

Saturn-Pluto

by Bill Herbst

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Saturn conjoined Pluto in the tropical zodiac (at 22° 47' Capricorn) on January 12th, 2020. What that means is that Pluto, Saturn, and the earth formed a straight line along the plane of the ecliptic, which is the projection into space of the earth's yearly path around the sun.

The January 12th conjunction of Saturn and Pluto ushered in the beginning of the next Saturn-Pluto cycle for all of humanity, right here at the birth of the new decade. This cycle varies in duration from 31-38 years long, with 8-9 year quarters. Each quarterly transition has roughly a two-year effective period.

Below is a bullet list of qualities associated with active periods of the Saturn-Pluto cycle (including the relatively dramatic active period we're in now):

- Paranoia, xenophobia, ethnic cleansing
- The dark side of nationalism, patriotism, racism
- Cold ruthlessness by authority
- Manipulation that threatens or leads to mass violence
- The reality of destruction
- The urge for power and domination over others
- Courage or perseverance during extreme hardship or against seemingly insurmountable odds
- Moral or emotional staunchness, holding the line against negative or destructive forces

The previous Saturn-Pluto cycle began in 1982 in Libra. The next one will start in 2053 in Pisces. This new and now-current cycle in Capricorn focuses on government, economics, and cultural hierarchies. Politics, business, and social institutions are front and center, targeted right in the crosshairs.

The Saturn-Pluto cycle corresponds symbolically to the human yearning for absolute certainty through the blunt application of authoritarian power. These two planetary symbols are as far from kind and gentle as they could be. In tandem, Saturn and Pluto reinforce each other's most repressive social tendencies, giving permission as it were to the most extreme human impulses toward the imposition of crude, harsh measures to achieve forced conformity.

The combination is bold and unforgiving. Dog eat dog, and take no prisoners. No nuance or subtlety here. You're either with us or against us. The cycle doesn't lean toward sitting around the campfire singing "Kumbaya" together. Harmony? Compassion? Empathy? Civility? Cooperation? Gentleness? Not with Saturn-Pluto. The only unity possible during Saturn-Pluto periods is the extreme polarity of Us-versus-Them.

What we get basically is two camps: those who will do anything to overturn the status quo, and those who will do anything to maintain the status quo. The status quo to which I refer is the existing social order, the way things work, business as usual.

Paradoxically, some people are in both camps simultaneously. "Doing anything" here implies that the end justifies the means. Concern for fairness, ethics and morality go right out the window. Winning is everything, at any cost. The problem, of course, is the authoritarian results. Pete Townsend's lyric for The Who's song "Won't Get Fooled Again" resonates nicely here: *"Meet the new boss. Same as the old boss."*

World War One began with the onset of a Saturn-Pluto cycle in 1914. So did the Cold War between America and the Soviet Union in 1947. The typical expression of war — armies, invasions, battles, etc. — is not the only expression of Saturn-Pluto, nor even the most likely expression. War as "diplomacy by other means" is, however, the easiest metaphor for the combination of these two symbols.

OK. I could go on for pages, but you get the gist. I could be more detailed about the many correspondences I see between the astrological symbolism and the 24/7 news headlines, but you can connect those dots yourself.

My question is: *Who among us did not see this coming? Have we not had ample warning about the current state of affairs in the world?*

One doesn't need to be an astrologer, a psychic, or a political pundit to have seen the telltale dark turbulence of this perfect storm on the horizon, and from a long ways off, both in distance and time. These dystopian qualities have always been with us, always lurking in the background of our psyches. When the Saturn-Pluto cycle is active those background qualities emerge into the foreground.

It's a helluva way to kick off a new decade, but that's been the case with every decade over the past century. Just when we think things can't get any weirder in civilization, they do. Time after time. And here we are again.