

Photo by Eric Francis.

# There is a Deeper World Than This

Somewhere In Between for Aquarius

By Eric Francis

HEN PLUTO ARRIVES in your sign on Jan. 20, it will be accompanied by the Sun. While this is not the most shocking of all astrological synchronicities in history, it's a pretty good one — standing as a personal reminder that Pluto's arrival is about the illumination of who you are, and your emergence from a long night of the soul.

The Sun's presence on that day makes the event personal for you. It's also a reminder to be optimistic about what will undoubtedly be the most important phase of this incarnation. Pluto in Aquarius represents change, and I dare say evolution, coming to everything that is found in the social environment — and that includes you.

There will also be radical changes coming to the technical environment, not just through advances, but potentially by way of disruption events. These will shock people into recognizing the need for true social bonds not mediated by the digital environment.

Usually, people experience Pluto as something with the approximate feeling of "grow or die." I don't think this is necessary, though. It's just one of those things we think of as human nature — usually operating way below its true potential intelligence and squandering most of its capacity for awareness.

If history (ancient, modern, very recent or whatever) is any indicator, existence on our planet seems to have long been some version of *Hunger Games:* induced desperation. In that state, there's not much time or bandwidth to consider the mysteries or beauty of existence. Then there are the people who have resources and plenty of time on their hands who respond the same way. Pluto in Aquarius is here to move things along — meaning, accelerate and deepen your progress.

You have just lived through Pluto in Capricorn, your 12th place, which I will recap more fully a little later in the reading. However, while this was not an easy transit, it prepared you from the inside out for Pluto through your own sign. There will be events in the coming years that feel like some kind of replay, as if you dreamed them at some point a long time ago and are now living through them in physical reality.

The most basic thing to know about Aquarius is that it's a fixed sign, and that means that its primary quality is to form and hold patterns. These span from personal habits to the patterns of your social network to the wider collective and mass public.

Because our whole world is now electrified, and Aquarius is about both electricity and technological advances, we are in a serious situation

where exposure to technology is shaping and defining who people are, how we relate to one another and the tenor of the entire society.

Pluto in Aquarius will arrive with a massive reckoning and potential point of correction before we get too much deeper into the Aquarian Age (which has no tangible point of beginning; it can only be inferred). The reason I think we are already there — or feeling its early effects — is because of the intensity and speed with which patterns form, merging the social and technological facets of existence.

This is a property of Aquarius. And it's crucial that we as a society and as individuals be able to shift, rearrange or get out of the patterns that are damaging to spiritual progress. I am not accepting the logic that "everything leads to the good." I am saying that it's necessary to be aware and make decisions when we can.

#### What is Pluto?

The first planet discovered beyond Neptune was named for the Roman lord of the underworld. The 1930 discovery was said to have been named at the suggestion of a child, Venetia Burney.

This was a cute name, and in some way apropos, but ultimately not a compliment. Pluto, a mythologically cold and daunting entity, was believed to kidnap people and bring them to his depths (i.e., they died). His temples, from what I have read, were never visited; he was feared, if not respected.

We might have grown a different astrological concept had the discovery been named something other than the lord of the underworld and the agent of death.

Physically, we now know that Pluto is a cluster of six objects (Pluto, Charon, Hydra, Nix, Styx and Kerberos, mostly named for figures associated with the Roman underworld). It is an orbit-crosser, intersecting with and traveling within the orbit of Neptune for several decades out of each 248-year cycle. And it has many Neptune-like qualities, including operating from the deep background and tending to be an invisible environmental force — until it manifests to perception.

In 2006, a body called the International Astronomical Union (IAU) declared Pluto "not a planet" and assigned it a minor planet number (134340). This allegedly made Neptune the "outermost planet." If astrologers who use Pluto take note of this, it's a suggestion to work more thoughtfully with other minor planets. There are many, and that seems to be the 'problem' — a kind of overwhelm that reflects the billions of websites and apps that surround us.

However, astrology with whatever number of planets is containable and manageable enough to offer the opportunity for the one thing we need the very most in the 21st century: pattern recognition.

It took astrology a long time to catch up with Pluto; the scholarship was sporadic, though there was a good book published in German in 1934, just four years after the discovery.

In English, Dane Rudhyar had a pretty good idea of it in the 1960s, though he was a little overly-exuberant. In the late 1970s, Isabel Hickey noted that Pluto is a binary influence under which we have choice of how to experience it: as a dark and destructive force, or a teacher of wisdom. (Soon after that, the first satellite, Charon, was discovered.)

Richard Tarnas describes Pluto as a Dionysian force — for an image, think Jim Morrison or Mick Jagger as an expression. Modern astrologers usually associate Pluto with Scorpio. In *Esoteric Astrology*, Alice Bailey says that Pluto rules the sign Pisces.

Psychological astrology has translated Pluto into a force for transformation working within the psyche. Without comment about the rest of the book with a similar title, an "evolutionary journey of the soul" is a pretty good starting place.

Pluto has a way of driving spiritual progress, even if people do not like it at the time. We have all lived through Pluto transits. They always drive growth and evolution, but moreover, Pluto seems to provide access to a transformational force that one might miss when it's gone.

Where you have Pluto in your natal chart calls for special care. That placement is something to be worked with rather than against. I have

seen through experience with many clients that Pluto either confers power or leads to an obsession with power. It can manifest as passionate, or as cold and calculating. It will tend to amplify the energy field of the sign that is temporarily hosting it.

Those who have seen or experienced the power of Pluto to reshape society, sometimes in a matter of minutes, know to treat this transit with respect. Pluto can accelerate growth; it can have a spiritualizing effect; it can and often does transform people; and it was the star of the chart for the World Trade Center free-falling (as Billy Name put it) like dropped marionettes.

Pluto's influence is changing. There are now many known planets in its approximate region of space, called Kuiper objects. During Pluto in Capricorn, a spacecraft was sent to Pluto and sent back thousands of photos of both Pluto and its biggest (not really a) moon Charon (not Chiron). Pluto now no longer lurks purely in the unconscious. The more we astrologers and astrology students work with it, the more we bring it into the light.

These developments will be helpful to you as you experience this transit, and as Pluto gradually helps you redefine, deconstruct and reconstruct your idea and experience of yourself. Mostly this is going to come in the form of changing patterns (more the domain of Aquarius) than changing dense structures (the realm of Capricorn, though structures are patterns).

# What is Aquarius?

Your sign is one of the most complex and misunderstood ideas in astrology. The most basic definitions work pretty well, such as Aquarius is the sign of groups, and of quirky people, and as I define it, the relationship between the individual and the group.

The confusion about this sign arises partly due to the abundant propaganda associated with selling the Age of Aquarius. This started with tales emerging around the turn of the last century (in various East-meets-West spiritualist and Theosophical traditions), and culminating with the Broadway musical *Hair* (cue the fantastic bass

<u>line</u> written by Carol Kaye). We were all sold an era of peace and love, and of abounding harmony, trust and understanding.

The astrological references in the song have zero credibility; the Moon is in the 7th house two hours every day, and Jupiter aligns with Mars every year at least. Given that the Age of Aquarius is supposed to last 2,000 years, this is pure fluff.

"Crystal mystic revelation and the mind's true liberation..." sounds a little like dropping acid on a good day.

All of this is from the "forthcoming golden age" cycle of myths, of which the Second Coming of Christ is one. Effectively, "New Age" is synonymous with the alleged Age of Aquarius which is usually associated with the Second Coming.

I don't find any of this to be especially informative, though I think we should take note of the sources of various rumors. (The "Second Coming of Christ" is really an inner spiritual awakening, not a dude coming on a chariot.)

Along these lines, a quick Google search (landing on a Christian-themed astrology website) proposes, "The Age of Aquarius is all about enlightenment and represents spirituality coming together with science." That would be excellent, wouldn't it? We're not that far into the story, though unfortunately, that has not been the way things are going. The writer did have a clue: replace "spirituality" with religiosity and "science" with "technology" and it makes more sense.

What we have experienced is so-called science transforming itself into industrial products, and becoming a form of crude fundamentalist religion — and instead of God watching over us, we see the needless surveillance of every person in society. Nowhere has this been parodied more beautifully than on *South Park*, when Butters <u>prays to the NSA</u> to look after and protect his friends and family.

Yes — "the ascension" arrived, in grand form, and it amounted to not entering 5D but uploading humanity and all of its knowledge and a lot of trivia and porno to the cloud, transferring our senses to devices, and being surrounded by cameras and microphones.

All of this has delivered a shock to individuals and society the past few generations, and most people are still too stunned to realize they have been struck on the head. I have never heard or read one account of the Aquarian Age or any New Age from any allegedly spiritual source that even hinted at what we are living through today. I have never read a single line of New Age "prophecy" suggesting that we would be assimilated by the Borg, or that the planet would start to feel like a prison.

Pluto in Aquarius (which I have called the Aquarian Era) will push a confrontation and reckoning with all of these issues and circumstances. There will be enough disruption of technology to allow for something else to slip through. And during this time, you will be at the forefront both of personal change and of a necessary kind of leadership — what I describe as leadership from behind.

This is not the out-front waving-a-flag leadership, but rather your subtle influence on your environment. Despite all the busts of great men in various halls of honor, what people actually respond to is the example set for them by those they respect or even just encounter. It does not matter whether you're in charge of anything special. With Pluto in your sign, your personal and private actions become far more pronounced as exemplary — whether positive or not, helpful or not.

### Three Basic Possibilities for Pluto in Aquarius

Before I get too much further into this reading, it may be helpful to outline generally what Pluto in Aquarius is about. I see potential in three main categories.

1. Pluto representing power and Aquarius representing groups, we are likely to see the rise of the influence of groups. We are already in a time when the cult and the corporation are the fundamental social units of society. They are becoming incredibly powerful, having the power to dip right into our bank accounts. Additionally, the influence of social groups, norms and rules will rise, and there will be increasing pressure to conform. All of this will be

driven by advances in technology to rival what we see in the series *Black Mirror*.

- 2. **Individuals will evolve, differentiate themselves, and learn to stand up to groups.** Aquarius has the property of individuality, which seems to be a corollary to the group theme. Pluto will push some people to break the consensus and take responsibility for their own thoughts, ideas and actions. This will be the more difficult path; it's obviously easier to go along to get along. The people who stand up will, in effect, be spiritual initiates and in a position of leadership by example.
- 3. **Group initiation. There is the potential for groups of people to take up a shared growth and evolutionary mission**. This happens today somewhat, though often under adverse conditions such as communities responding to disasters or a family going through a loss. It's rarely voluntary or around a positive goal. Groups are groups of individuals. Where there are collectives of people who have not developed their individuality, *mass consciousness* is induced. That would take us back to possibility 1.

To clarify the difference between a mass and a group, a mass is the crowd at a football game, cheering at exactly the right time. A group is a collective, committee or organization comprised of people who are distinct individuals but who can act in accord with a purpose larger than their own. What typically happens, though, is that groups of five or more subvert individuality. This is often due to a perceived threat to the power of the leader, or a perceived threat to the group's cohesion.

#### **Now Add Pluto**

Because Pluto is so far from the Sun (currently 39 times the Earth-Sun distance), it will take about 20 years to traverse Aquarius (the relatively recent Pluto in Scorpio took a bit more than 12 years). Pluto is making its entrance to the new sign in three stages rather than the usual two. The first ingress was March 23, 2023; the final will be Nov. 19, 2024; but "the big one" is coming up this month, just as your birthday season begins.

The final ingress is also distinctive, as will be the brief spell between September and mid-November when Pluto briefly returns to Capricorn; I will cover that in a little while. For now, let's stick with the second ingress, the one that takes place in January. I will add a comment at the end about the third ingress.

Pluto, whatever and wherever it might be transiting, has an egodestroying quality. For it to arrive in your sign with the Sun describes the cultivation of what I would call the healthy adult ego (rather than the bundle of guilt and fear given the same name by A Course in Miracles, and other teachings).

The journey of Pluto through Capricorn has confronted you with many artifacts of the past. It's as if you've been dragged through the total experience of your ancestors, going back more generations than you can name your progenitors. We all carry around the world of their past. It is rare that people have the guts to challenge the legacy left for them, though a Pluto transit through the 12th place (the sign immediately before yours) makes it inevitable.

In emerging, you will discover that you have come to the limit of one particular self-concept, determined to let that fall away and be replaced by a vibrant sense of your actual existence — not a persona, but an actual person. The difference will be pleasantly shocking, though it usually requires some reorientation, both emotional and social. Reality must bend to Pluto, the prime mover, and it will.

Yet you must tread lightly as you proceed with your enhanced and even liberated sense of who you are. Your mere presence will move people; your confidence will inspire them and any lack of confidence will be repelling. More than ever, your presence will have a way of projecting its way into your social environment, and so you will need to work with your self-awareness as a moment-to-moment experience.

Self-awareness is an inner sense of your own being. It's not a common trait these days; all that was previously internal has been blown outward, put on display, and therefore denatured as a personal or private experience. However, Pluto's journey through Capricorn has shown you how much you contain and revealed the complexity of your inner world.

For a long time you've been trying to get a message through to yourself, and finally the idea is coming across. It's about connecting with the deeper purpose of your existence, and living as if each day truly matters. Each day being unexpectedly and unpredictably different from the prior is the deeper meaning of "living one day at a time." So too is making today's choices today, instead of in advance.

Under the new influence of Pluto in your sign, you will feel different; you will be different; you will have more influence on the world around you; people will experience you as more compelling and I dare say more powerful. Yet there are important risks you must be aware of, including the enhanced power to mislead people, and to hurt them.

So I will keep repeating the "tread lightly" message in different contexts throughout this reading.

### Saturn, Nessus, Neptune in Pisces

The 2nd place in astrology — one sign or house from any reference point — is highly sensitive, as it denotes the value of things. This initially pertained to one's cash, movable property and possessions. In contemporary astrology (which tends to be psychological in nature), it's about self-value and self-respect.

You have Pisces here. Without adding any planets to modify the ground-level of your solar chart, Pisces in the 2nd suggests that your ability to love and honor who you are must have a spiritual basis, and that is rare to find in this world. Even if Pisces is not in any form of victim consciousness, it can be self-effacing, shying away from credit and recognition. It's fairly easy to experience a sense of loss or deflation. And it's not especially realistic.

Depending on other factors in the chart, Aquarius may compensate for this with a strong mental position, reliance on superior intelligence and the use of external images to help shore up any internal matters of image with a strong public position and superior social skills. Now let's add some planets. Neptune has been in Pisces for about 12 years. This can cast a rather foggy view over self-esteem. There can be a sense of loss or unworthiness. However, depending on one's spiritual attenuation, it's possible to know in your heart that you are worthy in the eyes of God or the Universe and that's enough.

Not everyone can get there. In truth it's not a real question; though in the ego experience on the planet, it can be a persistent one. And to some degree, nearly everyone struggles with it.

With Neptune it's also possible to be an illusionist and convince oneself of being worthy, and to compensate with drugs or drink. A lot of people shore up their "confidence" this way.

And on Feb. 17, 2010, there was a rare event: the conjunction of Chiron and Neptune in your sign or ascendant, at 27 degrees of Aquarius. I suggest going back through your memories, journals, photo stream, email, social posts or whatever and recalling what happened that month, and in 2010 generally. This extraordinary event and others in its vicinity gave you something that you can still collect on now.

Then soon after, Chiron entered Pisces, followed by Neptune. So for the first seven or so years of Neptune in Pisces, you were supported by Chiron — perhaps the one and only antidote to Neptune. This may have provoked certain kinds of deep questioning or crisis of its own, though Chiron always delivers.

Then Chiron moved onto Aries, and you were left with Neptune only in your self-esteem zone — not so easy, for the reasons described above, and Pluto in Capricorn moving through your 12th place may not have been helpful either, as that can really make you question yourself. And since the past four years in particular have been such a challenging time for everyone, you may not have noticed some unusual way you were struggling with your perception of your worth and value.

And who knows — you may have passed through this territory just fine. You did, if you had enough self-respect to keep on going through whatever challenges you faced. How you handled relationship situations will also tell you a lot.

One potentially complicating factor has been Nessus in Pisces. Nessus is a Chiron-like influence (related to wounding and healing) that can at times reflect the worst in human nature. It's possible that this has symbolized your self-perception in a negative way. It's possible that it's led you to feel responsible for what was not yours to be accountable for, such as blaming yourself for something someone did to you.

Should you have any such question, imagine you're sitting with a good therapist who can help you sort out whether you are, in fact, responsible for certain circumstances or developments. With Nessus, there is always a haze of confusion around the whole notion of responsibility, and it must be considered thoughtfully, making no assumptions. With Nessus, you are prone to argue against yourself. So objectivity is essential.

The major development of the past year is that Saturn has arrived in your 2nd, for a three-year stay in Pisces. Most astrologers would not look at this as a positive development. I think it will be helpful, because (for one thing) Saturn is your ruling planet. Second, it is providing some substance where previously there was only fog and the sense of something missing.

Saturn in your 2nd will show you what was missing and give you the strength to do something about it: for example, make difficult decisions. Saturn will be in Pisces through the duration of Neptune in Pisces, so you will be internally supported in ways that you have not been during the past five or six years.

This summer, Saturn moves all the way up to the position of Nessus without forming an exact conjunction. This will show you what to change and give you the opportunity to do something about it voluntarily. If you need external help and support, get it. If you are suffering from a previous injury inflicted by someone else, work this out — you don't have to drag it along with you throughout your life.

Saturn will go retrograde this summer and give you plenty of time to evaluate whatever you may have observed about yourself during this near-miss Saturn conjunction to Nessus. The exact conjunction forms in February 2025, which will leave you plenty of room to make

decisions without pressure, until anything unresolved can be forced into a kind of inner confrontation at the time of the exact conjunction.

Nessus may represent an injury of some kind, and if this is true, I suggest you would be wise to address the matter this year instead of next. Because Pisces is involved and Neptune is in the vicinity, you may have some veils to pull back to really get a sense of what is hindering you. But I am confident that Saturn will help you get to the bottom of the issue and do something about it. You of all people can trust Saturn — it's your planet.

# The Aries Factor: Chiron and the Eclipse

Aquarius is said to be a social sign — perhaps the most social. I have a theory that the placement of Aries in any solar chart (the chart for the sign and not the person) reveals something of that sign's essential nature. The location of Aries is a zone of seeking self-actualization.

We find Aries in your 3rd place (or house). This is one of the social houses, associated with community and state of mind. The 3rd is also associated with ideas, another thing Aquarius gets a lot of credit for — though you have Aries here, and this is a description of why you're so identified with your intelligence and your ideas.

This, by the way, may not be entirely helpful. Given the new and unusual qualities of the astrology we are under, curiosity is a more helpful force than intelligence that relied on past patterns — especially if those patterns no longer exist in their old form.

And it turns out that Aries is the scene of most of the action from 2024 out to 2027. While this has been going on for a while, there are about to be a series of peak events coming to Aries, and these are likely to challenge many of your past ideas about yourself and your existence.

So while Pluto is present to help you rework your self-concept and your presentation to the world, Aries is going through an astounding series of transit events that are rather dramatic, personal, and provide a forum to express your transformations associated with Pluto.

Said another way, the effects of Pluto can be somewhat abstract or remote; those in Aries are close to oneself, tangible, and easily expressed in some way. Looking at events, we will have to go chart by chart to determine where an influence appears to be coming from. But they really amount to the same thing, and both Pluto in your sign and events in Aries will conspire to get you to some new and unusual places.

There is profound commentary here about your relationship to the technology of our society and also the effect that it has on you (regardless of what devices or systems you prefer to use). Technology is an environment; it feeds a mental environment and a set of prevailing self-concepts that we live with; those in turn feed mentality and state of mind — yours and everyone else's.

Chiron's presence since 2018 has been driving an urgent self-awareness of these relationships, whether you called it that or not. What is different in 2024 is that a total solar eclipse occurs exactly conjunct Chiron. This is like catching up with Chiron's efforts suddenly and all at once after six years. This may be awkward; it may be a revelation. It may be both; look for events around April 8 for more information.

Often, the action of Chiron in the 3rd place is to distort your sense of your own intelligence — or how you present yourself. Children with this placement, for example, can be thought of as "slow" but in fact possess greater intelligence than their peers. They just express it differently and in a way that does not conform.

It's also possible to have an aggrandized sense of one's intelligence; the measure of whether this is true is how adept you are at curiosity. How much pleasure do you take in learning and discovering, especially matters close to who you are? This is why I'm suggesting that in these coming years of your life, curiosity be your default mode.

With Aquarius, it's crucial to "know when you do not know." As an editor, I've put a lot of thought into how you would teach this skill. By that I mean years.

And the best I can offer here is to flip the question: when you think you know something, ask how you know. How, exactly, did you get to that observation? Go through the steps and find out if they were valid. Once you start auditing your own knowledge, you will get a much better sense of how to know when you don't know.

It's worth having this skill, as it's what in many ways divides stupidity from genius. If you know when you don't know, you're at a tremendous advantage. If you think you know and you do not, you are at a disadvantage. Curiosity is the force working the line. Stay close to your curiosity and you will be brilliant.

# **Jupiter Conjunct Uranus in Taurus**

Speaking of brilliant, this is also the year of the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction. Like most of your transits, this is happening close to home — in your 4th place, Taurus. Let's consider this one last aspect in the written portion of your reading.

Before we add planets, let's consider Taurus as the 4th place — it's pretty much perfect. The 4th is home and security, and Taurus knows exactly what it wants in this respect, and further, is resourceful at making it happen. Having Taurus at the bottom of your chart is like having the Earth itself to draw nourishment from. The alleged obsession of Aquarius with technology is belied by this fact: deep down, you're an earthy person, and that means a lot to you.

And you're resourceful when it comes to where and how you live. You could probably furnish a home for little-to-no money, just collecting things, manifesting them, picking up extra stuff from friends, and so on. But you probably want much better stuff than that, which fits your own personal sense of tradition, beauty and value. And though you may be a kind of techie, you will definitely want spaces in your home that do not have devices, wires or spare parts laying around. Or maybe the most high-tech computer of them all rises up out of your mahogany desk and then disappears seamlessly.

The 4th is also about your sense of emotional stability, and Taurus is an excellent placement to have here. It's a strong foundation,

grounded in the Earth, and that in turn is helpful for your psychological and emotional stability. In fact Taurus here goes a long way toward assisting with Pisces on the 2nd place, described above.

In April (among other rare events) is the one and only conjunction of Jupiter and Uranus in Taurus. It's difficult to say anything bad about this conjunction, which is rare. There always seems to be a downside with every aspect. I cannot really think of one with Jupiter conjunct Uranus in Taurus, except to say that it only happens once, and you will need to get it while it's hot.

It's probable that you will figure out you need more living space — and you may have been restless about this for a while. The opportunity may arise — and you may have the impulse to go for it. This may expand into other areas of your life — including generally wanting to improve your situation, level of wealth, etc.

With Uranus, there are always unforeseen developments — things you cannot expect or plan for. But you can pay attention to when they do show up, and establish a kind of standard for action, i.e., I would move if I found a better place I can afford in a better location, and solve the following three problems in the process. Then you will at least have a tangible basis for making a decision. If you *are* moving your home, you might want to make sure you get a place with some space for groups to gather.

It's possible you will have an opportunity too good to refuse. And it's possible you will need to take a chance and just jump at something that seems opportune, or like a breakthrough. This is unlikely to be the kind of thing that repeats itself. Jupiter and Uranus will be conjunct in Aquarius in 2080, and will again be conjunct in Taurus in 2107.

Make the most of this one. It's a gift, especially if we remember that most contemporary astrologers associate Uranus with your sign. There is certainly a similarity.

# The Third Ingress: Pluto Conjunct Child

Let's end this part of your reading with the third ingress of Pluto into your sign, on Nov. 19. Between September and then, Pluto will make one last visit to Capricorn. This is an opportunity to wrap up some old business that you may have overlooked.

Future children with Pluto in Aquarius (2023-2043) will be the first generation of humans who are fully network compatible. Genetically modified to have nanotechnology in their blood from birth, none of these children will be conceived sexually; they will be generated in fetus farms to custom specifications. Born with an IP address rather than a Social Security number, they will give new meaning to the phrase, "I'm a Mac." It will be deeply disappointing when they are finally 'born' only to discover that they no longer have any rights -- except to marry a cyborg, which was generously guaranteed for them decades earlier by the Pluto



in Libra generation. Ultimately however, they will be against computers and revolt against their origins, and their motto will be "Opt out, log off, shut down." This is going to piss off their parents to no end, who by that point will be waging a pointless cyber-war against some developing country that has banned Facebook and refuses to join the global effort to stop climate change.

When Pluto returns to Aquarius to stay for the next 20 years, it does so in a conjunction with the asteroid Child. Recall that it enters Aquarius 10 months earlier in a conjunction with the Sun, the functional adult ego.

The conjunction to Child is a reminder that we must look after the children of the digital age. This is not a friendly time for kids, who need the kind of warmth you see in a puppy pile (that is, a pile of actual puppies). The digital age is giving them next to none of that warmth, and their parents are often distracted, or giving them a tablet as a babysitter.

In a parody <u>Pluto reading from early 2012</u> - 12 years ago, when I was just guessing - I wrote that, "Future children with Pluto in Aquarius (2023-2043) will be the first generation of humans who are fully

network compatible. Genetically modified to have nanotechnology in their blood from birth, none of these children will be conceived sexually; they will be generated in fetus farms to custom specifications. Born with an IP address rather than a Social Security number, they will give new meaning to the phrase, 'I'm a Mac'."

Here in early 2024, that does not seem like such a joke. And it's about us adults as well. We need most of the same things kids do, but we forget. We must remember.

After closely covering the events of the past four years, I have no doubt that we are in a struggle to preserve our humanity from being totally consumed by technology. The way I see things now, we are being transformed into something besides people, waddling haplessly into the future. If we want to remain human, we will need to value that, and work for it. Which means work together.



