

Civilizational Astrology: *Part Two*

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Here again are the ten long-term, outer-planet cycles that comprise what I call Civilizational Astrology:

Cycle	Avg. Length	Quarterly Phase Shift	Effective Transit Period
Jupiter–Saturn	20 years	every five years	12-14 months
Jupiter–Uranus	13-14 years	every 3–4 years	13 months
Jupiter–Neptune	13-14 years	every 3–4 years	11–12 months
Jupiter–Pluto	12-13 years	every 3 years	13 months
Saturn–Uranus	44 years	every 11 years	24 months
Saturn–Neptune	36 years	every 9 years	24 months
Saturn–Pluto	31-38 years	every 6–9 years	22–25 months
Uranus–Neptune	172 years	every 38-48 years	11–15 years
Uranus–Pluto	113–142 years	every 33-47 years	8–13 years
Neptune–Pluto	~493 years	every 70–170 years	17–24 years

Seven of the ten cycles involve Jupiter or Saturn as one of the moving bodies. These are fundamentally different from the three cycles involving only the outermost planets (Uranus-Neptune, Uranus-Pluto, and Neptune-Pluto). Those three are visionary and transformational. They form a subtext for the evolution of civilization. By contrast, the seven cycles involving Jupiter or Saturn are about more practical considerations in how society is structured and operates. They are not visionary, transformational, metaphysical, or “spiritual.” While these seven cycles do have psychological implications, they are much more about our human behavior within society. While not predicting individual behavior, they indicate collective behavior across the bell curve as we move through changes in the archetype field.

Among astrologers, the Jupiter-Saturn cycle has been linked historically to business and economics. I think it probably has implications beyond commerce, but the economic emphasis seems accurate to me. It’s also been tied to Presidential succession in the U.S., since throughout the past century the 20-year Jupiter-Saturn cycles began mostly during Presidential election years: 1940, 1961, 1980, and 2000. This synchronicity will recur in 2020.

The other six cycles involving Jupiter and Saturn can be thought of as three pairs, linking as they do the two gas giants with each of the outermost three planets: Jupiter-Uranus and Saturn-Uranus, Jupiter-Neptune and Saturn-

Neptune, Jupiter-Pluto and Saturn-Pluto. In general, the Saturn cycles are more dynamic and newsworthy in terms of events, while the Jupiter cycles provide context in the background.

Jupiter-Uranus and Saturn-Uranus both imply changes in civilization occurring through new developments in social evolution, especially in technology and mores, and potential political disruptions to social order. When these two cycles are active in their quarterly phase changes, they can correlate with dramatic and surprising events — not always, but frequently.

Especially with the Saturn-Uranus cycle, we may see confrontations between the old and new, especially in regard to authority: "The (old) King is dead. Long live the (new) King." We can also expect Revolutions in science, technology, culture, and rebellions in politics. National elections for President were held in America during active Saturn-Uranus quarterly transitions in 1908, 1920, 1932, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, and 2000. In six of those eight elections, the party that had held the White House previously was voted out.

Jupiter-Neptune and Saturn-Neptune imply changes in society around visions and dreams, but also illusions and deceptions. Religion and spirituality in the collective morph and shift with changes in these two cycles. These two cycles are less dramatic and more subtle in their real-life correspondences.

Especially with the Saturn-Neptune cycle, we may see correspondences with a general public tone of exhaustion, depression, or despair in the longing for escape from existing conditions. It is, however, a bit like shadow boxing or trying to punch one's way out of a paper bag. Nothing seems solid or dependable, and the world may feel as if it's gone goofy. Often Saturn-Neptune correlates with fantasies of a perfect social hierarchy with a decidedly conservative slant.

Jupiter-Pluto and Saturn-Pluto correspond to changes in society around power and control — who has them and how are they used together. When active, these two cycles correlate with changes in social perspectives that tend to be extreme, dogmatic, hard-edged, and often authoritarian.

The Saturn-Pluto cycle is particularly intense and unyielding. When active, it corresponds to periods of cultural paranoia, xenophobia, and ethnic cleansing. This is the dark side of nationalism, patriotism, and racism, usually accompanied by a cold ruthlessness on the part of authority or the state. The most obvious downside of the major phase changes in the Saturn-Pluto cycle is the urge for domination — power over others. The positive implications include courage or perseverance during extreme hardship or against seemingly insurmountable odds, as well as moral or emotional staunchness, holding the line against negative or destructive forces.

Nothing I write about Jupiter and Saturn is more important than this: *Jupiter is not "good," and Saturn is not "bad."* The processes and characteristics of Jupiter's archetype — expansion, opportunity, optimism, buoyancy, philosophical righteousness — are easily assimilated into culture and eagerly adopted by the

pubic. That does not, however, mean that they are necessarily good. Expansion can obscure important boundaries, optimism can be unfounded, and righteousness can too easily become self-righteous. Conversely, Saturn's archetype — restraint, delay, effort, responsibility, hierarchies of authority, and solid structures — tends to be resisted by the population and forced from the top down. That does not, however, mean that such measures are inevitably bad. Patience and thoughtful responsibility are critical elements in achieving maturity. The effort of hard work can be fulfilling.

A better way to think of Jupiter and Saturn is easy versus hard. Jupiter is effortless and feels great, while Saturn demands discipline and feels difficult. They are probably best when considered in tandem, as operating together rather than alone. That's why the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction that begins their shared cycle is such an important crossroads or turning point. Based on the sign in which the conjunction occurs, a basic tone and direction are indicated for civilization's most practical concerns over the ensuing 20 years.

For instance, the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in 2000 occurred in Taurus, implying that economic productivity and amassing wealth would be significant elements of social organization and activity for two decades. During this current cycle, China cemented its position as a global economic powerhouse. In America, the War on Terror and the financial meltdown (the opening salvo of the Uranus-Pluto disruption) were both serious setbacks, but the economy "recovered" during the second half of the cycle. In both countries, however, national policies insured that the increased wealth was transferred upwards, with the result that economic inequality galloped to obscene levels. Before the current Jupiter-Saturn cycle, talk of billionaires was rare. Now it's commonplace.

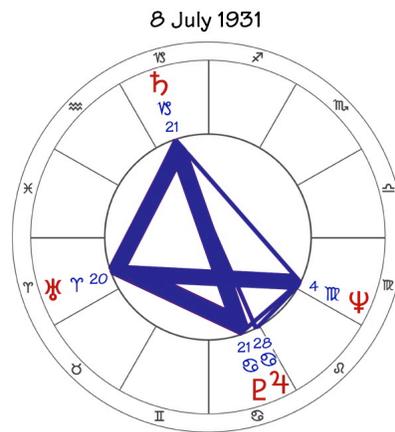
When a civilizational cycle begins is meaningful, for it sets a tone for the entire cycle to come. If we note the total number of civilizational cycles that begin in a decade, will that tell us anything about the relative importance of that decade? Nope. Below is a list of 15 decades — all of the 20th and half of the 21st centuries — with the number of cycles that began in each:

<i>1900s</i>	4	<i>1950s</i>	4	<i>2000s</i>	3
<i>1910s</i>	4	<i>1960s</i>	3	<i>2010s</i>	1
<i>1920s</i>	3	<i>1970s</i>	1	<i>2020s</i>	6
<i>1930s</i>	2	<i>1980s</i>	7	<i>2030s</i>	4
<i>1940s</i>	6	<i>1990s</i>	3	<i>2040s</i>	3

Three decades top the list — the 1980s with seven cycles starting, and the 1940s and 2020s with six each. The 1940s were certainly important, given World War II, the beginning of the nuclear age, and the founding of Communist China. But the 1980s? Not so much. And, of course, the 2020s are yet to be seen.

Conversely, the decades with the fewest cycle beginnings were the 1970s and 2010s. The 1970s were certainly less than memorable — disco was hardly profound and Watergate was an anomaly — but the 2010s have not felt insignificant.

That highlights one obvious drawback of simply noting the number of cycles that renew: That measure alone omits many other significant factors. The most important astrological alignment of the 2010s has been the Uranus-Pluto waxing square. Even if no civilizational cycles had begun in this decade, the Uranus-Pluto transit would still highlight the 2010s as a major crossroads in humanity's story. Similarly, the extraordinary aspect pattern that occurred in 1931 involving all five outer planets included only a single cycle's beginning (Jupiter-Pluto) but was crucially important. That catastrophic symbolic alignment — essentially an extended T-square — corresponded to the worst depths of the Great Depression, which led to the rise of Nazism in Germany and eventually to World War II. Below is the chart for that alignment:



No, it's clear to me that simply noting the number of renewing cycles in a given decade is no indication of that decade's importance. That's just as well, though. The judgment of "Most Important Decade" in a century (or ever) is an entirely subjective opinion akin to pop culture media lists of "Best Songs of the 1960s (or whenever)." Those may be entertaining as mind candy for about five minutes, but carry no weight in the greater scheme of things over the long run.

Beyond that, the number of renewing cycles in a given decade is too simple a yardstick. Even the infinitesimally tiny sliver of reality that humans perceive and experience is bewildering in its overwhelming complexity. Reducing life to a formula is a fool's errand.

I began this two-part commentary by referring to patterns. The patterns of presumed meaning that humans find or create become the maps we use to guide our journey. Such maps can illuminate reality or mask it. Sadly, the most basic maps currently used by civilization have led us astray. Those are the maps of industry, of technology, of progress, of Us versus Them, and of humans as the sole measure of value. Many invaluable maps have been lost — our connection to nature and to the sacred, to humility, and even to sanity. Humanity needs better maps, and we also need to learn to read them accurately.

Can Civilizational Astrology assist us in finding our way home? I don't really know. Perhaps.