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Notes on World Trade Center attack
September 11, 2001

“We have not understood yet that the discovery of the unconscious means an enormous spiritual task, which must be accomplished if we wish to preserve our civilization.”

C.G. Jung

Many of my non-astrological friends have asked me what has been happening in the heavens that would make more intelligible the events of September 11 and since. These notes are a summary of a lecture I gave in my Psyche and Cosmos graduate seminar on Tuesday, September 18, with a few quotations added later. In the lecture there were more historical examples, elaboration of key points, and so forth. What follows here really are just headlines, but I hope you can glean something of the basic archetypal background of this historically momentous drama we now find ourselves in.

The events are immensely complex, beyond words really, with so many causes, consequences, and dimensions. But the planetary archetypal situation was dramatically clear. In the last few weeks the planetary alignment that represents the heaviest—the darkest, most weighty, mortally serious, historically grave—of all archetypal combinations, the Saturn-Pluto alignment, reached exactitude, an opposition. The first two weeks of September in particular were critical, as the Sun and Full Moon moved into a rare and extraordinarily precise grand cross (two oppositions--Saturn with Pluto, Sun with Moon--both 90 degree square to each other).

This Saturn-Pluto alignment lasts around three years—it began last fall, and will be operative for about two more years. Historically, the hard aspects between Saturn and Pluto (conjunction, opposition, and square) have consistently coincided with periods resembling the present one, sometimes much worse: the beginnings of both world wars coincided with tight Saturn-Pluto hard aspects, as did the outbreak of the Vietnam war, the massively violent Red Guards' Cultural Revolution in China begun at the same time, the Terror during the French Revolution in 1793-94, and the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, to cite only a few. The moment the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks were known, every astrologer in the country knew the

Saturn-Pluto alignment, which has coincided with so many grim periods of historical gravity and contraction, had erupted.

Yet there is more to this archetypal complex than these words and examples suggest. As horrific as is its shadow, it is equally capable of bringing forth actions, psychological transformations, and enduring social-political consequences involving extraordinary moral nobility and sheer physical and volitional effort—something we have certainly already witnessed. The positive potential of the Saturn-Pluto archetypal complex is usually inextricably intertwined with confronting its negative manifestations—great courage in the face of darkness, danger, and death; sustained effort and determination, intense focus and discipline; moral discernment and wisdom born from experience and suffering.

To understand the full dimensions of this alignment, one has to grasp clearly the archetypal meanings of Saturn and Pluto, and then see how the combination of the two works. As with every major aspect or alignment between two planets, the corresponding archetypes mutually activate each other and combine, each in its own archetypally specific way, to create a range of quite distinctive and powerful qualities, tendencies, and events.

Pluto is in certain respects the most potent archetypal principle in the planetary pantheon: it is the archetype of power itself, as it embodies the primordial forces of destruction and regeneration, the id, the broiling cauldron of the instincts, the shadow, the underworld in every sense, the secretive and subversive, the violent and the demonic, the fiery and volcanic, the elemental energies of nature: Pluto-Hades-Dionysus in Greek mythic terms; in Indian terms, Kali and Shiva in both their destructive and regenerative aspects. Whatever Pluto comes into alignment with, it greatly intensifies and compels that second archetype, deepens and makes more profound, destroys and transforms. It brings a titanic, overwhelming elemental potency, on a mass scale.

The Saturn archetype is extremely complex: It represents the principle of limit, structure, and necessity in the universe; the principle of opposition and negation, of heaviness and gravity—both moral and physical (weighty as serious, and weighty as materially heavy); of rigidity and separation, contraction and density; repression and reaction; of hard concrete materiality. It is the reality principle, the bottom line. It is fate and karma, the cross we bear, hardship, sweat and labor, problems and

difficulties, suffering and death, failure and defeat, sorrow, the endings of things, the consequences of the past, guilt, judgment, punishment. But it is also discipline, rigor, moral determination; order, precision, control, security, and organization. Saturn is “the Establishment”: the established structures of control, authority, tradition—which may be rigid or stabilizing, containing or oppressive, grounding or deadening. In hard aspects, such as the opposition it is now in with Pluto, Saturn consistently brings out the problematic, challenging, negative potential in any reality; it defeats and hardens, it grounds and forges.

As you read the following, keep in mind that every one of these experiential qualities and phenomena are precisely faithful to the archetypal character of Saturn and Pluto in combination—there is nothing random or loose about this litany of phenomena. Each archetype simultaneously acts on and is acted upon by the other—each activates, informs, inflects, opposes, and combines with the other.

Here then are characteristic manifestations when Saturn and Pluto come into major hard alignment:

- 1) Dark, grave, momentous, deadly serious, profoundly weighty events.
- 2) Intensely dramatic times, with enduring consequences ensuing from current decisions and actions, with much at stake, often with life and death issues in the balance.
- 3) The feeling of being caught helplessly in the grip of overwhelming, powerful, and often dark forces, of being the victim of large ruthless impersonal forces of nature or of history that are both destructive and imprisoning. More generally, a sense of larger powers of any kind—social, historical, elemental, biological, archetypal—being in control of one’s life. The powerlessness of the entrapped and suffering victim is usually matched by an obsessive drive for control, power, and domination, the two sides of the experience mirroring each other, sometimes occurring in alternation in the same person or community.
- 4) Deep humiliation effected by violence, violation, and defeat. A compensatory need to prove one's steely strength, power, and invulnerability.
- 5) The empowerment of forces of hatred, murderous aggression, of evil and the demonic, of the secretive and subversive, of the underworld—elemental, instinctual,

criminal—with consequences that are punitive, defeating, traumatic, contracting, tragic. More generally, the simultaneous experience in extreme form of both violence and contraction.

6) Absolute determination, courage, and sacrifice, unbending will, intensely brave silent strenuous effort. Superhuman physical and moral exertion in the face of horrific circumstances, perilous threat, murderous hostility (the firemen and police in the World Trade Center, the passengers that stopped the hijackers in the jet that crashed in Pennsylvania from hitting their intended targets). Extreme self-control in dangerous and terrifying situations. (These qualities also pertain of course, in twisted form, to the suicidal hijackers themselves.)

7) A deeply sobering awareness of the world's dangerousness. The potential for either a highly grounded and experienced realism in the face of a harshly challenging world, or paranoid fears of hidden organized plots and dangers.

An intense focusing of concentration on a deadly serious reality. A sense of vital threat, causing primitive fear. In the extreme, the naked encounter with one's own death, producing in response either mortal panic or unflinching courage.

8) The empowerment of conservative or reactionary forces, bringing about an emphatic increase in defensive armoring, rigid boundaries, hostile separation.

9) A tremendous intensification of the harshest aspects of reality—material, mortal, existential. Negativity of overwhelming, mass dimensions. Deprivation, poverty, hardship. Sadness intensified to anguish. Absolute defeat. At worst, intense mass suffering, death, loss, grief, agony.

10) The encounter with that form of the numinous which inspires awe and dread, even terror; confronting a power—divine or natural—whose stupendous elemental destructiveness is more than human, that stupefies the imagination.

11) The eruption of massive, titanic, volcanic, overwhelming elemental forces that have a negative, collapsing, constricting effect.

12) The annihilation of the established order and of the enduring structures symbolizing that order. Also, established structures of power which are experienced as being both oppressive and evil, and thus deserving of ruthless destruction. (The

World Trade Center and Pentagon as Saturn—supreme symbols of established order and control; Pluto as violent destruction, as the terrorist underworld, and as extreme hatred, demonic both in intensity and as projected onto the established structure of power.)

13) Confinement and constriction intensified to claustrophobic, life-threatening, or even lethal dimensions (cf. the fetus struggling in the contractions of birth; suffocation; helpless entrapment by larger physical forces; Saturn-Pluto is the central aspect of the perinatal trauma—both Grof and Rank, the major psychologists of the birth trauma, had this aspect).

14) Experiences that in their traumatic intensity and gravity take many years to absorb, integrate, or heal from. More generally, events that are extremely enduring in their consequences—both destructively and constructively—establishing new structures and orders of life, either solidifying or oppressive, deadening or maturing.

15) The capacity to endure extreme pain, suffering, or hardship. Extremely hardening experiences, the necessity to endure them, and the long-lasting psychological or physical structures such experiences forge. Impossibly difficult tasks, hard labor beyond human endurance.

16) In general, the emphatic intensification of conflict and separation, of intractable enmities, of problems, contradictions, and oppositions.

17) The tendency towards ruthless complete “othering”: intense objectification of other subjects. This extreme objectification combined with the projection or experience of evil and shadow qualities, thereby impelling cruel behavior, hatred, revenge, murder, anger, suspicion, fear, terror, greed, fanaticism (Pluto). All made possible by establishing or experiencing an absolute boundary (Saturn) between self and other as separate and alien, often seeing the other as subhuman and unworthy of life (references to beasts, devils, swamps, vermin, lairs, hunting down animals, etc.).

18) A tendency to see things in terms of a confrontation between good and evil. Both the confrontation with evil, with the shadow, and the constellating of it. Periods of collective intense and heavy judgment, blame, scapegoating, punishment, execution. With one’s own side definitively good and the enemy definitively evil, the impulse for jihads, crusades, “holy” wars.

19) Historically a tendency in the collective psyche to constellate the shadow by eliciting or projecting archetypal “faces of the enemy,” seeing or experiencing darkness and violent evil in the other, resulting in periodic historical contractions bringing war, mass death. There is usually a powerful focus of grave concern and fear in the collective psyche onto a particular object, either as scapegoat or as authentic danger or evil—the “Evil Empire” (Reagan against Soviet Union) in 1981-84; the apocalyptic nuclear danger of the superpower arms race reaching its peak during the same period, with widespread fear of World War III; the Germans and Japanese in 1939-41, the Communist Soviet Union at start of Cold War (1946-48), international terrorism now.

20) Experiences of irrevocable catastrophe, intense loss, endings, death, resulting in lasting sense of deep heaviness, darkness, and sorrow often combined with anxiety.

21) A sense of the tremendous inescapable weight and burden of history, the past, errors from the past, ancient resentments and enmities.

22) The sense of an ominous, darker reality descending on an age.

23) A sense of the irrevocable end of an era; the destruction of the established order of existence, the end of an earlier mode of life characterized by naivete, inflation, or illusion. “The end of innocence.”

Cf. 1914, beginning of World War I (the first Saturn-Pluto conjunction of the 20th century); 1929-30, beginning of the Great Depression (the following opposition); 1964-67, the beginning of the Vietnam War (the last opposition). The earlier age now seems “Prelapsarian,” before the Fall: the WTC attack and destruction have brought about a ruthless end to an age in America of complacency, of arrogance, of hubris, of taunting indifference to the larger world community, of naivete, of inflation, of specialness, of unthinking freedom, of self-indulgence, of decadence, of illusion, of unconsciousness. “That fat, daydreaming America is gone now, way gone” (Frank Rich, NYT).

The end of naïve specialness: now sharing the hard fate of common humanity. Cf. Dylan’s “Like a Rolling Stone,” under Saturn-Pluto opposition of 1965: “How does it feel....”

24) A greatly intensified and deepened maturation of a person or a culture, leaving its *puer* dream of naïve eternal youth and entering a *senex* reality—darker, gravely serious, problematic, concrete, confining and challenging, aging, burdening, maturing (cf. Manhattan’s Stuyvesant high school students who directly witnessed and were deeply transformed and matured by the events; almost all high school students at the time of the Columbine school shootings and the concurrent wave of other school shootings in the country were born under the Saturn-Pluto conjunction of 1981-84).

25) The galvanizing of the will, a sense of stern purposefulness, grim determination.

The man of steel., the mother in the throes of the birth labor—the superhuman effort of contraction and determination in the service of a life-and-death cause. Cf. the firefighters and police entering the towers and climbing to their deaths out of duty and service to others. “The iron will of the ironworkers laboring at Ground Zero” (NBC News).

Steely purposeful assertion of control and power (Saturn and Pluto), after experiencing the horror of utter powerlessness—by U.S. now, the president and military and intelligence establishment; earlier by the terrorists (Pluto as extreme life-and-death survival instincts and intensity, Saturn as being in control or being controlled—thus the alternation of extreme assertions of controlling power and extreme helpless victimization under another’s controlling power).

“Grim determination”—a phrase used many times to describe both the terrorists and the response, in different forms, by rescue workers, the American people, or the Bush administration, and now the Taliban and Afghani people. Saturn brings seriousness, gravitas, focused purposefulness, which Pluto intensifies with the desperate force of life-and-death survival instincts.

“Perhaps the worst realization is how low-tech this attack was. No sophisticated missiles, no stolen nukes, no exotic bio-warfare or chemical agents. The main, decisive weapon here was determination.” NYT

From the terrorists’ guide found in their luggage: “Stand fast... The time of fun and waste has gone. The time of judgment has arrived.”

Grim, driven, humorless and merciless determination in the service of power and control—the terrorist mass murderer, the slave driver, the tyrant, the inner tyrant (cruel superego), the dictator, the merciless judge, the intensely self-disciplined ascetic, the rigid authoritarian, the obsessive-compulsive security apparatus. Totalitarianism and terrorism, mirror images in their calculated organized violence in the service of power and domination.

26) A quality of relentlessness, implacability, irrevocability; of ferocious ruthlessness and cruelty. Grim violence, the cruel ruthless enemy.

27) The impulse to kill. Murder (Saturn as death, the Grim Reaper, Pluto as violent instinct, hatred and aggression, predatory destruction, Kali). Also, mass murder (Saturn as personal death; Pluto as mass death and destruction).

28) The unspeakably difficult—physically, emotionally, logistically—task of rescue and recovery—sifting painstakingly and perilously through the endless gargantuan mountain of hot ash and pulverized debris, of fragmented concrete, steel, and human bodies; the crushing failure to find survivors.

29) The Herculean labor of clearing and cleaning the immense mass of destruction; of restoring structures, of stabilizing the deep underground foundations and containments destroyed or threatened by the collapse.

The task of rebuilding from the rubble (cf., the conjunction of 1946-48, not only the beginning of the Cold War, Iron Curtain, etc., but also the Marshall Plan and the rebuilding of Europe from the rubble of World War II).

30) Consider the great German astrologer Ebertin's telegraphic summary of Saturn-Pluto: "Tenacity and toughness, endurance, the capability to make record efforts of the highest possible order, the ability to perform the most difficult work with extreme self-discipline, self-denial and renunciation....A hard and unfeeling disposition, also cold-heartedness, severity, tendency to violence, a fanatical adherence to one's principles once they have been adopted. A martyr. Mass murderer....Hard struggling for success. The participation in achievements brought about by large groups or masses of people, the pursuit of difficult work or of painstaking and thorough research in seclusion, the process of growing spiritually and mentally, silent activity...." (*Combinations of Stellar Influence*, 188).

Saturn-Pluto is grit and grime, fire and brimstone, ashes and horror, dust to dust, blood, sweat, toil, and tears (Churchill rallying the British against the Nazis during the Blitz, 1939-40). It is harrowing and galvanizing. It traumatizes and it forges. It destroys, transforms, and bodies forth.

Saturn-Pluto also brings forth the possibility of wisdom: of deep gravitas, of unflinching moral discernment and self-awareness achieved through profound experience and suffering.

It's helpful to think of great artists born with Saturn-Pluto hard aspects whose work has especially embodied many of these qualities in diverse and richly complex ways: Kafka and Melville, for example, throughout their work, both born with Saturn-Pluto conjunctions; Hemingway with his lifelong concern with (and attraction to) war, death, killing, and the grim brutality of life; the three Saturn-Pluto directors Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, and Oliver Stone in their many films of fear and suspicion, evil and the shadow, being helplessly trapped in the dark plots of cruel, murderous, or diabolical forces; Giger's many paintings and images of darkness, evil, brutality, ruthless entrapment; Joseph Conrad's horrific, traumatizing experience of metaphysical and human evil in the Congo under the Saturn-Pluto alignment of 1890, later recorded in *The Heart of Darkness* ("the horror, the horror").

Shakespeare had Pluto square Saturn as a long personal (once-in-a-lifetime) transit during the entire six-year period in which he wrote all the major tragedies—*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*—exploring and articulating with such profundity the depths of the human shadow.

We see it too in the metaphysical and spiritual vision of major Saturn-Pluto theologians like Augustine and Calvin, with their profound sense of the dark evil and corruption rooted in the human soul, original sin, guilt and remorse, hell and damnation, predestination, being in the grip of an overwhelmingly powerful force and fate that rules one's life and destiny no matter what one might attempt otherwise, their relentless determination to suppress evil and construct moral and ecclesiastical structures to serve that quest, their overall focus on moral judgment and self-judgment. (In a more contemporary, less medieval example, we see it in Thomas

Merton, born under the conjunction of 1914-15, whose spiritual autobiography *The Seven-Storey Mountain* under the immediately following conjunction, 1946-48, wrestles with these same themes with somewhat different results.)

The forging of the moral faculty and the collective superego is a Saturn-Pluto effort, from the God of thunder and almighty power giving Moses the Ten Commandments onwards (even our film recreations of that event reflect the collective psyche's archetypal dynamics, with both cinematic biblical spectacles of that name, *The Ten Commandments*, both by De Mille, produced when Saturn was square Pluto, in 1923 and 1956).

Saturn and Pluto were conjunct when the world faced the full horror and evil of the Holocaust, 1946-48, with the public release of the films taken of the Nazi concentration camps (films edited for the British government by Hitchcock), and with the Nuremberg Trials of the Nazi war criminals in 1946, with their ambience of grave moral and legal judgment, confrontation with the shadow, horrific evil, "man's inhumanity." Films precisely express the archetypal dynamics of the collective psyche. After that conjunction, each hard aspect of Saturn and Pluto coincided with major films about the concentrations camps and Holocaust—Resnais's *Night and Fog* in 1956, Kramer's *Judgment at Nuremberg* in 1965, *Sophie's Choice* in 1982, *Schindler's List* in 1993; virtually all of the 10-hour long documentary *Shoah* was filmed under the conjunction of 1981-84. Kafka wrote "The Trial" under the Saturn-Pluto conjunction of 1914 (and was himself born under the Saturn-Pluto conjunction just before that). Saturn was opposite Pluto in 1536 when Michelangelo began painting "The Last Judgment."

In terms of the tendency to see things in terms of good and evil: cf. Augustine's epic drama of history; the American view of Soviet Communism from the beginning of the Cold War during the conjunction of 1946-48, "the evil Empire" of Reagan in 1981-84; "a monumental struggle between good and evil" of Bush in 2001; Churchill's view of Hitler in 1939-40; Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"; Oliver Stone's rendering of America in *Platoon*, *JFK*, *Nixon*, *Wall Street*, *Born on the Fourth of July*...Melville's magnificent dissection of this tendency in *Moby Dick* and *Billy Budd*.

Saturn-Pluto alignments do indeed tend to bring genuine confrontations between good and evil—but where the evil exists is not usually as simple a matter as the

confronter believes (cf. Keen's *Faces of the Enemy*, the perinatal projections in history analyzed by Grof and the psychohistorian Lloyd de Mause).

Cf. Israel and Palestine, whose implacable enmity was established with the founding of Israel under the SA-PL conjunction of 1948; with every hard SA-PL aspect since, including the present, coinciding with a Middle Eastern war, with their mutual projective constellating of the shadow and the need for suppression and attack. Modern India and Pakistan were divided under the same conjunction, 1947, commencing a similar tragic drama.

“We are at war”—those grim words, creating that heavy dark weight in the pit in one's stomach, again and again heard during Saturn-Pluto eras. Cf. the first Saturn-Pluto cycle of the twentieth century, beginning in 1914, and its hard aspects coinciding with both world wars, essentially constituting a “thirty years war” that does not end until the end of the full Saturn-Pluto cycle at the end of World War II (the first Thirty Years War, 1618-48, also precisely coincided with the Saturn-Pluto cycle).

Yet it does not have to be the full-fledge open war of the world wars: the following Saturn-Pluto conjunction (1946-48) brought the beginning of the Cold War, with the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, the Iron Curtain, the Berlin crisis, the beginnings of anti-Communist McCarthyism in the U.S., the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the founding of the CIA, National Security Council, and Department of Defense. (Saturn as “cold” war, rigid, armored, iron boundary, containment, fear, hardness.)

In terms of the sense of the tremendous inescapable weight and burden of history, the inexorable power of the past, errors and conflicts from the past, ancient resentments and enmities: note that Samuel Huntington's often cited (especially recently) essay “The Clash of Civilizations,” with its dark thesis of virtually ineluctable and irreconcilable conflict between the West and Islam, rooted in centuries of history and war between civilizations and religious cultures, was published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993 under the last Saturn-Pluto square. Kissinger, whose geopolitical philosophy has always been notable for its sense of history's ineluctable influences, dark and heavy, on the present, has this aspect all his life (born 1923).

W.H. Auden's poem “September 1, 1939”—widely circulated, beginning on the very day of the World Trade Center attacks, as both resonant with and prophetic of the

current moment—was written in New York City as the Nazis invaded Poland under Saturn square Pluto:

Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

The poem explores many relevant Saturn-Pluto themes—the dark end of an era, evil being done by those to whom evil is done, skyscrapers and imperialism, a psychopathic god served by an enemy gone mad—but especially relevant is the insight about humiliation and violence: “The poem, as Joseph Brodsky once pointed out, is really about shame—about how cultures are infected by overwhelming feelings of shame, their ‘habit-forming pain,’ and seek to escape those feelings through violence. What drives men mad—drives them to psychopathic gods—is the unbearable feeling of having been humiliated” (Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*, 10/1/01). Auden was himself born with Saturn square Pluto.

In terms of that sense of an ominous, darker reality descending on an age—we’ve already begun to forget what it was like, during the last Saturn-Pluto conjunction, of 1981-84 (the one immediately following the conjunction that coincided with the beginning of the Cold War), Reagan’s first administration when the Cold War was at its peak, with the tremendous nuclear buildup on both sides of the Atlantic reaching apocalyptic proportions, preparing for “nuclear overkill,” and impelling apocalyptic fears of nuclear holocaust in the collective psyche, the sense of a nuclear sword of Damocles hanging over the world because of the Manichaean battle between the superpowers; Armageddon fantasies emerging (along with the empowered fundamentalist imagination), coincident with the beginning of the AIDS epidemic; Helen Caldicott and the mass anti-nuclear rallies, scientists’ recognition of the “nuclear winter” probable fallout from a nuclear war, the widely seen “The Day After,” the fears of “triggering World War III,” the drawing of many historical parallels with the beginning of World War I, and so forth. It is a powerful archetypal gestalt as it emerges in and grips the collective psyche (again, recall 1914-16, 1939-41). Saturn-Pluto as mass death: the many wars, massacres, major terrorist attacks coincident with this alignment.

Events with brutal and enduring impact—it is the principal aspect of trauma.

Confrontation with darkness, evil, hatred, bestial ferocity, the demonic, the shadow, and the moral and physical effort to sustain that confrontation: Cf. Churchill courageous rallying the British alone in Europe to face Hitler and the overpowering Nazis in 1939-40. Albrecht Durer's woodcut "Knight, Death, and the Devil" beautifully conveys this archetypal moment (Durer born with his Sun on a Saturn-Pluto square).

Confronting "the beast" (cf. this summer's shark epidemic of attacks and fears; Spielberg's *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park* [Spielberg's born with Saturn-Pluto conjunction, visible as well in *Schindler's List*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *AI*, et al.]; Giger's work; this summer's film *Sexy Beast*; Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle"; Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," *Apocalypse Now Redux*).

And then there is the purely physical, material, and energetic manifestations of Saturn-Pluto in this event:

"Steel" and "iron" are themselves quintessential Saturn-Pluto: matter hardened by fire, powerfully enduring concrete and steel structures, steel jet airliners, steely responses, iron curtains, iron determination.

The World Trade Center towers were built beginning under the Saturn-Pluto opposition of 1966-67. They were the strongest buildings in the world, built from 192,000 tons of steel to withstand hurricanes and earthquakes, with steel columns encircling the 110 stories and a massive reinforced steel core running vertically down the center. Their capacity to withstand the tremendous impact was so great that it saved 20,000 lives as they remained standing for more than an hour after impact, swaying and shuddering but allowing thousands to escape, and even then not toppling over onto other buildings. In a sense the titanic strength of the World Trade Center towers was met by the titanic force of the Boeing 767s—400,000 pound jets traveling at 300 mph carrying 24,000 gallons of fuel.

Saturn-Pluto is the stupendous weight of the twin towers collapsing, 110 stories of steel and concrete and glass, the inconceivable amount of potential energy (Pluto) contained by the building in its immensely elevated erect condition suddenly destructively released as it fell (Saturn) from its great height. “Each floor of the Trade Center was nearly three feet thick and made of concrete; a floor gave way, and the one below it then collapsed—six feet of concrete. That gave way, the one below it collapsed. Nine feet of concrete. Twelve. Fifteen. Eighteen...” The titanic cumulative weight of the collapse, pulverizing everything below—Saturn as weight, gravity, falling, collapse, hard materiality; Pluto as stupendously intensifying that weight and gravitational collapse—great mass and great gravity creating tremendous destruction.

Pluto also as the fire ball heat of the explosion melting the steel, destroying the steel shell of the buildings, collapsing the huge structures down upon thousands in destructive finality (“then the fire ensues and once the temperature gets up [to] 800 to 900 degrees, the structural shell will start to fall. Engineers suspect the temperatures inside the crash areas could have quickly reached well over 1,000 degrees, perhaps approaching 2,000 degrees — beyond the melting point of any steel” NYT). The combination of being crushed (Saturn) and incinerated (Pluto).

Titanically massive steel and concrete material structures, destroyed, annihilated, atomized: the Newtonian-Cartesian world (Saturn) of engineering meets Shiva (Pluto). And Shiva uses the Newtonian-Cartesian “laws” of matter and force, mass and gravity, to accomplish his destruction.

All the destruction was created from the encounter of fire and matter (Pluto and Saturn).

Saturn and Pluto are both archetypally “dark,” in different ways, including the literal; their combination is extremely dark: hence the literal implacable darkness after the collapse, black soot, smoke, ash, the impossibility to see anything.

“Just as survivors of the WTC collapse have spoken of being enveloped in dust so thick and black that they couldn't even see their hands in front of their faces, so it was for me entering this cloud of emotion, thought, and energy. All I could experience within it was sorrow, grief, fear, and anger...” (David Spangler)

“The jaws of death.” “The gates of hell.” “Nuclear winter” (WTC witness accounts).

Saturn-Pluto as the darkest dark, the deepest underworld, the absolute bottom, the lowest ground, the worst, the ultimate bottom line, death’s finality, the point of annihilation, Ground Zero--ground to nothingness, ashes and dust. “A terrifying graveyard.”

The stupendous mass of debris: from Pluto’s relationship to the results of destruction, decay, refuse, garbage, scatology, waste; Saturn’s to materiality, dust, death, worthlessness, grayness. (Cf. “Desolation Row,” Dylan, 1965, Saturn opposite Pluto.)

We see the unusual synthesis of the two principles, Saturn and Pluto, in such phrases describing the terrorist attack as “a carefully planned catastrophe—executed with alarming precision and seemingly cold-blooded calculation.” A company whose engineering expertise was consulted by the reporter of the twin towers’ collapse was named “Controlled Demolition”—disciplined, precisely calculated devastation. Other characteristic verbal juxtapositions describing the events: “Terrifying professionalism” (New Yorker on the hijackings), “Organized pandemonium” (witness of the Pentagon aftermath).

Yet Saturn-Pluto is also the aspect of unusually enduring structures and foundations, powerful structures and structures symbolizing power, solidly and deeply constructed buildings and existential structures whose strength and solidity allow them to endure for great lengths of time—Pluto in this case intensely driving and empowering the material solidity and enduring structure.

It is titanic structures and titanic efforts, the building of structures and foundations that endure through immense toil and struggle, grit and determination, the strenuous marshalling of tremendous resources in a focused, determined manner: cf. the Marshall Plan 1947, the skyscrapers themselves, and now the extraordinary labor to secure the deep underlying structural foundations seven stories below the larger WTC area (cf. NYT, 9/18/01) to keep the entire area from collapsing from the inrushing river below.

By the way, the World Trade Center twin towers were completed 28½ years ago, an exact Saturn return. The Pentagon was completed 58 years ago, thus this was its second Saturn return. Saturn returns for individuals regularly bring major

transforming events, confrontations with mortality, endings of an entire cycle of life, profound structural shifts, completions, etc. (More benignly, the Berlin Wall also came down at the end of its exact Saturn return cycle—1961-89).

Pearl Harbor took place 59 years ago, two Saturn cycles ago.

Saturn is archetypally associated with order, Pluto with chaos—the chaos of destruction, of annihilation, but also the empowering chaos of nature’s depths from which regeneration and new structures emerge. The Saturn-Pluto combination is profoundly embodied in the dialectic between order and chaos. Each constellates the other, each secretly contains the other, like the yin/yang symbol, as in chaos theory and complexity theory. Chaotic phenomena always mask a deeper order, evolution’s chaotic unfolding spontaneously self-organizes, every order masks and gives way to underlying chaos.

Intrapsychically, Saturn-Pluto expresses itself as the superego and ego structure controlling and repressing the id. Yet it is a true dialectic, for the superego is not only antagonistic to the id, the id drives and can even control the superego (as Freud brilliantly saw, with the id providing both the superego’s energy and its potential for cruelty—Freud’s formulation of the superego and its relation to the id, by the way, emerging precisely during the Saturn-Pluto square of 1922-23). Each increases the reality and high-pressure potency of the other. (Cf. the collective level of this, expressed in Freud’s *Civilization and Its Discontents* under the Saturn-Pluto opposition, 1929-31.)

Saturn-Pluto brings both the repression of the id and the return of the repressed—the id’s eruption out of the repressive containment of the ego and superego, the compensatory backlash, the karmic return, the consequences of past actions, the wages of sin. (“Americans are reaping the consequences of a monster they helped create but could not control” *Sydney Morning Herald* on the U.S. financing and training of the Afghan Islamic fundamentalist groups throughout the 1980s; also, cf. the Gulf War fought under Bush pere to ensure flow of oil to the West, the American-led bombings and subsequent embargoes causing hundreds of thousands of deaths to Middle Eastern civilians; American military presence in Saudi Arabia cited as single greatest cause of bin Laden’s hatred of U.S.)

Concerning the characteristic empowerment of the most reactionary, conservative forces during Saturn-Pluto alignments, bringing about increased sense of defensive armoring, rigid boundaries, hostile separation: cf. first half of the 1980s, Reagan in the U.S., Thatcher in England, Pope John Paul II in the Catholic Church, the rise of the Christian right in the U.S., of Christian and Islamic fundamentalism throughout the world). Cf. conservative empowerment again during the most recent square of Saturn-Pluto, in 1992-94—the coming to power by the Taliban in Afghanistan for example, or the Republican right, Newt Gingrich, and the Contract on America, both in 1994; as well as the cruelty and evil visible in the Rodney King beatings, the trial, the LA riots; as well as ethnic cleansing, concentration camps, atrocity, and mass death in Bosnia, Yugoslavia, Rwanda....The first bombing of the World Trade Center, by the way, took place during that Saturn-Pluto square as well, 1993. It was also under this alignment in 1993 that bin Laden first proclaimed his jihad against America.

Saturn-Pluto is the cycle of terrorism and repression, violence and retribution, each driving and constellating the other (consider Israel's and Palestine's incessant life cycle, with Israel born under the Saturn-Pluto conjunction of 1948 in triple conjunction with Mars, reaching boiling points under each succeeding Saturn-Pluto hard aspect—1956, 1967, 1973, 1982). “How does one create a terrorist? Bomb their families.” (Which, in a sense, is what the terrorists who bombed New York may tragically succeed in doing.)

Note the simultaneous opposites: Saturn-Pluto is the tyranny by terrorism, and it's the grimly determined effort to oppose and obliterate terrorism....It's also the tyranny of a society gripped by anti-terrorist fears, controls, and rigidities; and it's a state and military willing to murder thousands of innocent people to effect its implacable exterminating purpose.

Cf. Robespierre's “revolutionary puritanism” during the Terror in 1793-94, Saturn square Pluto.

It is the mobilization of structures of power against evil, which may themselves move into the grip of evil: i.e., shadow-possession, unconscious id-driven behavior often of a punitive kind.

Saturn-Pluto as demonic power that is in control (cf. Hitler in 1939-40, or the images of Giger, born in 1940).

We see a similar polarity in Saturn-Pluto with both the Inquisition and the evil seen/projected in witches and heretics, or the 1940s-50s Soviet Communism and American communist underworld versus the McCarthyite anti-Communist reaction—the evil, the shadow, the dark manipulation and perfidy are exclusively seen in the other, never in the self.

Again, the latter phenomenon all began under the Saturn-Pluto conjunction of 1946-48 that brought the beginning of the Cold War, the Iron Curtain, the Berlin crisis, the beginnings of anti-Communist McCarthyism in the U.S. with the House Committee on Un-American Activities, blacklists, also the founding of the CIA, Department of Defense, National Security Agency, military-industrial complex, while Stalin asserted control throughout Eastern Europe...Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four," written during that same conjunction of 1946-48, is a classic expression of the dark controlling power in totalitarianism.

Saturn-Pluto is the fundamental aspect of totalitarianism, which first emerged in Germany with the German state's total mobilization for war in 1914. Note the sequence of totalitarian empowerment in coincidence with the succeeding hard aspects of Saturn and Pluto: the rise of Fascism and totalitarian Soviet communism in 1921-24—Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler's putsch--and crucial empowerment with the Great Depression 1929-32; and full Nazi eruption in 1939-41; then the 1946-48 fullest extension of Stalinist Soviet power in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the crucial period of Communism coming to power in China.

Cf. Saturn-Pluto's similar relationship to the history of fundamentalism. Note the themes of fundamentalist empowerment and ruthless "divine" judgment visible in the terrorists' theology of judgment and vengeance against the Satan of the West, and also in the emblematic comments by fundamentalist American leaders such as Falwell and Robertson to the effect that the attacks can be recognized as God's righteous punishment for the sins committed by secular America, liberals, gays, and feminists.

The rigid security measures now instituted to combat the possibility of terrorism will precisely resemble the classic Saturn-Pluto obsessive-compulsive syndrome of the incessantly hypervigilant superego, brilliantly rendered in Kafka's great story "The

Burrow” (written during the Saturn-Pluto square of 1923—the same year and alignment that brought Freud’s formulation of the superego-id relationship in *The Ego and the Id*).

Saturn-Pluto brings those terrifying encounters with death and danger that cause primitive fear and the reactive rigid constriction of egoic security controls, the traumatized tightening of the sphincter, the obsessive-compulsive psychological structure, the mobilization of security measures that ensure safety, boundaries, order, purity and cleanliness, control, leading in extreme to the anal-sadistic personality, the rigid and punitive puritanical conscience, the judgmental fundamentalist, the cruel superego, the totalitarian state.

Yet Saturn-Pluto is the configuration that brings a powerful confrontation with the basics of human mortal reality, of life and death, in such a way as to cleanse one of illusory concerns and superficial values. “Up until the moment the twin towers fell, America was deep in a cocoon of self-gratification and self-improvement....Now we have to view our solipsism and wretched excess through the prism of the ‘epic wretchedness’ of the Afghan people, as The Times's Barry Bearak called it. It's somewhat embarrassing that we didn't look outward sooner, that foreign wars got less TV air time than the war against wrinkles. But our culture turns out to be about much more than its glittery surface, and that's been clear in all that's happened since Sept. 11: the exposure to the quiet lives of inspiration that so many victims led; the valor of rescue workers; the altruistic derring-do of the men who fought back on Flight 93; our concern about inflicting unnecessary suffering on innocent Afghans; the generosity and civic tolerance at the heart of our country's response to horrific loss. With their oxymoronic holy war, Osama bin Laden and his murderous disciples ...succeeded in illuminating - not just to the rest of the world but to us - how little all our baubles and all our booty have to do with who we really are.” (Maureen Dowd, NYT, 10/3/01)

“The initial shock and grieving after the terrorist attacks instilled in the American psyche a gravitas, a deep sense of grounding that seemed to slow time in our mad-dash world and draw us into silent reflection rather than quick talk. Thinking felt as if it were weighted in our entire body. It refused to click into easy patterns as we sought to grasp the unimaginable new reality. In that palpable grounding the first week, we were all bonded with the dead and with each other, causing us to reach out

to family and friends around the country in shock and loving support. It felt as if our suddenly having to bear the unbearable had delivered us to another way of being, one shaped by the trauma of immense tragedy and the movement into regeneration. Even mainstream commentators noted that the trivial concerns of our consumer culture seemed extremely irrelevant. We had entered a new time and a new psychological space.” (Charlene Spretnak, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/5/01)

And Wendell Berry, *Thoughts in the Presence of Fear*: “I. The time will soon come when we will not be able to remember the horrors of September 11 without remembering also the unquestioning technological and economic optimism that ended on that day. II. This optimism rested on the proposition that we were living in a "new world order" and a "new economy" that would "grow" on and on, bringing a prosperity of which every new increment would be "unprecedented". III. The dominant politicians, corporate officers, and investors who believed this proposition did not acknowledge that the prosperity was limited to a tiny percent of the world's people, and to an ever smaller number of people even in the United States; that it was founded upon the oppressive labor of poor people all over the world; and that its ecological costs increasingly threatened all life, including the lives of the supposedly prosperous...”

We see the Saturn-Pluto energy in the recent outpouring of so many writings and communications—essays, columns, emails, lectures—characterized by sustained grave reflection, deeply serious, penetrating thought and analysis, moral and psychological depth and earnestness, engaged with grave issues in profound ways.

People who have these planets in major hard aspect all their lives often have a sense of living with special moral responsibilities, with the heavy burden of history on their shoulders, a sense of weighty karmic duty.

Saturn-Pluto presses for the forging of a deeper moral structure of consciousness, of the superego—which can be rigid and pathological, or a profound moral advance in consciousness, a deepening of conscience, a deeper awareness of evil, of the shadow, a profounder moral self-awareness, a moral strength of purpose.

It is no accident that Jung, born with Saturn square Pluto, was the psychologist who most brought the modern self into awareness of the “shadow,” which he named and dissected, and who explored its reality in 20th century history: the shadow of European civilization, the shadow of modern man, the shadow of modern

technology, the shadow of every individual psyche, the shadow even of God (*Answer to Job*). Note also how so many of his writings are characterized by a tone of intense moral gravity and penetrating analysis.

Cf. An Afghani interviewed about the possibility of being bombed by the U.S. in reprisal: “America is very powerful and can do almost anything it wants; but if I were America, I would look deep in my heart and ask myself why someone would want to attack me in this way.”

We also can see the Saturn-Pluto complex in Jung’s acute sensitivity to the fateful determining power of the unconscious psyche over human life. Saturn-Pluto brings that sense of the encompassing power of history, of our evolutionary inheritance, and of the archetypes themselves, beyond the control of the rational self:

“We have not understood yet that the discovery of the unconscious means an enormous spiritual task, which must be accomplished if we wish to preserve our civilization.” C.G. Jung

Saturn-Pluto is the collective psyche in a contraction of death that is also, at another level, a contraction of birth, a ruthless hard labor of transformation within the alembic compression chamber: Saturn-Pluto periods bring evolutionary contractions, historical epochs that bring about a great death, the destruction of an old order, deep transformation, and the establishment of a new evolutionary structure. Through suffering and experience, deeper and wiser forms of consciousness emerge.

Saturn-Pluto is the aspect of patriarchy—the evolutionary empowerment of the stern Father archetype, of authority, hierarchy, control, law and order, tradition and stability, discipline, domination, oppression, structure, maturation—and at another level, it is the aspect of the Great Mother’s hard birth contractions pressing and impelling new life and a new form of being. Thus patriarchy as the birth canal of the Great Mother Goddess, just as History is the birth labor of Nature. “All creation groaneth in travail” for the birth of this new being.

Saturn-Pluto ruthlessly deprives and separates and presses us—by loss, by death, by sacrifice, by hardship, by hard labor—out of an old form of life and into a new one, and often the new is not visible.

Saturn-Pluto is the crucifixion, on the cross of opposites, where the divine embrace of absolute defeat and death gives birth to a new humanity. (Saturn and Pluto were in opposition in 29-31 AD.) It is the agony in the garden: the shouldering of collective pain, sorrow, loss, and shadow. It is the hard structure of death and rebirth. It is the sacrifice that transforms reality. It is the dark and brutal storm which brings in its wake, in the fullness of time, slowly but inevitably, the luminous serenity of a new dawn.

This is the essential insight of the death-rebirth mystery: that every death is on another level actually a birth.

Thus Saturn-Pluto hard aspects consistently bring those epochal periods in history of great darkness, moral gravity, and disciplined determination that, while confronting evil—within as well as without—ultimately serve to build the enduring spiritual, moral, and social-political foundations for the future. They are the death contractions of history, but also its birth contractions.

Again, the Saturn-Pluto opposition, which first moved into orb last fall during the election season, and just now in the past few weeks reached exactitude for the first time, will last about two more years, until 2003.

A shorter term alignment that began about the time of the attacks and lasts about six weeks, is the Mars-Jupiter opposition, typically bringing enthusiasm for assertive and militaristic action, strong displays of patriotism, proud flag-waving (especially at sports and military events), nationalist bravado, jingoism, swaggering cowboy rhetoric, bluster, saber-rattling, a crusading spirit, and, less problematically, an overall energetic optimism and increase in courage and ardor.

While many other specific astrological factors can be adduced to fill out the picture, bottom-line it's the Saturn-Pluto alignment that symbolically and multivalently informs virtually every element of the phenomenon. The several other astrological factors that played a role in the timing and the nuances of the event—the Full Moon grand cross; the Pluto and Saturn stations; the Mars retrograde cycle (including what

Mars aligned with during that cycle); the background of specific eclipses; the Mercury grand trine with the extraordinary calculating smoothness of the hijacking operation; the Moon and Saturn both in Gemini, with the twin towers, twin airliners, two cities attacked, and so forth—all these basically supported the larger, deeper, more powerful archetypal reality of the Saturn-Pluto complex. It is this great outer-planet alignment that constituted the simple--yet in another sense infinitely complex—essential archetypal background of these profound events.

We must also take into account that this alignment is taking place in the immediate aftermath of the long Uranus-Neptune conjunction, lasting from the mid-1980s to the present year, which has left humanity in a condition that is more globally united and interconnected, more sensitized to the suffering and realities of others, in certain respects more spiritually awakened, more capable of collective healing and compassion, and, through technological advances in communications media, more able to think and feel and respond together in a spiritually evolved manner to these grave realities than has ever been possible before.

I hope these notes, combined with David Spangler's message, may provide a larger perspective on the deep and grave events that have irrevocably shaped our lives.

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