

# Thinking Outside of the Box - A Closer Look at Uranus-Mercury Aspects

by Ray Grasse

*Talent hits targets no one else can hit. Genius hits targets no one else can even see.*  
— Arthur Schopenhauer

My old friend, the dearly departed Carl Fitzpatrick, shared a helpful way of explaining something important about the meaning and influence of Uranus, and he did it by comparing its effects with those of Jupiter.

“Both planets have a quality of ‘expansion,’” he pointed out, “but in uniquely different ways.”

To explain that difference, for Jupiter, he used the example of 13th-century explorer Marco Polo. A daring Venetian, he traveled great distances and visited exotic cultures, which, for a person of that time, surely was extraordinary. With all that travel came an incredible expansion of his knowledge and a tremendous broadening of his horizons, which, quite possibly, was unprecedented for his time.

Yet, for all of that, his allegiance to his own Euro-Christian viewpoint was so fixed that he still regarded other cultures and their religions as fundamentally inferior to his own. Despite his expanded horizons, he was unable to step outside of his own ideological, ethnocentric perspective and see the intrinsic worth of other non-Christian cultures.

Compare that now to Uranus, Carl suggested. It expands one’s horizons too, but with the added ability to step *outside* one’s shoes and see other viewpoints as if from *their* shoes. Unlike Jupiter, Uranus has what I’ve often called a *decentralizing* effect — much in the same way that the discovery of Uranus forced astronomers to stand outside the old Saturn-bound view of our solar system. Said a little differently, Jupiter gives the ability to think *big*, whereas Uranus gives the ability to think *differently* — to see and do things outside the norm, outside the conventional.

At its most harmonious, that ability allows one to give birth to unique or unusual ideas and structures and come up with unorthodox solutions for problems that others simply can’t see. Uranus is unconventional and deeply independent. Thus, it is the planet most associated not just with outsiders or progressives — but with that thing we call “genius.”

On the negative side, though, it can think so *far* outside of the box that it can sometimes come off to others as crazy and shake things up to such a degree that it becomes a veritable wrecking ball to existing structures. On the personality level, Uranus, thus, may veer to the eccentric, weird, or downright anarchic. We’ve even witnessed a few political leaders in recent years with a dominant Uranus who’ve left a trail of wreckage behind, some of which could well take years or decades to repair, if ever. At this level, Uranus isn’t merely “independent” but more like an outlaw — e.g., Diamond Jim Brady, John Wayne Gacy, and Charles Manson all had strong Uranus–Mercury aspects. That alone doesn’t account for all their behaviors, to be sure, but it certainly contributed.

These Uranian qualities, both positive and negative, can act out when it comes into contact with *any* of the horoscope’s bodies or angles. For instance, when Uranus links to the Sun, it affects one’s professional status, general creativity, and ego-drives, causing one to work and create more independently; when in contact with Venus, it affects one’s love nature or economic attitudes; in relation to the Moon, it affects one’s emotions, close relationships, and domestic instincts — and so on.

What I’d like to focus on here is how this planetary energy specifically affects Mercury — the symbol of mind, communication, and thinking. As I think the following examples make clear, the influence of this combination makes a fascinating case study across different fields and perspectives. (1)

(A technical note: in terms of aspects, I’ve generally allowed for an orb of up to six degrees, though in most of these examples, it’s considerably less, and in a handful of cases, somewhat more. In those few instances involving inconjuncts or quincunxes (150° aspects) or semi-sextiles (30° aspects), I’ve allowed for a much tighter orb of two degrees or less.)

## Science, Mathematics, and Technology

In relationship with the planet Mercury, that Uranian ability to think outside of the box can be an especially productive tool for uncovering or understanding important truths about the cosmos. Following are just some of the thinkers who advanced the development of science and mathematics through the centuries:

Niels Bohr (conjunct), Johannes Kepler (conjunct), Margaret Mead (conjunct), Dmitri Mendeleev (conjunct), Louis Pasteur (conjunct), Max Planck (conjunct), Alessandro Volta (conjunct), Thomas Young (widely conjunct), Richard Feynman (sextile), Srinivasa Ramanujan (sextile), Edward Witten (sextile), Luigi Galvani (square), Kurt Gödel (square), Benoit Mandelbrot (square), Joseph Priestly (square), Claude Shannon (square), Alfred North Whitehead (square), Francis Crick (trine), Charles Darwin (trine), Paul Dirac (trine), Stephen Hawking (trine), Albert Einstein (inconjunct), John Carl Sagan (opposition), and Archibald Wheeler (opposition).

Uranus is also the planet most associated with technology and machinery, so we naturally find Uranus–Mercury connections in the charts of important innovators here as well, such as aviation pioneer Orville Wright (sextile), actress/inventor Hedy Lamarr (square), Elon Musk (square), rocket scientist and occultist Jack Parsons (square), Wilbur Wright (square), Ben Franklin (opposition), and Dutch inventor Boyan Slat (opposition).

## Politics

Uranus doesn’t simply involve an impulse toward innovation, although that’s true enough, but it often includes an awareness of broader social concerns. For example, on the more progressive and activist side of the spectrum — including ordinary citizens promoting “reform” agendas — we could cite such figures as Rosa Parks (conjunct), JFK (square), Robert F. Kennedy Sr. (square), filmmaker Michael Moore (square), Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (square), Andrei Sakharov (square), filmmaker Oliver Stone (square), singer Joan Baez (trine), LBJ (trine), Abraham Lincoln (trine), Bernie Sanders (trine), and Afghani activist Malala Yousafzai.

It would be wrong to think that Uranus always leans toward the left, however. On the other end of the political spectrum, we find figures like William F. Buckley (square), Dick Cheney (square), Ted Cruz (square), Bibi Netanyahu (square), Vladimir Putin (square), and Rush Limbaugh (opposition). In these cases, we’re not seeing the liberal qualities of Uranus so much as its more independent or sometimes extremist side, which can manifest through political ideologies of *any* sort, be they liberal or conservative.



Keep an open mind

Source: Aquarius: [ANDRI TEGAR MAHARDIKA](#) auf [Pixabay](#)

When it comes to true, die-hard revolutionaries, though, it's no surprise that Uranus–Mercury contacts are common in these charts as well. For instance, consider such figures as Emiliano Zapata (conjunct), Che Guevara (sextile), Napoleon Bonaparte (square), “Chicago 7” radical Jerry Rubin (square), Leon Trotsky (square), and Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa (square).

Speaking of revolutionaries, I was curious to see if there were any prominent Uranus–Mercury contacts in the charts of America’s “Founding Fathers” and their associates, since they were among modern history’s most famous exemplars. Though I expected to find some, I was frankly surprised by just how many there were, such as James Madison (conjunct), Paul Revere (conjunct), Samuel Adams (widely conjunct), Alexander Hamilton (sextile), Thomas Jefferson (sextile), George Washington (sextile), Martha Washington (inconjunct), and Benjamin Franklin (opposition). I have no doubt that a deeper dive into the horoscopes of Declaration of Independence signers would reveal quite a few more.

## The Arts

Though it's probably more natural to expect Uranus–Venus, Uranus–Moon, or Uranus–Neptune aspects in the charts of artistic innovators and “stars,” we find a surprising number of cases with Uranus–Mercury aspects, too. Why would that be? I'd suggest it's because creativity in any field — **not just** writing but also music, painting, dance, and cinema — involves an ability to think differently, not only in the conception of one's work but also in matters of self-promotion, marketing, or sometimes even personal fashion!

Some examples from the art and entertainment worlds are actor, activist, and filmmaker Sean Penn (conjunct), filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky (sextile), photographer Richard Avedon (square), Francis Bacon (square), pioneering surrealist Giorgio di Chirico (square), Alfred Hitchcock (square), Stanley Kubrick (square), Claude Monet (square), Auguste Rodin (square), Orson Welles (square), Jean-Michel Basquiat (trine), Andy Warhol (trine), Woody Allen (inconjunct), Lenny Bruce (inconjunct), David Lynch (inconjunct), Edvard “The Scream” Munch (opposition), and actress and producer Margot Robbie (opposition).

From the music world, we find figures like Taylor Swift (conjunct), Brian Eno (widely conjunct), Miles Davis (sextile), Mick Jagger (sextile), Prince (sextile), Igor Stravinsky (sextile), Chet Baker (square), Björk (square), Frédéric Chopin (square), Lady Gaga (square), Charles Ives (square), Justin Timberlake (square), Weird Al Yankovic (square), Roger Waters (trine), Jack White (trine), Buddy Holly (inconjunct), Eddie Van Halen (inconjunct), Jimi Hendrix (opposition), and Johnny Rotten (opposition).

Since it's an inherently Mercurial profession, it's natural to expect notable Uranus connections in the charts of writers and poets. That ability to think outside the box isn't simply an invaluable key for writers in coming up with unconventional ideas and perspectives, but also in helping to enhance their awareness of social issues and circumstances.

Some prime examples of this planetary combo, on either of those fronts, are investigative journalist Ronan Farrow (conjunct), Gabriel Garcia Márquez (conjunct), Whitley Strieber (conjunct), Paul Verlaine (conjunct), Charles Dickens (sextile), Herman Hesse (sextile), Henry Miller (sextile), Charles Baudelaire (square), Philip K. Dick (square), poet and independent Egyptologist Normandi Ellis (square), Norwegian novelist Knut Hamsun (square), Franz Kafka (square), Ursula K. Le Guin (square), “anomalist” writer Brad Steiger (square), “gonzo journalist” Hunter S. Thompson (square), Charles Bukowski (inconjunct), Sylvia Plath (inconjunct), Virginia Woolf (inconjunct), Arthur Rimbaud (opposition), Michael Crichton (opposition), John Steinbeck (opposition), and Oscar Wilde (opposition).

## History, Mysticism, Mythology, Philosophy, and Religion,

Here, as well, that Uranian talent — sometimes even genius — for perceiving things from unconventional perspectives shows itself in the lives of many key figures in history, mysticism, mythology, philosophy, and religion.

This ranges from more popular or mainstream figures like Joseph Campbell (square) to those on the more openly spiritual or mystical end of the spectrum, like famed yogi Ramakrishna (conjunct) and Kriya Yoga teacher Sri Yukteswar (conjunct), and Theosophical figures like William Quan Judge (conjunct), Alice Bailey (sextile), and Annie Besant (opposition). This list also includes Franz Hartmann (square), religious and esoteric scholar Richard Smoley (square), and Buddhist writer and explorer Alexandra David-Néel (trine), along with such controversial “outsider” figures as Aleister Crowley (square), David Icke (square), and Mormon founder Joseph Smith (square).

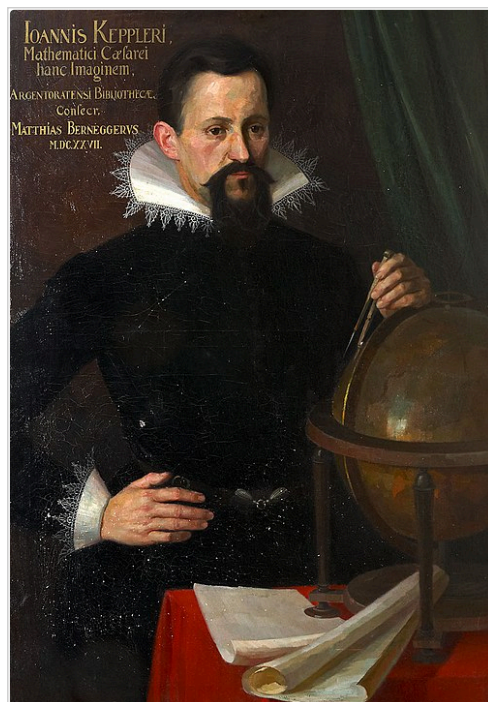
Especially noteworthy is how many historical figures, now regarded as transformative or even revolutionary in the history of philosophy, were born with notable Uranus–Mercury aspects. This includes John Locke (conjunct); Friedrich Engels (conjunct); Martin Heidegger (conjunct), who John David Ebert calls “the Picasso of philosophy”; Oswald Spengler (square); Alfred North Whitehead (square); Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (trine); Friedrich Nietzsche (opposition); and the French philosopher Voltaire (opposition).

When it comes to psychology and our understanding of the human psyche, we must add the towering figure of Sigmund Freud (conjunct) because his impact since the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899 has been as much on philosophy and global culture as on psychology. In turn, his foremost colleague and successor, C.G. Jung, was born with a tight semi-sextile, while arguably *his* foremost successor, James Hillman, was born with a tight conjunction. Radical thinkers, all!

## Media Celebrities

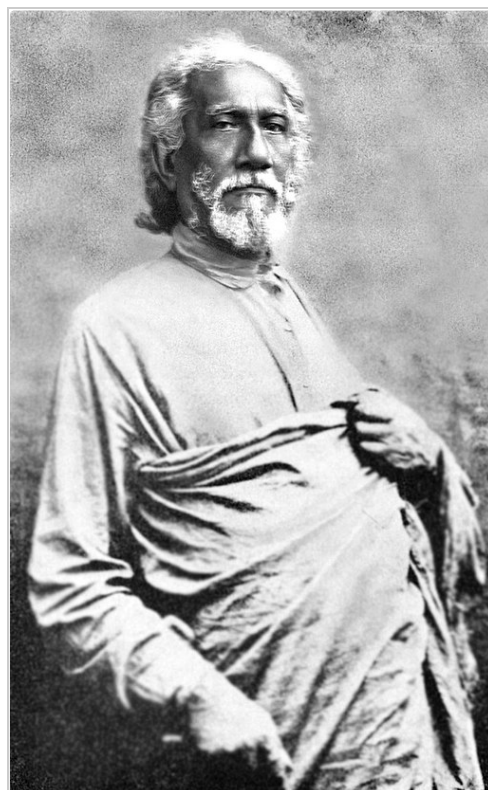
During my research, I was surprised by the sheer number of ultra-famous figures from contemporary pop culture who weren't necessarily notable for outstanding intellectual, spiritual, or artistic achievements, but whose charts featured prominent Uranus–Mercury aspects. Why might that be?

A possible explanation is that in our media-saturated age, a necessary key to fame and fortune is an ability to work with Uranian media. One must know how to promote oneself through the media — whether talk show appearances, social media posts, or interviews on the proverbial “red carpet” — otherwise, it's difficult, if not impossible, to become particularly famous or successful these days.



**Johannes Kepler, born with a Uranus–Mercury conjunction**

Source: August Köhler, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



**Kriya Yoga Swami Yukteswar Giri, born with a close**

Prominent Uranus–Mercury aspects are, thus, among those factors suggesting a connection to (and talent for) the media. Consider the following personalities, all just in the category of Uranus–Mercury conjunctions alone: Kevin Bacon, Jack Black, Matt Damon, Timothée Chalamet, Leonardo DiCaprio, Adam Driver, Jimmy Fallon, Tiffany Haddish, Kit Harington, Kim Kardashian, John Krasinski, , Gwyneth Paltrow, Florence Pugh, Keanu Reeves, Adam Sandler, Megan Thee Stallion, Gwen Stefani, Sophie Turner, and Trisha Yearwood.

**conjunction of Uranus and Mercury**  
Source: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Casting our gaze back a bit further, we might also include a few of those figures from past decades who have been influential in TV or radio, whose charts displayed notable Uranus–Mercury connections. These include pioneering broadcaster Edward R. Murrow (square); talk show host Jack Paar (square), liberal media personality Jon Stewart (square); radio, film, and TV genius Orson Welles (square); Johnny Carson (widely trine); Larry King (inconjunct); Dan Rather (inconjunct); Ted Turner (inconjunct); Oprah Winfrey (inconjunct); conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh (opposition); and “shock jock” Howard Stern (opposition).

## Astrologers

Last, but certainly not least, this survey wouldn’t be complete without a look at the role this planetary combo has played in the horoscopes of astrological practitioners or theorists throughout the years. While the birth data of many contemporary astrologers isn’t available online, the data I did find made for an interesting group, especially when coupled with well-known figures from earlier eras.

These include such individuals as Johannes Kepler (conjunct), William Lilly (conjunct), Glenn Perry (conjunct), Joan Quigley (conjunct), Ebenezer Sibly (conjunct), Sri Yukteswar (conjunct), *The Mountain Astrologer magazine* founder Tem Tarriktar (semi-sextile), Alice Bailey (sextile), Demetra George (sextile), Aleister Crowley (square), financial astrologer W. D. Gann (square), Manly Palmer Hall (square), Noel Tyl (square), Evangeline Adams (trine), André Barbault (trine), Stephen Arroyo (trine), Steven Forrest (inconjunct), Marc Penfield (inconjunct), Cyril Fagan (inconjunct), and Michel Gauquelin (inconjunct). And while US President Theodore Roosevelt wasn’t a professional astrologer himself, he was a vocal proponent of the discipline during his life and was born with an exact inconjunct between the two planets.

## Final Thoughts

While looking over all of the examples cited above, you may have noticed the seemingly disproportionate number of square (90°) aspects in many of these cases. Why would that be?

The answer is fairly simple. While squares are normally considered difficult or even “malefic,” they can be extremely constructive in several ways. One is that they involve and generate a huge amount of energy, far more than trines or sextiles — energy that can be necessary for manifesting ideas or projects in the real world.

In turn, precisely because the square aspect *is* innately more challenging or even frustrating, especially in youth, it essentially *forces* one’s attention onto a given area, skill, or challenge — which can ideally lead to mastery of that area. There is an element of drive involved with the square that isn’t experienced to quite the same degree with any other aspect, except perhaps the conjunction. As I heard an astrologer say many years ago,

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*If you hope to be successful at anything in this world, it’s probably best to incarnate with some strong squares in your chart!* ([2](#))

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But while it’s true that the “hard” aspects have more energy behind them, it’s important to stress that even the “softer” aspects (sextiles, trines, semi-sextiles, and inconjuncts) can play a critical role in helping anyone think “outside of the box,” whether they be a scientist, writer, revolutionary — or simply the average person on the street.

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### Notes:

[1](#) While researching this chapter, I came across quite a few instances of important innovators where I expected to see prominent Uranus–Mercury aspects — but didn’t. So, what might explain that? In many of those cases, I found a strong Uranus–Sun aspect instead. Some examples of that include Walt Disney (conjunct), test pilot Chuck Yeager (conjunct), Werner von Braun (tightly sextile), Nikola Tesla (sextile), scientist Richard Feynman (square), futurist Buckminster Fuller (trine), J. Robert Oppenheimer (tightly trine) — and many, many others. My own take on this? Simply, while there are subtle differences between the influence of those two planets (the Sun being somewhat more ego-involved in its desire to express that creativity more publicly), I think this speaks to the allied role they *both* play in creative innovation.

[2](#) When I showed a draft of this essay to a longtime colleague, he pointed out that at least 30–40% of all charts picked at random would likely have *some* aspect between Uranus and Mercury, so a selection of this sort isn’t terribly impressive from a statistical standpoint. I said I understood, but that I’m not trying to sway skeptics and disbelievers about astrology here so much as to simply illustrate the role these aspects play in the charts of notable historical figures. Had I wanted to solely address skeptics, I would have focused more on charts with just conjunctions and squares. Using that metric, I’m sure the correlation of Uranus–Mercury contacts would be considerably more impressive. For instance, consider a few of the noted “revolutionaries” or rabble-rousers from our survey focusing only on the square aspect alone: Charles Baudelaire, Aleister Crowley, Philip K. Dick, Kurt Gödel, Manly Palmer Hall, Alfred Hitchcock, Franz Kafka, Stanley Kubrick, Benoit Mandelbrot, Napoleon, Joseph Priestley, Vladimir Putin, Jerry Rubin, Oswald Spengler, Leon Trotsky, Pancho Villa, Orson Welles, and Alfred North Whitehead. Quite an incendiary crew!

\* Author’s Note: Birth data of all the examples herein can be accessed at [AstroDatabank](#) or other internet sources, and in all cases the date of birth is not in question.

\*\* Editor’s Note: The article is adapted from *So, What Am I Doing Here, Anyway?: A Collection of Astrological and Philosophical Essays* by Ray Grasse, published by The Wessex Astrologer in the spring of 2024.