

# **The global situation – what can the past tell us about the future?**

## **Are you new to astrology?**

If you are new to astrology, it is not necessary to try and absorb all the technical astrological information at this stage. The article was written for people at intermediate and advanced stages of astrological knowledge, but still we hope it will be of interest to beginners. It mostly describes the Saturn, Uranus and Pluto energies coming up. You can leave out the sections which may be giving too much technical information to handle. Under the technical information, some comments have been put in italics which hopefully will help you to understand what is happening in the sky.

Briefly:

Saturn is about boundaries, restrictions, limits and fears. Its energy can be grounded and practical or it can be resisting.

Uranus is about reform, revolution and equality. Uranus is associated with idealism but it can be a very erratic, electric and volatile kind of energy.

Pluto is about death and rebirth. It is associated with empowerment and abuse of power and is associated with underworld crime.

## **Credit crunch and recession**

The period of astrological energies we are entering from late September 2008 to middle of April 2017 has many resonances with the first half of the 1930s and the mid 1960s. Saturn, Uranus and Pluto were all in challenging aspects during these periods. A 5° orb has been used for applying and separating aspects in this article.

We are now in the middle of a severe banking crisis, credit crunch and recession where millions are being thrown out of work and millions are having their homes repossessed in many countries. Perhaps the rot set in during the last Saturn, Neptune opposition from late 2005 to early August 2007, when putting the brakes on (Saturn) clashed with an out-of-control banking/financial system that was in some respects unregulated and extremely lax (Neptune).

In the UK, the first signs of trouble were seen in September 2007 when the bank/building society, Northern Rock, collapsed and there was a rush by savers to pull their money out from local branches. This occurred a few weeks after the Saturn, Neptune opposition had finished. News from the US that the big mortgage companies, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and AIG had to be saved by having billions of dollars handed over to them soon followed. Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. A few weeks ago, Bernard Madoff was arrested for allegedly running a fraudulent ponzi investment company in which banks, investment companies and wealthy individuals put their money. In the UK, Lloyds Banking Group which took over HBOS is now partly nationalised as billions of pounds of taxpayers' money have had to be pumped into it, due to HBOS losses. HBOS was also caught up in sub-prime mortgages. The Royal Bank of Scotland has also had to be rescued by billions of pounds of taxpayers' money and has also effectively been nationalised. There is concern and

disgust about its ex-Chief Executive, Sir Fred Goodwin, walking away with a pension fund of some £700,000 p.a. He was in charge of RBS when it made the biggest losses ever by a bank in the UK. Meanwhile most British workers have relatively meagre pensions when they retire which often cannot alone help them maintain a reasonable life style.

In brief, bearing in mind the complexities of the banking/financial system, credit became easily available in the form of mortgages, credit cards and business loans. Borrowers were frequently given 100% mortgages which were manageable as long as house prices continued to rise. However, in the USA, many house buyers were given mortgages with little hope of paying them back and these were known as sub-prime mortgages. The inhabitants of whole trailer parks, as well as ordinary house owners, were granted sub-prime mortgages which they cannot now repay. Easy credit spiralled house prices out of control. In order to issue more mortgages, mortgages were bundled up as sound mortgages and sub-prime mortgages (toxic debts). These were sold at a profit to other banks and financial institutions. Then the whole system collapsed and house prices fell leading us into recession. However, according to BBC News 24, on night of 4/5<sup>th</sup> March, some small conservative banks in the USA are thriving because they rely more on lending on savers' deposits and on mortgage repayments, although many other smaller banks are still closing down.

## **Climate change**

Climate change is now a major threat to life on Earth. No longer a fringe concern (covered by organisations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Earth First and members of the counter-culture), climate change has become a mainstream global issue, but will the recession get in the way of reducing our carbon emissions and pollution?

## **The challenging Saturn, Uranus and Pluto aspects over the next few years**

Saturn in Virgo started to come into opposition with Uranus in Pisces at end of September 2008 and will leave the opposition in September 2010. The exact opposition periods are early November 2008, early February 2009, mid September 2009, late April and late July 2010. These two planets in mutable signs are showing weaknesses in our institutions.

Saturn in Virgo/Libra square Pluto in Capricorn starts in September 2009 and finishes in July 2011. The exact square periods are middle of November 2009, late January 2010, and mid to late August 2010. Uranus in Pisces/Aries squares Pluto in Capricorn from early July 2009 to mid April 2017. They are exactly square, with Uranus in Aries and Pluto in Capricorn, in late June and mid September 2012; in mid to late May and early November 2013; mid to late April and mid December 2014; and finally in mid March 2015.

Saturn, Uranus and Pluto form a t. square, although not exact and sometimes beyond an orb of 5°, from March to August 2010; before the Uranus, Pluto square is exact. Jupiter is conjunct Uranus and square Saturn, Pluto for some of this period.

Uranus does not enter Aries until late May 2010. Saturn goes retrograde into Virgo in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April, entering Libra again in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July 2010. Uranus slips back into Pisces in mid August 2010 and enters Aries again in mid March 2011.

So there is a combination of cardinal/mutable energy while this t. square is going on. With Saturn in the last degrees of Virgo and Uranus in the last degrees of Pisces, there may be more news about collapsing institutions and collapsing stock markets, and it is doubtful if this recession is going to pass quickly. Saturn, Pluto, and Saturn, Jupiter challenging aspects often indicate recessions. Saturn, Uranus and Pluto will only all be in cardinal signs when the t. square is over, but by then Saturn would have moved on well into Libra. When all three planets are in the cardinal signs, the prevailing energy is likely to change and it may be 'all go'. The trouble with cardinal energy is that it can act too quickly for the sake of change. Uranus in Aries will want change immediately. Pluto in Capricorn may symbolise politicians and bankers etc. trying to hold onto the old ways, but this is not necessarily the case and there could be positive reforms in terms of managing economies and getting on with dealing with climate change. Saturn could try and calm things down and keep a lid on tensions while the t. square is active, or it could emphasise our fears about making changes. Saturn and Pluto can resist, while Jupiter and Uranus can explode as a result of putting up with frustrating situations for too long.

*If you are a beginner, this t. square means that Saturn is on one side of the Earth and Uranus is on the other side of the Earth (180° apart), with Pluto at right angles to them both (90° apart).*

**“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” said Franklin D. Roosevelt, USA President, 1933.**

## **The Great Depression**

Looking at the past can help us make more sense of the future, although each cycle is never quite the same as the previous one.

The whole period from Saturn square Uranus, to Saturn opposite Pluto, to Uranus square Pluto, lasted from late 1929 to early 1936. This time Saturn was in Capricorn, Uranus was in Aries and Pluto was in Cancer. There was a t.square between these three planets in 1932.

*If you are a beginner, this means that Saturn was at one side of the Earth and Pluto was on the other side of the Earth, 180° apart, with Uranus at right angles to them both, 90° apart.*

The Wall Street stock market crash occurred on 29 October 1929 and this, along with problems with the banking system, is believed to be the cause of the Great Depression. The markets rallied in 1930, but this was not sustained and by 1931, things were on a downhill slide again, reaching rock-bottom by 1933.

There were similar problems with the banking and financial institutions then – easy credit and debt on a massive scale. In the USA, a further cause of the depression was believed to have been overproduction of goods due to improved technology; but

there were not enough people who could afford to buy the newly produced goods in order to produce more goods. Up to about 1931, the wealthy and middle classes had been speculating wildly on property and on stocks, but the 1930s saw a great levelling off.

Then there was an environmental disaster in the United States, the dustbowl caused by years of severe drought in the southern plains. The dust problems started in 1931 and lasted for 10 years. The problem was particularly bad in Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma where people struggled to survive as nothing would grow in the dustbowl. Up to 200,000 people migrated west as a result.

President Roosevelt introduced the New Deal in 1933, a series of economic reforms. The New Deal was introduced at great speed and was often not administered properly – Uranus in Aries? Credit facilities were made available to industry and agriculture and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation insured that savings put into banks were guaranteed up to \$5,000. The sale of securities on the US stock exchange was heavily regulated under Roosevelt's administration. Roosevelt's Emergency Banking Act is seen as a turning point in beating this severe recession.

During the depression, Uranus was entering the waning square phase to Pluto, much like a last quarter Moon in meaning, and this is the 'crisis in consciousness' phase – one in which beliefs not only take hold but are frequently challenged. This was an ideology-driven period. Fascist, communist and capitalist ideologies were battling with each other, but the economic climate made things much worse. The depression hit Germany very badly largely due to it having to pay severe financial reparations for the part it played in World War I (agreed at the Treaty of Versailles 1919). This was the age of the dictators – Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini and Franco.

Stalin's first 5 year plan was from 1928 to 1932 and the second one was from 1933 – 1937, although it started in 1932. These two plans aimed for speedy economic development, particularly in heavy industry, as Stalin felt vulnerable to attack from powers stronger than the Soviet Union without such development. Workers who did not fulfil targets or who were absent from their jobs were either shot or sent to gulags (labour camps) in Siberia and on the Baltic Sea coast.

In China, the Communist Red Army was trying to take control of the country and escape the clutches of General Chiang Kai-Shek. The Red Army went on several long marches, the most famous of which was the Long March which started in mid October 1934 and was finally completed in October 1936. Mao was part of the HQ at the start of the march and had taken over as leader by the end of the march. 80,000 people, mostly Red Army troops, left Jiangxi Province with permission from General Chiang Kai-Shek strangely enough, as they wanted to escape from his troops. They marched over extremely difficult terrain in the south east of China to the north and west and different groups met up in Saanxi in October 1936. They were marching under terrible conditions and many deserted or died on the way. Mao gained much prestige on the march which eventually resulted in his leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and his ascent as Chairman of the People's Republic of China in October 1949.

## The mid 1960s

The whole period of the aspects involving Uranus, Pluto and Saturn started in October 1963 and had finished by late June 1968. The Uranus, Pluto conjunction in Virgo came into orb first in late 1963, followed by Saturn in Pisces opposing them from March 1965 to late February 1966, then Saturn opposed Uranus till January 1967. Uranus was moving away from a conjunction with Pluto by the end of June 1968. The Saturn opposition to Uranus, Pluto was on and off during the periods listed.

*If you are a beginner, this means that Uranus and Pluto could be seen together in the sky (except a telescope would be needed to see them as they are so far away). Saturn was on the other side of the Earth at an 180° angle from Uranus and Pluto for much of the time.*

These astrological energies coincided with the latter half of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, led by Martin Luther King. The southern states in the USA, which had been part of the old confederacy, were where most African Americans lived as that was the area of the slave plantations. Cities had developed in these states with many African Americans moving to them looking for work. Many had left for the cities of the north looking for better lives, but had found themselves living in ghettos in cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles. The climate in the south was extremely racist with violence carried out by whites against blacks. The white Ku Klux Klan kept the African Americans 'in their place'. Much like apartheid South Africa, there were notices displayed all over the place, reminding African Americans and Mexicans that they were not to use restaurants, parks, and other facilities used by whites. Schools and transport were also segregated. This was the environment that set the stage for the civil rights movement.

The Civil Rights movement began in the early 1950s and ended in 1968, when Martin Luther King was assassinated. King was its major driving force and, along with others, had much success in bringing about changes through non-violent means, such as desegregation of blacks and whites on the buses, desegregation in restaurants and in shops, etc. Some progress had also been made in desegregation in schools, but it was slow. They were confronted with tremendous resistance from the whites.

In the mid-1960s, the Civil Rights movement started campaigning in the African American ghettos, mainly in Chicago. King pointed out that the USA could never live up to the American Dream until everyone was treated as equal, and had equal access to public facilities, jobs, good standard housing, health and education. This would cost billions of dollars, King pointed out. He had no illusions about that.

King and other civil rights leaders spent much time, energy and resources on non-violence training for demonstrations and protests. However, by the mid 1960s, some in the Civil Rights movement were becoming more militant as they felt that no progress could be made if African Americans continued to try to negotiate with whites. They would be better off empowering themselves, using their own resources and developing their own institutions. Many were no longer impressed with the philosophy of non-violence. As King had warned, if massive investment into slums

and ghettos was not made, there would be riots. There were. From the mid to late 1960s there were many race riots in the ghettos of the big cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago. There were fewer riots after 1968.

Malcolm X recruited thousands into the Nation of Islam by the mid 1960s. Members gave themselves the surname 'X' in order to disassociate themselves from the surnames they had inherited from their white slave owners in the past. Malcolm X was assassinated in February 1965. He had been at loggerheads with the philosophy of non-violence and believed that integration was not a solution in the short term. However at some point in the mid 1960s he left the Nation of Islam, converted to mainstream Islam, and softened his stance a little.

Stokely Carmichael turned 'black power' into a popular movement and is credited with coining the term 'black is beautiful'. He had been involved in the Civil Rights movement for a long time, but when he became leader of the SNCC, a non-violent protesting student organisation, he threw out the white volunteers. He no longer believed that conditions for African-Americans could be substantially improved through non-violence and integration. King spent many hours arguing and debating with some of the younger generation, many of whom were probably going through their Uranus square Uranus transits. Perhaps he symbolised the Saturn in Pisces, calling for caution and non-violence. He was a deeply spiritual man and a follower of Gandhi and Saturn in Pisces can be very spiritual.

From the mid-1960s, President Lyndon Johnson escalated the war in Vietnam with massive bombing raids and by sending in hundreds of thousands of American troops, of which a high percentage were African Americans. The US was also backing a repressive regime in Saigon, South Vietnam. This disturbed Martin Luther King a great deal, who saw the Vietnamese as fighting for their own political freedom against their western colonisers. Johnson and the FBI chief, J. Edgar Hoover, were totally obsessed by communist infiltration in eastern Asia, but they knew nothing about the Vietnamese. This was Saturn, Pluto paranoia. It was a mad, terrible war which not only killed civilians on a massive scale, but brought about devastating environmental destruction with the use of napalm which left people with horrific burns and other devastating chemicals, such as lindane and agent orange, used to destroy the land.

Because of his strong views, King and some of the other civil rights leaders joined forces with the Peace Movement in the mid 1960s, the American anti-Vietnam war movement. There were protests at the University of California, Berkeley, Los Angeles and demonstrations in Washington during 1965 and 1966.

The Civil Rights movement campaigns to end poverty and bring about positive change in the African American ghettos did not really work. The ghettos are still there. The Uranus, Pluto conjunction is the seed point of the cycle. The issue of racism was coming into general consciousness much more so than it had done before. Will the forthcoming Uranus, Pluto square see further awareness and action to challenge racism in all its forms? While there have been many positive changes over the last 40 years or so in terms of combating racism, the US and many European countries with a racist past still have a long way to go.

During the 1960s, President Kennedy, his brother Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King were all assassinated.

The book, *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson, published in 1962 in the USA, was about the effect of pesticides on the environment, particularly on birds. Rachel Carson, who died in 1964, is often accredited as being the founder of the current environmental movement. It is interesting to note that as the Saturn, Uranus, Pluto energies are on the rise again, that Barack Obama is the first African-American President of the United States. This would have been impossible 40 years ago. He is also showing real concern for the environment and is keen to tackle climate change problems.

The Cultural Revolution was started in China in May 1966 by Chairman Mao. This is a period not looked on favourably by the post Mao Communist Party leaders. In 1981, it blamed Mao Tse Tung (Mao Zedong), Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, led by Mao's wife (Jiang Qing) for this period of China's history. Mao, believing that there were too many bourgeois members in the party, decided that it was time for another revolutionary class struggle by encouraging China's young people to form Red Guard units. Mao's previous Great Leap Forward had been an utter failure, leaving many people destitute, and perhaps the Cultural Revolution was seen as an attempt to hold onto power. He officially ended this revolution in 1969, but many see it as continuing until his death in 1976.

The seeds of the Cultural Revolution were sown in 1959 when the Deputy Mayor of Beijing (Wu Han) published a play, *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, which was about an honourable official who was dismissed from his job by a corrupt emperor. This was seen as a subtle attack on Mao, who was to say the least extremely corrupt. In 1965, Mao's wife and one of her cronies wrote an article which was critical of the drama. Further articles were published by Jiang Qing and co. in 1966 resulting in the formation of the Cultural Revolution Group. The first Red Guard group was formed on 29 May 1966, and its aim was to attack intellectuals and Mao's enemies. By August 1966, this had developed into a mass movement of Red Guards who were encouraged to abolish the Four Olds: old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas – very Uranian! This was a terribly destructive period in China's history when millions of Red Guards destroyed temples, churches, mosques and monasteries. Many people committed suicide; many were murdered and tortured. Nearly 2000 people were killed in Beijing in August and September 1966. Many Red Guards persecuted their parents. Saturn, Pluto oppositions in particular can thrive on scapegoating and instilling fear.

## **Back to the present**

The current astrological Saturn, Uranus, Pluto aspects have more in common with the 1930s than the 1960s because of the emphasis on cardinal signs and because Uranus is in Aries again, but the 1960s Uranus, Pluto conjunction was the seed point of the cycle, like a New Moon. The Uranus, Pluto energy is extremely volatile. Saturn, Pluto energy can be very suspicious and paranoid, but it has tremendous resilience, staying power and a determination to survive tough times. Pluto reveals the hidden, but impatient Uranus wants to bring things to light faster and to improve conditions – now – often with no thought for the consequences. Bringing in the

Saturn, Uranus opposition, care and planning are needed. With Pluto in Capricorn, corruption in government and in major financial institutions is coming to light. Bryan Gould, who directed the Labour Party's election campaign in 1997, sums up the problems we are facing in his article, 'I disown this Government', in the Guardian on 3 March 2009.

"...the government enthusiastically endorsed the virtues of the 'free market', which turned its back on the need for regulation, which celebrated the excesses of the City, which proclaimed it was 'intensely relaxed about people becoming filthy rich.' That betrayal of those who looked to Labour for help has seen a rapid widening of inequality and a sharp intensification of social disintegration. It is the jobs, homes and lives of ordinary people that have borne the brunt...."

"But even that failure pales by comparison with the latest revelations about the abandonment by New Labour of any pretence of civilised standards. We now know that this government connived with the Bush administration to hold people illegally, to kidnap them in secret, and to torture them while in custody – all in the name of a war against the forces of darkness."

Rendition (this kidnapping of potential terrorists suspects) has not been entirely substantiated, but looks as if it is going to be challenged in the UK courts, so at this stage, rendition is an allegation rather than fact.

There is also the issue of constant surveillance of the population and the threat of the introduction of ID cards. While we obviously need some surveillance in order to combat terrorist attacks, etc., many believe that this is getting completely out of hand and that governments cannot be trusted not to abuse personal data, let alone not to lose it!

When Saturn squares Pluto, it will be in the waning half of the cycle, like a last quarter Moon. The last opposition between these two planets lasted from about August 2001 to end of May 2002 when Saturn in Gemini opposed Pluto in Gemini on and off. The planes crashing into the Twin Towers in New York occurred on 9 September 2001. Guantanamo Bay, rendition and the Big Brother surveillance society have largely occurred as a result of that event. The last quarter phase has often been interpreted as 'pay back' time. Whatever actions have been taken during previous phases of the cycle are now seeing their repercussions.

When Uranus squares Pluto, it will be in the waxing phase of the cycle, like a first quarter Moon. This is the 'crisis in action' phase, a 'do or die' kind of energy, particularly with these two planets involved. With the environmental crisis, with the recession, with problems in the Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan, it may well be 'do or die' time. Caution is needed, but may well not be there with Uranus and Pluto in Cardinal signs – fortunately Capricorn can be a lot more cautious than Aries, so there is hope.

Any social scientist would say that social unrest occurs when people are deprived of the basic essentials of life, are discriminated against, oppressed and abused. The Uranus, Pluto periods are likely to bring serious social problems to a head and intense frustrations, built up over many years, can lead to unrest. Saturn, Pluto

energy can lead to suspicion and oppression – fears can take hold and cause devastation. Social protest may well increase during the years when these two planets are in close square aspect. Will people put up with corrupt institutions and governments, lack of respect for civil rights and environmental damage for much longer? But can we always blame governments for everything that goes wrong? Does Pluto in Capricorn mean that we should take more responsibility for our own lives and actions? Does the Pluto, Uranus square mean that we should be more prepared to challenge government actions that affect all our lives, rather than bury our heads in the sand, thinking that ‘it doesn’t affect me’?

On a positive note, this square may coincide with developments in technology that really help us tackle climate change and our values, collectively, may change into a more harmonious way of living. But it is easy to get carried away by romance and revolutionary energy can turn very nasty! It is easy to become caught up in ideologies without working out what they really mean and what their consequences might be if put into practice. It is easy to be manipulated. Keep your heads on until at least 2017.

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**Aspect cycles and aspect phases** come from the 20<sup>th</sup> century humanistic astrologers, Dane Rudhyar and Alexander Ruperti.