

# *Kairos*

## Opportunity in the Time of Capricorn

*Chance is born out of the occasion of misfortune*

The streets of London and New York and Tokyo and Paris are almost empty. Their celebrated boulevards and urban alleyways like a wasteland. The high-end shops are closed, some boarded up: no shoppers, no trade, no commerce. No pubs, no restaurants, no mass, no Olympics. What is non-essential, yet part of daily life, is closed. New rules apply. It is not a science fiction film set, so what are we seeing?

Depression, downturn, despair are embedded in every cycle, constellated in times of disaster and crisis, two words which are full of meaning. Disaster combines the negative prefix *dis* with *astre* meaning  $\text{=star}$ , hence its implication of an ill-starred event carries astrological implications. Western popular culture cites the Chinese word for crisis as containing two Chinese characters which mean danger and opportunity. While this interpretation is not quite kosher, it has entered our language to become a meme for motivational teachers and coaches, a powerful mantra that shifts the focus to the silver lining of the crisis: Danger *and* Opportunity.

The Greeks also recognized two characters to crisis through their perception of timing. There was  $\text{=real}$ time, but also  $\text{=right}$ timing. Seeing through the realities to foresee the opportunities veiled in the moment is the interchange between *chronos* and *kairos*, the movement from predicament to possibility.

It is a time of *chronos*: of closing borders and governmental directives, of discipline and personal responsibility, of restoring order and science and statistics, of self isolation and complying with new rules, of fear, denial and anxiety. Chronos was the ancient Greek word for time, embedded in our vocabulary through words like chronic, chronological, chronicles  $\text{o}$  it is the actuality of time measured and quantified.

But the Greeks knew another time and that was *kairos*, which brought a subjective, even supernatural quality, to the experience of time. While *chronos* characterizes linear and measurable time, *kairos* refers to a critical stage, an appointed or  $\text{=right}$ moment. In early usage it was linked with opportunity, that moment when possibility penetrated the present. In ancient Greek terminology *kairos* refers to an opening, the critical moment to enter into and take advantage of that moment. In Homeric Greek *kairos* was the  $\text{=penetrable opening}$  which may have originated with the archer who aimed at cracks in the armour to seize the opportune moment.<sup>1</sup>

The word was also associated with weaving which is frequently connected to time and fate, conjuring up the sisterly alliance of the Horai and the Moirai.<sup>2</sup> Eternal moments are woven into the fabric of fate, and *kairos* time is when these timeless moments of opportunity breach the surface of our everyday reality. *Kairos* is the mysterious process when a fissure between the worlds opens up crucial and life-affirming opportunities. It is the ripening of time.

*Kairos* is more than a word; it is a symbol that characterizes timing and opportunities released by problems created by the crisis. Chance is born out of the occasion of misfortune. *Kairos* implies that at times of tension and crisis, the  $\text{=right}$ time arises, but it is our choice and our determination that seizes the opportunity.

While *kairos* is the Greek image for opportunity, our English word is more associated with the Latin *opportunitas*, whose root is *portas*, from where we derive our word portal, an opening or an entrance.<sup>3</sup> Opportunity constellates this sense of opening onto a new space. But what might *kairos* be opening up in this measure of time? What might be possible on the other side of the portal? Certainly there are many economical, ecological, sociological and psychological ways to reflect on this transition. Another way is astrological.

Chronos was personified in Greek myth as a Titan, the last child of Earth Mother Gaia and Sky Father Uranus. At the bidding of Gaia Chronos overpowers his father to become the new ruler. Yet in turn Chronos is overthrown by his son Zeus, who takes on the Olympian mantle of power and control.

In astrological tradition Saturn, Chronos's successor, oversees Capricorn. The shade of Chronos re-enacts the archetypal role of the old king in the theatre of this sign. He haunts the Capricornian stage with the image of the old kingdom decaying and collapsing. A new and natural order needs to emerge. When the dying king frequents the Capricorn landscape, his defence to control and dominate the outer world, whether ecological or economical, preoccupies this earthy sign. When time to systemically revision and reorder the Capricorn hierarchy, Chronos's spirit can be seen roaming the wasteland of the old world, awaiting the reconstruction of genuine values.

Astrologically Saturn is characterised as an authority figure and lawgiver whose systems, establishment and rules are felt as restrictive to the next generation. But as the god of age and the archetype of boundary, the next generation grows to experience this force, not just through the projection onto authority, but as a shared aspect of being human. Through self regulation, vocational responsibility, communal conscientiousness, parenting and numerous other social traditions, Saturn is internalized. Saturn is the symbol of walls and blocks, but these can also be used for building, structuring, containing and preventing. The Capricorn kingdom is not just the old order, but is also the archetypal landscape where the fostering of authority, authenticity, leadership and stability can rebuild the failing systems from the consequences and aftermath learnt from past judgmental errors. 2020 is a time of Capricorn as Pluto, Saturn, Jupiter and a host of other celestial bodies conjoin and transit this sign. But it is also the time of maturation for the generation born in the late 80s and 90s when Saturn and Uranus joined Neptune in Capricorn.

What is the *kairos* embedded in this Time of Capricorn? To reflect on this question is to contemplate the qualities and virtues inherent in this sign.

### ***The Time of Capricorn***

A Saturn return ago, on November 29, 1990, with the North Node, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune all in Capricorn, the Australian Treasurer Paul Keating described Australia's recession as 'the recession we had to have', a statement now immortalized in Australian history. But being a Capricorn himself, perhaps Keating knew the *kairos* of that moment was the impetus to resuscitate the economy that was failing because of corporate excesses. Through the course of the economic fallout triggered by the pandemic can we consider the distribution of wealth in a legitimate and honest way? Is this an opportunity to reset economic equality?

During the Covid-19 lockdown, air pollutants are less. Residents of the Punjab in northern India posted photos on line of the Himalayas, a spectacle they have not seen for nearly 30 years due to poor air quality. Is this an opportunity to contemplate climate change apolitically?

The urban landscape cleared of humans is hosting other creatures such as deer, raccoons, goats, monkeys and bears on our global streets. They are coming out to remind us that we have decimated so many of their habitats. With reduced noise in the cities birdsongs are audible again; with oceans free of the commotion of cruise ships, whales can hear one another again. Is it possible to take this opportunity to find new directives to safeguard and respect our animal kingdom?

Up and down the United Kingdom, on doorsteps and out of windows the people clap and cheer and bang pots and pans to acknowledge the dedicated workers of the NHS (National Health Service), acknowledging those who have followed their helping vocation. Has there ever been a time when a cleaner, a doctor, an ambulance driver, a nurse's aide and the kitchen staff have all been recognized as equal. Will we be able to take the opportunity to acknowledge each and every worker as equal, not because of status or celebrity, but because of vocation and dedication?

In Italy they sang from their balconies. The music united all those ordered indoors. It was Pan, one of Capricorn's representatives, who created the panpipes from the reeds in the river.<sup>4</sup> Can we

remember that ingenuity, creativity, imagination, music, poetry and art arise out of the depths of crisis and disaster? Can we take the opportunity to find this in ourselves, to imagine possibility and create opportunity?

These are vignettes of possibility from the Time of Capricorn. Within each of these moments are Capricorn virtues such as: *respect*, not because of status or celebrity, but because of authenticity; *commitment and contribution*, not from duty, but care; *acknowledgment* for a task well done; *responsibility* as action for safeguarding the community, not for self preservation; *deeds well done*, not for self promotion but for society; contemplation on the *wellbeing of all*; *business*, not as a corporate cartel, but as an essential service; *animal welfare* because as human beings we are the curators of our world. These are seeds that can be planted in the earth of Capricorn.

*Kairos*. As astrologers we are always moving between *chronos* and *kairos* similar to our interchanges between fate and free will. I think we all see the possibilities and opportunities when Saturn opens the gate onto Aquarius and a few days later Jupiter crosses through the opening to conjunct Saturn at the Northern Hemisphere's winter solstice, the nadir of the Solar cycle. It also marks another opening. The quality of the 20-year Jupiter/Saturn cycles enters the element of Air for the next two centuries. Like free will, *kairos* invites us to seize the opportunities and be proactive. Capricorn has given us the discipline and responsibility to make that possible.

### ***The Capricorn Chronicles***

Following are some tables focusing on the ingresses of the social and outer planets into Capricorn, as well their synodic cycles with each other that commenced in Capricorn. The table begins 36 years ago, three Jupiter cycles ago. On January 19, 1984 Neptune entered Capricorn followed by Jupiter twelve hours later, conjoining one another at 0°01'. Even though the orbits of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto last well over 36 years, the sign of Capricorn has hosted all the social and outer planets since 1984. Saturn's current transit through Capricorn is a return to its 1988 ó 1991 passage. Just before it entered Capricorn it conjoined Uranus in the last degrees of Sagittarius and then joined Neptune in its passage through Capricorn.

### **Capricorn Ingresses**

<b>Planet</b>	<b>Ingress</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Exit</b>
Jupiter	19/01/1984 3/01/1996 18/12/2007	<i>Every 12 years Jupiter passes through Capricorn. In 2020 Jupiter ingresses into Aquarius two days after Saturn, both conjoining in the first degree of Aquarius on the Capricorn solstice (the Sun at 0° 01')</i>	6/02/1985 21/01/1997 19/12/2020
Saturn	13/02/1988 12/11/1988 20/12/2017 3/07/2020	<i>Saturn's successive ingress into Aquarius is often followed by Saturn's retrograde movement back into Capricorn for some months. It is as if Saturn has a final chance to complete what still is left undone in its Capricorn agenda. This period in 2020 is from March 22 to July 3.</i>	10/06/1988 6/02/1991 22/03/2020 17/12/2020
Uranus	15/02/1988 2/12/1988 9/06/1995	<i>It was a time when national borders were reset, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall built during the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Capricorn. Saturn approached its return. This age group is now between 24 and 32.</i>	27/05/1988 1/04/1995 12/01/1996
Neptune	19/01/1984 21/11/1984 23/08/1998	<i>Even though the market severely crashed, the 1987 film Wall Street promoted the 'greed-is-good' slogan. Global attitudes to lending &amp; spending and the economy were deconstructed; fantasies about money, celebrity, entitlement were drastically changing. This age group is now between 22 and 36</i>	23/06/1984 29/01/1998 28/11/1998
Pluto	26/01/2008 27/11/2008 11/06/2023 2/09/2024	<i>Pluto's passage into Capricorn was synonymous with the Global Financial Crisis. Many economists suggested this was the most serious financial crisis since the Great Depression, which they are once again suggesting in context of the global economic downturn due to Coronavirus.</i>	14/06/2008 23/03/2023 21/01/2024 19/11/2024

Each planetary passage through Capricorn brings critical challenges to the moral principles and codes of communal leadership, prestige and power, corporate cartels, ecological management, economic stability, the boundaries of business, law enforcement and governmental responsibility. Embedded in each planetary passage through Capricorn is also *kairos*, the time to respect and restore the natural law.

### Capricorn Synods

Planetary Synod	Union	Kairos
Jupiter conjunct Neptune <i>At the conjunction the seed of new beliefs and ideals are sown; however as the cycle unfolds the clashes of ideology, religions and beliefs become apparent.</i>	19/01/1984 at 0°01 9/01/1997 at 27°08	<i>Opportunities to be immersed in cross cultural awareness and acceptance</i>
Saturn conjunct Neptune <i>The god of structure meets the archetype of dissolution representing the suspension and disbanding of forms, structures or governments.</i>	3/03/1989 at 11°54 24/06/1989 at 11°14 13/11/1989 at 10°21	<i>The possibility of new systems and structures for creative and imaginative arts</i>
Uranus conjunct Neptune <i>the emergence of new ideologies and collective ideals that may be expressed through periods of reform and 'enlightenment' or unrest and deception</i>	2/02/1993 at 19°33 20/08/1993 at 18°48 24/10/1993 at 18°32	<i>Technical &amp; inventive opportunities unite to create new social platforms for all</i>
Saturn conjunct Pluto <i>During this planetary combination the consequences of power or attempts to manipulate and dominate become apparent.</i>	12/01/2020 at 22°46	<i>Possibilities of authentic ecological &amp; economic changes that heal the planet</i>
Jupiter conjunct Pluto <i>The exposure of the shadow side of riches – greed, hoarding, misuse of power – is likely. One of the ways we might be awakened to this is through financial difficulty and crisis</i>	5/04/2020 at 24°53 30/06/2020 at 24°06 12/11/2020 at 22°51	<i>Opportunities to tolerate and maximize the diversity of human beliefs and concepts become available</i>

Astrological cycles carry on whether we change or not.

*Kairos* reminds us that we are co-participants in shaping events through time. Capricorn reminds us that this is our responsibility.

*written April/2020*

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> James Hillman, "Notes on Opportunism", from *Puer Papers*, edited by James Hillman, Spring (Dallas, TX: 1994), 153.

<sup>2</sup> The three Horai were the custodians of the seasons of time, daughters of Themis and Zeus. The three Moirai or the Fates, the spinners of the thread of life, were also daughters of Themis and Zeus. The passing and weaving of time is symbolized by these trinities of goddesses.

<sup>3</sup> R.B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA: 1953, p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> See Pan and the Pandemic - <https://www.astrosynthesis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pan-and-the-Pandemic.pdf/>.