
THE HERBST NEWSLETTER

astrological-cultural-spiritual-political views & opinions

--- Thoughts, dates, and reminders about our lives as members of the craziest species on this lovely planet. Like a message in a bottle washing up on the sandy shores of consciousness ---

Issue #120 – March 2010

Dear friends,

In previous commentaries, I have written about striking parallels between the 1930s and 2010s. This month I will try to explain more fully how the astrological patterns from each decade reflect similarities and contrasts.

--Bill Herbst

Commentary: **The 1930s and 2010s: Great Depressions**

1930s – Uranus square Pluto

alignment: last-quarter square (3/4 through a 115-year cycle that began in 1850)

symbolic seasonal correspondence: winter

zodiacal positions: Uranus in **Aries** 90° behind Pluto in **Cancer**

strength & duration: 5 exact passes from Apr 1932 to Jan 1934

affected zodiacal degrees: 21-25° cardinal

total effective period (10° orbs): Apr 1928 to Jan 1937 – 9 years

2010s – Uranus square Pluto

alignment: first-quarter square (1/4 through a 139-year cycle that began in 1965)

symbolic seasonal correspondence: summer

zodiacal positions: Uranus in **Aries** 90° ahead of Pluto in **Capricorn**

strength & duration: 7 exact passes from Jun 2012 to Mar 2015

affected zodiacal degrees: 7-16° cardinal

total effective period (10° orbs): May 2007 to Mar 2020 – 13 years

Though a majority of the people who witnessed the entire decade of the 1930s has now “left the building,” so to speak (think Elvis), the record of still and moving images that remain from photographs, newsreels, and movies forms an iconic scrapbook of human experience during

that time, especially in America, where the decade was well-documented. A few of those images that immediately come to mind include:

- *Dorothea Lange's Migrant Mother photograph of a hardscrabble farm woman whose face looks haggard and careworn as she is clutched by her two small children*
- *newsreel footage of the Oklahoma Dust Bowl's wind-whipped, abandoned homestead farms, complete with ramshackle, deserted farmhouses and ruined barns*
- *Jane Darwell's Oscar-winning portrayal of Ma Joad and Henry Fonda's performance as Tom Joad in the film version of John Steinbeck's novel, **The Grapes of Wrath***

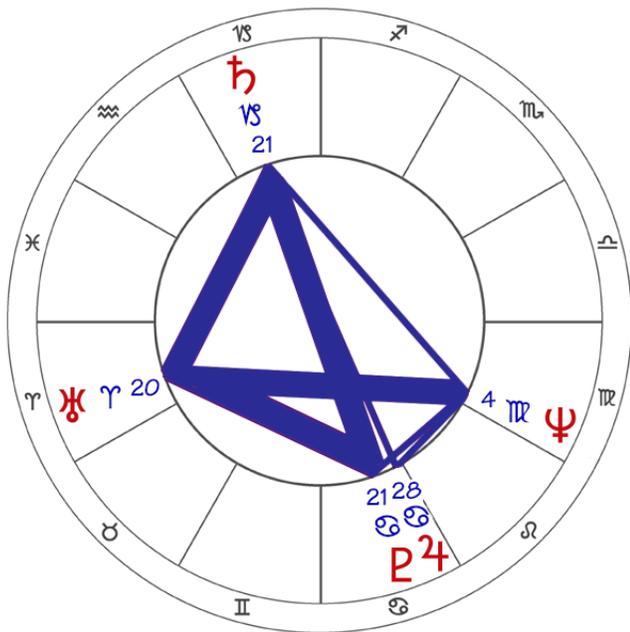
All these images relate directly to what has come to be known as The Great Depression. Technically, a "great depression" is a formal term from economics that defines a severe business downturn of more than seven years duration, but the commercial collapse that beset America during the late-1920s and 1930s left a deep scar on the American psyche, so much so that the term itself is now indelibly associated with that particular economic bust.

Why a Great Depression?

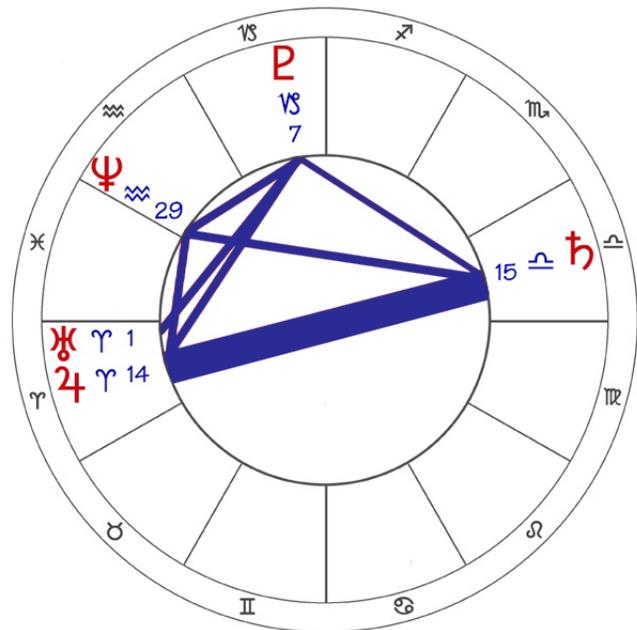
Nothing inherent to the symbolism of Uranus and Pluto implies an economic meltdown when the two planets align. Certainly commerce is such a basic human activity that it will be impacted to some extent by any major social, political, or cultural change. But some collective changes carry greater impact on economics than others. Other astrological factors must be present for economics to be pulled into the collective death-rebirth upheavals of this pair. Although many symbols may touch on economic levels (for instance, Venus and Taurus-Scorpio for money), the most likely candidates for a full-bore meltdown are Saturn and Capricorn, which represent not only the commercial activities of what is called "the private sector," but all the institutions of government and commerce that regulate and standardize the affairs of society into hierarchies of authority: banks, savings & loans, clearinghouses, trade associations, chambers of commerce, etc.

Because of the length of Uranus-Pluto alignments, Saturn usually steps in at some point to complicate the picture. This was certainly true in the 1930s as Saturn moved through Capricorn and formed a cardinal T-square to Uranus in Aries and Pluto in Cancer. Such a configuration of symbols corresponds *precisely* to a great depression and governments in turmoil.

8 July 1931



28 March 2011



Aspect patterns (grand crosses, grand trines, T-squares, kites, etc.) vary in meaning according to their shape and component angles. They vary in intensity and power based on how tight the orbs are of their various aspects. Squares and oppositions of exactly 90° and 180° are called "partile" and are much more potent than the same arcs with a wider orbs, say 94° or 173° . Wider orbs mean weaker aspects and a broader latitude of possibilities; Tighter orbs imply greater concentration of likely impact. Sometimes tighter versus wider orbs are discussed in terms of fate versus free will. Metaphorically, partile aspects offer no quarter and take no prisoners, whereas aspects with wide orbs aren't quite sure whether to fire their weapons or not. Put very simply, tight orbs carry the biggest bang for the buck. (In my chart graphics, the tightness of an aspect orb is indicated *visually* by the aspect's thicker line.)

The left chart above shows a grand alignment of outer planets in July 1931, during the darkest days in the early years of The Great Depression. Notice the nearly exact T-square (the right triangle configuration) between Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto. The economic disaster and subsequent change of governmental policies are indicated by Saturn's critical position at 21 Capricorn, making all three angles in the T-square simultaneously partile.

Contrast that with a similar "grand alignment" of outer planets during late March 2011 in the chart to the right. Again, we see a cardinal T-square, although it is nowhere near as exact. The 1931 chart shows a pinnacle of the entire Uranus-Pluto period from 1928-1937. The 2011 chart represents only a preliminary peak to the more extreme economic pressures that will occur after 2012 (when Uranus and Pluto begin their seven partile passes from Aries to Capricorn).

In both charts, Neptune is precisely at the offset stress point, linked by semisquare ($1/8$ th) and sesquiquadrate ($3/8$ ths) to the triangular points, thus becoming the bull's eye for the tense, explosive energies of the two T-squares. In the 1931 chart, we see a misunderstanding of

economic systems and how they work (Neptune in Virgo) contributing to the commercial meltdown. In the 2011 chart, however, the implications are quite different. With Jupiter in Aries (opportunism for quick gain), Saturn in Libra (an unlevel playing field), and Pluto in Capricorn (corrupt authorities and institutional secrecy), Neptune in Aquarius takes on the meanings of deliberate obfuscation of the truth orchestrated from behind the scenes. In other words, more lies courtesy of those who rule.

To better understand the economic implications of what took place in the 1930s and what we'll confront in the 2010s, we need to add another element: The July 4th, 1776, birth-chart of the U.S.A. This chart forecasts American economic downturns with stunning accuracy.

The U.S. Chart and Transiting Grand Cross

The key element is a dominant square in the U.S. chart: Sun in Cancer/8th house tightly squared to Saturn in Libra/10th house, a mere 2° from partile. That square not only looms over the entire U.S. chart, it symbolizes many of the most glaring paradoxes in the American character. The warm and sentimental family orientation of the Cancer Sun is cooled and sobered by a hard edge of a business-oriented 10th-house Saturn. But Saturn is exalted in Libra, so the implicit promise of America includes social equality and a level playing field of fairness. The 8th-house Sun (plus Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter) undercuts this progressive stance by focusing our national purpose on the amassing of wealth that is concentrated by being handed down within families. Rather than royalty by birth, America determines class by monetary wealth. The Founding Fathers were, for the most part, wealthy landowners who espoused slavery. Even our legal system is designed to favor property owners.

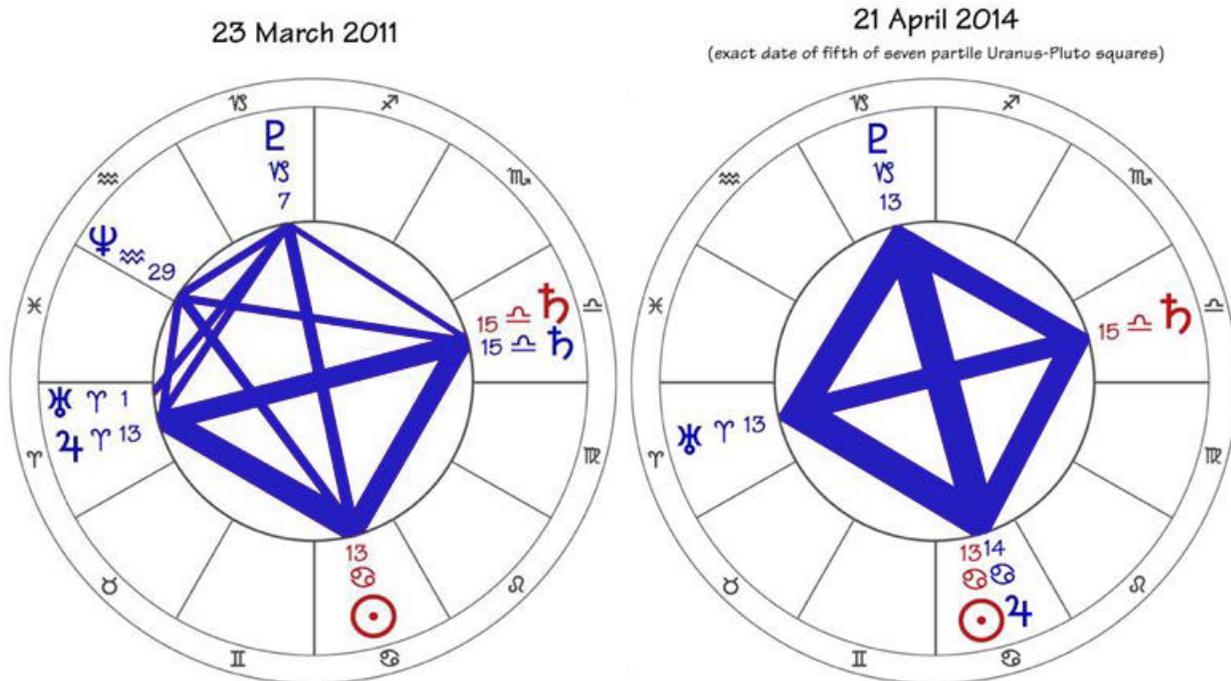
Throughout America's existence, the irreconcilable tensions between social equality and fair distribution of wealth versus domination by a small and ultra-rich ruling class (oligarchy or plutocracy) have sparked bitter disagreement. Less than one century after our founding, we fought a bloody civil war in large part because of these conflicts, with both camps claiming that "freedom" was on their side. Since then, tides have ebbed and flowed in both directions.

Whenever two slow-moving outer planets align into square aspect in the middle of the cardinal signs Aries and Capricorn, they form a Cardinal Grand Cross with the USA Cancer Sun and Libra Saturn. The first time this happened was with Pluto in Aries and Saturn in Capricorn in 1842, during a serious economic depression in the U.S. The second time was in 1872, with Saturn again in Capricorn, but with Neptune in Aries, also during an economic depression. The third time was during 1930-1931, with Saturn yet again in Capricorn, but with Uranus in Aries, during guess what? The Great Depression.

The significance here is that these three grand cross configurations with the U.S. chart were the *only* times such alignments occurred in our history, yet each of the three instances coincided with a major economic downturn in America. When will the Cardinal Grand Cross take shape again in the U.S. chart? First, during the Uranus-Pluto first-quarter square of the 2010s, with Uranus in Aries and Pluto in Capricorn, then again seven decades later during the Uranus-Pluto last-quarter square in the 2070s, when Uranus and Pluto will have switched positions, with Pluto in Aries and Uranus in Capricorn.

Of these five Cardinal Grand Crosses between 1842 and 2076, the upcoming alignments in the 2010s are far and away the most powerful in their symbolic implications for economic disruption, institutional transformation, and governmental change. Two separate Crosses form, the first briefly in 2011, and a second, much longer Cross in 2013-2016.

*Grand Crosses formed by Outer Planets
to the Sun-Saturn square in the U.S. Sibly natal chart*



transiting planets in blue
U.S. Sun and Saturn in red

Notice that the 2011 Grand Cross involves all the major outer planets, but not as a “full strength” configuration (meaning that some of the aspect orbs are far too wide). At that point Uranus is still largely unengaged, implying that critical mass has not been reached. Revolutionary times of profound change through new ideas are not yet upon us in 2011. Denial will still have the upper hand, as the existing power elites of the American empire continue their efforts to resuscitate the old Humpty-Dumpty economy. About the only success they can have, however, is to dig the hole of financial disaster much deeper.

2012 brings the financial and economic meltdown of corporate business and government to critical mass as Uranus reaches the first of seven partile passes in square to Pluto. That is the most passes of any Uranus-Pluto alignment for more than 1,000 years, making the 2010s the longest period we know of breakdown followed by radical reform. By mid-spring of 2013, the second Grand Cross gets underway and makes its eruptive presence felt. The breakdown goes viral and spreads rapidly to every outlying social institution — governmental, educational, civic, etc. State governments go belly up. Social services are severely cut back. Many global markets simply seize up and grind to a halt. The Cardinal Cross continues unabated until June 2016, but

Uranus and Pluto remain within 10° orb of their square for four more years past that, through early 2020. The entire eight years from 2012 represent the most urgent wake-up call ever for America, and, by extension, for the world.

People who expect life to remain largely unchanged are in for a shock. Even those who anticipate a slow-motion shift over two or three decades may be surprised at the sudden cascade of events that accelerate and overtake us in the middle of the 2010s.

From where we are now, however, most of the big questions remain unanswered. How severe will the crisis be? No one knows. Will chaos overwhelm civility? In some places quite probably, at least for a time. That happens with every sudden and dramatic change. What radical reforms will be put in place in response to the breakdowns? How draconian will they be? How compassionate? Answers to these and other questions will depend on how and to what extent our individual and collective consciousness awakens.

We do not need more of the hardened ideologies and fanatical beliefs that already divide us. Since what happens will be a collective co-creation, no particular camp will get its longed-for way: Christian Fundamentalists do not get The Rapture, Islamic Fundamentalists do not get an end to western liberalism, New Agers do not get E-Z Magical Spirituality, Tree-Huggers and Environmental Scientists do not get a balanced and harmonious eco-system, Animal Lovers don't get to save many endangered species, Military Hawks don't get to use all their blow-up toys, Peaceniks don't get an end to War, Technologists do not find the solution to our energy problems, Socialists do not get conformity, Progressives do not get an egalitarian society, Authoritarians do not get fascist control, Corporations don't get to keep the rights of individuals, the Wealthy and Privileged (read: Capitalists) don't get to own Everything, the Poor and Downtrodden don't vanish from the earth, the Young do not get Wisdom, and the Old do not get Vitality.

Despite all that — and if we're lucky — somehow we'll muddle through.

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