
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 ---

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Dear friends,

Last month in Part One of this essay, I offered the perspectives of *timing*, *duration*, and *sequence* to better understand the impact of the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto t-square's activation of personal transits in the natal charts of individuals. This month in Part Two, the essay concludes with a discussion of *phases* for those weighty, profound, and disruptive personal transits.

--Bill Herbst

Commentary: **THE T-SQUARE TRIPTYCH (Part Two)**

As the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto T-square gradually comes together for its main alignment (and maximum whomp) in early cardinal signs during 2010-2011, significant symbols within the natal charts of literally billions of individual human beings will be activated.

Anyone with meaningful natal points in the latter degrees of mutable signs (from about 24° on) has already begun to experience the cascade of potentially life-changing major transits triggered by this profound alignment. The Pluto transits are already over for these people, and they are or soon will go through the Saturn and Uranus transits to the same mutable natal symbols.

In addition, people with significant natal positions in the earliest degrees of cardinal signs (from 0-3°) have this year joined in the chaotic festivities in much the same way, with ruthless death-and-rebirth Pluto transits now underway, to be followed by Saturn and Uranus transits to the same points next year. For

those of us with natal points a little further into cardinal signs (from 4-12°) the transits don't begin until next year, and then they stretch out well into the coming decade.

Four-fold Cycles

Understanding the meaning of these exceedingly rare and profoundly significant triple transits is based not only on elemental degrees, but also on the phase relationships with each of the three outer planets that are unique to the spans of the natal positions: Pisces-Aries, Gemini-Cancer, Virgo-Libra, and Sagittarius-Capricorn.

Only the hard angles are considered here: conjunction (0°), first-quarter square (90° ahead), opposition (180°), and last-quarter square (270° ahead, or 90° behind). Each of these gateways represents a period where individual life wells up into a peak or crisis, usually made plain by a set of challenges that arise during the transit. The challenges have both a generic meaning, based on the two symbols that define the cycle, and more custom-tailored meanings specific to each particular individual, based on the particular condition of those two symbols within the chart, as well as overall implications of the chart-as-a-whole.

This is astrological cycle analysis at its most fundamental and brilliant, involving division of the whole circle (cycle) into four sections based on mother nature's yearly progression of seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. This is the four-fold path of life on earth, reality made manifest through the four atoms of carbon that are the basis for our physical world. In transits, when a moving body conjoins a fixed natal point, the alignment of the two symbols represents the beginning of spring, the first season in the sequence, and the one that kick-starts the cycle of life-renewal.

• Conjunction

Like birth, a transit conjunction is urgent and intense. Time itself seems to stand still in this moment of becoming, as if we had stepped out of the flow of life and into another dimension of timelessness. Technically, the reverse is true: We are moving from timelessness back into time and the unfolding of a new cycle within our lives.

As the weather warms and the snowstorms of late winter give way to spring's raw winds and pelting rains, the sun's rays strike the soil more directly. The life-force contained within the formerly dormant seed bursts forth. This arising of new life is driven more by fate than decision, more by compulsion than awareness, and more by sheer vitality than reasoning intellect. Transiting conjunctions are the birth pains that initiate the next "year" of growth (one

“year” here refers to the length of the whole cycle — 29 years for Saturn, 84 years for Uranus, and 250 years for Pluto). Sometimes the entire cycle-to-come is experienced in compressed and condensed form during the conjunction. At the very least, the challenges of the new cycle are laid out plainly.

Consider the growth of a tree: Though we cannot know for sure how tall, straight, or strong an adult tree might eventually reach during its life span, we can be certain of at least one fact: plant an *acorn*, and we get an *oak*, not a birch or fir. Similarly, while we cannot know the outcome of a long personal cycle, we can see its basic meanings from the symbols involved and the chart through which the dance of archetypes is playing out.

● **First-quarter Square**

The first-quarter square is the portal into the summer phase, where plants leave the delicate vulnerability of recent germination and explode into full manifestation through accelerated outward growth of stalks, branches, and leaves. In this crisis, time accelerates. We are faced with the challenge to grow or die. Here we must manifest in real, physical life the abstract and emotional meanings of the cycle that were established at the conjunction. Food crops grow strong in preparation for bearing fruit: “the corn was as high as an elephant’s eye...” But farmers also tend their crops, protecting them from pests, weeds, drought, and other threats. And so, we work in the fields, devoting our energies to the fruit that is yet to ripen from flowers and buds. This first transiting square is the challenge to flesh out as fully as we can the literal meaning of the cycle in actual living, to build whatever is necessary to encourage and allow eventual fulfillment. The challenge is to engage the obstacles that will need to be overcome, even if we cannot achieve those victories until long after the transit ends.

● **Opposition**

The opposition marks the end of summer growth and the transition into autumn harvest (reaping what was sown in the spring). The cycle is now half over; once through the doorway into the full phase, what we built for ourselves shifts into a vehicle for sharing. Personal ambition evolves into a social dynamic as partnerships emerge that expand the meaning of the cycle. What was previously an impersonal external environment containing obstacles and resources becomes humanized as an audience with which we must reckon.

During the opposition, time slows again as we are challenged to see ourselves in others, and others in ourselves. (And to the extent that we don’t realize this, our relationships devolve into conflict-laden confrontations that destroy the very meaning we seek). The full phase is the beginning of the universalization of personal experience through mirrors that reflect the self and enlarge awareness.

● **Last-Quarter Square**

Finally, the last-quarter square symbolizes the beginning of winter. We have planted, tended, and harvested. Our harvest may have been glorious in bounty or bitter in scarcity. We may have farmed badly or been undone by terrible weather. Either way, we are finished with this year's farming. (What do farmers do in the winter? Many things. They mend fences and fix machinery. They read seed catalogs and plan crop rotations. They go the bank to arrange loans for seed. They may take vacations or grow experimental plants in the greenhouse. But the one thing they *don't* do is go out in the fields and farm.)

At the last-quarter square, a crisis of attachment emerges. We learn what we need to let go of. In the winter phase to follow, we detach from our victories or defeats and turn our attention to the future, to the next spring that will follow a winter's hibernation. So, one meaning of winter is rest and recovery. We need to lie fallow just as the fields do. Another meaning is freedom from excessive responsibilities and long-term commitments. We are granted freedom to experiment, trying out new experiences to see how they might suit us in a future cycle.

Phases — Four Combinations

Now we can determine the *phases* of the personal transits for any individual whose natal chart is triggered by the Saturn-Uranus-Pluto alignment. Please keep in mind that the *order* or *sequence* of the three transits (last month's commentary) will differ from one person to the next depending on the particular zodiacal degree of the natal symbol being activated.

● **For Those with Natal Points in Late Pisces through early Aries**

the triple activation is a time of catapulting oneself into action through revolutionary personal endeavors and cooperative social involvements.

The Uranus transit will be a conjunction, a shocking and surprising awakening into something new and unexpected. One can expect experiences of strong singularity and feelings of uniqueness, along with a particularly compulsive and new sense of willfulness. Out of this, a new cycle of freedom will be born.

The Saturn transit will be an opposition, meaning a time when you are stopped by the need to reconnect with purpose in a new way that involves others. Seemingly unfinished tasks will be interrupted by the intrusion of other people. After inevitably reacting with frustration, realize that the time allotted for the task is over, and that you must move on into new sharing. Work to remember your original reasons for starting down any road roughly 10-15 years ago.

The Pluto transit will be a last-quarter square, implying the necessity of extreme detachment from whatever you once held dear. People, habits, rituals, and circumstances will fall away, vanish, or forcibly be taken from you in the experiences associated with the natal symbol being activated. Grieve if you need to, but let go! You need to move on, into a life of less certainty (past) and more freedom (future).

● **For Those with Natal Points in Late Gemini through early Cancer**

home, and community are typical arenas where the triple transits operate. Security and family must be re-thought and re-established carefully, since the larger world no longer fosters safety. The challenge is to choose love over security and local over global.

The Saturn transit will be a first-quarter square, meaning that a developmental cycle that started seven years ago is now hitting road blocks that limit expression. During the transit, define the obstacles holding you back from movement, communication, or good relations with your family. After the transit, remove those obstacles one by one by becoming a better partner and finding better partners.

The Pluto transit will be an opposition, implying a period of great struggle with impersonal institutions that seem to want to crush you. Put an end to generic fitting in or making decisions according to the prevailing wisdom. From now on, support for your life in the world must come from smaller, more local groups and organizations that work based on mutual recognition and respect.

The Uranus transit will be a last-quarter square, revealing detachment and letting go concerning personal idiosyncrasies and eccentricities, especially those in the personalities of others. Don't force people to fit your mold; rebuild your home and enlarge your community to allow them permission and space to fit in.

● **For Those with Natal Points in Late Virgo through early Libra**

the triple transits represent a new beginning in relationships, especially those that encourage or support fuller cultural involvement or ambition.

The Saturn transit will be a conjunction, revealing that you are on the threshold of a new cycle of experience, quite likely down a different road of relatedness than you walked in the past. Mutual cooperation and renewed commitment in partnerships are key requirements in the decades ahead.

The Pluto transit will be a first-quarter square, implying the necessity of ruthless removal of obstacles from the path of your ambition. Remove the imaginary pedestals you've placed under others to elevate them above you. Any culture that values only wealth and success (achieved at any cost) more than deeper virtues such as humility, maturity, and generosity of spirit isn't worth saving and deserves to collapse. So tear it down, then rebuild society in a way that fosters greater equality and kindness.

The Uranus transit will be an opposition, meaning that you will move through a period of separation from others. Your relationships may or may not return afterwards, but what's certain is that you cannot sacrifice any more of yourself. New contracts are in order. The unusual trumps the familiar.

● **For Those with Natal Points in Late Sagittarius through early Capricorn** the triple transits concern cultural attitudes and group identities, which will be challenged to change dramatically. Definitions of conservative and radical will intertwine and often reverse for these people during and after the transits.

The Pluto transit will be a conjunction, implying the death of much deeply social programming in your psychological imprints. Your beliefs about the world and the cultural values you embraced are being destroyed, sometimes cruelly and with no pity. Your immersion in group-think is at an end. Whether you gave in to duty or struggled mightily with your social responsibilities, they cannot own you any longer. With freedom from conformity comes confrontation with insecurity. You may fear that your world is imploding. It is, so prepare for a brave new world.

The Uranus transit will be a first-quarter square, implying that your innate individuality is being awakened radically, and that you are about to join a revolution to remake the world. Stop taking orders from idiots! No more kowtowing submission to bogus authorities. Respect only those whose authority is genuine and deserved.

The Saturn transit will be a last-quarter square, so you are stopped in your tracks until you detach from and let go of certain very traditional pair-bonds. All relationship bets are off. All contracts with others are null and void. You are a free agent in the universe, and you may play alone or with others, for yourself or on a team, but you must not sell your soul to anyone. You have been dutiful long enough.

Caveat

As with all public writing about highly individualized and custom-tailored experience in astrology, some caveats apply. The four categories of phases as written should be relevant to a majority of the individuals whose charts are activated by the T-square. Because astrology is both complex and paradoxical, however, a smaller percentage of individuals may experience these triple transits quite differently than described, in a way that is almost opposite to what I've written. It's not that the descriptions are incorrect *per se*, but rather that life for human beings can be downright twisted, often comically and sometimes perversely so.

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