

The Signature of Pluto in the Events of Christ Jesus's Life, Historical Personalities, and Modern World Events

By David Tresemer and Robert Schiappacasse

(Revised version of a paper for Christian Star Calendar 2008, now The Journal for Star Wisdom)

What do the far outer planets have to do with our lives and our experience?

In astrophysics, we note that Rudolf Steiner did not refer much to the far outer planets, even though Uranus had been discovered in 1781 (by Herschel), and named "Uranus" in 1850, just before Steiner's birth. Neptune was discovered in 1846, also just before Steiner's birth. Pluto was discovered after Steiner's life, in 1930; recently it has been demoted to "dwarf planet," and indeed another object has been found beyond Pluto that is a bit larger than Pluto.

The "classical" planets end with Saturn, because we can see all of them with our naked eyes. There is a long tradition of what effects each classical planet has on our experience, including the aspects each has with each, and the signs in which they have greater potency. The far outer planets, however, do not have the centuries of observation by astrologers.

The present authors asked, "Beginning with the heavens, what do the phenomena on earth show us? What is the signature of the planet in action?" But where to begin? Is a planet's behavior most revealed by its presence in a particular zodiacal sign? Or is it revealed in aspect to another heavenly body? We settled on the notion that relation to the Sun might reveal an influence more sharply and more strongly than any other relation. If a planet is behind the Sun (and thus conjunct), then the flow of energy from the stars through the Sun is conditioned by that planet. We liken this to turbulence, as in a rock in the middle of a stream, and the water then shows eddies this way and that around the rock. Likewise, when a planet is exactly on the other side of the Earth from the Sun (geocentric opposition and heliocentric conjunction), a different kind of turbulence can be expected. Lastly, when the planet is at right angles to the Sun (geocentric square¹), then experience has shown that another kind of turbulent challenge exists. Some people even say that conjunction with the Sun is so powerful that the planet "combusts," a metaphor of turbulence gone too far! Steiner might say that viewing the planets in their major aspect to the Sun attunes us to the activities of the astral body.²

¹ For points far away, including the far outer planets, a geocentric square would approximate a heliocentric square.

² From Rudolf Steiner, *The Alphabet: An Expression of the Mystery of Man* (Spring Valley, NY: Mercury Press, 1982, lecture of December 18, 1921), 9.

We decided to begin this series with the furthest out, with Pluto, even though it has recently been demoted by the International Astronomers Union to “dwarf planet.” Though the authors would like to join the movement for the diminishment of this oddly orbiting rock’s significance, practical work with charts of people and events have shown it to be active at important times.

In what follows, we have to be very careful about attribution of causality. If we conclude that Pluto causes this or that, then we might greet a similar aspect between Pluto and the Sun in the sky with trepidation. We might end up with the fatalistic notion that “Pluto made me do it!” Someone who had that aspect at birth might feel chained to Pluto for his or her whole life, and interpret everything harsh that comes his or her way as “There’s that Pluto again.” It’s tempting, and it’s common, but it’s not accurate.

Please read the article twice, the first a quick scan of the headings which repeats the authors’ search for the phenomena, to let the phenomena speak for themselves. Secondly, you can read through the descriptions in greater detail, as we have let some interpretations creep in. Were this a classical scientific paper, we would present the facts in a neutral way, and leave any interpretation until after the data had been presented. We don’t have the space for that. You can, however, have the sense of that approach by skimming the headings first.

We have tried to avoid the notion of causality in what we say, because the conclusion that “Pluto made me do it” undermines the inherent freedom of the soul. More accurate would be the notion of a *matrix of correlated phenomena*, all complicatedly interwoven, each a cause and each an effect of the others. We could imagine that the soul seeking right timing for a birth that could unfold pre-earthly intentions in the best way chooses certain patterns that create opportunities for soul growth. We can’t know if this involves the consequences of previous deeds – karma – or if this involves the creation of a cause that will stimulate some future development – also karma. Karma doesn’t always go one way, cleaning up the past, so to speak. It can also speak to the future. Thus difficult experiences need not be seen only as consequences, but could also be seen as the wise hand of destiny putting us into a place where we might best learn.

The language and the thought of human beings tend to use expressions of causality, to serve either pride or blame. We try to steer clear of that, but something may slip in. Rather than “Pluto did it,” the more accurate would be to say, “the soul utilized the opportunity of Pluto in hard aspect to the Sun to magnify an issue for purposes of the soul’s growth through experience.” We emphasize the role of the soul as free, working for the conscious freedom of

the human being. Sometimes the personality experiences that freedom. Sometimes the personality feels that it is the victim of outer circumstances.

Let us begin with Rudolf Steiner, who had developed his conscious sense of freedom to a high degree. At the end of his life, three major events occurred one year apart, in all of them the Sun opposing Pluto. We will begin with a look at how Steiner used those celestial opportunities, and then look systematically at some other events from the lives of modern historical personalities, from the activities of Jesus Christ long ago, and from historical events.³

Rudolf Steiner's encounter with Pluto and the Sun

Rudolf Steiner died on March 30, 1925, but this final crossing was preceded by three events in his life that took him closer to that passage. It reads like the story of Job going deeper into hell on his ascent higher into the heavens.

The Burning of the Goetheanum. On December 31, 1922, Steiner gave a lecture in the building that had taken many years to build. After the lecture, people went home, then an alarm went up that there was a fire between the inner and outer walls. Attempts were made to save the building, but these failed. At midnight, just as the year turned to 1923, "the large cupola burst open and huge flames shot up into the air," the moment that we could say that the building opened up to the heavens.⁴

The entire community went into shock. Steiner pulled himself together and announced that the lecture and performance originally scheduled for the next night would take place as planned, except in the workshop next door, where the group had met while the larger building was under construction.

But Steiner never regained his previous vigor. As he explained some months later, "since January 1923, the connection of the higher members of my being with my physical body was no longer complete."⁵ As one of the artists working on the Goetheanum described it, "the youthful light-hearted laughter that earlier often lit up the serious features of Dr. Steiner's face,

³ The following is an abridged version of a chapter from a forthcoming book tentatively titled *Starry Gateways of Initiation*. We emphasize there the zodiacal positions, which we do not emphasize in this paper.

⁴ Ilona Schubert, *Reminiscences of Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner-Von Sivers* (London: Temple Press, 1991), 47.

⁵ Steiner cited in Sergei Prokofieff, *May Human Beings Hear It!: The Mystery of the Christmas Conference* (London: Temple Lodge, 2004), 725.

his quick movements, his rhythmical gait – nobody could walk like he did – we all no longer experienced it following the night of the fire.”⁶

Sergei Prokofieff understood that Steiner had united his personal etheric body with the building, explaining that “It is incontestable that the perfidious attack that destroyed the Johannes-Bau [Goetheanum] caused Rudolf Steiner’s etheric body irreparable damage.” Even more than that: “As the result of this tragedy, along with the physical-etheric forms of the Goetheanum, the forces of the etheric body of its builder left and moved out into the width of the etheric cosmos surrounding the Earth.”⁷

At the burning, the Sun stood opposite to Pluto.⁸

The Poisoning. Despite the burning of the beautiful building, Steiner had gathered something precious from spiritual realms that he brought back to benefit humanity. He called it a Foundation Stone, as if it were a physical thing – a “stone” – laid at the interface of artifice and earth, at the bottom of a physical structure. He understood that this gift was an etheric “thing” that would form a foundation for a new human culture. It was four long verses with interlocking references that summarized his whole teaching. He brought it as a gift from spiritual realms.

Journeys into spiritual realms can have their dangers. Steiner journeyed there several times a day, yet this crowning achievement of Steiner’s life took him deeper than usual. Such journeys have their risks, and Steiner risked much to bring spiritual treasures back for humanity. On the evening of January 1, 1924, after Steiner had delivered the whole of the Foundation Stone Meditation, the twenty-three year old eurythmy student, Ilona Schubert, was walking down a hallway from the tea-kitchen:

As I happened to be walking along this passage with a cup of tea, the curtain separating it from the rest of the hall parted and Dr. Steiner came staggering towards me, snow-white and groaning loudly. I quickly put the cup down and was just able to guide him to a chair. All he said was: “I feel so poorly.” I wanted to go quickly to fetch Frau Dr. Steiner and Frau Dr. Wegman, but he held my hand firmly and said, “No, stay with me – water please, water.” Fräulein Mitscher, who just then appeared, ran for the water but I could not go away because my arm was supporting Dr. Steiner. He emptied the glass which Fräulein Mitscher gave him. We asked him

⁶ Ibid., 725, citing Assya Turgenieff.

⁷ Prokofieff, *Hear It!*, 723 and 724.

⁸ At the burning of the Goetheanum, the Sun lay at 15 Sagittarius 51 and Pluto at 16 Gemini 30. The Moon at the midnight blowing out of the cupola lay at 19 Taurus 35 (exactly on Aldebaran at 3:30 PM, when the fire was most likely set). Uranus lay at 16 Aquarius 45 at the exact center of the Waterman (Aquarius).

what had happened and he said, "I have been poisoned." One could see that he was in terrible pain. He was icy cold and bathed in sweat.⁹

Steiner later summarized the situation: "As you know, I am quite alienated from my physical body since January 1924. Therefore steadily increasing care has become necessary."¹⁰ This sounds very similar to how Steiner perceived himself from a year earlier. This time it was worse. Something profoundly negative was working in both the burning and the poisoning.

From Prokofieff's point of view, following upon comments by Marie Steiner, Rudolf Steiner had offered the best he had ... and people didn't respond, at least not satisfactorily. "He trusted that his sacrifice would be understood," relates Marie Steiner, and when people did not step forward in the way that was demanded by Steiner's sacrifice, he entered "a path of martyrdom" for "the sake of all of erring humanity."¹¹ Even though, since the burning of the Goetheanum, there were bodyguards with him at all times, Steiner explained that it was "the incomprehension, the lack of understanding of people that paralyzes one."¹²

At the poisoning, after his tremendous spiritual achievement, the Sun stood in close opposition to Pluto.¹³ Note the theme of martyrdom, which we will find again. Note the combination of the most refined fruits of spiritual penetration and the most serious consequences. In traditional astrological lore, Pluto, as lord of the underworld, guards over the dead as well as precious gems and precious metals; Pluto supervises both suffering and bright gold! Some question if the planets are named accurately, especially the far outer planets, as there are stories of whimsical naming. Perhaps in this case, the name and its mythological meaning have merit.

After the poisoning, even though his output increased, it was as a swan song, a flaring up brightly that preceded the end. He lost weight rapidly, and appeared gaunt and ill.¹⁴ After the Last Address on September 28, 1924, speaking of the being of John/ Ioannes, Steiner was mostly in bed.¹⁵

⁹ Schubert *Reminiscences*, 53. We can note that Ilona Schubert died (on October 26, 1983) with Sun (7 Libra 44) conjunct Pluto (5 Libra 4), suggesting that she was working with the celestial opportunities opened up by this alignment, certainly very strongly in this experience.

¹⁰ Prokofieff, *Hear It!*. citing Steiner, 730.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 738, citing Marie Steiner.

¹² Bodyguards: *Ibid.*, 906-907 (note 22); incomprehension, spoken to Ita Wegman, *Ibid.*, 908 (note 37).

¹³ At the poisoning, the Sun lay at 16 Sagittarius 26 and Pluto at 17 Gemini 40.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 730-731, citing various sources.

¹⁵ At the Last Address, the Sun (11 Virgo 40) squared Pluto (19 Gemini 49). This is a wide orb (just under eight degrees), and wider than what we allow in the research on historical personalities and events. However, when one looks at the chart of the Last Address, one says, "Oh, there is the Sun square to Pluto." It would be exactly square eight days later. The next square to Pluto marked his death.

Steiner had taken a huge risk, one that he was aware of. Did Pluto “cause” the poisoning? No. This is rather a picture of a free human being choosing right timing for an immense spiritual deed. He seemed to use the opportunity of the Pluto-Sun opposition to deepen his work. There were consequences. Finding freedom for oneself in this world does not mean that one does not face dangers, and that there are no consequences. Steiner was attacked, and it happened during this celestial alignment. A free being chooses these dangers; an unfree being is simply at the effect of them. The poisoning should not point to blame of those around Steiner, but should guide us to a more thorough contemplation of the Foundation Stone Meditation, as a gift for the future. Do not emphasize the negativity but rather the capacities of soul that develop from confrontation with that negativity.

Heart Attack. On January 2, 1925, Steiner suffered a massive heart attack. Dr. Ita Wegman was very concerned that Steiner would die at that moment.¹⁶ Sun opposed Pluto.¹⁷ Even after this, Steiner’s will rose again, and he continued to write his *Leading Thoughts* and receive occasional visitors. We don’t know from the biographies how Steiner used that celestial opportunity beyond the heart attack.

Death. On March 30, 1925, at 9:45 in the morning, Steiner passed over the threshold. His physical body ceased to function. The Sun lay square to Pluto.¹⁸ Prokofieff summarizes the situation: “Rudolf Steiner prematurely had to leave the physical plane in order to settle the *debt of others* before the spiritual world so as to ward off the negative consequences of the sacrifice (of the revelations) that had not been accepted by human beings.”¹⁹ Prokofieff suggests that had enough human beings come forward with “understanding and spiritual protection,” none of these events would have occurred.²⁰ In short, “Karma demanded the sacrifice of death.”²¹ These words are strong, even harsh. They do not take into account Steiner’s dance with the celestial opportunities opened up by the play of Sun and Pluto.

¹⁶ Ibid., 730, reporting from Zeylmans van Emmichoven’s summary of the notes of Dr. Ita Wegman, Steiner’s personal physician.

¹⁷ At the heart attack, the Sun lay at 17 Sagittarius 52 and Pluto at 18 Gemini 49.

¹⁸ At death, the Sun lay at 15 Pisces 27, and Pluto at 17 Gemini 43 (moving retrograde).

¹⁹ Ibid., 742, italics in original.

²⁰ Ibid., 908-909 (Note 46).

²¹ Ibid., 742, citing Ita Wegman. Also dealt with in Paul Emberson, *From Gondhishapur to Silicon Valley: Spiritual Forces in the Development of Computers and the Future of Technology* (Isle of Mull, Scotland: Etheric Dimensions Press, rev. ed., 2000).

We aren't saying that Pluto caused Steiner's death. Rather, given the other events in Steiner's life when Sun and Pluto were interacting, we wonder what was occurring in the realms of soul, of destiny, in service of the future, as Steiner as an initiate in complete freedom was working with these celestial alignments. His dedication seems completely in line with the comment from John (15:13), "No greater love hath a man than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Other Occurrences with Sun Opposed Pluto

From the database of people and events that we have compiled, we gathered all the times that Pluto was conjunct, opposed, or square the Sun. We begin with opposition, in line with the three events leading up to Steiner's death. For historical personalities, we will look only at births. We can see there how an aspect can prepare someone for a life theme or life task.

* **Chernobyl.** A modern event that occurred with Sun opposed Pluto was the explosion of the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl, the Russian word for wormwood (*Artemisia*).²² Indeed the experience was as bitter as wormwood. The most advanced technology had been used to harvest earth's decaying energy, and through human error had spilled it. Great intensity of energy that had been used to support human beings through powering their appliances became a tragedy of the worst possible pollution.

* **Flight to Egypt.** In the events of Christ's life, Sun opposed Pluto when Joseph heard the call to take his wife and child to Egypt. He bundled them up and left immediately. He had intuited the "slaughter of the innocents," an unthinkable act of mass cruelty wherein all male children were killed. Joseph's son, the Solomon Jesus, had been born also with Sun opposed Pluto. Thus we have the combination that we saw in Steiner's experiences – the sublime, as with the delivery of the Foundation Stone meditation, coupled with the horrible, as with Steiner's poisoning. Here we have the sublime reincarnation of the great teacher Zarathustra in the person of the Solomon Jesus, as well as the horrible slaughter of the innocent male children, as well as the training of the Solomon Jesus in the traditions of Egypt.²³ To

²² Sun 10 Aries 53, Pluto 11 Libra 28. The other major accident was at Three-Mile Island on March 28, 1979, with Sun (12 Pisces 38) widely square Pluto (23 Virgo 42).

²³ Birth on 5 March, 6 BC: Sun 15 Pisces 48, Pluto 14 Virgo 10. Flight to Egypt on 2 March, 5 BC: Sun 13 Pisces 41, Pluto 16 Virgo 45. About Solomon Jesus, as compared with Nathan Jesus, see the Appendix in *Star Wisdom and Rudolf Steiner* (op. cit.).

understand this not as causal, but as a soul-chosen matrix of possibilities, we have to contemplate these events meditatively.

* **Peter cures the lame man.**²⁴ Another event from the time of Christ. On a day when the Sun opposed Pluto, the disciple Peter cured the lame man at the Temple in Jerusalem, a man who had lain at the entry for forty years. Once cured the man went running through the Temple declaring the glory of God. Even though his legs must have atrophied from forty years of disuse, he was able to run through the Temple. We see again great transformation. We must note that the Pluto-Sun matrix does not only have illness, tragedy, and punishment, but also the progressive, the healing, and the clarifying. Peter used this celestial alignment to perform a very powerful healing. He emphasized his own sense of powerlessness, a pre-requisite for a great power to come through him.

Let us look at the births of some historical personalities who have the closest orb to exact opposition.²⁵

* **Birth of Marie Curie.**²⁶ Her expertise was the underworld, in the sense of examination of radioactive materials, the decaying earth, the mysteries of the destruction of matter. She had opened the gates of hell, so to speak, when she sought to penetrate the mysteries of matter by concentrating radioactive substances. These are seeds of the death of the world. She died of radiation poisoning.

* **Birth of Dante Alighieri.**²⁷ His expertise also included the underworld, and his tour through it, as well as through paradise, which he recorded in his *Divine Comedy*. He was able to experience, writing almost as a reporter on the scene, the vast realms of Hell, Purgatorio, and Paradiso! One could say that Dante utilized this birth aspect to its fullest, as a soul-chosen opportunity that opened doors for him to a level of creativity that still sings out over seven hundred years later.

* **Birth of Friedrich Nietzsche.**²⁸ The war injuries that he sustained as a young man caused him to suffer through the rest of his life. He may have contracted syphilis as a young man, and died a slow death. Rudolf Steiner considered that Nietzsche was possessed by The

²⁴ Peter cures lame man, on June 2, 33 AD: Sun 11 Gemini 21, Pluto 16 Sagittarius 13. This is a wider orb than we normally like, and much wider than we use for modern people and events.

²⁵ We use a dataset of approximately 2300 historical personalities whose birth information has been collected by Robert Powell (about 800) and by us, beginning with those who are closest in orb. We will use later a dataset of a few hundred historical events. We continue to add to this dataset.

²⁶ Marie Curie, born November 7, 1867, Sun 21 Libra 41, Pluto 22 Aries 14.

²⁷ Dante Alighieri, born June 6, 1265 (J): Sun 7 Gemini 35, Pluto 5 Sagittarius 40.

²⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, born October 15, 1844: Sun 29 Virgo 33, Pluto 0 Aries 24. Much more about Steiner's observations and experience of Steiner can be found in David Tresemer with Robert Schiappacasse, *Star Wisdom and Rudolf Steiner: A Life Seen Through the Oracle of the Solar Cross* (New York: SteinerBooks, 2007).

Hardener, especially in his later years.²⁹ Yet Steiner also championed him as a fighter for freedom. You can read his writings, such as *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (see the theme of Zarathustra again!), and find the most disturbed kind of thinking that has moments of liberated ecstasy, another picture of extremes. He championed the Super-man, the truly free human being. And he had a mental breakdown, again the contrast of highest and lowest. Nietzsche took on a battle with dark forces, perhaps indicated by the Pluto-Sun aspect at birth, an opportunity that he chose to increase the intensity of his quest.

* **Birth of Gershom Scholem.**³⁰ He was a master of the Kabbalah, the mystic path of study of the Jews. He revealed the Zohar – “The Book of Splendor, Radiance, Light” – to the world, editing and translating its rambling passages to make sense of the ecstatic discoveries made there. He also knew the underworld very well, writing about the Golem and Dybbuk. Note that a Dybbuk is someone possessed by a spirit of the dead, and a Golem is a living being created by artificial means. This latter refers to exactly what is described in the third temptation in the wilderness, in the next section.

Conjunction of Sun and Pluto

* **The Temptation of Christ Jesus in the Wilderness.**³¹ The Sun lay in conjunction to Pluto at the three temptations of Christ Jesus in the wilderness. There the man who had recently gone through the Water Initiation of John had, at the end of forty days high up in a desert mountain, intimate encounters with retarding beings, with Lucifer (the Illusionist) and Ahriman (the Hardener). The closest conjunction of Sun and Pluto came on the third and final day of the three temptations, wherein the Hardener challenged Christ Jesus to turn stones into bread. The Hardener taunted: “You are starving, you can turn these stones into bread.” Christ replied, “The human being does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

There are four aspects to this interchange: 1.) acknowledgement that human bodies have needs for sustenance – “you are starving,” 2.) the challenge to Christ Jesus to demonstrate

²⁹ Steiner called this force Ahriman, after the demonic power named in Persian tradition. We use the more descriptive term The Hardener, as it describes, for those who have not studied Ahriman, the tendency of this power to harden and rigidify us, make us mechanical and unfeeling.. See *Star Wisdom and Rudolf Steiner: A Life Seen Through the Oracle of the Solar Cross* (New York: SteinerBooks, 2007), Part I.

³⁰ Gershom Scholem, born December 5, 1897: Sun 20 Scorpio 19, Pluto 20 Taurus 25.

³¹ Third temptation on November 30, 29 AD: Sun (8 Sagittarius 54) conjunct Pluto (8 Sagittarius 55). Robert Powell has spoken repeatedly about the temptations in relation to Pluto, for example, a talk given in Seattle on June 29, 2007 (available from author, who is editor of CSC), also his article, “Pluto and the Galactic Center,” *Christian Star Calendar* 2007, 7-18.

mastery of the forces of creation and thus rise above “mere humanity,” in other words, to work magic, 3.) the urge to form something apparently good for sustaining life from something indigestible, and 4.) the importance of divine word.

As to the third aspect, we can see modern chemistry at work. The artificial creation, such as bread, is something that appears nutritious and alive, but is not. It is merely mineral bread, without the life-force needed to sustain those who eat it.

Following this challenge by the Hardener, there is a celebration of the completion of the trials in the wilderness. Angels bring heavenly food, nutritious to the soul, made from the purest of life force, revealing the true and original intention of the Divine for human beings.

The nutritional importance of divine word can remind us of the Foundation Stone meditation delivered in a Pluto-Sun aspect. Like essential amino acids, there are essential nutrients that can only be gotten from divine sources.

Again at Sun in relation to Pluto we find the contrast between the worst of the underworld – an actual encounter with the being of Ahriman bearing fake food – and the best of the overworld – legions of angels with heavenly food. Christ Jesus had prepared forty days for this final test, the worst followed by the best.

What other events occurred with Sun conjunct Pluto?

* **Second Raising of Jairus’s daughter.** Christ Jesus had raised from death the daughter of the head of the local synagogue. Urged on by the mother, and buoyed by her new vitality, the daughter had come to take her health for granted, straying from the path of recovery in physically and spiritually. Two weeks after her miraculous healing she relapsed, and died. When the Sun stood aligned with Pluto in the sky, Christ Jesus again brought her back to life, warning the family that the first death risked only the body, but the second death risked the death of the soul. We don’t usually think of these distinctions, yet how important they are! The celestial alignment of Sun and Pluto perhaps offered an opportunity to dip down into deeper realms, and battle for the life – the physical life *and* the soul life – of this human being.³²

* **Birth of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross,**³³ whose main life work concerned the investigation of the transition to death, and helping others make this transition. Note that the threshold between life and death always has both glory and pain in abundance, the worst pain not being the physical but rather the encounter with one’s own shortcomings. Kübler-Ross analyzed these steps in terms very reminiscent of the trials of Job: 1. Denial and isolation, 2. Anger, 3.

³² First raising: November 18, AD 30. Second raising: December 1, AD 30, with Sun (10 Sagittarius 46) conjunct Pluto (10 Sagittarius 59).

³³ Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, born July 8, 1926: Sun 22 Gemini 14, Pluto 20 Gemini 35.

Bargaining, 4. Depression, 5. Acceptance.³⁴ Those in the last stage she described as tired, weak, resigned, and calm. Throughout, Kübler-Ross noted hope, but usually a “desperate hope.” Her tale includes descriptions of the resistance of the medical professionals to her investigations. What the conventional medical approach glossed over, she discussed compassionately and openly. Her work can be seen as the wise use of the opportunity of working the Sun-Pluto connection at her birth to assist others in the greatest transition in a life – the one to death.

* **Birth of Saint Padre Pio**,³⁵ a saint who experienced the bleeding stigmata, the wounds of Jesus Christ, at five points on his body, at first as debilitating pain, then as bleeding sores. He knew deep suffering, and felt that he was in the pit of hell, attacked by devils. Indeed, he lived in the hell that Dante described. These experiences gave him extraordinary powers of compassion and healing. He was canonized as a saint in 2002.

* **Birth of Emperor Nero**,³⁶ one of the most decadent of the Roman emperors, who took pleasure in the most depraved of activities. Whether or not he started the fire that burned most of Rome, and whether or not he fiddled while Rome burned, he was certain to have ordered the lengthy and bizarre torture of large numbers of Christians in blame for this deed. He also ordered the execution of his own mother, as well as the execution of many near him.

* **Explosion of the bomb at Hiroshima**,³⁷ the first use of a nuclear device against human beings, bringing hell onto earth, as many described it. We should note that this was not a completely dark event in the eyes of some – this first public demonstration of the power of the atom has been attributed with an acceleration in the development of consciousness. For example, about this explosion, “I would like at this time to touch upon the greatest spiritual event which has taken place since the fourth kingdom of nature, the human kingdom, appeared. I refer to the release of atomic energy.”³⁸ No one can contest that human activity, including consciousness, has changed since that event.

³⁴ Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Collier, 1969).

³⁵ St. Padre Pio (Francesco Forgione), born May 25, 1887: Sun 10 Taurus 49, Pluto 10 Taurus 14. Charles Mortimer Carty, *Padre Pio: The Stigmatist* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1963). The stigmata occurred on September 20, 1918, with Sun (2 Virgo 56) widely square Pluto (12 Gemini 59), though the first signs of the stigmata had occurred on September 20, 1915, with Sun (2 Virgo 43) much closer to square Pluto (9 Gemini 43).

³⁶ Nero, born December 15, 37 AD (J): Sun 24 Sagittarius 53, Pluto 24 Sagittarius 47.

³⁷ Hiroshima bomb on August 6, 1945: Sun at 19 Cancer 9, Pluto at 15 Cancer 59. This is a wider orb than for the births, but is an orb acceptable for this kind of work. Note that the preparations for the bombing would have occurred with Sun closer to Pluto.

³⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Trust, 1950), 491, recording the person speaking through her, Djwahl Kuhl.

* **Fall of the Berlin Wall.**³⁹ After weeks of loud marches and protests, the crowd took up sledge hammers and began toppling the wall. The feared soldiers atop the wall did not shoot. The wall itself was a threshold between dictatorship and freedom. It was drenched with the blood of those who had tried to cross it. Its coming down implied a more powerful will, one that had hope and love as foundation. We are seeing Pluto having to do with endings and beginnings. Note that will also worked in the soldiers who did not use their weapons.

* **Birth of Federico Garcia Lorca.**⁴⁰ The aspect is very close for Lorca, and explains to us his capacity for understanding the dark sides of life, and what lies deep down in the human psyche, and even the psyche of the world. His art converses with the gods, including the gods of the underworld. An example from "Gacela of the Flight": "As I lose myself in the heart of certain children, / I have lost myself in the sea many times. / Ignorant of the water I go seeking / a death full of light to consume me."

Square between Sun and Pluto

We take the cue from Steiner's passing that we ought to look at the square also.

* **Presentation of the infant Jesus at the Temple.** The Nathan Mary brought the infant Nathan Jesus to the Temple to be recognized. At her appearance the old man Simeon declared that he could now die because he had seen the divine being for whom he had waited so long (indeed, since his previous lifetime where he had served in the court of Siddhartha's father, but died before seeing Siddhartha attain Buddhahood).⁴¹ That was the good news. A prophetess also told Mary that a sword would pierce her heart. We see often that life events in relation to a stronger Pluto has these extremes.

* **Mara and Nazor.**⁴² Christ Jesus healed the woman Mara, who was possessed by devils, who are described in detail, as are Mara's tortures under the effect of these dark spirits. Nazor was raised from the dead, and we see in great detail the extent of his guilt. Both of these healings are particularly dark in what is encountered and released.

* **A few inventions** occur with this aspect, among them Henri Becquerel's discovery of radioactivity on March 1, 1896, Emmet Leith's invention of the hologram on December 4, 1963, and Paul Chu's invention of the superconductor on January 29, 1987. Note that all of these

³⁹ Fall of Berlin Wall, November 9, 1989: Sun 22 Libra 26, Pluto 20 Libra 35. The background of fear and intimidation has been captured in the film *The Lives of Others*.

⁴⁰ Federico Garcia Lorca, born June 5, 1898: Sun 21 Taurus 0, Pluto 20 Taurus 53.

⁴¹ Presentation at the Temple on December 14, 2 BC: Sun 23 Sagittarius 40, Pluto 28 Virgo 0.

⁴² Mara healed: September 4, 30 AD, Sun (11 Virgo 57) square to Pluto (8 Sagittarius 42); Nazor raised on September 1, 32 AD, Sun (9 Virgo 28) square Pluto (12 Sagittarius 47).

have to do with manipulation of matter in a way that parallels the challenge to transform stones into bread.⁴³

* **The original Foundation Stone.**⁴⁴ On September 20, 1913 the original Foundation Stone was laid under the First Goetheanum building, commencing the construction of that monument. The building went up in flames on New Year's eve 1922/23, with Sun opposed Pluto. The beginning and the end of this building involved Pluto in interaction with the Sun. One could say that the destiny of this building, and all those affected by it, related to the use of celestial opportunities relating to Pluto, thus giving us a sense of how Pluto can function.

* **Event of explosion of the space shuttle Challenger.**⁴⁵ The failure of an O-ring seal led to the leak of fuel that then exploded. This awakened everyone to the huge risks that astronauts take to perform research for the good of others.

* **Birth of Leonardo da Vinci.**⁴⁶ This man mixed brilliant ideas with some of the most bizarre. Can we understand his passion for anatomy, including the grave-robbing that gave him the corpses on which to operate, as a desire to get to the under-world, below the surface, to find out what was the source of life? Can we understand his statement, "While I thought I was learning how to live, I have been learning how to die"?

* **Birth of Sri Aurobindo.**⁴⁷ In *Savitri*, Aurobindo looked high into the heavens and deep into hell. Of the latter, he wrote:

Then in a fatal and stupendous hour / Something ... / Lifted its ominous head
against the stars; / Overshadowing earth with its huge body of Doom... / A nameless
Power, a shadowy Will arose... / Life grew into a huge and hungry death, / The
Spirit's bliss was changed to cosmic pain... / A mighty opposition conquered
Space. / A sovereign ruling falsehood, death and grief, / It pressed its fierce
hegemony on the earth.⁴⁸

To encounter this "shadowy Will," Aurobindo advocated the evolution of human consciousness through the Supermind (paralleling Nietzsche's Superman) to become one with Divinity (paralleling Dante's rise from hell to paradise).

⁴³ Becquerel radioactivity, Sun 18 Aquarius 14, Pluto 17 Taurus 29; Leith hologram, Sun 17 Scorpio 40, Pluto 19 Leo 57; Chu superconductor, Sun 14 Capricorn 57, Pluto 15 Libra 22. These inventions have been identified by Nick Kollerstrom and Mike O'Neill, *The Eureka Effect* (London: Urania Trust, 1996).

⁴⁴ Foundation Stone of building, September 20, 1913: Sun 3 Virgo 36, Pluto 7 Gemini 35. This is a wider orb than what we use for births, and wider than the burning which was exact, but quite acceptable in astrology, and astonishing in its reflection on the history of that building.

⁴⁵ Challenger explosion, January 28, 1986: Sun 13 Capricorn 56, Pluto 12 Libra 47.

⁴⁶ Leonardo da Vinci, born April 14, 1452 (J): Sun 16 Aries 32, Pluto 19 Cancer 0. Note that the date of his birth was given as April 15. However, in Italy at that time, the new day began at sunset of the previous day. Thus born in the third hour of April 15 would be measured by us as late in the evening of April 14.

⁴⁷ Sri Aurobindo, born August 15, 1872: Sun 29 Cancer 25, Pluto 27 Aries 51.

⁴⁸ *Savitri* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970), Book II, Canto VIII, 222-223.

Conclusion

In this study, we asked what happened when Pluto had strong aspects to the Sun – in the life of Christ Jesus, in historical events in the world, and in the births of historical personalities. We looked at Transiting-Sun in aspect to Transiting-Pluto in Rudolf Steiner’s life, and in the events from Christ Jesus’s life. We looked at Birth-Sun in aspect to Birth-Pluto in the lives of individuals (and some events). In a more thorough study we could look at Transiting-Sun and Birth-Pluto in lives (e.g., an opposition of Sun to your Birth-Pluto happens once a year), or Birth-Sun and Transiting-Pluto (e.g., a “Pluto transit” over the Sun position of your birth, which can take a year or two to complete).

Letting the phenomena speak, we see that human beings use the opportunity of Pluto intensified by aspects with the Sun in various ways. Here are some themes that we glean from this collection of events and people: Hidden capacities of the human being can be revealed when under extraordinary stress. One steps outside the zone of comfort to confront greater mysteries – in their glory and in their destructive power as well. Pressing through creates a triumph of the will, not a will for pleasure but a disciplined will, filled with the power of sacrifice, that can open gateways to other worlds and bring back treasures for the common good, often at a great cost to the individual. Though confrontation of evil is part of this passage, it is not useful to assign “evil” or “bad” to Pluto in its activity. Underworldly, and delving into death, but not evil. Subearthly, dangerous, involving the worst releases of radioactivity, both intentional (Hiroshima) and unintentional (Chernobyl), as well as inscribed into the births of those who developed it (Curie, Becquerel). A person who has traveled through the Pluto path – and this can include transits in those who do not have the birth positions that we have investigated here – can achieve “not my personality in me, rather the divine in me.”⁴⁹ Do not blame Pluto for the pain. Greet Pluto for the potential for transformation. The best and the worst, come together – for example, the rebirth as the Solomon Jesus of the great teacher Zarathustra, as well as his flight from cruelty (slaughter of the innocents).

Christ Jesus confronts the Hardener in a battle for the true nourishment of the human being – spiritual nourishment; he confronts evil. Christ Jesus heals at the level of soul difficult cases – Jairus’s daughter, Nazor, and Mara; he confronts evil. Then others acknowledge the

⁴⁹ Summarized one way as “not I, but the grace of God that was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

powerlessness in their own beings and, in the name of Christ Jesus, in resonance with this power to confront evil, heal others; this includes Peter and all the others whose births we have investigated. These are the templates upon which all of us can base our experience of Pluto.

Common to these people and events is an intensification of experience – risk, sacrifice, martyrdom, great tragedy, opening of the realms of decaying earth, endurance of a trial, leading to triumphs of will, invention, and deeds of love.⁵⁰ Can we say that Pluto has a “signature”? Yet it is not operative all the time, not even every time that the Sun conjuncts, opposes, or squares Pluto, which happens four times every year. Any activity thought to emanate from Pluto must be seen in interaction with the beings who interact – with the working of soul, which is the true mystery.

Review what was brought from spirit realms when Steiner risked all, and immediately afterward suffered a poison attack. This is the picture of an advanced human being using a celestial opportunity to do his work more deeply. Here is the fourth and final panel of the Foundation Stone Meditation, given all bunched together so that those who know it have a renewed sense of its flow, leading to the conclusion (after the *, and especially the last word):

At the turning point of time, / The Cosmic Spirit-Light entered / Into earthly life-stream. / Night-darkness / Had ended reign. / Day-bright Light / Rayed within human souls. / Light / Which warms / The simple shepherd-hearts, / Light / Which enlightens / The wise heads of Kings. / Godly Light / Christ-Sun / Warm / Our hearts / Enlighten / Our heads / *That good may become / What we / From hearts found / What we / From heads / Direct with single will.

This is a most succinct statement of triumph of the will over adversity, darkness, and the opposite of the good – in favor of the good, of light, and warmth of heart. Both of these extremes may characterize what is available when one works with the influences that emanate from Pluto, affirming the power of the truly free human being.

⁵⁰ Here in a footnote because it uses a different method from that used in the rest of this paper, we note that transiting Pluto (17 Sagittarius 20) crossed the Birth-Sun position (16 Sagittarius 4) of the Nathan Jesus at the event of the Crucifixion and Resurrection (April 3, 33 AD). Pluto was exact over the Birth-Sun on January 3, 33 AD, just as he was returning from his months in the desert, visiting the cultures of Persia and Egypt. This set the tone for the final events in his life. Noting when Pluto crosses the Birth-Sun position (including opposition and square) is an interesting alternative technique.