

Saturn in Capricorn

Part Two: Implications for Individuals

by Bill Herbst

Version 1.3 (posted on 13 March 2018)
© 2018 by the author, all rights reserved

[In Part One of this three-part commentary on Saturn in Capricorn, I wrote about the collective meanings of that two-and-a-half year passage, taking into account other current and upcoming astrological alignments. Now, in Part Two, I'll address some of the personal implications of Saturn's passage through Capricorn for individuals.]

As a zodiacal archetype, Capricorn is cardinal earth, ruled by Saturn, and the 10th sign of 12. This means that Capricorn is problem-solving, practical, ambitious, hard-working, conservative, and culturally sensitive to tradition and authority. Capricorn "types" are worker bees in the hive, but not drones. They are interested in success by doing the sustained work of dues-paying to move up the ladder of recognition and reward. They are all about doing whatever is necessary to achieve this. Capricorn does not buck the system, but instead works within it, dutifully building the edifice of success step by step, one brick at a time. If successful, Capricorn achieves authority and is rewarded for perseverance, a disciplined work ethic, excellence, and leadership. Capricorn types usually embody the conservatism that holds together society.

As a sign, Capricorn is naturally associated with business, through economics, commerce, and industry, but another natural arena is government and the social structures that make up society. Just because someone is a Capricorn type, however, doesn't imply being a businessperson, politician, or bureaucrat. Any endeavor in society that achieves significant institutional status is fertile ground for Capricorn types, especially professions that require long study, certification through testing, and granting of authority, such as medicine. "Pure" Capricorn types are not generally found among the arts or on the fringes of society, since they much prefer a more conservative road and socially-approved status. Their chosen paths and subsequent achievements tend to be based not on creativity, individuality, abstraction, or sentiment, but rather on the potential for success through mastery of practical or technical systems that involve serious training.

People born with the Sun in Capricorn may or may not reflect those qualities overtly, since myriad factors in the natal chart can and do modify the personality. (Numerous factors beyond the chart are also important, including Consciousness itself.) But, with the Sun in Capricorn at birth, the qualities listed above exist inside the person as a fundamental orientation, essentially a gravitational center,

like a compass pointing to true north. Books and articles describing different Sun Signs are useful in learning the meanings of a particular Zodiac sign within human experience, but they're often overblown as "personality descriptions" of people born with the Sun in a given sign. What we call "personality" is complex and cannot be accurately predicted or reduced to a group of formulaic sign traits.

Saturn's passage through Capricorn is arguably more important than its movement through other signs, because Saturn "rules" Capricorn, meaning that the archetypes represented by Saturn and Capricorn are more directly and closely related to each other than to any of the other planets or signs.

Many different technical approaches are available to astrologers to define in our individual lives the relevance and meaning of Saturn's passage through Capricorn. Ways of extracting meaning from charts are so diverse, in fact, that I can't imagine any astrologer using all of them. We tend to cherry-pick the system for our favorite techniques.

One commonly used approach is to note the House (or sometimes two adjacent Houses) of a personal natal chart through which Saturn is transiting during its passage within a given sign, in this case Capricorn. Interpretation starts with Saturn's occupied House in the natal chart, the meanings of which are then integrated into the Houses through which it is transiting. While that approach is certainly reasonable, it's not my favorite technique.

My primary technique for assessing and revealing the meaning of any time period in an individual life is through analysis of the personal cycles that activate in transit. Linked to the basic understanding of the life-journey provided by the natal chart, the evolution of cycles moving through time via transits is the backbone of my work.

With regard specifically to Saturn's passage through Capricorn, I am most interested in the activation of personal Saturn cycles that will occur during that period. Typically, that would be about eight major transits over the three years, but the number of active cycles can vary widely from one chart to another, and from one sign to the next.

Consider President Trump's chart. Over the period of Saturn's passage through Capricorn (2018 through 2020), the majority of his personal Saturn cycles will activate in six major transits (indicating significant phase changes of those cycles) and six additional minor transits. The major activations in 2018 are Saturn in last-quarter square to Trump's natal Neptune from February through November 2018 and, almost simultaneously, Saturn in opposition to his natal Mercury from March through December 2018. In 2019, Saturn will form last-quarter squares to Trump's natal Chiron and Jupiter. Then, in 2020, transiting Saturn will oppose Trump's natal Saturn in January, followed immediately by

Saturn's opposition to his natal Venus from January through October of that year.

That's a veritable treasure trove of information, enough in itself to fill an entire book. The information those transits provide is much more specific and detailed than the previously mentioned approach of Saturn's position in the Houses. I'm not suggesting that Saturn's position in the Houses isn't useful. It is. I have always been a working astrologer in private practice, however, and I work with clients about the various dimensions of meaning in their lives through conversations that last 90 minutes or longer. The information from Saturn's transiting position in the Houses provides about two minutes of discussion, whereas the active personal transit cycles of Saturn offer a wealth of information that's better suited to lengthier conversation.

Briefly, 2018 is a year where Donald Trump's tendency to play fast and loose with the truth takes center-stage as a serious issue and, quite likely, a problem for the President. The kindest interpretation of his natal Mercury-Neptune square is that Trump's "creative" narratives are a product of his strong connection to the field of archetypes and dreams that constitute the zeitgeist of the collective unconscious. While no one would defend Trump as being well-informed or a policy wonk, he does have an uncanny, almost cunning sense of understanding the public's dissatisfaction and anger. With Mercury in Cancer, Trump shapes this into usually fictional narratives to stoke the emotions of his base while defending himself and those he regards as family.

A less generous interpretation of his natal Mercury is that Trump is simply a chronic and habitual liar. From that perspective, it's probable that Trump believes his own lies when he tells them, but his chart is not definitive on that question, since it also reveals Donald Trump to be inveterate salesman who tries to convince others of the value of his product — namely, himself, since he's the star of the show.

Saturn's activation of Trump's natal Mercury-Neptune square in two near-simultaneous, long (11-month) three-pass transits is provocative. Such quarterly phase changes in Saturn cycles aren't rare — they occur every seven years — so he's been challenged by reality often. However, having survived all those lies without disaster, Trump has become emboldened in his lying. This is the first time in Donald Trump's life that he will have major Saturn-Neptune and Saturn-Mercury transits in the public fish bowl of the Oval Office, with Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller as his main enemy. Whether Trump will again emerge unscathed from scrutiny or be forced to atone for his sins remains to be seen.

The issue that these transits pinpoint surrounds Trump's wealth and the ways he achieved it. With Neptune in the 2nd house natively, Trump's "self-worth" is not solid and physical, but rather elusive and immaterial. His actual net worth may not be nearly as much as he claims.

By itself, Neptune occupying the 2nd House of any natal chart shouldn't be considered a "negative" indicator. It tells us simply that personal value is somehow intangible. Any judgments about how that manifests in a particular life come from outside the chart. It might mean that one's self-worth is based on the development of inclusive and universal spiritual values, such as empathy and compassion. I think it's obvious, however, that this interpretation is not correct for Donald Trump. At the other end of the scale is the possibility that self-worth is based on deception and illusion. This seems to be the arena where Trump has lived his life, where self-aggrandizement, superficial glamour, and the fantasy of immense, exaggerated wealth hold sway. In that sense, Trump is a reflection of his times and a symbol for what has gone wrong in America.

What is certain is that as 2018 progresses, President Trump's mind and nervous system will be under increasing pressure. He survived his first year in the White House with Saturn on his Moon and opposite his Sun and Uranus, but that was no walk in the park for Mr. Trump. Now the celestial parade moves on to his next round of Saturn transits. These are less significant than those of 2017 for him, but perhaps no less daunting, given Trump's vulnerabilities from ongoing chaos in his administration and his increasing personal isolation.

And the heavens aren't done with messing with the President, not by a long shot. In 2019-2022, a potent and potentially life-changing set of outer-planet transits cascades through Trump's chart: Pluto and then Saturn oppose both his natal Saturn and Venus, Uranus conjoins his Midheaven, and Neptune squares his natal Moon. While nothing in astrology guarantees disaster, it's hard to imagine that Trump could make it unscathed through such a period of radical disruption, shocks, and transformation. Those transits provide sufficient reason to predict that Mr. Trump will not serve a second term.

But this commentary isn't really about Donald Trump. It's about the implications of Saturn's passage through Capricorn in the personal lives of billions of human beings. I use Donald Trump's chart only as an example, and solely for convenience.

Basically, every person drawing breath on the planet is potentially impacted by at least some of the various correspondences of Saturn in Capricorn. For many people, this will be clearly indicated by their natal charts, through the mathematical alignments that Saturn will form within those charts as it activates major personal cycles. For others, the main impact will be felt through collective changes that occur in the larger world, then ripple out to affect all our lives. Both factors are meaningful.

[In Part Three of my commentary on Saturn in Capricorn, I'll discuss the Saturn-Sun cycle and its looming implications for all people born with the Sun in Capricorn, as that critically important cycle of central purpose and life-meaning begins or restarts again in their lives.]