

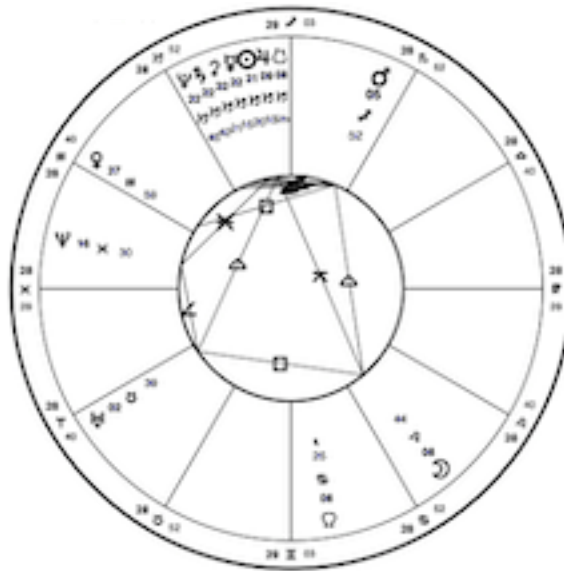
The Astropoetic School of Soul-Discovery

News From The Astropoetic School May 2020

Greetings from The Astropoetic School of Soul Discovery in the Smoky Mountains of western North Carolina, where the dependable flourishing of new life provides reassurance in an anything-but-reassuring world.

Becoming a Diamond Under Heat and Pressure

Early Hellenistic astrologers (circa the third century BCE) believed when there was a conjunction of all visible planets in Cancer or Capricorn, it signaled the periodic destruction and re-creation of the world (Chris Brennan, *Hellenistic Astrology*, 230). On January 12, 2002, we had an alignment of 5 of 7 visible planets, plus the South Node, Pluto and Ceres in Capricorn.



On January 13, the first known case of COVID-19 outside of China was confirmed in Thailand (WHO - <https://www.who.int/csr/don/14-january-2020-novel-coronavirus-thailand-ex-china/en/>), and a global pandemic was born. While the world has not been literally destroyed, it seems reasonable to say at this juncture that we have reached one of those turning points in history beyond which the world will be irrevocably altered.

COVID-19 in Historical Perspective

Although there is much debate about the accuracy of the numbers, as of May 4,

when I started this article, there were over 3 million confirmed cases and over 200,000 deaths worldwide (WHO - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200503-covid-19-sitrep-104.pdf?sfvrsn=53328f46_2). Today on May 23 – 19 days later, as I am finally getting around to finishing it, there are almost 5 million confirmed cases and over 300,000 deaths worldwide (WHO - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200522-covid-19-sitrep-123.pdf?sfvrsn=5ad1bc3_4). Approximately one-third of all confirmed cases and one-fourth of all deaths have taken place in the US.

To put these numbers (taken as a ballpark) in historical perspective, here is a list of most serious previous pandemics we have known so far, their dates and geographical range, and the estimated death toll for each (<https://www.seriousrankings.com/top-10-epidemics-by-death-toll/>):

1. Russian Flu/influenza, worldwide, 1889-1890 – about 1,000,000 casualties
2. Third Cholera Pandemic, Russia, 1852-1860 – more than 1,000,000 casualties
3. Sixth Cholera Pandemic, Europe, Africa, Asia, 1899-1923 – 1,500,000 casualties
4. Asian Flu/influenza, worldwide, 1957-1958 – 2,000,000 casualties
5. Antonine Plague/smallpox, Roman Empire, 165-180 – 5,000,000 casualties
6. Third Pandemic/Bubonic plague, China & India, 1855-1959, 12,000,000 casualties
7. Plague of Justinian/Bubonic plague, Eastern Roman Empire, 541-542 – 25,000,000 casualties
8. HIV/AIDS pandemic, worldwide, ongoing since 1981 – 25,000,000 casualties
9. Spanish Flu/influenza, worldwide, 1918-1920 – 75,000,000 casualties
10. Black Death/Bubonic plague, Europe and Asia, 1338-1350 – 100,000,000 casualties

By these measures, Covid-19 is at this point still a minor blip on the radar screen with only 0.3% the number of deaths the most serious pandemics the world has known, although as pandemics go, this one is to still be in its infancy.

By another measure – leading causes of death worldwide (<https://ourworldindata.org/causes-of-death#what-do-people-die-from>) – Covid-19 also seems a bit undersized. Cardiovascular diseases kill about 17.8 million people worldwide each year; cancer kills another 9.6 million; respiratory diseases and lower respiratory infections (the next two leading causes of death) kill a combined total of 6.5 million. Farther down the list, tuberculosis kills 1.2 million; malnutrition kills 0.5 million. Current estimates for the number of people killed each year by seasonal flu

is about 400,000 (<https://ourworldindata.org/spanish-flu-largest-influenza-pandemic-in-history>).

This is not to say the current pandemic is not serious, as it is spreading rapidly, is global in scope, has a fatality rate (CFR) across all ages 12-24 times more deadly than the flu; is likely to infect twice as many people, and 9-10 more times likely to require hospitalization (<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2020/3/12/21172040/coronavirus-covid-19-virus-charts>).

No doubt, some would dispute these numbers. Some think they are inflated; most health authorities consider them conservative. All measures of the virus, including projections of future and final mortality rates should probably be taken with a very large grain of salt. All current tallies of confirmed cases and deaths are subject to the vagaries of reporting in general, which can differ from country to country, and often county to county; and sometimes be subject to hidden political agendas that bend statistics into lies, lies and more lies. As with other pandemics, while we are in the middle of it, it is sometimes difficult to accurately quantify what is going on.

Still, having said that, short of global conspiracy to invent the illusion of a phenomena that doesn't exist, it appears we have a far-reaching, multi-faceted crisis on our hands – one that could last, assuming other pandemics as a model, either a couple of years, or a couple of decades.

Even if you cut the numbers in half, Covid-19 is still on track to kill 60,000 more people worldwide this year than the flu. Again – cutting the official estimates for Covid-19 deaths in half, it has already killed over 10,000 more people in the US than died during the entire 2018-2019 flu season (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/2018-2019.html>).

Regardless of the numbers, Covid-19 is not something we can safely pretend doesn't exist, or isn't serious. Whatever the final tally might be, it is clear that this pandemic has already made its mark as a global game changer, as governments, medical systems, financial systems, and ordinary people around the world scramble to adjust.

Let us take a look at the astrology involved and speculate about what might really be going on, and how we might make best possible use of this crisis/opportunity.

Saturn-Pluto and Pandemics

Within the dramatic Capricorn stellium that dominates the chart for the onset of this pandemic, we have three outer planets working in tandem – an exact Saturn-Pluto conjunction, plus Jupiter – 14° away in the onset chart, but moving through the Saturn-Pluto conjunction now, and through the end of this year.

While there are many ways in which this combination can potentially manifest, we can start by noting an historical association of the Saturn-Pluto cycle with pandemics. Of the major pandemics noted above, we can observe the following (with only hard aspects considered):

The Russian Flu/influenza Pandemic of 1889 – 1890 took place with Saturn in Virgo square Pluto in Gemini within the 15° range suggested by Richard Tarnas for outer planet transits throughout the entire

period (*Cosmos and Psyche*, 509, footnote 1) and exact on September 4, 1890.

The Third Cholera Pandemic of 1852 – 1860 began with Saturn and Pluto conjunct in Aries (exact on February 10, 1852) and ended with Saturn in Leo square Pluto in Taurus (exact on September 7, 1858, March 11 and May 29, 1859).

The Sixth Cholera Pandemic of 1899 – 1923 began with Saturn in Sagittarius opposed Pluto in Gemini (within 1° of partile aspect on August 22, 1899) and ended with Saturn in Libra square Pluto in Cancer (exact on July 16 and October 9, 1922).

The Asian Flu/influenza Pandemic of 1957 – 1958 took place within Tarnas' 15° range of a square between Saturn in Sagittarius and Pluto in Virgo, but without ever forming an exact aspect.

The Antonine Plague/smallpox Pandemic of 165 – 180 encompassed an exact square between Saturn in Aquarius and Pluto in Taurus, exact on February 9, 169.

The Third Pandemic/Bubonic plague of 1855 – 1959 ran concurrently with the Third Cholera Pandemic, encompassing Saturn in Leo square Pluto in Taurus (exact on September 7, 1858, March 11 and May 29, 1859).

The Plague of Justinian/Bubonic plague of 541 – 542 took place within Tarnas' 15° range of a square between Saturn in Libra and Pluto in Capricorn, but without ever forming an exact aspect.

The ongoing HIV/AIDS pandemic that began in 1981 during a Saturn-Pluto conjunction in Libra (exact on November 8, 1982 and June 7, 1983), is still officially considered an ongoing pandemic, and has now come full cycle – through the waxing square (exact on March 20 and October 9, 1993 and January 2, 1994) through the opposition (exact on August 5 and November 2, 2001 and May 26, 2002) through the waning square (exact on November 15, 2009, February 1 and August 21, 2010) – to the current Saturn-Pluto conjunction in Capricorn.

The Spanish Flu/influenza pandemic from 1918-1920 followed a Saturn-Pluto conjunction in Cancer exact on October 5 and November 1, 1914 and May 19, 1915, but does not fit the pattern we are exploring here, since there were no exact hard aspects between Saturn and Pluto during the pandemic itself.

Lastly, the Black Death/Bubonic plague of 1338-1350 ran for a few years before encountering a square between Saturn in Capricorn and Pluto in Aries (exact on December 16, 1341), then culminating with a conjunction in Aries (exact on April 13, 1350).

Jupiter's Role in Pandemics

Jupiter has a less obvious historical role in pandemics, but we do know that Jupiter

tends to exacerbate, amplify and expand whatever it influences, and may well play a role in the spread of communicable diseases. Jupiter was likely a factor in at least some of the longest running pandemics, such as the Sixth Cholera Pandemic of 1899 – 1923, when for a while Jupiter conjoined Saturn in Libra while squaring Pluto; during the waxing square of the HIV/AIDS cycle, when it conjoined Pluto in Scorpio and the waning square, when it opposed Saturn and squared Pluto; and during the culminating conjunction of the Black Death/Bubonic plague of 1338-1350, when it squared Saturn and Pluto.

On the other hand, being the Grand Benefic (as it is known among Hellenistic astrologers), Jupiter may also participate in the amelioration of disease. Shortly after the waxing square of the ongoing HIV/AIDS pandemic, for example, when Jupiter conjoined Saturn while it was squaring Pluto, a new type of protease inhibitor drug became available to treat HIV, and within two years, the death rate from AIDS started to plummet. To complicate the picture, however, and part of what makes the HIV/AIDS pandemic ongoing, is the fact that Timothy Ray Brown – the first man to be considered cured of HIV after a successful bone marrow transplant – still tested positive for HIV during the waning square, when Jupiter opposed Saturn and squared Pluto.

The fact that Jupiter is sandwiched between Saturn and Pluto from April 5 – December 21, 2020 is already reflected in the fact that COVID-19 is a rapidly-spreading worldwide event, and suggests the advisability of erring on the side of caution, at least for the rest of the year. As I write this, with all three planets gone retrograde, several countries and most states in the US are moving toward relaxing stay-at-home orders in order to return to business as usual, while the race is on for a vaccine, which will not likely be ready by the end of the year at the earliest. By the time all three planets turn direct again, from October 6 – 18, we could potentially see a second wave of out-of-control acceleration, or some breakthrough in the search for a vaccine, or some combination of both.

Saturn-Pluto and Fear of Death

Speculation aside, we can see that 7 of the 10 largest pandemics this world has seen have coincided with at least one exact hard aspect between Saturn and Pluto. This is not surprising, given that one of the most fundamental interpretations of this combination of planets is a fear (associated with Saturn) of death (now associated with Pluto, and in earlier days with Saturn, the Grim Reaper) and there is nothing like a potentially fatal communicable disease, rapidly spreading throughout the world, with no known, reliable cure, to arouse a fear of death.

This does not necessarily mean that we are all going to die, or even that we all fear our literal death as a consequence of being alive during a pandemic, although of course, that depends in part on where you live. Here in western North Carolina, there have been a few dozen cases and a handful of deaths, but for most of us, life goes on pretty much as it always has, without an intensification of any overt fear of death, face masks, social distancing and stay-at-home orders notwithstanding. In places like New York City or Moscow or Madrid, the fear of death might be more literal.

Literal or not, part of what is being evoked for all of us at this time, is a fear of death that is as contagious as the virus itself. Taken as a metaphor, death can encompass any number of experiences – from the loss of income experienced by many as the

global economy spins into freefall; to a loss of freedom, experienced by many for whom even sensible stay at home orders are an affront to the exercise of accustomed mobility; to a vague sense of dread that many share without being to articulate it clearly, that something irrevocable is changing.

Of course, something is always changing. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus noted in the 6th century BCE: change is the only constant, and you can never step into the same river twice. Still, during cardinal moments in the Saturn-Pluto cycle, the river itself is a daunting torrent with Class 5 rapids, and stepping into it at all is taking your life – and life as we know it – into your hands.

Saturn-Pluto and Recent History

As noted above, the previous Saturn-Pluto conjunction (one cycle ago) in Libra coincided with the onset of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, when suddenly sexuality became a potential source of daunting uncertainty, linked with death, a fear of homosexuality, new panicked outrage about the potential of addictive drugs to wreak havoc with the social fabric, and then, as now, there was a palpable nameless fear in the air that made us all more cautious and vulnerable. In addition to the onset of AIDS, the Cold War was revived, fueled by Ronald Reagan's Star Wars fantasy of nuclear standoff with Russia, newly dubbed the Evil Empire. Drought precipitated a massive famine in Ethiopia killing over a million people as the world watched unbearable images of starving children on television. All of this contributed to a kind of palpable vulnerability in the face of uncertainty that felt potentially lethal on a global scale, whether you were on the front lines or not.

During the waxing square in 1993-1994, we had the first bombing of the World Trade Center's twin towers by Islamic fundamentalists, largely forgotten in the wake of the subsequent bombing of 911 during the Saturn-Pluto opposition in 2001-2002. During subsequent investigations after the first bombing, additional plots were uncovered to blow up the George Washington Bridge, the United Nations headquarters and other New York City landmarks, effectively signaling the advent of a new age of terror, and triggering another palpable uptick in our collective vulnerability.

Meanwhile, in April 1993, the worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl revived fears about nuclear safety in Russia, a month after the publication of the White Papers, admitting that the Soviet Union had been routinely dumping nuclear waste in the ocean for years. In 1994, a civil war, and a shocking and swiftly moving genocide killed 800,000 people in Rwanda. Death was in the air, in the water, and on our minds.

During the Saturn-Pluto opposition in 2001-2002, aside from the bombing of the Twin Towers, we had the official beginning of the War on Terror, the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan – which turned into the longest war in US history, still ongoing, followed closely by the US Patriot Act, which was a severe compromise to civil liberties, allowing far greater latitude in the surveillance of US citizen and weakening 4th amendment rights. All of this was ostensibly designed to make us feel safer, but had the exact opposite effect on most people who not only felt the terror that had landed on US soil, but also feared and deeply mistrusted the government's response and/or possible complicity.

During the waning square in 2009-2010, we were still reeling from the ongoing financial crisis and recession that began in 2007 with the mortgage bubble collapse and the failure of the banks, slowly making our way out of the largest financial meltdown since the Great Depression. The World Health Organization declared the swine flu (H1N1) a global pandemic, a two-year surge that affected somewhere between 700 million to 1.4 billion, and killed about 285,000 (<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2012/06/cdc-estimate-global-h1n1-pandemic-deaths-284000>). Then as now, the numbers are fuzzy. Meanwhile, the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill – the largest marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry – dumped over 200,000 gallons of oil in the Gulf of Mexico (https://homeport.uscg.mil/Lists/Content/Attachments/119/DeepwaterHorizonReport%20-31Aug2011%20-CD_2.pdf). Again, for anyone paying attention, our collective grief and despair were nearly equal to our outrage. This is the feeling tone of Saturn-Pluto.

Saturn-Pluto Themes in Recent History

The argument can be made that there is rarely a time in history that something somewhere is not breaking down and causing fear or crippling anxiety somewhere in the world. But in looking at the cardinal points of the last Saturn-Pluto cycles, we can easily see several themes that fuel a palpable uptick in the intensity with which a fear of death (or irrevocable change) in the face of massive uncertainty spreads virally through the collective. We can also see several more specific developments that directly feed into and compound the immensely scary challenges we are facing now.

As already noted, pandemics are characteristic of these periods, the most recent being the beginning of the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the last conjunction and the swine flu at the waning square. Global financial crises are another recurring theme, as evidenced recently by the Great Recession of 2007-2010. Environmental devastation is ongoing, of course, but seems to reach some kind of feverish pitch during these periods, for example in the nuclear meltdown in Russia and admission of widespread ocean dumping that emerged during the waxing square, and the BP oil spill during the waning square.

The War on Terror, involving two attacks on the World Trade Center, ostensibly by Islamic fundamentalists, ongoing tensions between the US and Russia, and a government response that arouses increased suspicion of those governments, as well as dark forces believed to be behind them by some, all seem to intensify a general atmosphere of fear and mistrust, while unleashing specific fears about a loss of freedom and civil liberties.

Some of these fears seem perennial and vaguely focused on shadowy bogeymen like the Illuminati or the “deep state.” Others are more specific in response to actual events, such as the diabolical Patriot Act – passed during the opposition and up for reauthorization during the conjunction, as I am writing this now (<https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/496459-senate-expected-to-approve-house-passed-surveillance-powers-bill-next-week>).

Repressive governments around the world have often used various global crises as smokescreens behind which to pass unpopular legislation, to strip various rights from the people being governed, or even in some cases, to make significant moves toward totalitarianism. These are political developments to be monitored now, as this too is

a theme associated with Saturn-Pluto that is playing out in real time (https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/dictators-are-using-the-coronavirus-to-strengthen-their-grip-on-power/2020/04/02/c36582f8-748c-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html).

Saturn-Jupiter-Pluto, Paranoia and Panic

Beyond that, there are many theories afloat – labeled conspiracy theories by those who fact-check them, but taken as gospel truth by those who believe, and in turn, dismiss the fact checkers and the mainstream media as part of the conspiracy:

The virus is a hoax, or is being blown way out of proportion by the deep state as a way to discredit Trump and/or take away our freedoms.

The virus is a bioweapon create by the Chinese or the deep state.

Hydroxychloroquine, bleach, cow urine, MMS (miracle mineral substance, exposure to UV rays, teas, essential oils, tinctures, and colloidal silver and other dubious or deadly substances can cure the virus (<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/no-products-can-cure-covid-19>).

The virus is caused by 5G and/or is a smokescreen behind which 5G is being installed everywhere as a mechanism for depopulating the planet.

Bill Gates. Dr. Fauci and/or the WHO are planning mandatory vaccinations that will implant a microchip that allows the deep state to control us.

Different factions of aliens are wielding the virus as weapon as they battle for control of planet Earth.

Most of these perspectives are held and disseminated by a bewildering mix of independent but intersecting groups and pundits, mostly on the radical right – Qanon activists such as Liz Crokin and Jim Watkins, owner of the far-right message board 8chan/8kun; the anti-government Patriot/militia movement including people like Ammon Bundy, ex-Milwaukee County Sherriff David Clarke, Chuck Baldwin and Shane Scott III; the neo-Confederate League led by Michael Hill; the Boogaloo contingent, seeing the virus as the possible trigger event for long-awaited Second Civil War; survivalists like Alex Jones, host of Infowars, who has stated publicly that he would kill his neighbors, if necessary in order to feed his family (<https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2020/5/1/1941902/-Alex-Jones-I-will-eat-my-neighbors?detail=emaildkre>), Wayne Madsen and James Wesley Rawles, founder of the American Redoubt movement; anti-vaccinators such as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.; alternate health care practitioners with a profound mistrust of mainstream medicine; white supremacists; accelerationists seeking societal collapse; eco-fascists, who propose genocidal solutions to ecological problems; climate change deniers like James Corbett, Steven J. Milloy and James Taylor (not the singer); fundamentalist Christians like Jerry Falwell Jr. and Chrissy Stroop; Breitbart alumni such as Milo Yiannopoulos; Fox News host Laura Ingraham and contributors such as Dr, Phil McGraw, Jason Chaffetz, Sara Carter, Chris Berg, Brit Hume and Todd Starnes; right-wing think tanks such as the Mercer Family Foundation, the Heartland Institute and Security Studies Group; some Republican politicians such as Minnesota State Senator Scott Jensen (also a doctor), Arkansas Senator Tom Cotton and Republican California congressional candidate Joanne Wright; independent, rogue conspiracy theorists such as Jerome Corsi and David Icke; as well as Donald Trump and his cronies, people like convicted felon Robert J. Stone, national security advisor Matthew Pottinger and Chanel Rion, White House Correspondent for One America News Network, another far-right news and opinion channel; Vladimir Putin, RT, the

Kremlin's You-Tube channel, and a small army of Russian trolls; Chinese disinformation operatives attempting to counterbalance US scapegoating of China; and numerous self-proclaimed citizen-activists with no credentials other than their own passionate conviction about the truth of their beliefs and the capacity to make convincing, if deeply-biased cases.

This is only the tip of a very large and complex disinformation network, one that thrives on easy proliferation in the digital age of viral memes.

To be clear, there is probably a grain of truth in at least some of these theories, or at least a grain of truth I personally (and presumably others, probably for somewhat different reasons) can subscribe to. Having lived through the Viet Nam War, Watergate, the Iran-Contra scandal, the Iraq War, and many other shenanigans, I do not place much trust in the US government. Having seen the allopathic medical profession contribute to the death of both my parents, I would decline any vaccine that was offered. I do think there are unanswered questions about the safety of telecommunication infrastructure technologies like 5-G. And so on.

Each of us, must of course, decide for ourselves what is true, and this has become increasingly difficult in the Age of Disinformation. There are many questions, few reliable answers and many people who think they know The Truth.

In addition, as Richard Tarnas notes in *Cosmos and Psyche* (209):

. . . the successive quadrature alignments of the Saturn-Pluto cycle coincided with especially challenging historical periods marked by a pervasive quality of intense contraction; eras of international crisis and conflict, empowerment of reactionary forces and totalitarian impulses, organized violence and oppression, all sometimes marked by lasting traumatic effects. An atmosphere of gravity and tension tended to accompany these three-to-four year periods, as did a widespread sense of epochal closure, 'the end of an era,' 'the end of innocence,' the destruction of an earlier mode of life that in retrospect may seem to have been marked by widespread indulgence, decadence, naivete, denial, and inflation.

This is certainly all fodder for the rampant dissemination of fear, and I might add, especially a sense of fear that is born of powerlessness and victimhood: "They, whoever they may be (the government, the deep state, the cabal, the aliens, the New World Order, take your pick), are going to do something bad to me." Some people implode in the face of fear, and sink into debilitating depression; others explode and march on capital buildings with guns, or light cell towers on fire. Both are over-reactions to the intensity of the times.

Under the auspices of Saturn-Pluto, whatever unexamined fears we do harbor will be projected outward as shadows writ large on the world stage. Whatever powerlessness we feel in relation to our own lives, or to the collective life of the culture in which we live, will find a ready reflection in some external evil power or authority figure that seems to embody what we are unable or unwilling to own. This is especially true given the presence of Jupiter in the middle of this particular Saturn-Pluto conjunction. Everything seems larger than it is; perception and opinion assumes the inflated mantle of indisputable fact; fear becomes paranoia; powerlessness becomes panic.

Facing Our Fears

We all need to be vigilant lest our worst fears are realized, but regardless of what we believe, first it is helpful to ask the simple question: "What am I afraid of?"

Are you afraid you will die a horrible death? Are you afraid your money will run out and you will wind up under a bridge, starving to death? Are you afraid the government will force you to get a vaccine, implant a programmed microchip in your arm, and turn you into a virtual slave? What is the worst-case scenario that fuels your sleepless quest for inside information?

Once you are clear what your fears actually are, then ask yourself, "How much of my fear is "false evidence appearing real?" How much is rampant paranoia rooted in powerlessness? How much of my fear is something I genuinely need to be concerned about?"

It will take deep self-honesty to answer these questions, and I would suggest to each of you that the answers are not out there, regardless of how much information you are able to gather or piece together.

It is natural to take refuge in the convictions of others who believe they know what is going on, even if we don't, and it is natural to want to have our own uncertainties to be assuaged through the sense of belonging to a community of believers. Sometimes we can compensate for our feelings of powerlessness by spreading the bad news and engaging others to corroborate our fears. The harder task, and the more fundamental opportunity here is to look within – not at what is happening out there, but what is happening inside your own psyche: your fears; your discomfort at uncertainty; your response to the uncertainty of the times.

Claiming Our Own Internal Authority and Power

To counteract this hyperinflation of the knee-jerk impulse to project our fears onto those with authority and power is to own our own authority and power. If, after looking your own deepest fears in the face, and looking at them through a honest lens that shrinks them down to size, there are still fears that seem worth addressing, the next question to ask yourself is, "What power do I have to do something about these fears?"

Your authority will come from your life experiences, and what you have learned from your experiences. The truth is that you are not a helpless child; you are not a victim; you are a fully capable adult, able to handle whatever life throws at you. How you do know this? Because you have handled whatever life has thrown at you to this point, or you wouldn't still be here. What makes you think that is going to change?

Your power comes from taking what you know, what you have learned in cultivating the inner authority that makes you a master of your own life, and applying it to the challenge at hand. The path forward may not be immediately obvious, but if you trust in yourself – and beyond that, if you can muster this level of trust, in some Greater Intelligence or Higher Power that is orchestrating not just your life, but the collective choreography as well – then you can show up, even in the face of Covid-19 and its aftermath and become a part of the brave new world seeking to be born in the heat and the pressure of Saturn-Pluto's crucible.

Slogging Toward Rebirth

In a very real sense, the world is in crisis now because there are long overdue changes that we, as a collective, need to make. Clearly, our existing health care system is unprepared to address a serious public health issue such as a pandemic. We have a government that is compounding the problem by waffling in its response, while using the pandemic as a smokescreen behind which to gut environmental protections. Our economy is more fragile than many want to believe, and gross income inequalities that create massive pain and suffering at the bottom of the pecking order, where over 23 million people are suddenly out of work (<https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/unemployment-rate>). All of these and other problems exposed by the pandemic need to be addressed. Whether or not they will be, of course, is another matter entirely, and for most of us, these problems are beyond our personal range of influence.

What we *can* do during the pandemic, however, is to look within and get our own house in order. Many will rail against the stay-at-home orders, and even the best of us can easily get cabin fever with no place to go. Nor are we, as a culture, really trained or encouraged to introspect or self-reflect, even if we ostensibly consider ourselves spiritual. All of that aside, however, this is our opportunity to do just that.

The hard truth that each of us in our own way must face, in this time of fear of death, is the likelihood that something in our own lives is just not working. Something needs to die; something needs to change. Although, it is human nature to want to avoid looking at these dysfunctional pieces of our life as long as possible, in the middle of a Saturn-Pluto moment, it is harder to do that without going into soul-deadening denial or experiencing catastrophic breakdown.

For those of you who are brave enough, I would recommend another path, one that may be hard to walk, but that ultimately leads to a more solid sense of strength and a deeper sense of empowerment. This path begins with the questions: "What ending has been begging to happen that I have wanted to avoid? What needs to change? What must I let go of in order to move forward with my life?"

Maybe, your health could use an upgrade and the fear of death evoked by this mysterious disease could be your incentive to get off your butt and make the changes you have long known you needed to make. Maybe this job from which you have been laid off was never really serving you in the first place, and it is time to rethink your future. Maybe this spouse of life partner with whom you have been quarantined is obviously not the right person for you, or maybe your relationship needs some serious, quality attention that you have been too busy to give it.

Whatever problem, issue or challenge that you have wanted to put off addressing, can't be put off any longer. This is your time to be brave, to be strong, and to do what you know you have to do. No more excuses. No more procrastination. This is easier said than done, for most of us, but in a time when doing nothing can still prove fatal, the consequences for not doing what we know we must can also be dire.

On the other hand, with Jupiter traversing this draconian-no-fun-when-the-hell-will-it-be-over Saturn-Pluto transit, we have an opportunity to come out the other end, better, brighter, more fully alive than before. The first statewide quarantines in this country were imposed in late March. Nine months later, in late December, transiting

Jupiter will pass beyond the Saturn-Pluto womb in which it is contained. From the depressing vantage point of the last few months, it may seem like a hard slog ahead, but for those willing to do the work, significant rebirth is possible.

Remember: diamonds are only formed under heat and pressure. If you had a chance to become a diamond, would you take it?

My Offerings

If I can be of help in orienting you to the more specific opportunity to become a diamond under heat and pressure in your life right now, you can schedule a consultation at <https://www.astropoetics.com/2011/03/astrological-consultations-with-joe-landwehr.html>.

If you are an astrologer, and wish to learn my system for integrating astrology and the chakra system, you can sign up for my next webinar class here - <https://www.astropoetics.com/tracking-the-soul-the-webinar-series.html>. The class will begin when I have six people interested.

If you are looking for a good read, you can check out my books here - https://joelandwehr.typepad.com/ancient_tower_press/book-catalog.html.

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Quote of the Month

from an interview with Bill Moyers in *Bill Moyers: A World of Ideas*

by Martha Nussbaum

The condition of being good is that it should always be possible for you to be morally destroyed by something you couldn't prevent. To be a good human being is to have a kind of openness to the world, an ability to trust uncertain things beyond your own control, that can lead you to be shattered in very extreme circumstances for which you were not to blame. That says something very important about the human condition of the ethical life: that it is based on a trust in the uncertain and on a willingness to be exposed; it's based on being more like a plant than like a jewel, something rather fragile, but whose very particular beauty is inseparable from its fragility.