

Esoteric Astrology Commentary

When Heaven and Earth Meet Saturn—Uranus Opposition 2008 to 2010

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Abstract

This article explores the historical, astrological, and mythological relationship between Saturn and Uranus in light of a current cycle of Saturn-Uranus oppositions that continues over the next eighteen months. It discusses the meaning, nature, and quality of these two planets, highlighting the opportunities and challenges specific to this astrological cycle of events against the backdrop of other planetary placements. The article concludes with some thoughts about the contemporary significance of this planetary opposition and about the resolution of this infamous pair of seeming opposites.

Overview

*The Cosmic Magnet shifts many things. The battle between Saturn and Uranus is naturally reflected upon the fires of the Chalice. Therefore, the pull of the centers is active at present.*¹

Powered by the seven rays, the planets are engaged in an endless cosmic dance, ceaselessly informing and infusing planetary life with fresh energy and new experiences. We are told that “nothing can escape these radiatory and magnetic influences.”² They are like grand directors, propelling and galvanizing opportunities and discoveries that fuel our progress.

Relative to the zodiacal signs and the world period in which an opposition between Saturn and Uranus occurs, *change* is the undeniable keynote and evolutionary *shifts in consciousness* are the inevitable outcome of this legendary combination. An opposition of Saturn and Uranus takes place once approximately every 45 years at the midpoint of a complete Saturn-Uranus cycle. This marks a turning point comparable to a full

moon when the energies are extremely heightened. The current opposition, overarching the next eighteen months will involve five exact oppositions that will be defining moments within this period.

The first exact opposition took place on November 4, 2008 (Election Day in the USA). The other four direct oppositions will occur on February 5, 2009, September 15, 2009, and April 26, 2010, and will culminate with Saturn in Libra and Uranus in Aries on July 26, 2010.

In recent history, similar Saturn-Uranus oppositions occurred in 1917-1920 and 1964-1967. During both of these periods, there was dramatic political, social, and cultural change and transformation.

In 1917, during World War I, Saturn in Leo began a series of oppositions to Uranus in Aquarius. Later in that same cycle, Uranus entered Pisces and Saturn moved into Virgo, paralleling the opposition that is currently underway in these same signs.

The oppositional period of 1917-1920 brought the Versailles Treaty and the end of World War I, an international influenza pandemic, the Rus-

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sian Revolution, the Balfour Declaration proclaiming British support for a Jewish national home in Palestine, and the founding of the League of Nations. It culminated with the right for women to vote being established in many parts of the world, immediately followed by an accelerated growth cycle in the world economy through the 1920s.

During the same period, in 1919 Alice Bailey was initially contacted by the Tibetan and co-authored their first book, *Initiation, Human and Solar*. At the same time another disciple, Paramahansa Yogananda, came to the United States and founded the Self-Realization Fellowship in an effort to disseminate teachings on ancient Eastern practices of yoga and meditation worldwide.

The next Saturn-Uranus opposition occurred in the spring of 1964, with Saturn in Pisces and Uranus in Virgo. The Sixties saw the rise of a momentous worldwide group counter-culture that, like all Saturn-Uranus oppositions, triggered dramatic social, psychological, and political change, totally revolutionizing the culture of the times. The focus of this movement centered around reaction to prevailing social norms and the stasis of the 1950s, political conservatism, the U.S. government's military intervention in Vietnam (which brought anti-war demonstrations), the Civil Rights era, anti-Apartheid, and an explosion of creativity in the music industry.

Fritjof Capra writes that the 1960s were also "dominated by an expansion of consciousness in two directions. One movement, in reaction to the increasing materialism and secularism of Western society, embraced a new kind of spirituality akin to the mystical traditions of the East. This involved an expansion of consciousness toward experiences involving non-ordinary modes of awareness, which are traditionally achieved through meditation but may also occur in various other contexts, and which psychologists at the time began to call 'transpersonal.'"³

Uranus represents the first aspect and the revolutionary impulse, while Saturn represents the third aspect and the conventional order of things. Over the next eighteen months, this opposition will undoubtedly strike a blow that will upset the status quo on Earth, exposing contemporary dis-

parities as well as commonalities between these two energy fields and presenting golden opportunities for blending and fusing their energies within a powerfully accelerated growth cycle.

In ancient Greek mythology, Chaos (Space) reigned over the universe until it divided itself into the three equal and orderly aspects of earth, sky, and sea. In due course Gaia, goddess of earth, emerged and created the world into a beautiful masterpiece; yet she longed for children to share in the bounty of earth. Her desire was so great that eventually she magically became pregnant and gave birth to her first son, Uranus, primordial God and ruler of the sky.

Over time, their union bore twelve offspring—six sons and six daughters—collectively known as the Titans, the children of Heaven and Earth. Fearing the growing power of his children, Uranus imprisoned them all in the womb of Gaia. She retaliated by conceiving a sickle that their youngest son, Cronus (Saturn) used to castrate his father. Uranus then passed into oblivion, leaving the Titans to rule over Olympus (Earth) for many ages until Cronus/Saturn and his sister and wife Rhea dethroned them.

Consequently, although Saturn and Uranus are related, mythologically they were mortal enemies. In their battle, Cronus/Saturn (time) won out over Uranus (space), symbolically separating Earth from Heaven—a division that still exists in the duality of the collective psyche to this day.

Saturn-Uranus oppositions are critical times of reckoning when humanity collectively faces the results of their actions and inactions. Past Saturn-Uranus cycles have coincided with transformational changes in culture, the struggle for civil and human rights, great scientific discoveries, and the upheavals of labor and economy. These are times of heightened awareness geared at reorganizing and repositioning our affairs in light of new understandings.

Saturn in Virgo

When disciples know Saturn as the God who offers opportunity and do not only feel Saturn to be Deity who brings disaster, then they are on the path of discipleship in truth and in deed and not just theoretically.⁴

As the body of expression of the Lord of Active Intelligence, Saturn powerfully expresses the Third Ray, the ray of planet Earth, and reveals the nature of the third aspect of divinity, which is intelligent substance. Saturn provides humanity with “a vast field of experiment and experience.”⁵

As Lord of the material world and supreme teacher in the fundamentals of the physical plane, Saturn provides a moral compass, executive organizing ability, and the necessary tools and discipline to approach the tests and trials of the mundane world with practicality, responsibility, and hard work. As the most potent of the four Lords of Karma, Saturn is “the imposer of retribution and the one who demands full payment of all debts and who therefore condemns us to the struggle for existence, both from the form side and from the Soul side.”⁶

Thus Saturn forces humanity to face the past and prepare for the future. Saturn closely maintains earthly checks and balances by seeding conditions for choice that intrinsically foster intelligent creativity and growth. Although quite a taskmaster, Saturn blesses humanity with a “tough love” approach that is unyielding, yet instructive and shielding.

As the esoteric ruler of Capricorn and the hierarchical ruler of Libra, Saturn presides over law and economy, balancing fiscal inequities and evening out the playing field for all members of the human family. Only through the attributes of Libra—equality, reciprocity, and sharing—can the divine life be served in its highest expression.

The mission of Virgo is to carry out the work of nature by tending the forms that first nurture and then reveal the hidden Soul of all things. Essentially, “Virgo stands for the glorification of the material world that ultimately gives birth to the Christ principle.”⁷

Virgo pertains to health and healing, service and labor, and the work of purification and integration. The esoteric ruler of Virgo is the Moon, which highlights Virgo’s special relationship with Mother Earth. The genius and uniqueness of Virgo is that it creates form as well as kindling the life within the form, thus nourishing and energizing two lives simultaneously. Virgo

represents a place of quiet warmth where secrets are discovered and eventually brought to light. Through Virgoian powers of assimilation, Soul and body are related and melded together into one.

Virgo is a complementary earth placement for Saturn, laying emphasis on being grounded and practical and getting one’s house in order. Saturn in Virgo is a no-nonsense position that focuses on cleaning up messes, eliminating excess, and creating greater efficiency. It also invites deeper integration through a tendency to cohere and bring various threads and elements together in a meaningful whole.

Saturn in Virgo also brings a focus on the needs of the middle class and should foster a deeper appreciation for the power of working people to unite and organize around global problems and challenges. The growing frustrations of the middle class due to job losses, lack of work, poor work conditions, and the “bulk” workload they carry for the wealthy few will be more obvious throughout this period. Saturn in Virgo will adjust inequities in labor; and there will be a rise in meaningful service opportunities, illuminating a more wholesome model of global workforce development and utilization that regards the labor force as a great resource in the work of global healing, reconstruction, and restoration.

Saturn in Virgo will also serve to uncover and resolve inequities between “the haves and the have nots”—a trend that will continue over the next seven years while Saturn moves through the three middle signs (Virgo, Libra, and Scorpio) that preside over the middle class and focus on the common good. Striking examples of activities of Saturn in Virgo can be seen in the rising interest in ecology, sustainability, recycling, conscious living, and green initiatives such as the new “green collar economy”⁸ that offers a single solution to the two major global problems of environment and labor. At no time in history have we been more acutely aware of the relationship between our collective actions and inactions and their effects on the environment.

As the esoteric ruler of Virgo, the Moon fosters attention not only on Mother Earth but on global family issues such as health, diet, and sanitation. 2008 was the United Nations’ International Year

of Sanitation. The goal has been to raise global awareness about the 2.6 billion people without access to basic sanitation—and to reduce that number by half by the year 2015. Saturn in Virgo also focuses on large-scale health issues such as over-population, AIDs, tuberculosis, malaria, and starvation; and, conversely, over-consumption problems such as obesity, which is considered to be the greatest health issue in the Western world in the 21st century.⁹

Uranus in Pisces

*When Uranus draws into coalescence the currents of the subtlest energies, it may be said verily that Uranus confirms all manifested paths and that its currents impel evolution forward. Thus the currents of the luminaries quicken the march of events, and the spirit of Our Uranus accelerates the movement of the chain of evolution. Thus, acute are the angles of correlation. Powerful are the sun's rays at a direct angle, and likewise the attraction of Uranus. A fiery assimilation then takes place. It is a very serious time. Uranus is acting! We are preparing that step.*¹⁰

As the seventh planet from the Sun, Uranus expresses the incoming Seventh Ray that relates Spirit to matter in a powerful manner. As a transpersonal planet, Uranus is naturally group-oriented, group-conscious, and driven by group purpose. It is one of the three synthesizing planets, fostering greater inclusiveness and spiritual awareness. As one author suggests, “Uranus is the corrective force of Nature Herself.”¹¹

Uranus is both awakening and liberating, producing “those new conditions that will help the Soul of humanity to express itself more freely... It is the urge to better conditions.”¹² As the exoteric ruler of the Aquarian Age, it is enormously significant and peculiarly active at this time.

Astronomically, the planet Uranus distinctively rotates on its side, presenting each of its poles to the Sun at the same time in its irregular orbital movement. This places one hemisphere in the light and the other in the dark for long periods within its 84-year revolution around the Sun, thereby demonstrating its extraordinarily eccentric and surprising nature. Although often con-

sidered erratic, the purpose of Uranus is to revolutionize and upset the status quo; therefore, it governs transformational change, reversals, and those unexpected bolts out-of-the-blue that are wake-up calls to us.

The effect of Uranus can be exciting and stimulating, yet very destabilizing. As a transmitter of the First and Seventh Rays, Uranus is a grounding rod, boldly shattering established foundations and imposing a whole new rhythm and order.

The keynotes of Pisces are bondage, renunciation, sacrifice, and surrender. This surrender is not submission of one's individual will, but the surrender of identification with the lesser self which “arises out of the single ‘will’ expressed by the unified group field.”¹³ Pisces signals completion and the urge toward synthesis and spiritual understanding. As deep compassion and sensitivity toward suffering are keynotes of this sign, it expresses a universal spirit that is forgiving, yet intolerant of slights or harmfulness. It underscores our humanity and oneness.

We are told that the “highest aspect of Pisces that humanity can at this time in any way comprehend is that of Mediatorship. This is the energy of mediation, of right relationship,”¹⁴ which is the golden thread that connects and relates the higher and lower—as symbolized in the Piscean glyph of two fishes swimming in opposite directions connected by a line.

Uranus entered Pisces in March 2003 where it will remain until 2010. Uranus in Pisces stirs up the collective unconscious and brings all that is dark and hidden into the light. Much like Pandora's box, it releases pent up evils, ills, and burdens on the world—yet leaves in place a lifeline that is a strong thread of hope.

This evokes an interesting correspondence. A common symbol for hope is the rainbow that is formed by refractions of light (air-Uranus) on water (Pisces). “In the beautiful Eastern symbolism, ‘The Bridge of Sighs’ that links the animal world with the human world and leads all persons into the vale of tears, of woe, of discipline, and of loneliness, is rapidly being replaced by the radiant Rainbow Bridge, constructed by the persons who seek pure light. ‘They pass across the bridge into the Light serene that there awaits

them and bring the radiant light down to the human world, revealing the new kingdom of the Soul.”¹⁵

Pisces rules the “waters of life,” and Uranus in this sign creates instability, turbulence, and the perfect storm in which we must learn to “sink or swim.” We see visible effects of this in violent waters around the world—tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, and in the abuse of our oceans and ocean life. And we can see this vividly in the choppy waters of the astral plane and in the painful cries of the world’s oppressed and downtrodden.

Uranus in Pisces awakens us to deeper secrets and mysteries about life. It fosters spiritual exploration and promotes discoveries in new dimensions of inner and outer space that dramatically change our view of the universe and our relationship with it.

Uranus in Pisces will also advance the work of planetary redemption. In esoteric psychology we are told that “the Seventh Ray of Ceremonial Law and Order works through Uranus, which is today the transmitter of Sirian force via Pisces to the Hierarchy. From that ‘middle center,’ it passes to that sensitive band of disciples, aspirants, and workers to whose hearts and hands is committed the heavy task, incident to the reorganization and the rebuilding of the shattered world structure.”¹⁶

The Resolution of Saturn in Virgo Oppose Uranus in Pisces

*For some time the [Solar] Logos has turned Its attention to the Earth Scheme and to Saturn, whilst Uranus is receiving stimulation. Much is therefore accentuated, and increased evolutionary development is the consequence of this divine attention.*¹⁷

*Decisive manifestations will occur in the battle of Uranus with Saturn. Therefore, although many currents are difficult, they are of much benefit.*¹⁸

An opposition is an astrological aspect formed by two planets 180 degrees apart in opposite signs of the zodiac. As the word *opposition* conveys, the two planets involved are often antagonistic toward one another, creating

agitation and resistance. As a *relationship* aspect, the goal of an opposition is to resolve the apparent psychological discord between two planets so that their work can proceed unimpeded.

Effective conflict resolution usually begins with dialogue and acknowledgement. By airing differing objectives and viewpoints, overlapping interests and points of commonality begin to emerge that serve to create lines of interdependence, cooperation, and even agreement.

Under the strain of an opposition, a tug-of-war can ensue between the two planets involved, creating even greater tension and polarization that result in psychological problems of projection and blame, serving to further exacerbate the problem. It is easy to see and feel the negative effects of extremely polarizing conditions in hatred, wars, fanatical and extremist groups, political factions, and terrorism in the world; but we can also see this in our daily lives in simple and complex ways—in minor irritations, unresolved conflicts, blame, and unhealthy relationships.

Saturn and Uranus are by nature quite at odds. Saturn strives to materialize and concretize form, while Uranus seeks to shatter outworn forms. Saturn imposes boundaries, while Uranus is boundless. Saturn is predisposed to conservatism and convention, while Uranus is progressive and revolutionary. Uranus commands change, and Saturn resists it.

The incongruities and dissimilarities between these two planets are well known, but what may not be so apparent are their points of commonality. Especially significant at the moment is the fact that both Saturn in Virgo and Uranus in Pisces are in mutable signs and therefore are naturally more adaptable and malleable, creating greater ease, mutual interplay, and interdependence. Further, their mutability fosters an innate desire for change and greater flexibility that will prove quite valuable amidst the current cycle.

Both Pisces and Virgo express the Sixth Ray of Abstract Devotion or Idealism, which is one of the rays of attribute that is powerfully affecting the destiny of humanity at this time, fueling desire and the incentive toward spiritual aspiration. Furthermore, both Pisces and Virgo focus on service, which will be important in solving the

issues that face humanity at this time. Virgo highlights social services and the activity of serving one another; and Pisces involves higher, united service such as that of the New Group of World Servers.

As indicated, Saturn-Uranus oppositions are critical times of reckoning when we collectively face the results of our actions and inactions. Many identifiable crises are in progress: global warming, nuclear proliferation, wars, terrorism, and pandemics—all glaring reminders of where we are out of alignment and need to face reality. Each crisis will be an opportunity to atone, to salvage and rebuild in a more genuine way. The energy of Uranus and Saturn will surely be needed to tackle the immense problems we face. Both the intensity of will, innovative spirit, and brilliance brought by Uranus and the practicality, discipline, and hard work brought by Saturn are needed in this massive undertaking.

Philosophically, this is a time of discernment where we will be evaluating inconsistencies between the authentic and inauthentic parts of ourselves and within the society in which we live. It will be a time to dig deep and make adjustments in the world and in our lives to align with our core values.

The five exact oppositions of Saturn and Uranus that are involved create five distinct phases within the cycle. Generally, major aspects have three separate phases so this is not only unique but significant. The number five corresponds to the five kingdoms in nature, the five planetary centers, the five outer senses, and the fifth plane, or spiritual kingdom. Humanity passes into the fifth kingdom through the “transmutation of the discriminative faculty of mind”¹⁹; thus, this will be a time for greater discernment.

The first opposition was on Election Day in the United States on November 4, 2008. By all appearances, this day earmarked a global victory

for all people of the world. Their united will echoed in every corner of the Earth and, in the words of President-elect Obama, “I will never forget who this victory belongs to. It belongs to you. It belongs to you.”²⁰

This celebratory moment sets the stage for the next exact opposition on February 5, 2009 that will be an outgrowth of events that are building between November and February. There will be a large conjunction of planets in Aquarius, indicating the united will of the people to again be heard against the backdrop of global conditions and events. To offset the effects of an unstable economy and resulting destabilization, the gist of this period will be containment and “damage control.”

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The oppositional cycle will climax on September 15, 2009 at the exact mid-point of the complete Saturn-Uranus cycle that began on June 9, 1988. Events in September will be fueled by two summer eclipses and Pluto turning direct just days prior to the actual opposition. There will be multiple, significant oppositions and squares at play, indicating complex challenges, tension and conflict, and a natural inclination to project blame. Many things will come to light, and it will be an in-

tense time with the possibility of open conflict. The Sun will be at 22 degrees Virgo conjunct Saturn and oppose Uranus. The keyword for this particular degree is *resoluteness* so it will be important to remain steadfast despite outer events.

The fourth opposition will take place on April 26, 2010. It will be the last opposition in the signs of Virgo and Pisces, bringing certain aspects of the oppositional impact to closure and alleviating some of the strain of the previous fifteen months. Having learned important lessons and acted upon our understandings, humanity will be able to begin to plan for the future with a more comprehensive point of view.

The fifth and final oppositional impact will occur on July 26, 2010, with Saturn at 0 degrees Libra and Uranus at 0 degrees Aries, the signs of their respective Soul rulerships. Zero degrees of any cardinal sign corresponds to the seasonal equinox and solstice points that are the natural vertical and horizontal axes of the zodiacal wheel and are natural points of renewal and new beginnings.

2010 will be a harbinger of 2012, the infamous end of the Mayan calendar. 2012 involves a close conjunction of the northern hemisphere Sun at the winter solstice with the crossing point of the Galactic equator and ecliptic—an event that will not be repeated for thousands of years.

This entire period will be supported and augmented by other planetary placements. Pluto's ingress into Capricorn in late November 2008 is now shifting the overall emphasis to getting back to basics, simplicity, frugality, and grassroots efforts that will make a world of difference in simple but profound ways.

Jupiter will move into Aquarius, its Soul position, in early January 2009, where it will remain all year. Jupiter is very strong in this position, encouraging brotherhood and love for humanity that will magnetically attract better solutions for the upliftment and good of the whole. Notably, all three transpersonal planets are in transpersonal signs at this time, vitalizing spiritual realms and the subtle dimensions of human experience.

Conclusion

Major planetary aspects create broad, sweeping changes in humanity and the world in which we live. Focusing on the larger trends and cultivating a wider point of view will serve to orient us to the overarching evolutionary tide. Remember that “breadth of vision, inclusiveness of understanding, and a widened horizon are the preliminary essentials to all work under the guidance of the Hierarchy of adepts.”²¹

Besides maintaining a spiritual practice, what else can we do of a practical nature? Attempt to establish win-win situations. Tune your mediation skills and be a bridging agent of change. Work cooperatively and co-creatively. Take stock of your life and “sharpen your sword” with

greater simplicity, discipline, and efficiency. Live more consciously. Take into account that little things can have an enormous impact on the planet. Renew and update your relationship with inner and outer power and authority and take action in alignment with your core values. Live leaner, give more, and make better use of your time. Assume greater responsibility for yourself, intentionally face your fears, and embrace the evolutionary changes.

This is a time for innovation and enduring change, a time to break free of limiting conditions. These are the times we have been waiting for. This is destiny. Despite the apparent darkness, doom, and gloom, it is the perfect moment: a time to align ourselves, a time to shift the paradigm. Much like the Sixties, 2008 through 2012 will be a momentous, historical time when humanity will turn the page of history. If we move forward strategically over the next four years, we will lay the perfect foundation for what is yet to come.

¹ Helena Roerich, *Infinity: Book I* (New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1930), 343.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 23.

³ Fritjof Capra, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone? Reflections on the Spirit and Legacy of the Sixties*, 12/01/02. Available at <http://www.fritjofcapra.net/articles120102.html>.

⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 284. Gender neutral terminology has been substituted by the Technical Editor in this quote as well as in the subsequent quotes.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. I* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1936), 23.

⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 105.

⁷ Marcia Moore and Mark Douglas, *Astrology: The Divine Science*, (Able Trust, 1978), 702.

⁸ Van Jones, *The Green Collar Economy* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

⁹ <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=2318>

¹⁰ Roerich, *Infinity I*, 334.

¹¹ Robert Wilkinson, *Aquarius Papers* (2007). Available at <http://www.aquariuspapers.com/>.

¹² Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 138-139.

¹³ Bruce Lyon, *Group Initiation* (White Stone Publishing, 2003), 59.

¹⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 444-445.

¹⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 408.

¹⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 445.

¹⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1925), 357-358.

¹⁸ Roerich, *Infinity I*, 356.

¹⁹ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 335.

²⁰ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/05/AR2008110500013.html>

²¹ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1934), 102.