

# The Astrological Road Ahead

by Bill Herbst

*Version 1.4 (11 September 2015)*

*© 2015 by the author, all rights reserved*

Uranus — currently retrograde at 19° 46' Aries — is now past its first-quarter square to Pluto — also retrograde at 13° 02' Capricorn. The perpendicular arc between these two significant outer bodies of the solar system was historic in having seven exact passes over nearly three years (the first pass was on June 24th, 2012, with the final, seventh pass occurring on March 16th, 2015). Such a rare event — a square with seven passes — had not occurred between these two orbiting bodies for more than 500 years, the last time being the seven-pass first-quarter square that occurred when Uranus and Pluto were in Aquarius and Scorpio respectively, from April 1496 through January 1500, a time period that closely coincided with the entry into the western hemisphere of the vanguard of European conquerors. That was followed by the subsequent European colonization that resulted in the largest and longest genocide of native populations in recorded history and paved the way for the “modern industrial civilization” we live in today, with all its benefits and ills. Since the similar Uranus-Pluto transit of the 2010s is now technically waning, what does the astrological skyscape of outer-planet cycles look like for the remaining years of the decade?

Well, just because the transit is now separating does not mean that it's “finished.” Not by a long shot. As a potent factor in the astrological archetype field that is symbolically relevant to humanity, the implications of the current Uranus-Pluto alignment still have a long way to go.

What I'm referring to as the “symbolic archetype field” is comprised at any given time by active transits among the ten cycles that occur between the outermost five major bodies of the solar system — Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Mundane or Geopolitical Astrology is typically thought of as the astrology of nations, so I use a different term to categorize the study of the ten outer-planet cycles. I call it “Civilizational Astrology” for the light it sheds on the evolution of collective humanity.

These ten astrological cycles are quite different from the 35 cycles of the inner planets, including the Sun and our Moon, whose faster orbits, quicker and more frequent passages through zodiacal signs, and shorter transits form the basis of most day-to-day forecasting astrology (which is something I neither study nor write about). Inner planet alignments are measured usually in hours or days, rather than the weeks, months, or years of outer-planet transits. That's part of what draws me to study outer planet cycles. They're slow and stately, stretching out over decades and even centuries, highlighting the evolving energies that emerge somehow into the collective consciousness and group behavior of human beings that shape societies and cultures. The fact that we don't know the “true” source or mechanism of these energies, however, doesn't invalidate the usefulness of the astrological system in illuminating them.

## The Fallacy of Cause-and-Effect in Astrology

It seems patently obvious that the planets, either alone or in tandem, do not actually "cause" the archetypal energies. Human beings, however, are still quite enthralled by simplistic cause-and-effect explanations, in part because our verbal and written languages encourage that manner of expression and thought. Given the linear structure of language — subjects, verbs, and objects — communicating in non-causal terms is less convenient and more challenging. As a result, many astrologers speak and write as if Uranus and Pluto, for instance, literally cause their perceived effects of radical change and revolutionary upheaval in group consciousness and behavior. However difficult it may be to prevent that error, acknowledging that planets and other bodies used in astrology are not causal factors is important to emphasize and bear in mind. The planets act as messengers for something much more mysterious.

All we can assert with certainty is that astrologers find correspondences between human experience — both inwardly as psychological experiences and outwardly as visible behaviors and objective events — and the symbolic archetypes that astrology has assigned to each planet, particularly as those planets operate in pairs. These correspondences are sometimes strikingly obvious, while other times subtle or veiled.

Some people are most impressed by the boldest correspondences as a validation of astrology. For instance, the nine-month "Reign of Terror" within the French Revolution, during which as many as 50,000 French citizens were deemed "counterrevolutionary" by Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety, then arrested and beheaded by guillotine, began in September 1793 and ended in July 1794 with the arrest and beheading of Robespierre himself. This chaotic and violent period of class warfare synchronized almost precisely with the opposition of Uranus and Pluto on the Leo/Aquarius axis that was exact for 15 months, from January 1793 through March 1794. Two centuries later, the Uranus-Pluto conjunction in Virgo opposite Saturn in Pisces during 1965-1966 synchronized just as closely with the beginnings of Mao's Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution in China and the rise of the Red Guards, millions of young Chinese zealots who became Mao's enforcers.

In both cases, the symbolic implications of the Uranus-Pluto transits corresponded to the actual events with uncanny accuracy in both timing and content. Oppositions and conjunctions fuse together the two astrological symbols, so that the Uranian impulse toward sudden and revolutionary change was combined with the Plutonian tendency toward radical, ruthless, and extreme use of power. Even further, while both events were social disruptions based on the intention of purging "counter-revolutionaries," the demographics were different, as predicted by the astrology.

Targets during the French revolution were royalists, the wealthy, and their supporters, which is reflected by the Uranus-Pluto transit taking shape on the Leo/Aquarius axis. By contrast, the Cultural Revolution in China played out more as an age-specific conflict between "proper" youth, who became the foot soldiers of the purge, and "bourgeois" older generations, which were targeted for public censure and humiliation. This befits the Virgo/Pisces axis of the Uranus-Pluto opposite Saturn alignment. This generational conflict emerged globally, around the world, as counter-cultural youth movements. "Never trust anyone over 30."

Such clear historical examples are one reason that the Uranus-Pluto cycle is given (and deserves) such weight and importance in the pantheon of astrological cycles. Another is that, as astrological symbols, Uranus and Pluto don't give a damn about the niceties of

social propriety. Although Pluto normally conducts its manipulative and sometimes nefarious activities under a veil of secrecy, when fused with (or challenged by) Uranus, Pluto steps out of the shadows and does its transformative work in the open.

However bold the strikingly accurate historical correspondences cited above may be, I am equally impressed by astrology's ability to reveal correspondences in character and experience that are subtly nuanced and might otherwise go unnoticed. My appreciation for astrology's ability to "make the invisible visible" has grown out of my 44 years as a working astrologer in private practice, during which I've done 12,000 sessions with individuals who've shared with me the outer events and inner awareness of their personal journeys through life. Even now, I still marvel that astrology "works" at all. While the relationship between the Moon's gravity and oceanic tides is sensible to me, how — and why — astrology should be able to reveal the core meanings of an individual life is beyond my comprehension and remains a tantalizing enigma.

While astrologers may employ metaphors to explain how these correspondences work — synchronicity, "as above, so below," etc. — we don't truly comprehend the underlying mechanisms. We know only that the alignments of heavenly bodies in their shared cycles and mandala-like patterns do indeed seem to correlate reasonably well (and sometimes amazingly accurately) with individuals' experience in their personal lives, and also with the shifting attitudes and changing beliefs embraced by collective humanity as civilization moves through time. Reality shows us that much, but remains secretive about the hows and whys that underlie manifestation.

## **How Precise Should We Be? — Allowable Orbs**

In the study of collective humanity through outer-planet cycles, we can easily track and accurately identify when the astronomical bodies that make up these cycles arrive at significant angular relationships. But we've learned that the correspondences of real-life developments and events associated with these activations of the ten outer-planet cycles usually tend *not* to occur at the precise moment of the angular alignments. Instead, the correspondences cluster *around* the period of angular precision, sometimes before, but more typically after. So, astrologers try to figure out how far off the angular relationship can be, yet still remain an effective predictor of possible changes in human society. We assign "allowable orbs" — adding a certain number of degrees on each side of the exact angle — to extend the time frame of presumed correspondence.

In other words, if we insist on an astrological system that is too precise, it fails to correspond to reality. We need to build in a certain amount of leeway to make the system more flexible. For instance, a "square" in astrology represents perpendicularity or a 90° angular relationship between two bodies or points of symbolic significance. How far off can the angle be, yet still qualify as an effective square? 89°? 93°? 82°? We apply different allowable orbs depending on what we're looking at in our search for correspondences.

With the personal transits in our individual lives that occur when moving bodies form significant geometric/angular relationships to fixed symbolic points in our natal charts — which is a technique that comprises a significant part of my astrological work in sessions with individual clients — the orb allowed is generally very tight, usually 1° (some astrologers extend that to 2 or 3°, but 1° is standard). That means that a personal transit is considered "active" or "effective" over the time period from when the moving planet arrives within 1° in the ecliptic of first making an exact aspect with the natal

position to the point in time when it moves beyond 1° past the aspect after the final exact (or “partile”) alignment.

In mundane cycles that apply to collective humanity and are thus relevant for all of us together, the angular relationships we track occur between two moving bodies in the heavens, rather than one moving body revolving around a fixed point. The major transits within those collective cycles seem to require much greater allowable orbs. This is especially true of the ten outer planet cycles. In assessing the active or effective period of transits in those cycles, an orb of 10° is typically allowed (and some astrologers use an even larger orb of 15° for certain angles).

If we apply 10° orbs to the Uranus-Pluto first-quarter square, then the “effective” period of the transit increases dramatically. The not-quite three years from first exact pass to last (June 2012 through March 2015) is extended to almost 13 years (May 2007 through March 2020), an addition of five years on either side of the precise alignment. The study of history that other astrologers and I have undertaken, where we note relevant correspondences between real events and/or developments in civilization and the symbolic implications of a given outer-planet transit, confirms the necessity and wisdom of using wider and more extended orbs. [NOTE: In this Commentary, I’ve used 10° orbs for major transits and quarterly phases and 5° orbs for minor transits and secondary phases.]

## Stages of Correspondence

In the case of the Uranus-Pluto transit square, the period of the initial five years (2007 to 2012) represented the time of “setting up the game board.” In the classic Parker Brothers game, *Monopoly*, this would mean choosing the players’ pieces (top hat, iron, race car, cannon, shoe, thimble, etc.), doling out the money (each player gets \$1,500 to start — two \$500, \$100, and \$50 bills, six \$20 bills, and five \$10, \$5, and \$1 bills), and shuffling the Chance and Community Chest cards. All that is “set-up” and precedes the first roll of the dice.

The period of precise mathematical alignment (mid-2012 to early-2015) then represents the “cooking” phase, where the symbolism “heats up” to critical mass.

Taken together, these two periods (2007 to 2015) comprise getting the Uranus-Pluto show on the road, so to speak. Over that eight years, we have seen many different events and developments in civilization that correlate well with the emerging Uranus-Pluto symbolism. Below is a short and partial list that offers some characteristic examples:

- *the financial meltdown of the Big Banks in 2008*
- *the more current and unresolved financial crisis in Greece and the EU*
- *concerns in America over National Security data-collection and invasions of privacy, along with the dramatic increase in systematic computer hacking around the world*
- *the significant rise of social movements that spur individuals to activism; some movements are truly grass-roots, while others are secretly funded, but both types fall within Uranus-Pluto symbolism and are increasing in numbers and impact*
- *the greatest wealth disparity ever in America and globally, more extreme even than in the era of the Robber Barons during the late-19th century*
- *many scandals and revelations of corruption that have adversely affected major institutions (too numerous to list)*

- *the worsening situation of refugee immigration from North Africa and the Middle East into Europe, as one symptom of global population instability*
- *droughts, floods, melting ice caps, and other serious indications of increasing volatility and deepening disruption of global climate patterns*

These and all the other related events of the past eight years should be considered precursors, however, the equivalent of “setting up the Uranus-Pluto game board” for more dramatic, important, or far-reaching developments that are likely to occur in the second half of the decade, from 2016 to 2020. What’s happened so far is only the falling of the initial dominoes in the chain. We can expect much more over the coming 4-5 years, which will then in turn set the stage for and define the terms of the serious work humans will face in the 2020s and beyond if we are to continue evolving as a species.

So, in the current 138-year Uranus-Pluto cycle that began in 1965, their perpendicular transit in the 2010s that kicks off the First-Quarter Phase (which will continue until August 2030, when the Gibbous Phase begins) remains first on my list of meaningful outer-planet events for the years ahead. The Uranus-Pluto alignment is far and away the most important astrological factor for the entire decade of the 2010s, head and shoulders above all the other outer-planet cycle activations.

## **Other Outer-Planet Alignments from Mid-Decade on**

Below are the rest of the outer-planet alignments that will occur from mid-2015 through 2017 (and, in one case, beyond). None of these is profoundly significant on its own, but each will add its particular symbolic implications to the archetype mix in the zeitgeist, altering the shape of the core Uranus-Pluto symbolism that indicates revolutions, breakdowns, and upheavals.

### **Jupiter square Saturn** (♃ □ ♄)

effective period: June 2015–July 2016

three exact passes: 3 Aug 2015, 23 March 2016, 26 May 2016

(entering the Last Quarter Phase)

Jupiter and Saturn have a 20-year cycle, so the quarterly phases change roughly every five years. In general, this planetary tandem charts the unfolding of economics in society, especially through the boom-bust swings of expansion and contraction in commerce. The current Jupiter-Saturn cycle began late in the sign Taurus as the new century began in 2000, implying the necessity of a grounded and pragmatic approach to business. Nothing could have been further from the way finance and commerce were conducted at that point, so the symbolism of the cycle (representing reality) has been in conflict with our approach ever since. The result has been severe economic contraction, but without a corresponding change in our fantasy-based, anything-goes approach.

The Last Quarter phase offers us the possibility of realizing the error of our ways and gradually trying out different approaches to make amends. Or we can continue to ignore reality and see where that takes us. We’ll have roughly five years until the next Jupiter-Saturn cycle begins in 2020. If we exercise moderate common sense in the interim, the 2020s can lead us out of the wilderness. If we continue the same business practices and monetary policies we’ve pursued so far in this century, the 2020s will represent a very rude awakening. Odds don’t seem good that we are ready to change.

**Jupiter sesquiquadrate Pluto** (♃ ♇ ♅)

effective period: July–Aug 2015

one exact pass: 4 Aug 2015

entering the Disseminating Phase

**Saturn semisquare Pluto** (♄ ♇ ♅)

effective period: Oct 2014–Sept 2015

three exact passes: 27 Nov 2014, 20 June 2015, 13 Aug 2015

entering the Balsamic Phase

The Jupiter-Pluto cycle represents an expanded use of power, usually accompanied by an attitude of philosophical justification through moral certainty. The dark side of this cycle is the risk of misplaced moral superiority. Although the transit is brief, the summer of 2015 has already revealed a significant expansion in the use of force by those in positions of authority or power. The recent approval of drone warfare and the licensing of parts of the Arctic Ocean to Shell oil for offshore exploration and drilling are prime examples, as is Putin's increasingly bellicose stance in Russia.

The Saturn-Pluto cycle is also about the application of power. But where Jupiter-Pluto is righteous (or self-righteous), Saturn-Pluto is pragmatic, blunt, and usually hard-edged. Since the transits occur together, they incline toward governments making decisions on many levels — financial and military primary among them — that involve policies of “clamping down” or “taking no prisoners.” The austerity situation in Greece over the past months is a telling example of forced restraint, as are the egregious public pronouncements of presidential candidate Donald Trump.

**Jupiter waning sesquiquadrate Uranus** (♃ ♅ ♁)

effective period: Aug–Sept 2015

one exact pass: 3 Sept 2015

entering the Gibbous Phase

**Saturn waxing sesquiquadrate Uranus** (♄ ♅ ♁)

effective period: Nov 2014–Nov 2015

three exact passes: 3 Dec 2014, 4 May 2015, 22 Oct 2015

entering the Disseminating Phase

Both of these cycles are about awakening from unconsciousness — one through opportunity and optimism (i.e., new perspectives), the other through the forced difficulty of harsher circumstances. In this pair, the pressure of the Saturn transit unfolds over a one-year period, inside which is the much shorter opportunity of the Jupiter transit that is now waning. Greater clarity is likely to be significant on the part of individuals, but that is juxtaposed against continued resistance from institutions.

### **Jupiter opposite Neptune** (♃ ♂ ♆)

effective period: Aug–Nov 2015  
one exact pass: 17 Sept 2015  
entering the Full Phase

### **Saturn square Neptune** (♄ □ ♆)

effective period: Nov 2014–Dec 2016  
three exact passes: 26 Nov 2015, 18 June 2016, 10 Sept 2016  
entering the Last Quarter Phase

These two cycles address the divide between faith and optimism on the one hand, and skepticism and pessimism on the other. As with the Jupiter and Saturn cycles to Uranus, their transits with Neptune are timed so that the Saturnian period of pessimism is much longer — more than two years. Jovian optimism for a more ideal future shines through for only a single season in the middle of the longer period. Inspiration is an element of both cycles, but the question is whether the visions can be grounded in practical reality or, instead, remain only illusions of goodness without actually improving anything. In general, 2015-2016 could be characterized as a time of unfounded hopes and ultimate disappointments in many collective arenas.

The two paired alignments juxtapose into a three-planet right-triangle configuration called a T-square for about a year, from August 2015 through July 2016. I'll discuss that in the *Overview* section at the end of the Commentary.

### **Jupiter square Pluto** (♃ □ ♇)

effective period: Oct 2016–Sept 2017  
three exact passes: 24 Nov 2016, 30 March 2017, 4 Aug 2017  
entering the Last Quarter Phase

The phase change into the Last Quarter of the Jupiter-Pluto cycle, starting in autumn of 2016 and continuing for a year through summer of 2017, is likely to correspond to increased recognition of the need for change in addressing various collective problems and concerns. The existing status quo begins to give way to the understanding that something must be done, and quickly. Those in power will begin to get on board with the idea of reform. The challenge here lies in making the changes meaningful by revising the rules rather than merely reshuffling the pieces on the game board. If the public becomes vulnerable to seduction by a political demagogue, this is the most likely time, although voices of ethical concern may be heard above the din. Discerning true and mature leadership from huckstering pied pipers becomes a serious issue.

### **Jupiter opposite Uranus** (♃ ♂ ♅)

effective period: Nov 2016–Nov 2017  
three exact passes: 26 Dec 2016, 3 March 2017, 28 Sept 2017  
entering the Full Phase

The halfway point in the Jupiter-Uranus cycle implies a culmination in the attitude that we can (and should) change life for the better. Of all the various outer-planet cycles active during the upcoming years, this one is the most optimistic, in that fear of change is replaced by enthusiasm for trying new policies. Especially in institutions, that could represent a tipping point away from stubborn resistance toward greater willingness to move forward. The downside of the transit is a corresponding increase in reactionary radicalism, i.e., philosophical or religious extremists with dogmatic views of the world and how it should be. This is a much longer and more important transit than the earlier

Jupiter-Uranus sesquiquadrate in 2015 and is likely to correspond to a powerful increase in social activism in 2017 at all levels: individual, grass-roots, institutional, and among the leadership class. In the struggle (square) between Uranus and Pluto, Jupiter's sense of entitlement and permission will give Uranus the edge, at least for the year 2017. Around the world, that may mean more rebellion and challenges to authority.

### **Uranus semisquare Neptune** (♅ ∟ ♆)

effective period: June 2016–April 2021

five exact passes: 11 Aug 2017, 7 Oct 2017, 16 June 2018, 15 Dec 2018, 2 May 2019

entering the Crescent Phase

This is the "magical technology" cycle. The question is: Can the roughly 200-year drunken party of the Industrial Age, with its constant theme of technological innovation, continue via further discovery and synthesis of new, "cleaner," and more sustainable technologies, or will the end of cheap, easily accessible fossil fuels (i.e., coal, oil, and natural gas) and the cumulative environmental damage they produced signal the demise of civilization as we have come to know it? The current Uranus-Neptune cycle began at the end of the 1980s, and the New Phase of that cycle has seen the development and implementation (at a dizzying pace) of the Internet, smart cell phones, and flat-screen displays for everything from televisions and computers to automobiles and sports stadiums.

This astonishing transformation has occurred with remarkable speed. We now regard the accelerating pace of technological innovation as "normal," as if it were a given and a simple fact of life. It is not, however. No one is alive today who remembers from personal experience what life was like for most human beings as recently as the early-19th century, a mere two centuries ago, which was largely the same as life had been throughout the entire span of recorded history:

- *travel was limited to the speed of a horse or sailing ship*
- *the majority of people lived their entire lives without venturing more than 50 miles from home, which was probably where they were born, and where they died*
- *night was truly dark, illuminated only by candles or oil lamps*
- *personal communication was by letters only, and a single letter could take months or even years to be delivered*
- *the majority of jobs, and especially farming, were accomplished primarily by manual labor*

All that changed dramatically, and for many reasons, but the primary agent responsible for the transformation was our discovery of cheap, plentiful, and easily accessible fossil fuels. Basically, the bonanza of oil allowed us to become who and what we are today.

As long as human beings have been around, we have dreamed of escape from the back-breaking labors of life. Like all fantasies, however, the reality may not live up to the dream. Oscar Wilde stated the problem plainly: *"There are only two tragedies in life: One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it."* For the past two centuries, we have been getting what we wanted, and though it has been both wonderful and terrible, we aren't likely to give it up willingly.

Uranus and Neptune have a cycle whose average length is 172 years. The previous cycle that began from 1816–1827 corresponded to the Industrial Revolution. The current cycle that began from 1988–1999 is about the Technological Revolution. We are just now

finishing up the first of the eight 45° phases of that cycle, the New Phase. Next year we will begin to enter the second phase, called Crescent.

The New Phase of every astrological cycle is a time of birthing something new and is characterized by passion, compulsivity, and the urgent drive to manifest whatever the cycle is about in any form that can be manifested. The Crescent Phase is the inevitable reaction, where everything we have ignored in our headlong rush to create something new rises up to slow us down and make us think about the wisdom of maintaining such exhilarating but unconscious momentum. Consequences and repercussions make their first appearance as critical factors to consider.

With the entry into the Crescent Phase, the Uranus-Neptune cycle indicates that, where technology is concerned, we will confront doubts and inner demons. The 2020s will likely be a difficult time for the techno-dreamers. Can the ironies and paradoxes of technology's double-edged swords be sufficiently vanquished to keep alive the whole panoply of human techno-fantasies that have recently enjoyed free and unfettered reign?

For instance, can the power unleashed by technology be used wisely by a species still groping through its emotional and spiritual adolescence? Or will that power destroy us? Can technology save us from our own worst impulses? Should we even want it to? Or will the 21st century witness a "course correction" in the evolution of civilization through the failure of technology due to economic collapse, followed by the terrible die-off of a large percentage of the human population, with the survivors picking up the pieces by returning to pre-industrial/pre-technological lifestyles?

A particularly worrisome example of technological concern is the proliferation of weaponry, particularly the stocks of existing nuclear warheads in the world. While we have managed to avoid disaster for the past 70 years by keeping that terrible genie in the bottle, will our luck hold out over the rest of the century? And beyond nuclear weapons, what about other incidents such as the meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear power plant after the Japanese earthquake and tsunami? The Crescent Phase of the Uranus-Neptune cycle could be a time where we are sorely tested about the wisdom of what we've already created.

Each subsequent phase of the cycle, from the Crescent starting in 2016, through the First-Quarter beginning in 2033, to the Full Phase that kicks off in 2073, will provide pieces of the ultimate answer. Considered from the standpoint of astrology, the jury leaves the courtroom in 2016 and begins deliberations that will take the remainder of the century before a dependable judgment can be rendered.

Although the transit itself is minor, I regard the phase change of the Uranus-Neptune cycle in the final years of this decade as very significant. This is the only cycle that challenges the primacy of the Uranus-Pluto transits in considering the future of civilization over the 21st century.

I don't expect the bulk of correspondences from this transit to manifest strongly over the next 2-3 years. My best guess is that the issues that will arise during the Crescent Phase are probably not particularly relevant to the 2010s and are likely to emerge more fully in the 2020s. We are, however, moving toward the beginning of a thousand important questions that have, until now, been mostly hypothetical. In the decades to come, those questions will become quite real.

## Overview

The three most important astrological alignments now and over the coming 2-3 years, listed in order of priority and potency, are:

- **Uranus in Aries first-quarter square to Pluto in Capricorn**

mid-2007 to early-2020

Uranus and Pluto, and the square between them, provide the core astrological archetypes for the 2010s; every other alignment functions as a modifier to this basic conflict and challenge

- **a three-planet alignment involving Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune**

with Jupiter in Leo/Virgo, Saturn in Scorpio/Sagittarius, and Neptune in Pisces

The three individual transits are:

- Jupiter last-quarter square Saturn, mid-2015 through mid-2016
  - Jupiter opposite Neptune, mid-2015
  - Saturn last-quarter square to Neptune, late-2014 through late-2016
- a T-square forms with Jupiter and Neptune as the base and Saturn at the apex during Aug–Oct 2015, then again in March–July 2016; although Jupiter has only a single exact pass opposite Neptune in Sept 2015, I regard the entire period of mid-2015 through mid-2016 as the effective period for the T-square

The arena of politics in the presidential race provides a perfect example of the T-square in operation. The gaggle of Republican candidates are full of high ideals (Jupiter-Neptune) and angry resentments (Saturn-Neptune). Contrast that with the Democrats, where Bernie Sanders is the positive idealist (Jupiter-Neptune), while front-runner Hillary Clinton is plagued by scandals that threaten to erupt (Saturn-Neptune) around her emails and anything else Republicans can find to smear her. The field of candidates is likely to be winnowed down by further scandals over the next nine months (Saturn-Neptune). Jupiter will have moved on by the time of the election in November 2016, leaving Saturn and Neptune to imply that confusing global or domestic events may cast shadows of fear or doubt over either the process of the election or its outcome.

- **Jupiter in Libra opposite Uranus in Aries**

late-2016 through late-2017

This transit implies the possibility of a breakthrough in the Uranus-Pluto conflict between status-quo business-as-usual (Pluto) and the many alarming developments that suggest a need to change how human beings conduct our affairs in society and on the planet (Uranus). Jupiter opposite Uranus indicates a readiness to challenge the unjust use of power, whether in making war, doing business, or structuring society. Whether this upwelling of rebellion in seeking justice produces anything good remains to be seen, but 2017 should be an interesting year.

In general, the portrait painted by the matrix of active outer-planet transits and phase changes over the next 2-3 years appears to me to indicate a steady increase in public concern about the future. More grass-roots movements toward various dimensions of social justice may gain traction and increased support among the populace, but institutions will continue to resist reforms, at least for awhile, probably through 2016.

Thus, the breakdown of trust in institutional authority, already far along, will likely deepen over the coming year. Relying on authoritative leadership, especially the charismatic variety, is probably a dicey proposition at best. Self-reliance and local organizing are likely to be more effective solutions.

Despite the longstanding resistance to change by hidebound institutions whose interest in feathering their own nests competes with and often outweighs their charters to serve the public welfare, the time is coming where authorities, executives, and bureaucratic managers who formulate policy will come around to the view that forceful change and dramatic action are necessary, at first grudgingly, but later with an enthusiasm that will probably border on self-righteous fervor. The gridlock that seemed pervasive over the initial half of this decade is likely to be transformed within 2-3 years into an increasingly urgent application of power, for better or worse.

Economic recovery is not around the corner, nor anywhere in sight. These are times of economic contraction, and the astrology of this decade and beyond reinforces that perception.

Don't look for any dismantling of the National Security apparatus here in America or elsewhere, for the technological means of eliminating privacy are already advanced, in place, and growing rapidly in government and commerce. Whatever the technocrats can do, they will. They have the means as well as the money, and they are not concerned with moral niceties. The best hope in that arena is for continued whistle-blowing to bring such activities out of the secretive shadows and into the light of day. At the very heart of the Uranus-Pluto symbolism is the necessity for public activism in demanding that society be run for the good of the many rather than the benefit of the few. This is a daunting challenge, but the time is coming when we will see whether it is possible.

With the difficult Jupiter-Saturn square setting a secondary tone to the more basic Uranus-Pluto archetype, the likelihood is that the policies undertaken toward reform will probably not be visionary or forward-looking. Instead, protocols will be put in place based on expediency and the intention to address existing issues in the easiest ways. In this case, however, "easy" is unlikely to equal "wise."

I'm fond of pointing out that astrology itself is neutral, since every astrological symbol or configuration is two-sided and contains possible correspondences in real life that we'd like and others we wouldn't. Any good/bad judgments made about a certain time frame or situation must be informed by factors beyond pure astrology. We have to bring our highest knowledge and clearest consciousness to the task in order to avoid unintentionally projecting our own hopes or fears onto the symbols. As a result, your assessment of what lies ahead may differ from mine. This is, however, my best take on the astrology of what's coming from my current perspectives on the world.