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INSIDE
MONSANTO

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photo: Lizanne E. Webb

In through the Out Door: **The Cosmic Signature of Monsanto & GMOs**



by *Eric Francis Coppolino*

Nearly every day, we see some news about genetically modified foods. Some people are even asking: Should products made from plants that had their genes rewritten in a laboratory be labeled? Are they safe for consumption or for the ecosystem? Anyone watching the issue might ask: How does their main purveyor, Monsanto, maintain so much power and influence over the government? *The Mountain Astrologer* asked me to use astrology to investigate Monsanto and its GMO project.

For my research into the astrology of Monsanto and its quest to take over the seed market with its genetically modified organisms (GMOs), I focused on one question: What in the chart of this company indicated the global leviathan this entity would become? Out of that, other questions emerged. What would indicate the extent of the company's influence over regulatory agencies, Congress, the presidency, and even the Supreme Court?

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Before we look at the truly extraordinary charts of Monsanto, its founder, and key events in its history, let's begin with some background into the company's history. Most people don't know that this history predates genetically modified organisms by nearly a century. There's a pattern to this history that's easy to spot: Over and over again, Monsanto's products and byproducts start out as what seem to be great ideas, then turn out to be deadly and are often banned. Monsanto has produced many ubiquitous toxins — poisons that can be found anywhere.

One case in point is a material manufactured by Monsanto between 1935 and 1977 called PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl). A form of liquid plastic, this was introduced as a fabulously versatile chemical, used by every industry from electrical equipment to plastics and dyes. Then, it was discovered to be a powerful hormonal toxin and carcinogen, which can now be found in the breast milk of any childbearing woman on Earth, and in the blood and fat tissue of every animal, no matter how far from the source it may be.¹

As a young reporter, I was confronted with a local disaster that was part of a much larger problem. In 1991, electrical transformers filled with Monsanto's PCB insulating fluid exploded in dormitories on my local college campus, the State University of New York at New Paltz. I started investigating that incident (which would result in a \$50 million-plus cleanup of six campus buildings). I was then quickly taken down the vortex of Monsanto and its long, toxic story.

My reporting got the attention of attorneys who had sued the company. They began sharing internal company documents, obtained through various legal discovery processes that had gone on for years. These documents revealed how much Monsanto knew about how toxic PCBs were (and still are), and that the company collaborated with a product safety-testing lab to produce fraudulent studies allegedly proving that PCBs don't cause cancer. This story is typical of the company's many industrial escapades.

Monsanto was a large supplier of the insecticide DDT, the banning of which began the modern environmental movement.

An Idea, a Plan, and \$5,000

Monsanto was founded in Missouri in 1901 as the Monsanto Chemical Works by a man named John Francis Queeny, with \$1,500 he had saved from his day job in a pharmaceutical company and \$3,500 he'd borrowed from another company. It was his second attempt at starting a business. Queeny was aware that good-quality artificial sweetener was not made in the United States. Monsanto owes its early fortunes to the Coca-Cola Company, for which it manufactured a variety of soft-drink components — initially saccharin, then Vanillin and caffeine.

From there, the company moved into production of a diversity of chlorine-based chemicals, beginning by acquiring Swann Chemical Company in 1935, which made PCBs. At the time, concerns about the toxicity of PCBs (including permanent liver damage) were well established, so Monsanto knew what it was getting into. Monsanto turned PCBs into a global market, getting its chemicals into thousands of products. It lobbied to have insurance companies require PCB transformers in public buildings, many of which later became contaminated with PCBs and their byproducts, dioxins and furans.

The company had its hands in the Agent Orange scandal during the Vietnam War, manufacturing both components of the defoliant: 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D, both of which were contaminated with dioxins. Monsanto was a large supplier of the insecticide DDT, the banning of which began the modern environmental movement. Monsanto manufactured the active ingredient in Lysol that

was contaminated with dioxin — the most toxic chemical known to science — despite the product's being advertised as safe for use in hospitals and for cleaning homes, children's toys, and dogs.

Monsanto was involved with Nutra-Sweet, the brand name for aspartame, which was pushed past the FDA despite concerns about brain cancer, and remains on the market despite reports of neurological effects. There was the Copper-7 intrauterine device, which sterilized some women who trusted it as a safe method of birth control. Monsanto was involved in the Manhattan Project, supervising one of several secret laboratories concerned with the development of the atomic bomb.

The publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 sparked environmental awareness and, in turn, investigations into environmental pollutants. The first researcher to take on PCBs, Dr. Søren Jensen of Sweden, found them everywhere he looked, including in his wife's breast milk and the hair of his children. Monsanto knew it had a problem and did its best to cover it up.

By 1969, while publicly denying the problems linked to PCBs, Monsanto privately acknowledged in an internal memo that the "problem involves the entire United States, Canada and sections of Europe, especially the United Kingdom and Sweden ... [O]ther areas of Europe, Asia and Latin America will surely become involved. Evidence of contamination [has] been shown in some of the very remote parts of the world."²

The company warned nobody of this fact and, according to a plan outlined in that same document, continued aggressively marketing PCBs until they were banned by an act of Congress in 1976. Monsanto's files are filled with memos that document its early knowledge of the problem, while it kept making money from the sale of PCBs.

One memo that came out in a lawsuit reveals the PCB cancer cover-up in detail. In the U.S., chemical companies practice a kind of self-regulation. They are required to send samples of their product to be certified as safe by supposedly independent testing laboratories that they hire for the purpose. Internal company documents reveal how that

process worked with PCBs. (These products were called “Aroclors.”) The chemicals were fed to rats, to see how many got cancer. Monsanto executives didn’t like the results.

“In two instances, the previous conclusion of ‘slightly tumorigenic’ was changed to ‘non-carcinogenic,’” a Monsanto executive wrote to its product safety-testing lab in July 1975. “The latter phrase is preferable. May we request that the Aroclor 1254 report be amended to say ‘does not appear to be carcinogenic’.”

Two weeks later, the lab’s president responded: “We will amend our statement in the last paragraph on page 2 of the Aroclor 1254 report to read, ‘does not appear to be carcinogenic’ in place of ‘slightly tumorigenic’ as requested.” Executives of the lab — the infamous IBT Laboratories of Northbrook, Illinois — were eventually prosecuted for fraud.

The false PCB cancer study issue came up in a Texas lawsuit against Monsanto. The original lab report had described PCBs as “slightly tumorigenic.” How slight is “slightly”? IBT documented that PCBs caused 82% of the rats in its study to develop cancer tumors when fed Aroclor 1254 at 10 parts per million, and 100% at 100 parts per million (in other words, all the rats got cancer). But PCBs were certified as noncarcinogenic.

In the meantime, the chemicals were supposed to make electrical equipment safer and were even required by insurance companies. It turned out that they caused transformers to explode. Due mainly to problems in the environment (rather than product safety issues), PCBs were banned by Congress, under the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976. On the day that President Gerald Ford signed the act into law (October 12, 1976), Mars and Chiron were in an opposition — part of a pattern of Chiron aspects that we will see follows the whole history of genetically modified foods.

In the early 1980s, when Monsanto was making its first idealistic forays into the genetic modification of plants, its biggest problems centered around the highly toxic synthetic chemical, dioxin. While the company was busy dumping dioxins by the pound into the Missouri



photo: Lizanne E. Webb

Demonstrators at the March Against Monsanto in Venice, California

River, they were sending agents into hospitals to take fat samples from cadavers to see just how much of the stuff was actually percolating into humans.

By one account, Monsanto was eager to get out of the chemical industry and went into biology — what it called “life sciences”: the genetic modification of plants. Instead of creating chemicals that contaminate and “unintentionally” disrupt biological processes for profit, the GMO endeavor is a conscious attempt to rewrite the genetic code for profit. Monsanto has been at the heart of this mission, from its earliest days. Most of these plants were designed to be pesticides, harmful to insect predators. The stated goal was making more food using fewer chemicals.

Yet, late into the project, they developed another kind of genetic modification: making their plants resistant to their own products. These plants have been marketed as “Roundup Ready” — that is, able to withstand application of the popular herbicide Roundup. This has caused more, not less, application of chemicals to the crops. That’s another way of saying that Monsanto has made more, not less, money on its pesticides as a result of genetic modification.

Meanwhile, insects that survived Monsanto’s GMO plants designed to kill them were selected out of the genetic pool. That is, the insects that survived the pesticide gave birth to other insects that were also immune to its effects. Hence, insect species have rapidly evolved into being immune to the genetic modifications that were supposed to kill them. So, we have a typical result from a Monsanto enterprise: It backfires.

The Monsanto Chart

The first incarnation of Monsanto was founded on November 29, 1901, with incorporation papers filed by John Francis Queeny in Jefferson City, Missouri. A longtime veteran of the pharmaceutical industry, he named the company after his wife’s maiden name. The state has not recorded the time of the filing; the date is not even on file among the 70 or so corporate entities that currently exist in Missouri for Monsanto. The date, as documented, was reported by the company in a public relations book titled *Faith, Hope and \$5,000*.

I have good luck with noon charts, which I use in my news reporting

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because, so often, times of birth or the founding of companies are not available. However, it seemed important to have a time in this case, so I recruited two classically trained astrologers with more experience in rectification than I have: Ursula Fugger and Larry Ely.

Working independently, they both came up with Aquarius rising, around midday. After a number of refinements, the chart started to look like it was going to come out close to noon. Then, after weeks of work, Larry said he believed that the chart was an electional set for noon. After I verified the angles by checking many transits, that is the time I went with.

There is a stunning feature in the Monsanto chart: the Jupiter–Saturn conjunction of 1901. (See **Chart 1**, below.) That conjunction, in the sign of Capricorn, was exact one time only — the day before Monsanto was founded, just past noon Local Time. In the Monsanto chart, the conjunction is exact to seven arc minutes. (The next Jupiter–Saturn conjunction was in 1921 in Virgo.) So, it’s fair to say that the founding of Monsanto is synonymous with this exceptionally strong, rare conjunction — some would say that’s all the information you need. This company

The 1901 Jupiter–Saturn conjunction in Capricorn was exact one time only — the day before Monsanto was founded.

seems here to stay; it was established at an astrological turning point and thus became a historical event of its own.

The year 1901, the first year of the 20th century, came with the first oil gusher in Texas and the assassination of President William McKinley. And just four days after the founding of Monsanto, fully under the influence of the still-exact Jupiter–Saturn conjunction, President Theodore Roosevelt gave a famous 20,000-word speech asking the House of Representatives to contain the power of monopolies “within reasonable limits.” This was the famous moment when he emerged as what became known historically as the Trust-Buster.

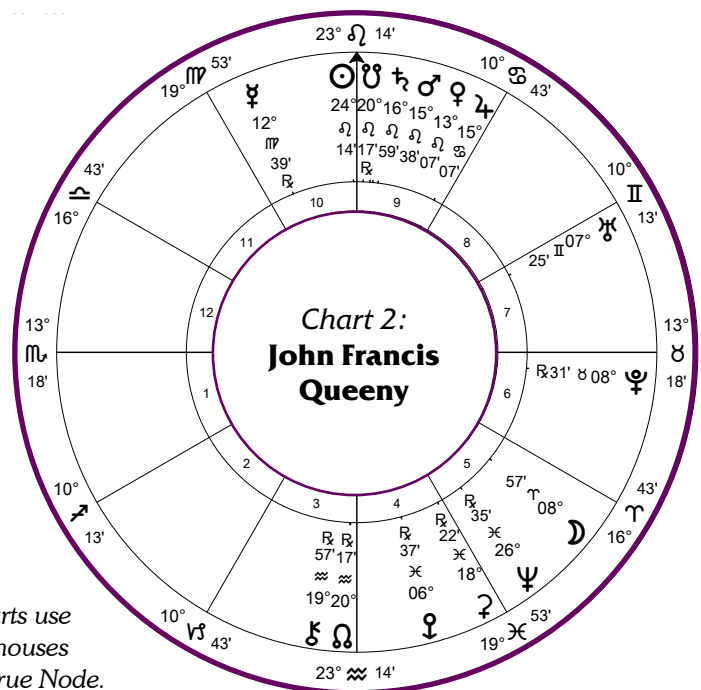
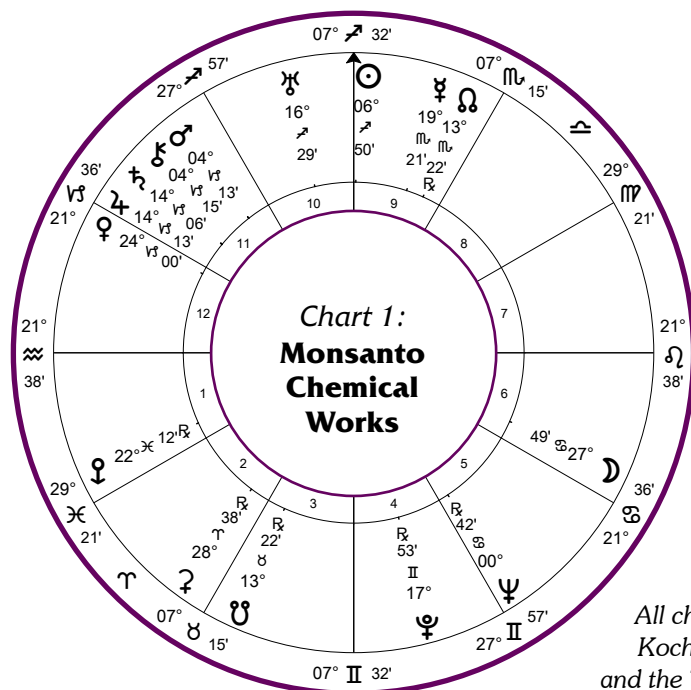
Roosevelt said, in words that made history: “There is a widespread conviction in the minds of the American people that the great corporations known as trusts are in certain of their features

and tendencies hurtful to the general welfare. This springs from no spirit of envy or uncharitableness, nor lack of pride in the great industrial achievements that have placed this country at the head of the nations struggling for commercial supremacy. It does not rest upon a lack of intelligent appreciation of the necessity of meeting changing and changed conditions of trade with new methods, nor upon ignorance of the fact that combination of capital in the effort to accomplish great things is necessary when the world’s progress demands that great things be done. It is based upon sincere conviction that combination and concentration should be, not prohibited, but supervised and within reasonable limits controlled; and in my judgment this conviction is right.”³

Though nobody knew it at the time, synchronous with this moment was the birth of Monsanto, a corporation that would thrive on the very concept of monopolization, doing so increasingly over the years.

The Powerful 11th House

The most salient feature of the Monsanto chart is its 11th house, which is the home to two conjunctions: Jupiter–Saturn, plus Mars and then-undiscovered Chiron in a conjunction that’s exact to two arc minutes. This is another conjunction that you could say tells us all



All charts use Koch houses and the True Node.

we need to know. Mars is powerful in Capricorn (its exalted position), gritty, determined, and resourceful. Mars–Chiron aspects tend to push innovation and leadership, and they favor the underdog. But this conjunction can also indicate an injury inflicted on Mars, or a sense of inadequacy; left untended, or under the influence of unrighteous forces, that injury seems to have festered into something deeply troubling.

We will come back to this aspect in a moment. First, let's look at some of the classical rulerships that bind together many houses of this chart. These come together in the 11th house. The 11th is the house of groups and elite social structures, though it's also associated with one's role in society — whether you stand out or blend in — and the social leadership role you might have. It's sometimes called the house of “hopes and dreams,” and with the two biggest planets aligned here perfectly, this chart describes something with a vision.

The 11th is also the house associated with revenue from professional activities, being the 2nd house from the 10th. We can see that there's going to be a prominent role for the company, given the Jupiter–Saturn conjunction, and that it will be profitable. Money flows toward structure, and this is a chart with great structural integrity.

Monsanto's Sun is in Sagittarius, and the Sun is lurking right behind the 10th-house cusp, as if its true magnitude is waiting to be revealed. The end of the 9th can function as a veil, like the 12th house from the 10th. In the 10th, also in Sagittarius, is Uranus, indicating the potential for a corporation that is innovative, idealistic, and even revolutionary.

Uranus and the Sun in Sagittarius are disposed by Jupiter in Capricorn, which is exactly conjunct Saturn. This helps to stabilize that Uranus and give substance to the Sagittarius Sun. Let's keep following the rulerships. The 11th house has Sagittarius on the cusp as well, so both the 10th and 11th houses are ruled by Jupiter. Conjunct Saturn and in Capricorn, this Jupiter is the image of the slow, steady, and meticulous establishment of one of the most influential corporations on Earth.

Monsanto's 11th house provides a description of why the company seems so intractable, including its stranglehold on the public.

For its part, Aquarius gives Saturn rulership of two houses — the 12th and the 1st — binding together the company's image with its behind-the-scenes activity. Monsanto is more than a corporation that maintains a professional and businesslike image, no matter what follies it gets itself involved with. This is an institution that can never get blown off course, and even if it does, it finds its way back again. Consider that the rulers of the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 1st houses are stitched together in a seven-arc-minute conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Capricorn. Mars in Capricorn brings in the influence of the 9th house — the higher courts — through its rulership of Scorpio in that house.

Monsanto has an apparent lock on regulators and other government entities; the 11th house of this chart provides a description of why the company seems so intractable, including its stranglehold on the public. You could say this is a setup for friends in high places. Among its many other friends in government, Monsanto has personal representation on the Supreme Court in the form of Justice Clarence Thomas, who was one of its attorneys during some of the company's darkest days in the late 1970s.

As for the Mars–Chiron conjunction, this has a number of properties. One of them is innovation. Monsanto is a company that forges ahead with relentless determination in whatever it does. Another is a fighting spirit. And another is the power to come from behind. Yet, when Chiron does not express itself as a healer, it will almost always do so as something toxic — and, in this case, aggressively so. Chiron is going to turn

up prominently in numerous charts in the history of genetic modification. This pattern goes back to the chart of Monsanto's founder, John Francis Queeny, who has Chiron on the North Node, opposite Venus, Mars, Saturn, and the Sun. (See **Chart 2**, facing page.)

Chiron's presence gives the impression that Monsanto is using a tool that could be a healing agent for the world as one that can potentially cause great harm. They also seem to be hacking their way into the coding of biology. In essence, genetic modification is a process that skips millions of generations of what might be natural mutations made with old-style hybridization, but these modifications are not vaguely natural. It's almost as if someone is entering the genetic code through an exit door in the distant future, influencing what happens today. Though producing GMOs is related to natural mutation, in truth it's a radical departure.

The Perfect Chart, Except for ...

Monsanto has what would appear to be the perfect corporate chart. It combines solidity with innovation, a blend of liberal and conservative qualities that support one another, a fighting spirit, and incredible structural integrity. It has an excellent setup for a profitable venture. It was founded with a sense of vision at the dawn of the chemical age and the dawn of the new century.

So, how do we account for the evident lack of conscience? Where is the integrity leaking out of this chart? One explanation is that this is a powerful chart, and power corrupts. The company does what it does because it *can*. As many astrologers have pointed out, the natal chart alone does not reveal the spiritual level of the individual in question. Usually astrologers find that out in other ways.

Looking for signs of compromised integrity in this chart, Neptune in Cancer opposing all those 11th-house planets stands out. Neptune's closest opposition is to Mars–Chiron, which feels like chemistry. In Cancer, that can be the chemistry of human tissue: Notably, human milk (under the influence of the sign Cancer) has been studied countless times for traces of Monsanto's products

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and for their carcinogenic effects. Neptune in Cancer located underneath all those planets in Capricorn has the feeling of water under the bridge, which illustrates how Monsanto responds to the damage that it has done.

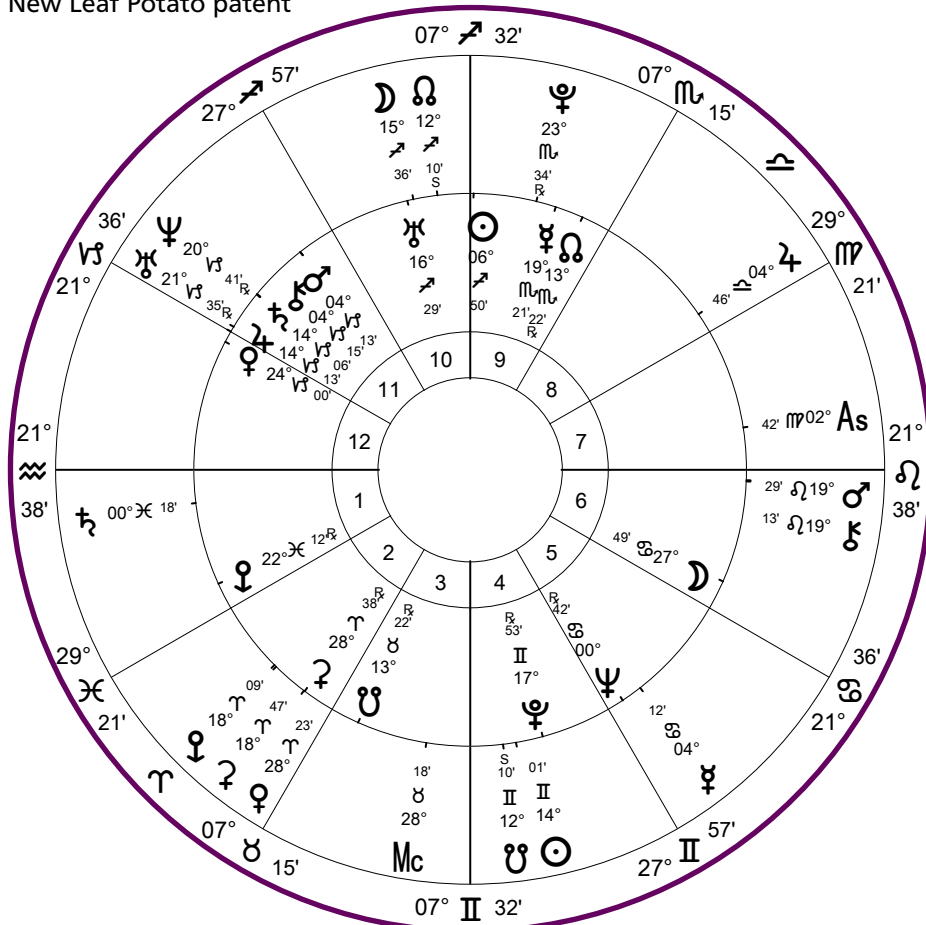
Some aspects between Mars and Neptune have been described as “kamikaze” — that is, potentially self-destructive. One story exemplifies this. Early in the company’s history, its factory burned down. John Queeny rented new space in a warehouse that he was sharing with the Diamond Match Company. Diamond’s facilities were not neat and tidy; they were more of a firetrap, but Queeny still chose to relocate the company there, showing his willingness to take unnecessary or even reckless chances.

Chart 3: Bi-wheel.

Inner wheel and house cusps:
Monsanto

Outer wheel:

New Leaf Potato patent



Monsanto’s natal Moon is also in late Cancer, and it’s nearly done making aspects in that sign. By several different rules, the Moon is void of course, though as is often said, she “performeth somewhat” in her sign of rulership or exaltation. Yet, when the Moon is in a very late degree, the feeling can be like a ship without a rudder and, in Cancer, may highlight a lack of empathy. That said, the Moon makes one last aspect before leaving Cancer: a square to Ceres, a dwarf planet associated with grain and the growth of food. In a sense, the company finds its way when it ventures into genetically modified organisms — though the Moon square Ceres does not hint at happy outcomes.

The Chiron Signature of the GMO Story

We’ve seen Chiron appear prominently in Monsanto’s two most important charts: the corporate chart (where it’s conjunct Mars to two arc minutes) and the chart of its founder, where it’s on the North Node in Aquarius, close

to the corporate chart’s Ascendant and aspecting many other planets in both charts.

We think of Chiron as the planet associated with healers and healing, though Chiron can have a second edge to it, that of injury and wounding. A prominent Chiron that is handled unconsciously can lead to problems. It grants power, which can then work against the greater good.

The surgeon’s knife, as well as the drive for innovation, must be used with caution, skill, and awareness of the consequences, or there can be many problems. There is a spiritual element that Chiron demands; otherwise, it will make a lot more karma than it resolves, and this seems to be a significant issue with Monsanto and its charts. Let’s look at this pattern and see what emerges.

On January 17, 1983, Monsanto filed its first patent applications for genetic modification, for the use of *agrobacterium* combined with food plants, which would turn the plant into a pesticide. Monsanto hoped to be credited with the invention of genetic plant engineering. It was an idealistic time in the company’s history. These applications were filed by Patrick Kelly, the company’s first patent attorney devoted exclusively to biotechnology. He later reflected: “I doubt that I will ever surpass that in an intellectual experience. There are vivid memories that will stay with me forever.”⁴

At the time, two other scientific teams were working on the same project: morphing *agrobacterium* with plants, to kill various worms and beetles. However, one of the other teams (from Washington University) filed its patent the next day. The Patent Office grants patents based on who is the first inventor, not who filed the patent first. The Patent Office declared an “interference” — and this issue remains unresolved.

In the chart for Monsanto’s patent application (not shown), Mercury is retrograde in Capricorn, applying to a trine to Chiron in Taurus. We can see the Mercury retrograde effect of things not working out as planned, involved with Chiron, representing the monumental discovery and also the use of a toxic plant. In many ways, this is an inventive and illuminating chart, driven

by passion. Another aspect that stands out is Mars in Pisces square Jupiter and Uranus in Sagittarius, showing sincere, almost religious motivation.

The New Leaf Potato

Another salient date in the GMO patent history is June 4, 1993: the filing of the patent for the New Leaf Superior potato. This was the first patent for a genetically modified crop, as opposed to a modification process. The New Leaf potato was designed to act like a pesticide to the potato beetle, but supposedly be harmless to humans.

This chart has a Mars–Chiron conjunction in Leo, exact to a quarter degree, close to Monsanto’s 7th-house cusp. (See **Chart 3**, facing page) Mars–Chiron squares Monsanto’s natal Mercury in Scorpio to the degree, which has a frustrated, counterintuitive feeling to it. Mars–Chiron is also aspecting (quincunx) the monumental transiting Uranus–Neptune conjunction in Capricorn, which spanned the early 1990s but was exact just three times, all in 1993. I have often thought of Uranus–Neptune in Capricorn as the breakdown of the known order of reality. Creating the first food crop that is also a registered pesticide would count for that.

On that very day, there was a total eclipse of the Moon in Sagittarius, with the Moon in a close conjunction with Monsanto’s 10th-house Uranus. The New Leaf Superior potato was a commercial failure after McDonald’s, Burger King, Frito-Lay, and Procter & Gamble said they would not use GMO potatoes. So, GMO potatoes never amounted to more than 3% to 4% of the potato market. *The Wall Street Journal’s* March 21, 2001 edition reported that the company would discontinue the product. However, Monsanto eventually succeeded in having the product deregulated by the FDA. In other words, it started off as a registered pesticide and ended up as just another potato (albeit a very special one).

Monsanto survived the onslaughts against genetically modified food by its usual tactics – the use of government influence.

The New Leaf was also the subject of an October 25, 1998 cover story in *The New York Times Magazine*, called “Playing God in the Garden.” The author, Michael Pollan, wrote: “Significant uncertainties remain, however. Take the case of insect resistance to Bt, a potential form of ‘biological pollution’ that could end the effectiveness of one of the safest insecticides we have — and cripple the organic farmers who depend on it. The theory, which is now accepted by most entomologists, is that Bt crops will add so much of the toxin to the environment that insects will develop resistance to it.”

That same year, Prince Charles wrote an op-ed column in one of Britain’s leading conservative newspapers, *The Daily Telegraph*. He stated, “I believe that we have now reached a moral and ethical watershed beyond which we venture into realms that belong to God, and to God alone. Apart from certain medical applications, what actual right do we have to experiment, Frankenstein-like, with the very stuff of life?”

This op-ed was a devastating blow to Monsanto, coming from the heir to the British throne, someone who is never supposed to have an opinion. The column appeared on June 8, 1998 — during a t-square of Venus (Taurus), Chiron (Scorpio), and Uranus (Aquarius). “It had a huge impact,” said Philip Angell, Monsanto’s former head of pub-

lic relations. “It changed the coverage of the debate and the profile of the issue almost forever.” England would continue to lead the way in the opposition to genetically modified crops.

Despite the setbacks, by 1999 more than 100 million acres worldwide were planted with genetically modified seed. Agribusiness was embracing biotechnology. Monsanto, as described in its natal chart, has a gift for enduring anything.

Chiron Conjunct Pluto in Sagittarius

In 1998 and 1999, Pluto and Chiron were working their way over Monsanto’s Sun and Midheaven, probably the most sensitive angle in the company’s chart. They were heading for a conjunction on December 30, 1999, the day before New Year’s Eve of what was considered by many to be the end of the millennium. There was a rebellious, Sixties-like vibe in the air — and this came as the first anti-globalization protests broke out in Seattle at a meeting of the World Trade Organization.

Monsanto had another difficult year for its GMO project in 1999, with the problems stemming from England once again. This time, the battle was led by William Hague, a conservative opponent of Prime Minister Tony Blair. “Why hasn’t the government accepted the advice of English Nature [a British government conservation organization] and delayed for at least three years the release of genetically engineered crops until more research is done?”

Like fire ants that cover a victim and then all bite simultaneously, the British tabloids went on the assault. Headlines such as “Mutant Crops,” “Astonishing Deceit of GM Food Giant,” “Terrifying Tampering,” and “GM Foods Are Playing Games with Nature” appeared on newsstands. When Blair came to the defense of GMO crops, the *Daily Mirror* ran the headline, “The Prime Monster; Fury as Blair Says: I Eat Frankenstein Food and It Is Safe.”

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Retail outlets that sold GMO products were feeling the heat as the headlines impacted sales.

In the European Commission (the executive branch of the pan-European government), regulators struggled with how to handle approval of GMO products. They passed responsibility back to member states, forcing them to state their position. Fifteen governments said they would not approve any more genetically engineered crops until there were procedures for labeling and traceability.

This was also the year that GMO soybeans surpassed majority use: In 1998, 42% of fields were planted with GMO soybeans, and in 1999, 57% were. Yet, major food companies such as Nestlé were losing interest in GMO crops, saying that they would use only traditional strains of soybeans.

In May 1999, an analyst for the New York branch of Deutsche Bank declared in a damning report that “GMOs Are Dead,” and recommended that investors sell off their holdings in the seed sector. The same week, a Cornell University scientist had a short article published in the journal *Nature*, which reported that GMO crops harm monarch butterfly larvae.

Monsanto had weathered many storms like this before, and had its ways of coming back from behind. But that was not to happen for a while.

Monsanto’s Chiron Return

In 2002, Chiron returned to its natal position in Monsanto’s chart for the second time. The first time was in 1952 — during the “better living through chemistry” phase of history and ten years before the publication of *Silent Spring* would kick off the environmental movement. This was not a notable time in Monsanto’s history, except that many documents revealing Monsanto’s carelessness and profit-driven motives, which later surfaced in lawsuits against the company, were created during that era. In my work with Chiron,

Though Monsanto often seems to enjoy existence as an immortal corporation, its chart is clearly sensitive to transits.

I have noticed that it has an association with documentation and the careful recording of facts, one of its Virgo-like manifestations, and the copious documents from this era were indeed damning.

That would surface at the Chiron return of 2002, when a process for tagging specific genetically modified organisms was developed and imposed on companies. This would allow any product to be traced, as well as to determine which food products are GMOs and which are not. This makes GMO foods detectable, down to the laboratory event that created that particular modification.

All GMO crops must have this genetic tag, which matters in Europe because there is a requirement for labeling GMO products. In 2011, the

European Parliament said that the “European Union guarantees the traceability and labeling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and products produced from these organisms throughout the food chain. Traceability of GMOs allows the monitoring and checking of information given on labels, the monitoring of effects on the environment and the withdrawal of products from the market in cases where new scientific data demonstrate that the GMOs used in the product present an environmental or health risk.”

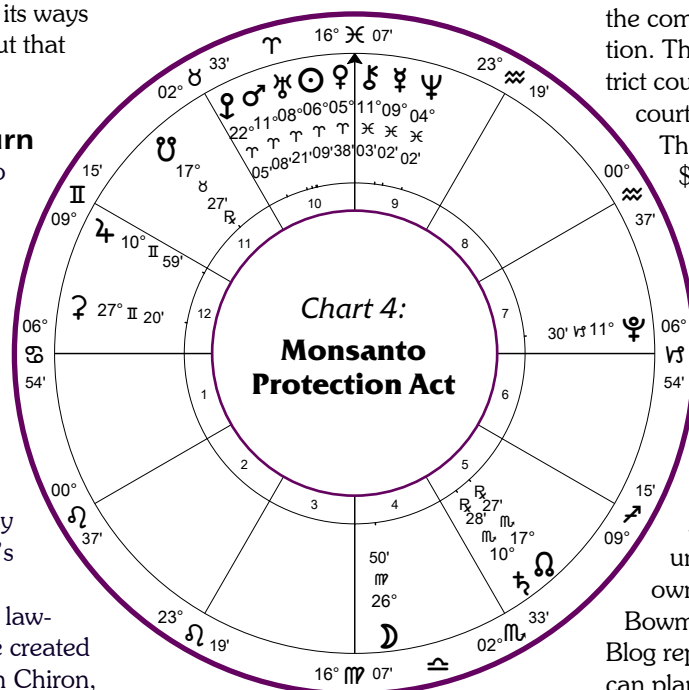
Pluto Conjunct Monsanto’s Mars–Chiron

Monsanto survived the onslaughts against genetically modified food by its usual tactics — the use of government influence. Pluto in Capricorn seemed to embolden those efforts and make them more successful. The company went on the offensive as a “patent troll,” filing lawsuits against farmers whose fields neighbored fields where GMO crops were planted.

Monsanto also brought legal action against people who re-planted seed from the previous year. In 2007, the company sued Indiana farmer Vernon Bowman for patent infringement. Bowman bought his seeds not from Monsanto but from a grain elevator. The case played out as Pluto crossed the first degrees of Capricorn, conjoining the company’s Mars–Chiron conjunction. The case first went to a federal district court and then to a federal appeals court. Bowman lost both times.

The court awarded Monsanto \$84,456.20.

Bowman appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing in February 2013 that a patent holder “exhausts” his rights after selling the product. Patent exhaustion means that, after an initial authorized sale of a patented item, the patent owner has no more patent rights to that item. But the Supreme Court disagreed, ruling unanimously that Monsanto still owned intellectual rights to seeds Bowman purchased. As SCOTUS-Blog reported on May 14, “[T]he farmer can plant the first seeds, those he pur-



chased. But he can't plant newly grown seeds again and again for years to go into the future."

Monsanto's original project — to create genetically modified seed — has morphed into two additional ventures: the sale of extra pesticides (in this case, Roundup) and the use of patent infringement to make revenue.

Perhaps the most famous example of Monsanto's finesse with regulatory power is the so-called Monsanto Protection Act, a federal law that seems designed as an inoculation against the inevitable demonstration that GMO crops are dangerous to consume. The law was signed by President Obama on March 26, 2013. Chiron is once again prominent in this chart: It's taking a square from Jupiter within four minutes of arc (the aspect was exact the next day). Mercury is in Pisces, just two degrees from conjoining Chiron and squaring Jupiter. (See **Chart 4**, facing page.) The Jupiter–Chiron square has the feeling of a spiritual crusade, activism, and fighting the good fight, being broadcast by Mercury. Monsanto succeeded in getting legislation through Congress and past the president, which bans the federal courts from halting the sale of GMO food products, even if they're determined to be harmful. Indeed, the company, ever in self-preservation mode, seemed to be giving itself insurance against this outcome. Once again, the healing power of Chiron seems to have been used in reverse.

According to the *International Business Times* and other sources, Roy Blunt, U.S. senator from Missouri, worked with Monsanto on the provision; it appears to be custom legislation. Despite more than 250,000 voters having signed a petition opposing the provision, Obama signed it into law anyway.

Lunar Eclipse: Monsanto's Worst Week Ever

In spite of overcoming so many obstacles and getting Congress to pass a law on its behalf, Monsanto seems to be running into new problems with its GMO project. On May 25, there was a lunar eclipse in Sagittarius conjunct Monsanto's Sun and Midheaven.

That was the same day of the first worldwide protest against one company:

Monsanto's Jupiter– Saturn conjunction will experience a simultaneous conjunction from Pluto and square from Uranus, which happens in 2015.

the March Against Monsanto. This seemed like a beautiful synchronicity, right down to the global nature of a Sagittarius eclipse — but then more tangible events started developing. Less than a week later, an Oregon farmer discovered, through genetic testing, that a patch of rogue Roundup Ready wheat was growing in his field — a variety of wheat that had never been approved and that was last tested twelve years ago. In response, Japan canceled its entire wheat order from the United States. (For some reason, people are more skeptical of genetically modified wheat than any other crop.)

The same week, Monsanto announced that it was giving up on its efforts to push GMO products through the European regulatory process. Europe has been resistant to genetically altered foods, and Monsanto was encountering too much turbulence, so it actually withdrew from European markets.

Then, capping off the week nicely, Kansas wheat farmer Ernest Barnes filed a federal lawsuit on Monday, June 3, alleging that he and other wheat farmers have been hurt financially by the discovery of the unapproved biotech wheat that Monsanto said it had stopped testing and shelved nine years ago. "Monsanto has released GE (genetically engineered) wheat into the non-genetically modified wheat population," the lawsuit stated, adding that the "plaintiff has been harmed by any and all Monsanto GE wheat because it has impacted wheat exports and the price of wheat."⁵

Though Monsanto often seems to enjoy existence as an immortal corporation, its chart is clearly sensitive to transits. And there is a big one coming. The Jupiter–Saturn conjunction at the

core of Monsanto's chart is about to experience an extraordinarily rare transit: a simultaneous conjunction from Pluto and square from Uranus, which happens in 2015, during the last pass of the Uranus–Pluto square.

This could easily influence Monsanto's relationship to regulatory agencies and the public that it so often depends on, and may represent an unraveling of its corporate image. Some of this will depend on whether Americans in particular wake up to the questions, the lack of safety testing, and the economic difficulties associated with GMO crops, though the 11th house of Monsanto's chart, where this is focused, represents the company's public and its customers as much as it does its relationship to the government.

While there is no way to predict exactly what the Uranus–Pluto square will bring, there are few astrologers who would dare to underestimate its potential power. Those who are working for a sane response to genetic modification, or to stop Monsanto outright, should know that the company is approaching a vulnerable moment, which is an invitation for activists to persist in their efforts.

(Additional Research: Larry Ely, Ursula Fugger, Margaret Kelly, Susan Scheck, Carol van Strum. Editorial Assistant: Amanda Painter.)

Chart Data and Sources

(in order of appearance)

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The Cosmic Signature of Monsanto

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