

GAMBLING ON THE UNIVERSE:

From Saturn to Pluto

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In November, 1962, when I was 19 years old, transiting Saturn opposed natal Pluto from the second to eighth houses. I was in a dilemma. Two men wanted my hand. Which one would I choose?

The crisis came one Saturday night. I was sitting alone at the kitchen table of the apartment I shared with three other college girls. The moment was crucial. This would be the last decision I would ever have to make. Marry one of these young men, and from then on he would be responsible, my life yoked to his.

"It is either get married," I thought, "or be a clerk at Woolworth's".... I could see no other options. At 19, Saturn had not yet returned to its natal place. I was caught inside its orbit, a prisoner of the usual social roles. Marriage represented security, and a husband would provide it.

I had broken up with my high school sweetheart the year before to be

with another young man. Not because I loved the second one, but because I was afraid the first one would break up with me! So I did it before he could! And now the first one was back, having hitchhiked down to Washington, DC from New Haven in the freezing rain to ask for my hand.

The second young man got wind of the situation and arrived at the door the same time as the first one did. Unable to handle the situation, I asked them both to leave.

Numb to my feelings, I sat alone that evening at the kitchen table, making up my mind. I was in shock, appalled at what I was about to do. For I was going to choose between two men when I knew that either choice would be wrong. I understood full well that the only real choice for me, at that age, was to choose neither of them, to go it alone. But I couldn't; I was too afraid.

Hating myself for my cowardice, I chose the man I would marry by flipping a coin. I made what I thought was the most important decision in my life by leaving it to chance. As if it didn't matter. As if nothing mattered.

The second man won, the one I didn't love.

Thus began a 29-year cycle which I am only now completing: transiting Saturn opposed Pluto again in the spring of 1991 and for a final time this past December.

I made a fateful life choice by flipping a coin. I was in a state of false consciousness and symbolized that by choosing to inaugurate a 29-year life cycle with a total random mechanical act. Saturn opposed Pluto and, in the tug of war between them, Saturn won. I shut down my feelings and made myself into a machine. I unconsciously projected Pluto onto my husband, and gave him power over me. "Til death do us part."

Luckily, the Plutonian life force within me was stronger than my attempted Saturnian controls upon it. Seven years later, as Saturn squared Pluto, I divorced, screwed up my courage, and went out on my own, having no idea what would happen next. I was being pushed from within to unfold like a flower. Without knowing what that flower would look like. Without a friend in the world. I cut myself loose from society and surrendered to Pluto.

That I chose to do this may look like courage--and in fact it was. What I felt at the time, however, was desperation. I could no longer choose to deaden my life.

Because I had been living as if I was already dead, death held no fear for me. Because I was no longer afraid to die, I could finally choose life.

During this Capricornian time when our nation "teeters on the brink of depression," many of my clients are full of fear. They fear loss of

security. And they tend to make choices in that same Saturnian frame of mind which I exhibited at 19. Choosing Saturn over Pluto, they attempt to control the situation mechanically rather than stepping into the void.

I tell my clients: "Remember what Einstein once said: 'In order to solve a problem, one must place the problem within a context larger than itself.' Imagine Saturn's sphere, 29 years, a particular portion of space/time reality. Now imagine Pluto's sphere, 248 years, a dimension which dwarfs Saturn's, and within which Saturn's dimension is included. Are you going to identify with Saturn or with Pluto? Are you going to see security as predictability, and attempt to achieve it through regular paychecks, etc., in what is merely a job, some slot in society that anyone can do? Or are you going to follow your bliss, surrender to your own precisely individual nature, and allow nature to take its course?"

I conclude with a saying which I made up when I was 36 years old, having already discovered through long personal experience that it works: "Follow your nature," I tell my clients, "and nature takes care of you."

I lived for many years on less than \$300 per month, not often knowing from one minute to the next where the money would be coming from. I can remember driving down the highway, windows open, my last \$10 in my pocket, throwing up my hands, and yelling joyfully into the desert wind: "Hey, I'm out of money again! Help!"

Where's it coming from this time? Come on, show me your stuff!"
Inside, I would be thrilled with expectancy, a sense of riding the edge, buoyed up by unseen hands. Over and over again running out of money would make me not depressed, and not fearful, but excited! I was about to find out once again how the universe *would* provide.

I no longer live my life that way. But I know I could if I had to. I was fortunate to be put in a position where I had to gamble on the universe. Over and over again. Until I really believed it.

When we break through Saturn's expectations of how the world works and allow Pluto to show us we realize: the everyday context of our lives is miraculous. The mechanical world of cause and effect is dwarfed within mystery, a luminous, gracious presence.

I don't expect clients to believe my story until they try it. And I know they won't try it until they are desperate enough. Hopefully, the deteriorating economic situation in this country will fuel desperation to the point where we begin to see our lives in a larger way.

The initial symptom both of Saturn and Pluto transits is fear. Fear of loss. But their orders are significantly different. Saturn's fear is relatively superficial: fear of loss of identity. Pluto's fear is at the core: fear of annihilation. In other words, Saturn's fears have to do with giving up a particular image of oneself, the role one has been playing in the social order. Pluto's fears, on the other hand, have to do with losing everything, even one's life. Saturn's fears are merely

mental; they have to do with our conditioning, and the social expectations which result. Pluto's fears are primal; hurtled into the void, one disintegrates, ceases to exist.

During times when Saturn aspects Pluto these two fears are connected: our fear of loss of identity plunges us into fear of loss of existence. These are times of rare opportunity; it is the manner in which we go through this deepening process that determines whether we will survive to transform the quality of our life in a fundamental way. We dismantle the machine-like structure of the personality which Saturnian society encouraged us to build and penetrate to the very core of our existence--and beyond.

While we choose in the manner of Saturn, we attempt to define our choices within the existing framework of our society. We see only certain options available to us, and then opt for the role which will give us the greatest security, as defined in terms of jobs, paychecks, advancement opportunities, etc. We see our crisis as a problem, to be solved. We force-fit ourselves into a certain job definition, and attempt to do what is expected. We act in a predictable manner, and control our every move.

To choose in the manner of Pluto, however, is to die to who we thought we were and to plunge to the center of our being. We enter Hades, and grope our way through the "dark night of the soul." Precisely here is where the soul is recovered, in this darkest of nights. As we lie dying we are reborn to larger life. The old framework

disintegrates. We are no longer tools for society, robotic, good (or bad) citizens. From now on we will live as embodied souls, with new eyes to see and new ears to hear.

Centering here, in our most private inner sanctum, our personal "holy of holies," we touch into the source of all creation. For the center of the Self is the soul, and the soul is an opening; through it streams the energy of the universe. The soul, indwelling, pulses energy into manifestation.

This is our old death-in-life transformed into boundless vitality. Gradually we learn to embrace the world in a new way--we are to live *in* the world but not *of* it. Detached, playful, endlessly curious and creative, we are guided by intuition, pushed from within, to live our own lives and in the process, naturally harmonize with others living theirs. Moving from the inside out, we feel our way into the present, attune to what this special moment brings, and the moment buds, blooms into radiance. Its rays pierce the future with seeds, they bathe the past in forgiveness, they offer glimpses of other dimensions, subtly fingering ours.

To surrender to the void is to shift the center of gravity from Saturn to Pluto, from the surface of ourselves to our inward core. No longer conditioned by society to think, feel and behave in only certain sorts of ways, we are free to be precisely ourselves. No longer blinkered by preconceptions of what we are supposed to do, we fall into the part we were born to play. The part which only we can play.

Each of us is the missing piece in the universal order.

When Saturn and Pluto are working together, then Saturn must give way to Pluto, as the smaller gives way to the larger. For to favor Saturn is to attempt to coerce or control Pluto to fit into Saturn's smaller sphere, which, of course, is impossible. The Plutonian energy of life, distorted, turns against us, causing all manner of ills, including chronic or terminal disease in the individual and terrorism and fascism in the state.

With transiting Pluto in Scorpio sextiling the conjunction of Uranus and Neptune in Saturn's sign of Capricorn during these years, the U.S. threatens to slip into another "great Depression." People are feeling insecure, afraid. When we are afraid, we tend to contract, to act like Saturn and attempt to control. But the situation is Plutonian, out of control. The only viable route is surrender. Then the Capricornian restructuring falls into place automatically.

Our real security lies not in forcing ourselves into the usual social roles of Saturn but in surrendering to the natural laws of Pluto. We move from the numbness to full feeling, from seeing the world as a machine, a closed system, ruled by linear time to feeling the world as an organic, interconnected, open-ended flow. We release Saturn's attempt to control, and open ourselves to Pluto's larger life. That life, in turn, will generate the Capricornian forms most natural to it at the time. These will not be what we expected. They will be greater

than our wildest dreams.

When I left my first husband I dreamed of a partnership which would be free and whole. Five years later I thought I had achieved that dream, when I married my old high school boyfriend. Within two years, however, transiting Saturn conjuncted Pluto and I had to admit that our partnership, though loving, was neither free nor whole. (The eerie synchronicity of astrology never ceases to astonish: when transiting Saturn opposed Pluto I threw the dice and didn't marry this man; 14 years later, under transiting Saturn conjunct Pluto, having "done the right thing" by marrying him, I had to let him go.) As Saturn conjuncted Pluto I was finally learning to join these planets so that they could operate together: I could not stay married (Saturn) to a man with whom total fusion (Pluto) was not possible.

Now, in December 1991, after another 14 years, once again transiting Saturn opposes Pluto, I sit here at my desk in my office which is inside the Jackson Holistic Center which my partner of one year, Jeffrey, and I created nine months ago--exactly when transiting Saturn opposed my Pluto for the first time, this round--and stopped there, stationary, before turning to go retrograde.

All my old fears came up last spring, of course, including the fantasy of becoming a clerk at Woolworth's! I went through a period of utter worthlessness (Saturn transiting the the second house). Then came the working through; I feel this process completing now as transiting

Saturn opposed Pluto for the final time this December.

I begin this new cycle of Saturn opposite Pluto by working with them together rather than choosing one and projecting the other. I open this new round knowing my own worth, centering within, and trusting our process, joining my worth with ours. I thank the universe for this luminous gracious presence.