

Trump's Dilemma, and Ours

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[In Part One of this two-part commentary, I consider President Donald Trump's ongoing and deepening dilemma, how it may unfold from here, and where it might lead.]

Poor Donald J. Trump. He never really wanted to be President. What he wanted was to be the Biggest Star on the Planet, and a constant thorn in the side of all the people he so desperately envies and despises. He wanted to be able to thumb his nose at them all, to flip them the bird. Instead, and to his great surprise, he became President, which may be his downfall. I write this with only a smidgeon of irony. Although I'm no fan of Trump — in my view, he's a truly despicable excuse for a human being — and while I believe any comeuppance he gets to be well-deserved, I feel nonetheless a certain sadness for anyone who is eventually destroyed by fate's shining its harsh light on what are finally personal defects of character.

What is Trump's dilemma? He has less than one year left before Pluto begins a nearly three-year transit by opposing his natal Saturn in Cancer/12th house. The transit activation hits critical mass in March of 2019, but Pluto transits have a long lead time starting a year or two before, so the circumstances that correspond to the symbolism are already developing and plain to see.

Since the 2016 Presidential campaign, I've written often about Donald Trump's chart and character. To provide context for his upcoming transit, I need to write a bit more in ways I haven't previously about the astrology of Trump's life-journey and how he's lived it.

In Donald Trump's natal chart, Saturn is conjoined to Venus in Cancer/12th house, and Scorpio is on the nadir (Lower Heaven or 4th house cusp), which is ruled by Pluto, also in the 12th house. Overall, Trump's chart has four areas of emphasis — the 1st house (Leo rising with Mars in Leo), the 5th house (the full, eclipsed Sagittarian Moon), the 11th house (Gemini Sun conjunct Uranus), and the 12th house (Saturn, Venus, and Pluto). That's the basic technical jargon for what I'll discuss below.

Donald Trump's early family life and childhood conditioning are presumed to have been characterized by power rather than love. Astrologically, his early years were not likely to have been soft, warm, and fuzzy, but hard and cold. The

worldview to which Trump was exposed in his formative years was likely to have been defensive and mistrustful, with a dim view of human nature and a dog-eat-dog attitude. Trump grew up never feeling validated or loved. He did not belong.

In a sense, Trump's entire life is a quest to be loved and accepted, although he is unlikely to admit that even to himself. He is clearly devoted to the masculine egoism of strength, power, and personal will, all of which are factors to which he has easy access in his chart. Those represent the path of least resistance. Conversely, Trump rejects in himself the more feminine symbolism of compassion or tenderness as indications of weakness and insecurity, neither of which his ego can face or tolerate in himself. Thus, feminine qualities must come into his life through relationships with women, which are based primarily on physical attractiveness.

The picture I'm painting here is not pretty. Does Donald Trump's chart make such an unhappy and superficial life-journey inevitable? No, not at all. Judging from the chart alone, Trump could have become an ascetic spiritual seeker, renouncing the material realm, perhaps as the eccentric abbot of a monastery. But Trump the person went the opposite direction, toward self-aggrandizement and exaltation of the ego. Rather than transcending the ordinary world and embarking on a journey of courageous and unflagging self-examination, he was seduced by the glitz and glamour of wealth and power and has spent a lifetime pursuing those goals. Blessed with strong intuition, he became instead a chronic liar and cunning cheat. Trump could have been a hero. Instead, he became the unabashed ringmaster of a depraved circus. Viewed from the astrological perspective, Trump's life has been a sad farce rather than a joyful triumph, although either was symbolically possible.

When Pluto opposes his natal Saturn (and then his natal Venus), the story comes full circle. The harshness and lack of love in Trump's childhood returns to haunt him. His ego, lathered up to monstrous proportions over a lifetime, will be under assault to acknowledge the frightened child imprisoned within. Will Trump suffer a psychological breakdown or do something incredibly stupid, like start a nuclear war? I don't know.

I doubt that Trump will ever abandon the ego-fortress he's built, even if it comes apart at the seams. Compared to the younger Donald Trump of the 1980s (who was certainly no saint), the 2018 version of Trump seems much crazier. The word "unhinged" is tossed around frequently to describe his increasingly bizarre outbursts. I wouldn't call Trump paranoid, however. He really does have powerful enemies who are out to bring him down. It's just that Trump does not (or perhaps cannot) understand that he himself has provoked the attacks against him. Sadly, Trump cannot risk the humility of self-examination; instead he combines egomania and victimhood.

As for war, Trump campaigned on the pledge to bring home the troops, but as President he is more and more hawkish, putting military generals in his cabinet, threatening North Korea with a preemptive nuclear strike, and twice bombing Syria. Looks like anything might be possible. Sure, Trump adheres to Nixon's "madman" theory. He wants his adversaries to believe that he's crazy and capable of anything, but such a ruse requires a secret core of sanity and self-control. I'm not sure Trump has that.

Can Trump weather the storm and survive the siege (both literal and astrological) now mounting against him? Again, I don't know. Pluto opposite Saturn is a transit that typically offers no quarter and takes no prisoners. Symbolically, it's a confrontation with irresistible power far beyond anything the ego can command in defense — in essence, a forced surrender. On the other hand, nothing in any chart is guaranteed to correspond to disaster or failure in the life it describes. Sometimes major transits occur and very little happens. All outer-planet events in a personal chart are wild-cards, like jokers in the deck. They come from left field and correspond to unpredictable changes or unexpected developments. On occasion, nothing at all can be the most unexpected outcome.

Given Donald Trump's actual life, however, and the current pressures he faces, the odds that nothing will happen when Pluto opposes his natal Saturn seem to me to be slim or none. Plutonian symbolism is volcanic. Pressure builds beneath the surface in the magma chamber via fissures that extend into the earth's molten core (which is psychologically analogous to the raw, primal power of the personal or collective unconscious). Eventually, an eruption results. That pressure has been building since Trump took office as President. Not only has he done nothing to relieve the pressure, he's compounded it (by fomenting discord, lying about everything, and publicly attacking anyone he feels has wronged him).

I don't usually make predictions about public figures, but as long as I'm doing so now, it might as well be bold. Donald Trump's been cruisin' for a bruise for a long time, and he's likely to get bruised hard. The Peter Principle applies here: Trump has finally risen to the level of his incompetence. This is true whether one accepts the anti-Russia narratives trumpeted by CNN and MSNBC or, conversely, believes the Fox News view that Trump is the innocent victim of a corrupt Deep State. Either way, the bottom line is that the powers-that-be have not taken lightly to Trump's refusal to toe the line obediently. As always, Trump is the Outsider. He does not belong and will not be tolerated.

I don't think that President Trump will be brought down by the Mueller Investigation. That was just the middle act of this Shakespearean tragedy. Act One was Trump's election to the Presidency, Act Two was his firing of FBI Director James Comey and the subsequent beginning of the Mueller Investigation now dogging his heels, but Act Three — the culmination — may be the public exposure of an entire lifetime of underhanded, shady financial dealings that

could be provoked by the Stormy Daniels lawsuit and the FBI's snaring of Trump's Fixer Michael Cohen.

Will the tragedy end with Trump's impeachment and legal removal from office? I doubt it. I think Trump will go down as he lived, fighting to the end, but in a way that becomes ever more desperate and pathetic, until everyone in his circle of toadies, minions, and sycophants is tarnished beyond repair, ends up in jail, or turns on him (or all three). Will anyone be surprised by such betrayals, including Trump himself? Probably not.

Viewed through the lens of astrology, the final dagger could be plunged into Trump's tiny, withered heart by some dishonor occurring in his personal family — perhaps to Don Jr. (the Trump family Fredo), or Ivanka and Jared Kushner. Maybe Melania will finally get fed up with her Faustian bargain and leave Donald, taking their young son with her. Yes, I know, that's a stretch, but stranger things have happened.

None of those possibilities necessarily implies that Trump will prematurely leave office. He may yet manage to bluster his way to the finish line. If so, however, he will do so as a seriously wounded animal, a neutered bull. Overall, I give Trump a 50-50 chance of serving out his four-year term.

Might he resign? I wouldn't call that likely, but it's possible. All indications are that Trump is not enjoying his life as President, so, depending on the outcome of the 2018 midterm elections, he might decide to get out while the getting is still good. Could Trump actually stick it out, run again (he does love campaigning), and be re-elected for a second term? Oh my, I hope not. All the Republican surrogates and talking heads are certain that Trump will run again, but by 2020 he may not want to.

[In Part Two of this commentary pair, I'll address the larger and more serious dilemma facing us all as Americans, regardless of what happens to President Trump.]