

## **CASSANDRA, NARCISSUS & JUST TOO MANY GODS: or What to Make of Planetary Configurations....or Not**

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Let's face it. Cassandra was a drama queen, always ranting something or other about a tragedy and then crying out, "I told you so! I told you so!"

Okay, maybe she was right about the Trojan War, but hey, wasn't there an upside to that too? So negative she was, and all that wasted worry!

Actually, I think I saw her at UAC.

So many astrological eyes and countless astro-website are targeted on August 7, 2010, as the new Doomsday, when the transiting T-square of Saturn, Uranus and Pluto in the cardinal signs gets triggered for a few hours by the Moon, and turns it into a Grand Square. Additionally, Venus and Mars will be in Libra, and even Jupiter gets into the act from Aries. To boot, the Sun is at the World Axis that day!

Isn't it comforting to know when to expect D-Day....or, really, to be under the illusion that one can know when to expect an exact day of doom.

Thank goodness we won't have to live too long with the particular disaster that will come with this major configuration, since the end of the world follows soon after then the Mayan calendar ends in 2012. I only hope I can pay off my mortgage by then; I don't want to go into my next life owing anything to Chase Bank.

Perhaps it is not the Cassandra in us that needs to predict such catastrophes after all, but rather the Narcissus. In other words, that part of us, astrologers, that thinks the complicated planetary configurations and ingresses of our contemporary times have never before taken place in history, and that we are the first to experience such celestial dramas.

In actuality, as recently as circa 1931, there was a similar configuration involving Pluto in Cancer and Saturn in Capricorn with Uranus in Aries at the apex of a T-Square. And okay, so it was the heart of the Great Depression, but it wasn't all bad. The Empire State Building went up and the notorious Jimmy Walker went down.

What also happened in that year was the birth of Andy Warhol. He, of course, went on to revolutionize the course of popular culture.

Harvey Milk was born then too and he led a revolution of another sort.

So was Stephen Sondheim and he reinvented musical theatre, America's only original cultural form.

Ray Charles was born in the midst of that T-Square, as was Mike Nichols, Tom Wolfe, Harold Pinter, Clint Eastwood and Francois Truffaut, all groundbreakers in their fields and known for their lasting impact on generations. Neil Armstrong, Edward Kennedy and James Dean, all-American boys of various kinds, all share in the T-Square, and the all-American ladies include Elizabeth Taylor, Barbara Walters and Sandra Day O'Connor. The list goes on and on.

These lives and their works are obvious embodiments of this configuration, i.e., working within the confines of an established form, but furthering it by transcending its limits, thereby reinventing it.

Indeed, when major planetary configurations transit through the heavens, times are hard and our souls are tried. They certainly symbolize trends, and often, but not always, events; but we must be very cautious about jumping to conclusions in predicting such catastrophic events out of our personal Cassandra madness or a Narcissistic need for importance.

We see these trends embodied in the individuals who are born during these configurations, and especially those, whose personal planets interact with the configurations, will become spokespeople for their generation.

Conversely, we see “interesting” deaths, which are the ends of eras, as represented by planetary configurations too. For instance, 1930-32 saw the death of Florenz Ziegfeld. Isn't it interesting the grand impresario of Vaudeville would die just as the talkies became well-established and took over the theatres....and audiences!

Other such significant deaths of this time include Thomas Edison, George Eastman, Melvin Dewey, D.H. Lawrence and Mother Jones. Innovators were born and innovators died.

Furthermore, and most important, before Cassandra jumps to those terrifying conclusions about a single configuration, we should see such a configuration in the bigger picture of cycles. Any one transiting aspect is a result of the previous version, i.e., an opening square is born out of the conjunction between the two; similarly, that square sets the stage for the opposition that is yet to come; and the opposition leads to the closing square, which sets up the balsamic phase, out of which emerges the new conjunction. And those are the just the hard aspects in a cycle! The soft aspects should be considered too, even though they might not be as obvious.

By the way, in further answer to Narcissus, the 1930's were not even the first time to see a T-Square of Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto. The configuration also took place in the mid-1870's! That variation gave birth to the likes of Albert Schweitzer, D.W. Griffith, Ravel, Rilke, Mann, Aleister Crowley and, the astro-beloved, Carl Jung. That's some list of who's who! The aforementioned interpretation, regarding form, furthering and reinvention, is apparent in the work of these lives too.

And speaking of the late 1800's, let's look at another configuration, one, which might boggle our minds, is the conjunction of Neptune and Pluto. It took place in the last degrees of Taurus and passed into Gemini. In its early stages, we see the likes of Albert Einstein, Paul Klee, Helen Keller and Alice Bailey. Talk about a Plutonian transformation of our Neptunian forces!

Interestingly, as Jupiter and Saturn entered into Taurus, the orb between Neptune and Pluto narrowed, and then we see the births of Picasso, Woolf, FDR, Joyce, Barrymore, Stravinsky, Goldwyn and Giraudoux. Not even first names are needed to identify them!

As the conjunction moved out of orb, but still in aspect of a generation, we see the births of Kafka, Truman, Modigliani, Eleanor Roosevelt, Chagall, Eugene O'Neill, Nijinsky, Charlie Chaplin, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Mae West, and yes, Adolf Hitler.

Living through this decade might not have been easy, but oh, what it gave rise to....and who, especially in that Neptune-Pluto kind of way!

Just when some of these names were making, well, their names in the world in the heat of World War II in the early 1940's, another gathering of planets took place in late Taurus and early Gemini.

Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus were weaving and bobbing in and out of soft and hard aspect with Neptune and Pluto, making for the births of all four Beatles, Simon & Garfunkel, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Talk about the spokespeople of a generation!

Then, the late 40's saw the conjunction of Saturn and Pluto in Leo, making for a generation of eternal youth, as represented by someone like Bill Clinton. And the noteworthy deaths, which are symbolized by this conjunction, included Gandhi, Fiorello LaGuardia, Henry Ford, Ettore Bugatto, Al Capone, and Jimmy Walker. However, a more interesting parallel during this period is the birth of Steven Spielberg and the death of Louis Lumiere, father of early cinema.

Moving on to the early 1950's, Christopher Reeves is a good example of the Saturn-Neptune-in-Libra-square-Uranus-in-Cancer group, the peak of America's move to the cushy, comfy suburbs, only to discover through disillusionment that life is hard and meant to be much more meaningful than comfortable. In other words, life is not a Doris Day movie. Ironically, though, just weeks before Reeves' birth, was the wedding of Jackie and Jack Kennedy as well as the deaths of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

Other deaths that were well represented by this configuration include John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Eva Peron, George Santayana and Joseph Stalin.

A little off the topic, but irresistible to mention as a manifestation of this configuration is the sex change operation of Christine Jorgensen. And who says astrology doesn't work!

The mid-1960's, of course, saw, not "the" most, but "a" most interesting configuration of the century, indicating the chaotic, but creative, trend of the Counter-culture Revolution: the conjunction of Uranus and Pluto in Virgo, opposite Saturn and Chiron in Pisces, and at their peak, Jupiter entered into a T-square from Gemini.

At the height of this T-square in 1966, Walt Disney died, signifying the end of an era in movie-making, and giving rise to the wave of the New American Cinema that was to follow in the late 60's and early 70's. With all due respect to Walt, this is an excellent example of the sweeping transitions in social trends that come with major configurations.

Have we have seen the most representative of this T-square yet? I'm not sure, but keep an eye on Brooke Shields because her personal planets are tied in with that major configuration. Ridiculous, you say? Hey, O.J. Simpson is a free man, Arnold Schwarzenegger is governor of California, and George W. Bush became President of the United States, not once, but twice. So, ya never know what could happen!

Should astrologers use our Promethean abilities to see into the future? Absolutely! However, we should also use our Epimethean responsibilities to learn from the past. And most of all, we should use our self-awareness to keep from projecting our own personal dramas onto the collective.

Ultimately, whether we like it or not, astrologers and the like are marginalized in Western society. We might just have to accept that. Such dramatic predictions from planetary configurations are overcompensation for feelings of being diminished, and they are not going to win us social respect and position. They will only present us as the foolish Cassandra's that society already thinks we are.

Instead, our priority needs to be holding true to the integrity of astrology in our work.

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