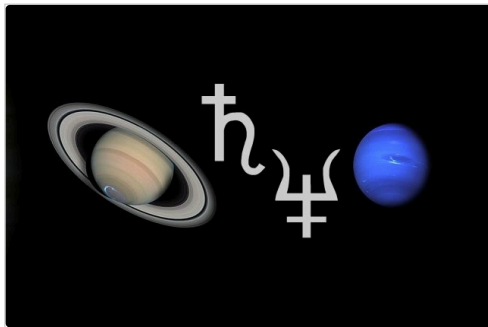


Saturn, Neptune and A New Look at Outer Planet Retrogrades

by Eme Kilkenny

The interpretation of retrograde planets - especially the outer planets - can pose issues in terms of getting to the essence of what is happening, what it means and how to utilise the period for further awareness on both the personal and collective levels.



Saturn and Neptune

Source: [0fjd125gk87](#) from [Pixabay](#), edited to suit purpose.

Saturn and Neptune together have an essential role in resolving how meaningful our life is on Earth. Once the resolution of these two planets is understood the meaning and purpose of Uranus and Pluto falls into place. The timing of when such contemplation and realisation is optimised is detailed in this text where a new look at retrogrades is proposed.

The outer planets - Uranus, Neptune and Pluto - cannot be fully understood solely within the context of this worldly dimension. They are our passport to awakened consciousness. Understandably, that attainment is highly conditional upon a deep attunement to the subtle layers of energy that enable awakening.

The barrier to pass through is Saturn. Saturnian energy on Earth is fundamental to all levels of manifested life - incarnation, physical forms, the world of things, structures and the nature of surface level reality here on Earth. This very primary energy that corresponds to our experience of life on Earth provides the orientation we have to life - for many that perspective simply means an abundance of things to engage with or possess - due to the mental conditioning that accumulates once we take form on Earth.

The more we are conditioned by Saturn and attached, absorbed and psychologically-bound to the physicality of life, including the addictions to ever increasing production and consumerism, the harder it is to access the meaning and function of Saturn's complementary opposite: Neptune.

The same unconscious resistance arises through Saturn when trying to incorporate the universal meaning of Uranus and of Pluto.

Saturn is form. Neptune is formless.
Saturn is manifest. Neptune is unmanifest.
Saturn is structure. Neptune is void.
Saturn is particle. Neptune is wave.

Whether at the surface or subatomic level, these two energies are in dynamic interplay just like Yin and Yang. Inseparable. Each containing a portion and potential of the other. Each requiring the other to attain their own higher vibrational potential.

By resisting the Neptunian dimension of awareness our dominantly Saturn-based life on Earth inherently features multiple signs of Neptunian distress: addiction, delusion, deceit, corruption, escapism in multiple forms. What is being overlooked and denied is our ongoing need and capacity for the oceanic experience from which we emerged - our state of being prior to incarnation: a non-visible, non-physical dimension where there is no separation and there is no body. We are embedded in the universe's field of potentiality prior to conception. This is a domain that is pure consciousness. And this is both from where we emerge and where we return to. This is the oceanic Neptune on an incomprehensible scale.

Humans need considerable transition time between the formless state and readiness for life on Earth and many challenges can arise in the transformation period we call gestation. The energy of Saturn is involved whenever form is being constructed. Miscarriage, abortion, defects due to genetic or chromosomal abnormalities, premature delivery as well as traumatic imprints from the mother's experiences during pregnancy are examples that either terminate the new life or leave residual challenges ranging from mild to extreme. This reflects that the transition process from formless to form is not only extremely complex but also very vulnerable to any other significantly challenging energy during gestation or birth - such as Uranus or Pluto - that might be an aggravating factor interfering with the naturally developing energies.



Saturnian achievement

Source: [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#).

The impact of the Saturnian imprint on worldly life evokes the worship of form, structure, organisation, ambition and climbing the ladder. High achievement, success, status, reputation and social authority as typically valued by the professional sector are embraced by the goal-oriented person who is in resonance with Saturn - but attaining those experiences in life is clearly no guarantee of happiness. And what happens to those with the will but no means no support, no network, no family funds to get onto and climb the ladder? Saturn like any planetary energy delivers a range of satisfaction levels but even those at the peak can ask "What else?" Those down off the ladder are more prone to the difficulties and challenges relating to not fitting into society's success model. When experienced as a negative influence, Saturn manifests as being surrounded by problems: tough people, harsh conditions, poverty or hardship, limitations, obstructions, restrictions, delays, difficulties, feeling excluded, low self esteem, frustration - a whole lot of suffering wearing many forms, many faces.

Those who cannot conform or succeed in the Saturnian model of good citizenship (which dominates much of the world irrespective of political ideologies) not only fall prey to the negative manifestations of Saturn - in this paired relationship the negative faces of Neptunian energy are also quick to arise.

Immense suffering is also evoked due to alienation from the essential awakened Neptunian experience that is out of reach when living a life mentally conditioned (by family, community, society) which values highly the ambitions of Saturn but leaves little space for the deeply peaceful.

That vacuum - where the orientation towards Neptune as a supportive structure in mind and consciousness does not exist or is undeveloped - typically drives the pursuit of proxies...the drink and drugs and behavioural addictions, especially which have some capacity to numb, to provide escape and to evoke a temporary altered reality. The alteration of mind associated with addiction eventually expresses as various types of mental disorder, but addiction both arises from and gives rise to disorders of mind.

On top of what already permeates our world the Covid pandemic has exposed the mind altering effects of fear and panic related to Thoughts. History has recorded various mass hysteria events afflicting humans - the common denominator being that very nonsensical ideas can infiltrate and be reinforced by groups or communities despite there being no rational evidence to support those beliefs.

Negative or *deeply unconscious* states of Neptune are involved in mass and individual cases of delusion, in lies, deceit and fraud - these being some of the lower vibratory expressions where the vessel (person) has come loose from the anchor (the origin state of consciousness).

The clarity of awareness and compassionate orientation of the highly developed Neptunian have a global role model in the widely appealing Tibetan Living Buddha - the Dalai Lama - whose title references oceanic consciousness.



Dalai Lama

Source: *christopher*, CC BY 2.0 , via Wikimedia Commons

But such attunement is rarely encountered in this world. We are far more exposed to the fear, panic, anxiety at the core of Neptunian mental distress - the alienation profile where we are estranged from we know not what. The same symptoms are at the core of the burnout experienced by the overworked Saturn type. In both situations - whether dysfunctional Neptunian or dysfunctional Saturnian - the antidote is to build a well developed Neptunian consciousness.

Saturn's developmental qualities are needed to pass through to the higher consciousness on offer when Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are to be integrated at their most subtle and aware levels. Saturn's key role is reflected in the way in which challenges and sources of suffering are managed. Failure after failure at meeting life's standardised milestones is understandably perceived as a difficulty and a source of deep distress when experienced within the worldly mental framework - but the sheer amount of pressure delivered by such repeated experiences is what compresses carbon into a diamond: pushing a person from despair through to higher consciousness due to a breaking down of the barriers and resistance that constrain such development. The Saturnian energy has to submit to a higher vibratory version of itself.

The payoff is being able to live harmoniously in the Saturn based world, while functioning from the bigger picture Neptunian perspective.

Neptunian development requires the best traits that can be acquired through a Saturnian orientation: time, hard work, dedication, commitment, endurance in order to structure into consciousness the primacy of our fundamental orientation: that our purpose is collective, not individual, and this process proceeds and evolves through attuned awareness, not thought. Cosmic-level consciousness of a Neptunian type opens up capacities for transcending the limitations of the Saturnian physical domain laws of physics.

Harnessing optimal Neptunian energy is not simply expressing wise compassion and strong humanitarian values while briefly in the world of form. It is a level of consciousness that allows the knowing that we all derive from a unified source and that our origin is embedded in a vast field of energy that is literally the fabric of the universe and sustained by its creator - consciousness itself (to which many personifications and names have been applied). It is where we come from and where we go to. It is where we have some access to when we sleep and when in the womb. It means we are all capable of consciously functioning in this world as vessels that contribute to the purpose of consciousness: meaningful evolution.

Though the interplay of Saturn and Neptune qualities is the deal when following this course of development, the energies of Uranus and Pluto through their processes of disruption, change and transformation play undeniably powerful roles in breaking down our resistance to the wholeness and integration offered by Neptune and then delivering a new way of being on this Earth.

Clearly it is very important to have a means of tracking or tracing the processes that are on offer. Astrology is the only system that offers the tools, timing and insights needed. Multiple approaches exist. An array of techniques. But there is much to be gained from the simplicity of fundamentals. The holographic capacity of astrology means that the same information is replicated in multiple locations...no need to visit all of them. Being lost in mind, in information is not the pathway to the awakened spacious consciousness. Go deeply not widely.

We each have a relationship with the transcendent planets Uranus, Neptune, Pluto. The everyday worldly contexts and typical personal expressions of each of them are revealed astrologically and provide some clues as to the potential in this life to get closer to the subtle levels of experience. If any of these three are positioned in the 3rd, 9th or 12th houses, then there is *capacity of mind* to integrate the concepts of that planet. In the 2nd house, there is *capacity to transcend the physical in favour of the metaphysical*. If the Sun is ruled by one of the three, look also to the house where Leo sits. If one of the three sits in its own house - Neptune in 12, Uranus in 11, Pluto in 8 then that is a *strong potential for activation of the essential principles*:

Neptune has been adequately detailed.

Uranian collective consciousness developed in this world is reflective of shared origins and embedded connections on the level of pure energy. The non-physical Uranian method is through *transfer of information, mind to mind or consciousness to consciousness* through the energy fields.

The **Plutonian** drive is to continually *evolve* all expressions of energy, whether physical or metaphysical, and this includes consciousness.

Tracking the processes offered personally and collectively involves not only transits through the chart. It is also important to focus down on time periods of optimum attunement.

PART II

Retrogrades and Optimising Attunement

Conceptualising outer space and even our tiny galaxy can be challenging, but the mathematical elegance of planetary movements provides us with the patterns which point to periods of immense importance.

In this section, the orbits of the three outer planets are taken as the key sources of development: we know that they will continually make aspects to the Sun - in effect mirroring the solar-lunar cycle starting with the "New Moon", Planet conjunct Sun.

In 2022 these cycles begin:

Pluto conjunct Sun - Jan 16

Neptune conjunct Sun - March 13

Uranus conjunct Sun - 5 May

Though many angles/aspects arise after this position, the next significant angle of Planet to Sun in the context of this enquiry is at 90°. This square angle is significant, being the beginning of the outer planet slowdown before aligning with Earth.

Within 13 days (Uranus), 12 days (Neptune), 11 days (Pluto), the outer planets will reach exact stationary retrograde, an even slower passage is underway.

Retrograde proceeds to a key juncture:

77 days later (Uranus)

81 days later (Neptune)

90 days later (Pluto)

		CONJUNCT SUN		
SQUARE SUN				SQUARE SUN
	STATION-R		STATION-D	
		OPPOSITE SUN		

The diagram identifies 6 locations within the outer planet orbit of the Sun. These positions create an identifiable focal location, which serves to unify the meaning and effects of the planetary cycle in question.

Source: Eme Kilkeny

After this period, the Planet has reached astronomical opposition to the Sun from the Earth-based perspective. The planet is under full solar illumination. This issue of illumination has much significance as detailed by Rudhyar in reference to the phases of the Moon - with the opposition, Full Moon being full illumination from the Earth perspective. The planet is perigee Earth, because Earth has orbited in perfect timing to align with the direct energy field pulsating between the Sun and the outer planet.

Earth is passing through that field over a number of days - perhaps in range for a week with 3.5 days either side of exact alignment, just as the Moon has a waxing and waning window of effect.

At this "Full Moon" type position involving Sun, Earth, Planet, the convergence of midpoints occurs: The midpoint between the Planet's 2 stations - retrograde and direct - and the midpoint between the two Planet square Sun locations - one before retrograde slowdown and one after direct motion.

In astronomy these squares are called the Eastern and Western Quadrature positions.

At opposition, the planet in transit also inherently evokes the signatures in effect at the prior conjunction, so the date of that occurrence and events of that period have resonance with the squares, stations as well as the opposition in that particular cycle.

In referencing the principles of connection and wholeness, the resonances between different periods in time can be revealed.

The period from first square of Planet to Sun to last square, which includes the stations and opposition, is proposed here to be the focal period of transit - within which the planetary energies during retrograde and while opposite the Sun are most strongly transmitted to our consciousness - integrating as well the initial event in the cycle - the Planet-Sun conjunction.

The significance of the Earth passing through such an intensified energy field during the outer Planet opposition to the Sun must warrant recognition that we Earth dwellers are exposed with arguably greater intensity of energy to significant incoming energies from the planet in question which can be accessed on various levels - with the most subtle being on offer for those ready to respond.

For even further clues, whether related to the everyday worldly or more awakened consciousness, there are even more resonant positions that can be reflected on or anticipated:

For example, 2022 Neptune opposition Sun, 24 Pisces, Sept 17, resonates with same degree April 14, 2022 and Feb 14, 2023.

Likewise any of the key positions - squares and opposition to Sun and stations can be used in this way to locate prior and upcoming resonant activation points that have meaning for the cycle underway.

2022		NEPTUNE	
		CONJUNCT SUN	
		13 MARCH	
16 JUNE			14 DEC
SQUARE SUN	28 JUNE	DEC 3	SQUARE SUN
	STATION-R	STATION-D	
		16 SEPT	
		OPPOSITE SUN	

The Neptune example for 2022 is illustrated here

Source: Eme Kilkeny

Quick sketch View: Neptune 2022

An overhead and highly compressed view with the central Sun around which the orbital planes of the planets radiate. The key section section illustrated can be seen to directly align from the opposition position to the conjunction position on the far side of the Sun.

Outer planet locations in the focal range 2022:			
2022-2023	URANUS	NEPTUNE	PLUTO
Conjunct Sun	MAY 5	MARCH 13	JAN 16
Square Sun	AUG 11	JUNE 16	APRIL 18
STAT Retro	AUG 24	JUNE 28	APRIL 29
RETRO Opp Sun	NOV 9	SEPT 17	JULY 20
STAT Direct	JAN 22	DEC 3	OCT 8
Square Sun	FEB 4	DEC 14	OCT 19

Source: Eme Kilkeny

Expanded Detail: Repeat Timing of Long Duration

The outer planets Jupiter to Pluto, despite their widely ranging orbital durations, conform to a cyclic pattern lasting 6 months during their orbit of the Sun. It is clear that long duration emphases arise, linking particular months with particular planets.

The time within the calendar year when the pattern begins depends on the sector of the zodiac passed through when the Planet forms a conjunction to the Sun.

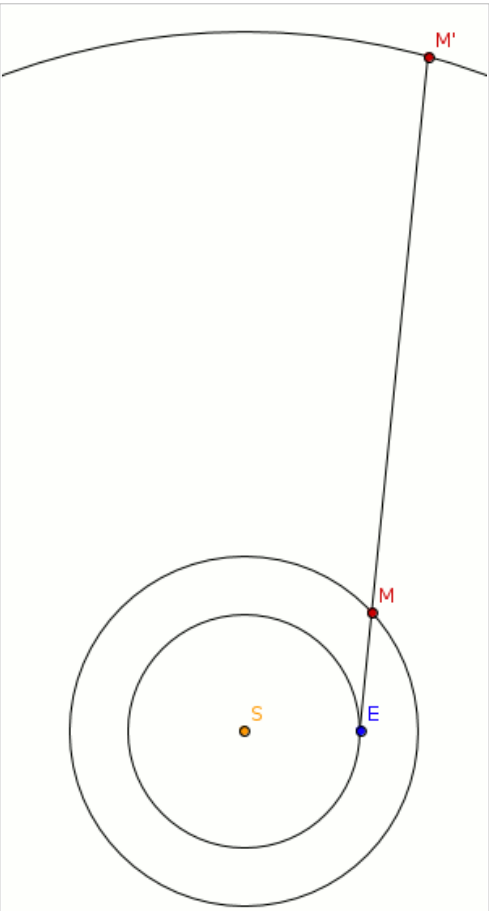
- The next important position is the month when the planet forms a square to the Sun.
- The midpoint of the pattern (which ranges from square to square) is the opposition.
- This location holds a lot of power - being also the midpoint of the two stations and activating the reflex position, the Planet-Sun conjunction.

To visualise this return again to the diagrammatic layout:

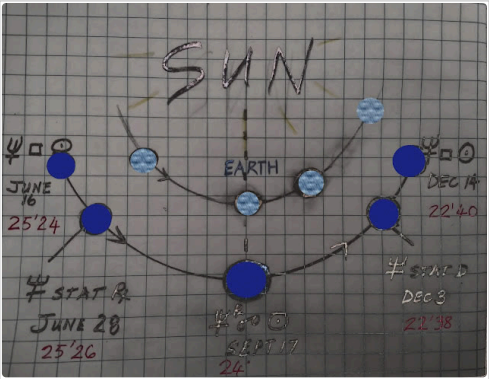
All 5 outer planets follow the same pattern, emphasising the midpoint opposition, which occurs 3 months after the first square in the sequence.

The three most outer planets emphasise a particular annual period continually over a very extended time frame compared to that established by Saturn and is much less relevant for faster-moving Jupiter.

Looking at the proposed location for high level activation - the Planet-Sun opposition - the indicated month features annually as a significant activation period for the planet noted in the given time frame. Being part of a cycle a shift in time eventually occurs.



Animation of a Mars retrograde phase
Schematic animation of Mars retrograde. As Earth (E) passes a superior planet such as Mars (M), the superior planet (M') will temporarily appear to reverse its motion across the sky.
Source: Frog23, CC BY-SA 3.0 , via Wikimedia Commons



The Neptune-Sun conjunction March 13, 2022 is located at the far side region of the orbit.
Source: Eme Kilkeny

Resonant Effects:

TABLE 2			
PLANET	PROPOSED	RESONANT	DATES
URANUS	MAY 7 2022 =	JAN 22 2023	
	MAY 9 2022 =	FEB 4 2023	
	JUNE 12 2022 =	NOV 9 2022	
NEPTUNE	APRIL 14 2022 =	SEPT 17 2022	
	NOV 5 2022 =	MARCH 13 2022	
	DEC 31 2022 =	MARCH 13 2022	
PLUTO	FEB 13 2022 =	JULY 20 2022	
	SEPT 1 2022 =	JAN 16 2022	
	NOV 13 2022 =	JAN 16 2022	

Dates re planet locations listed under "Resonant" may reveal meaningfully connected activation at the proposed dates. Both matched dates share the same astrological degree.
Source: Eme Kilkeny

		CONJUNCT SUN	
SQUARE SUN			SQUARE SUN
	STATION-R		STATION-D
		OPPOSITE SUN	

Source: Eme Kilkenney

The key point is that there is a particular month each year that stands out for each of the 3 outer planets and that emphasis lasts for a long duration.

Uranus (Taurus-Gemini) - **November** - 2020-2027 - **8 years**
Neptune (Pisces-Aries) - **September** - 2015-2028 - **14 years**
Pluto (Capricorn-Aquarius) - **July** - 2013-2028 - **16 years**

This signalling points to opportunity: right timing to deal with any challenges that reflect Uranus, Neptune or Pluto in their highly activated months - or hopefully utilise best principles of the planet in question to evolve its expression personally as well as dispersed by your efforts within the collective.

The key month the Planet-Sun opposition occurs deserves significant observation but does not function independently of the timing of the 3 other locations (2 stations and Planet-Sun conjunction)

The energy not only focusses and expresses at the midpoint (Planet-Sun opposition). It is manifested strongly too at the Planet square Sun, which in the example of Neptune, links June and December to expressions when Neptune opposes the Sun in September. The Planet-Sun conjunction, which began the cycle (March in the example) is also inherently active through all key positions. The stations also converge and form a midpoint at the Planet-Sun opposition. Therefore a window (totalling at least a week and generally longer for the slowest planets) surrounding an exact retrograde or direct planetary station of the 3 outers can contain qualities of the Planet in a magnified internal or external expression.

In summary for Neptune 2022: *March, June, September, December* expect to be very connected in experiences and very activating of various Neptunian experiences. (Sun will be **mutable**)

In 2022, Jupiter features in the *same months as Neptune*, which is likely to create a double whammy amplification: spread and intensity (not good news re viral contagion)

Pluto in 2022 involves *January, April, July, October* (Sun will be **cardinal**)

Uranus in 2022-23 involves *May, August, November, February* (Sun will be **fixed**)

Period of Retrograde

The period of retrograde from station to station is highlighted at the midpoint, which is the Planet-Sun opposition. As shown above, a particular point in time is emphasised for each planet at that location. As detailed above, the midpoint also captures the points in time when the squares and the conjunction occur. All of the 6 time periods are meaningfully connected and are involved in an inward-outward cyclic flow of energy related to the transit of those 6 locations - not simply a singular activation of one point at a time. At any one point all others are enlivened in a dynamic flow pattern.

The benefits of the literal retrograde period e.g. Neptune 2022, June 28 to December 3 accrue from the slowing down of the planet during retrograde. This slow passage in the near Earth alignment allows for the deeper level and stronger transmission of the planetary energy as Earth passes through this energy field, with the Planet-Sun opposition point signifying that Earth is at the closest alignment with Planet to Sun and the Planet is perigee Earth.

In the context of time, when dissociated from our Earth-based (Saturn) construct - the linear aspect is removed. Non-linear time is the nature of time at the deeper levels of reality - the quantum domain (and the workings of astrology can be viewed as consistent with the qualities associated with quantum level behaviour).

In this way, events are not fixed to a singular time, and what we term future events can mirror what we term past events and there is influence in what we regard as both directions. The same language regarding time and location is non-applicable in quantum reality, and so in this example, activations at the key locations during the retrograde period are likely to be observable at any other of the past or future locations in the 6 point pattern diagram above.

In summary, the retrograde period offers high availability of incoming energy transfer from Planet in transit to human consciousness. Though reflections of this period are transmitted in advance as well as afterwards in linear time, the opportunity to utilise the retrograde period is not to be underestimated in value.

The involvement of the cardinal, fixed and mutable modes in the outer transits of this era means the full complement of ways of using energy is in the mix.

Managing Outer Planet Transits in the Focal Zone

Following the planet cycles as detailed above is not primarily a personalised exercise. It is not necessarily relevant that the planet makes personal aspects when at the locations of interest. This is an exercise related to the collective level of planetary influence, but of course the planets will position themselves in a potentially life-impacting location relevant to the personal natal chart, and if strong aspects are also made to personal factors, then a more personalised noticeable experience is offered.

To extend the template even further into finer observation:

- Note effects at the Planet-Sun conjunction and the Planet-Sun square. Through any themes detected anticipate the events that could repeat or extend at the station retrograde.
- Or look backwards: on or surrounding the exact stations look also for noted events already associated with the initial Planet-Sun conjunction, then the first square.
- All these observations can feed into understanding the important Planet-Sun opposition with Earth proximity
- Then that awareness can be applied in advance to the direct station and the final square of Planet-Sun.

This approach - aided by good diary notes - enables a far more wholistic integration of a planetary cycle when repeat themes - productive or difficult - can be understood and used as fuel for further conscious development.

Endnotes:

Illusion 1:

A static graphic representation of retrograde cannot do justice to the moving parts involved: both the planet in transit and the Earth location viewpoint are moving. For this reason, Neptune in Pisces can be conjunct the Sun in Pisces at roughly 23 Pisces in March 2022 but opposite the Sun 6 months later in September 2022 at 24 Pisces. This opposition is during retrograde. Neptune has already reached over 25 Pisces at the June 28, 2022 station retrograde, then by the point of reaching 24 Pisces again on Sept 17 (previously April 14), the September location of Earth is aligned with Neptune creating the viewpoint from Earth that Neptune in Pisces is exactly opposite the Sun - which is now in Virgo.

The key to understanding this more easily is that the Sun rotates but it does not transit the zodiac: it is Earth that transits the zodiac. The whole perception of a changing zodiac is all down to the moving viewpoint from Earth *while orbiting the Sun*. As observers on Earth the zodiac movement through the signs is just our changing view of the zodiac during our planet's annual journey around the Sun. Our Earth-based human capacity enabled the consciousness of the zodiac, but incomplete astronomical knowledge gave false attribution to the Sun as the locational guide to the changing zodiac - due to the observational illusion involved when viewing the zodiac from Earth. How Neptunian.

Illusion 2 and Graphic Representation:

Positional graphics show a compressed view of an outer planet in a particular period of orbit, which includes a conjunction to the Sun, a square to the Sun, a retrograde station, an opposition to the Sun, a direct station and a final square, before heading for another Planet-Sun conjunction. Earth is shown, because aside from heliocentric astrology, Earth is the basis for our human perspective of cosmic activity. Moving at a faster rate, Earth comes to catch up with the location of an outer planet and easily moves past its orbital location. Distance is irrelevant. During the period of experiencing this passing view from Earth over a period of months, the positioning of the outer planet is perceived as reversing backwards in zodiac degrees (like the illusion of a nearby car going backwards as you sail by) and is termed "apparent retrograde" for this reason. When the key positions in this sector of transit activity are noted, it is clear that a pattern exists: the central location of Planet retrograde opposite Sun is the midpoint of the pair of squares and the pair of stations. A mathematically elegant creation born of our Earth-based illusion!

Author's note:

Preparation and publication of this post took place under a sustained semisextile of Saturn (including when retrograde in Aquarius) and Neptune in 2022 (including when retrograde in Pisces) along with exact and tight conjunctions of Neptune to the natal Sun in that same time frame.