were significant arenas of change. Many developments in knowledge or technical facility (Gemini) would group together (Sagittarius) to synthesize new and creative possibilities. Separate advances in mining, metallurgy, and chemistry converged to produce amazing results. In similar fashion, formerly isolated localities (towns and villages) were connected as longer-distance travel by rail became easier and more available to the general population. New industries built during the Age of the Robber Barons had paved the way for the onset of electricity as a common power source and the advent of the automobile, with its fossil-fuel-powered internal-combustion engine — both of which initially arose in collective use at the transition from the 19th century to the 20th. These are prime examples of the transit of Uranus in Sagittarius opposite Pluto in Gemini at work in the economic realm.

In politics, the 1850 Uranus-Pluto conjunction saw the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels, which birthed the idea that workers and common people might eventually band together and rise up to dethrone the historical holders of collective power: royalty, the wealthy, and owners of property. Over the next 50 years, this new philosophy spawned in the west numerous radical fringe groups labeled “anarchist” by the ruling elites. In China, however, the result was the Taiping Rebellion, which attempted to overthrow

China's feudal system and eventually cost 20 million lives. All such rebellious political movements failed during the latter half of the 19th century, but they were the precursors to successful revolutions that would substantially affect the 20th century, mainly in the Soviet Union and China.

Warfare changed. Both the American Civil War and the Chinese Taiping Rebellion were the first "modern" wars, largely because of technological advances in the killing power of weaponry. Both were sneak previews of the "Total War" that was to emerge full-blown in the 20th century, as warfare moved from conflicts between armies to wholesale slaughter of entire populations. The logical outcome of this was all-out Nuclear War, whose terrifying power threatens to annihilate humanity as a whole.

In science, Einstein's theory of relativity and Freud's postulation of the individual unconscious around the turn of the century represented revolutionary developments that were like volcanic eruptions, turning on their heads the disciplines of physics and psychology, but also effectively reinvigorating them with new life.

Then, 30 years later, during the 1930s, Uranus and Pluto activated again, this time in a waning square, meaning that we were seeing the last expression of something before it fell away, either through its forced destruction or via the revelation of its uselessness. Uranus was moving through Aries, perpendicular to Pluto in Cancer.

That decade witnessed the Arian rise of charismatic leaders (FDR in America) or willful dictators who were not averse to violent action (Hitler in Germany, Stalin in the Soviet Union). Accompanying that was a conspicuous nationalism, the collective manifestation of Cancer, whose most extreme expression occurred in Nazi Germany, with its racist emphasis on "purity of blood" that eventually took tragic shape as the Holocaust.

The 1930s also saw the Great Depression, a world-wide economic meltdown that was the most severe seen to that point. Unfettered capitalism, with its boom-and-bust cycles, had wrought its worst effects. During this period, an American experiment was begun in social/economic engineering called The New Deal, a primary tenet of which was to insure security (Cancer) for individuals (Aries).

In reality, World War II became inevitable after Hitler and the Nazis achieved power in 1933 — by 1937 it was a virtual certainty — even though that war played out during the first half of the 1940s. In effect, WWII tolled the death knell for all the old 19th-century Empires built on global colonialism. We see Uranus-Pluto's death-and-rebirth correspondence in the welling up of revolutionary movements toward national independence (Aries-Cancer) in former

colonies, while witnessing the sunset of previous “familial confederations,” most notably the British Empire.

Uranus-Pluto transits are not limited to the specific years during which they’re exact, nor even to the particular decades when they occur. Their collective consequences take many further decades to play out and are cumulative in their impact: 1850 leads to 1900 leads to 1930.

Recent History

A brand-new Uranus-Pluto cycle began in the 1960s. With the two outer planets conjoined in the sign Virgo (and simultaneously opposite Saturn in Pisces), that halcyon decade represented revolutionary spring-planting that would germinate seeds likely to produce profound results much later (as both consequences and repercussions). Uranus-Pluto always corresponds to a disruption of the status quo, but in the 1960s civil disobedience was aimed squarely at authorities who were seen as holding back the rising tide of humanism. The hard push for racial civil rights, generation-gap student rebellions, and protests against the Vietnam war all lobbied for a new order. Meanwhile, a burgeoning counter-culture ignored the assumptions and mores of the larger mainstream society to pursue greater freedom of self-expression, sexually and otherwise. In China, by contrast, the more authoritarian and repressive Cultural Revolution was led by the puritanical Red Guard youth.

Back in America, traditional technologies that had been discarded during the tumult of the Industrial Revolution were resuscitated, such as natural medicine/holistic healing and organic farming. New social sciences emerged: computers, ecology, and family systems.

Little of this was embraced by the culture-at-large, however. To the contrary, massive opposition and serious blowback were provoked. Racial equality was made the law of the land, but it wasn’t reflected in reality, any more than it had been following the abolition of chattel slavery after the Civil War a century earlier. Industrial agri-business and high-tech allopathic/pharmaceutical medicine tried to smother in their cribs the infants of holistic healing and organic farming. The rise (again) of fundamentalist Christianity was the antidote to “New Age spirituality.”

Civil disobedience so frightened the powers-that-be that renewed efforts were mounted in the 1970s to re-establish conventional law and order more forcefully than before. Money from Big Business poured into the development of politically-reactionary right-wing think-tanks, and the Ayn-Rand-laissez-faire-free-market ideologues filled K Street lobbying firms. Cultural conservatives took over Talk

Radio. These segments remain a disproportionately powerful force in American politics even today. A well-organized effort was created to smear the 1960s with the label of aberration, as if it had been nothing but a temporary pocket of adolescent anarchy. That effort was so successful that the “morning-in-America” Reagan 1980s looked more like the 1950s, except with an increasing number of mega-corporations, more funding for the military-industrial complex, and less superficial conformity in evidence, since the symbols of 1960s rebellion — such as long hair or bell bottoms — had been absorbed into mainstream society after having been effectively co-opted from symbols of rebellion into mere consumer styles. Overall, conspicuous consumption and amassing wealth became central memes in the mythology of American society.

Had the rebellious, humanitarian beginnings of the 1960s actually been squashed? No, they simply went underground. For decades they developed quietly, on the fringes, patiently biding their time. 65 million years ago, early species of small mammals had scurried through the forests scrambling for survival during the reign of the giant dinosaurs. When the dinosaurs suddenly died off, the mammals moved to center stage of the evolutionary limelight. In similar fashion, the humanitarian ideals of the 1960s have survived, working almost invisibly in the shadows while the dominant social institutions grew ever more gargantuan and monolithic, effectively taking over the country. When those mega-institutions falter, fail, or collapse, the maturing ideas of the 1960s will arise again to provide practical, working alternatives.

When will that be? At the waxing first-quarter square of Uranus and Pluto, which is the equivalent of summer, when seeds planted in the spring burst into full expression and leaf out. How will it occur? By people awakening. And why will that happen? Two reasons: First, because life as we know it is rapidly reaching the edges of breakdown and collapse. Second, because the status quo will reach a point of overshoot where our collective life erodes into forms so uncaring, so distorted, so grotesque, and so draconian that even many people who would prefer to remain passive will be forced to consider taking a stand.

When I write that “life as we know it” is breaking down, I’m referring largely to Pluto in Capricorn. Capricorn is about cultural authority and power as it is hierarchically structured in society by institutions — business, finance, government, and social structures (such as law, medicine, and education). When Pluto moves through Capricorn, economies tank, businesses fail, and governments are overthrown in tsunami-like waves. This death is now underway for the mega-institutions that dominate the American (and global) landscape.

We might think that with Uranus in Aries — an individual and aggressive sign of the zodiac — that the collapse of Capricornian social structures (business, government, and social institutions) would be caused by grass-roots rebellions

and revolts, by the people rising up to overthrow the rulers. Nothing could further from the truth. The collapse occurs largely from within. Organizations that early on may have contributed to the greater good gradually become self-absorbed and disconnected from the societies they purport to serve. They seek mainly to feather their own nests, and the public be damned. Also, when institutions grow gargantuan in size (as they have over our lifetimes in America and around the world), they lose their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Burdened by excessive bureaucracy and increasing dysfunction in their effects on the collective, they rot from within.

Pluto doesn't cause collapse; it merely indicates when the situation is ripe for implosion. Nor does Pluto cause death; it merely reveals the current arena where death-and-rebirth are likely to occur in the collective life of humanity.

Likewise, people who are satisfied do not rebel. No, Uranian rebellions take shape only *after* prolonged suffering or discontent. The American revolution in the 18th century did not happen simply because the Colonies wanted independence. The French revolution that followed was not simply about freedom, equality, and brotherhood (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*). No, those revolts occurred because people were profoundly dissatisfied by the treatment they were getting from the ruling elites in power. The French revolution was kicked off because there was no bread, and peasants rioted. In the 2010s, revolts will be caused by economic hardships, or by institutional or governmental disdain — not the other way round. Uranus simply tells us that triggers of pent-up dissatisfaction will be present.

Uranus and Pluto mark the 2010s as a period where institutional failures cause breakdowns in the system that are accompanied by an increasing loss of faith and trust in authority in general and large institutions in particular. As the failures worsen and the lives of myriad individuals are adversely affected (without any similar effect on the ruling elites), obedience falters and cracks.

The first factor of radical change — actual collapse — appears in another recent event: the City of Detroit declaring bankruptcy. Among major American cities, Detroit is the logical first domino to fall, but others will follow. The financial shenanigans of the past 30 years have bankrupted America, a fact that was revealed initially in 2008, with the sudden downfall of the big investment banks, when their ponzi schemes went sour and backfired. The response of the ruling elites was predictable. The huge banks were "too big to fail," so they were bailed out. Ever since 2008, the Federal Reserve has run the printing presses 24/7, pumping "fiat dollars" (read: worthless money) into the coffers of the bankers and the ultra-wealthy 1% to maintain the illusion that our economy can weather this storm. Although we may collectively limp along for quite awhile to come, business-as-usual is becoming more and more challenging to maintain. As the

status quo falters and breakdowns spread, more people will be negatively impacted by increasingly difficult financial/economic circumstances.

Add to these examples another couple hundred events of equal or greater importance that will occur over the next year or two, and we have a formula for Americans getting hit with a 50,000-volt economic cattle prod. Some people will suffer in silence, but more voices will be raised in louder dissent. This will disturb the ruling elites sufficiently that they will strike back the only way they know how — by clamping down ever harder in their efforts to transfer all remaining wealth to the ultra-rich 1%, which will eventually rouse from their passive slumber another segment of the 99%. In the latter years of this decade, we could see our country torn by revolt — either quietly, through subtle forms of mostly invisible civil disobedience, or loudly, in messy and chaotic pockets of open rebellion that crisscross boundaries of geography and demographics to foment revolutionary movements. Occupy Wall Street and The Tea Party are precursors to such organized resistance.

The second factor of revolutionary upheaval — taking a stand — is illustrated by an ongoing series of newsworthy events that give any reasonable person cause for alarm. Within a single month, the Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional (and unnecessary) the heart of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was followed by the Zimmerman murder trial, which highlighted America's unresolved racial problems, and then by the U.S. Army's harsh judgment against Bradley Manning for revealing the horrors of war. All these indicate boldly how our train is going off the rails. The ongoing revelations concerning invasions of Americans' privacy through communications data-collection by the national security apparatus that were made public by whistle-blower Edward Snowden (both Snowden and Manning perfectly reflect Uranus in Aries challenging Pluto in Capricorn) are just the tip of an iceberg more massive — and already in place — than anyone could have imagined. Conspiracy theorists may well have the last laugh on that one.

The ruling elites can be expected to use every means at their disposal to maintain cohesion, order, and mass passivity, including war. Don't be surprised if America chooses armed conflict with Iran, North Korea, or some other nation that challenges our position as the preeminent power in the world. Empires do not go gladly into the sunset, and the one resource America has in abundance to try to maintain its global dominance is military power. Further down the road, over the coming decades, lurks the distinct possibility of wars over natural resources: You have what we need, so we're taking it by force.

If you believe that such developments cannot occur in America simply because they haven't in your lifetime, then you have not studied history. Similarly, if you believe that everything will be OK because "the economy is recovering," then

you've drunk the kool-aid of the mainstream media's propaganda hologram. The economy is not "recovering."

But still, surely I'm exaggerating, right? Perhaps. But maybe not.

Consider what would happen if the dollar were to collapse or be overthrown as the world's reserve currency. This hollowing out of American power and influence is already underway and is no longer a question of *if*, but only of *when*. Russia and China are busily preparing now for that eventuality, and America itself is setting up that sorry end by pumping billions of dollars of imaginary money into the failing economy. It doesn't really make much difference how soon the dollar goes down — in 2016, 2018, or 2021 — nor whether it's all at once or in slow motion. Whenever the final result settles in, hundreds of millions of Americans will be left in the lurch, wondering not only how they're going to pay the mortgage, but how they'll put food on the table the following week.

And this is only one of a whole gaggle of possible, even likely triggers (about which I've written at length in previous essays) that could change the game almost literally overnight. Even if it's not overnight, however — even if the cascade of coalescing triggers compounds slowly rather than suddenly — the predictable reality is that the great bulk of Americans will eventually discover (as many already have) that the dream of security has evaporated, and with it the illusion of certainty, leaving no dependable institutions to guarantee safety and well-being for themselves and their loved ones.

What will people do? In America and around the world, people will do what they have always done during times of severe, extended crisis: They will adapt, however they can and in whatever ways prove necessary for survival. Will this mean a violent confrontation between regular citizens and the social, political, and economic institutions that have long since stopped serving them? In pockets, perhaps, or as isolated events. I remain dubious, however, about any unified uprising that will take the shape of a general rebellion to overthrow the government.

Is it possible that martial law will be imposed, with forced lockdown and even violent repression? I suppose so, but I'm not anticipating that, except in sporadic instances because of possible outbursts in large urban centers, and then only temporarily. I consider it more likely that the loss of public faith and trust in traditional institutions will be sufficiently broad and deep that the ability of these authorities to exert repressive control over the population will be seriously diminished. Oh, they'll try, of course, in all the subtle and indirect ways they already use, and maybe even overtly with the police and military, but I remain unconvinced of the ability of the government to impose order absent the consent of the population.

As more and more people realize and face the fact that they are on their own and must fend for themselves, we may see a re-emergence of what might appear similar to the communal movements of the 1960s. The differences between then and now will be profound, however. In the 1960s, communes were largely youthful experiments in alternative culture based on naïve idealism. In the 2020s, these bandings together will be practical rather than experimental, based on necessity rather than idealism. Alliances will not be age-related — the generational polarity of the 1960s will not repeat. Instead, millions of people of all ages will find a common purpose in helping each other through local reorganization by sharing and resuscitating commerce to keep alive the exchange of goods and services required for survival.

If events unfold roughly as I've written here, how well do I think we'll do? I don't know. First off, events may not unfold according to my vision, and even if they do, there's no telling from here about any long-term results, because we don't know how the various triggers — some of which are quite unpleasant to consider, such as war or pestilence — might cascade, nor the effectiveness of whatever responses people put in place. I'm not one to predict mass die-off, but the suffering of the coming decades could be widespread, especially since whatever is coming will tend to bring out both the best and worst in human nature.

I'd like to vote for the possibility — however uncertain — that what we create could be at least somewhat better (i.e., more reality-based, humane, cooperative, and life-affirming) than what we currently have. The next Uranus-Pluto alignment — an opposition in the 2040s that will symbolize the harvest of humanity's evolution since the 1960s — will show us how well we did.