

“Of the people, by the people, for the people”

By Matthew Carnicelli, Human Potential Left

On Sunday January 20, 2013, at approximately 12:00 noon, President Barack Obama will take the Oath of Office. He will be joined in whichever room of the White House this private ceremony takes place in by the Chief Justice of the United States, the Vice-President, important cabinet members, and close friends and family. However, the men and women most likely to control the trajectory of his second term as President will be entirely absent from this scene. These men and women are the people of the United States.

An astrological analysis of an inaugural moment is typically focused on the likely challenges and opportunities facing a President-elect over the four years that constitute his or her term in office. However, the planetary symbolism embedded within this next American inaugural moment strongly suggests that in this specific Presidential term, the American people are likely to assume at least a co-equal role with the President in the writing of the next chapter in our national story.

Introduction

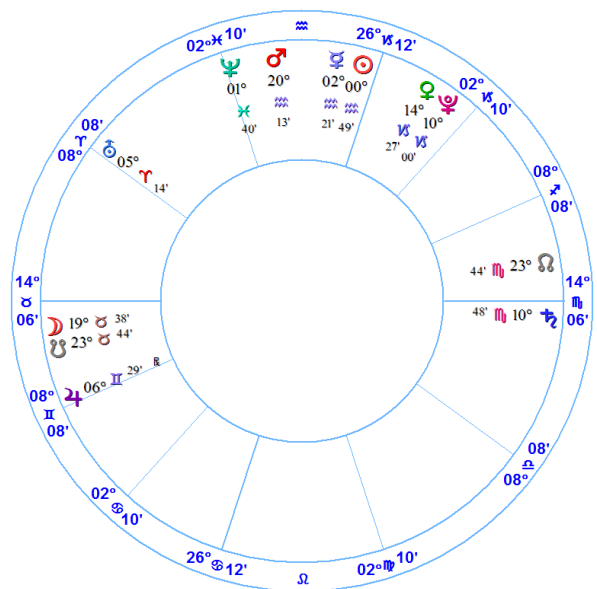
As I explained in my January 2012 inaugural preview study, “Take Care of this House” [<http://hpleft.com/010412.pdf>]:

“Contemporary-era Presidents of the United States are inaugurated every four years at or around 12 noon on January 20th in the year following a presidential election. Now, I say at or around because sometimes the actual inauguration moment can be delayed as much as an hour (as it was with John Kennedy in 1961) or even a day (as in the case of Zachary Taylor, who in 1849 literally refused to take the Oath of Office on the day duly prescribed by the Constitution because it fell on the Sabbath, and only took it the next day, March 5). It is nothing more than mere coincidence that both those Presidents died in office. However, the assumption underlying both my study and this piece is that the astrological symbolism embedded in the precise moment that the oath is taken persuasively describes the archetypal challenges and opportunities to be confronted or embraced by an incoming Administration.”

Because January 20th falls on a Sunday, there will be two Inaugurals in 2013, just as there was in 1985 (and every other year in which the day stipulated by the Constitution fell on a Sunday). The real one will be private, held at 12:00 noon, during which the President will formally take the Oath of Office. The second of these will public, and will amount little more than a re-enactment.

Our harrowing moment in time

The chart for Barack Obama’s 2nd inaugural moment has two striking features. First, as previously outlined in “Take Care of this House” (hereafter referred to as ‘TCOTH’), it contains a harrowing, nearly exact, hard aspect between Moon and Mars. As I documented in TCOTH, this type Moon-Mars aspect has been present in 17 previous inaugural moments. It tends to indicate a four year period in which “the people” become extremely aroused, angry, or upset in response to some domestic or international development. For instance, in 6 of 17 instances in which this type “hard” aspect was present, a President died in office – which certainly qualifies as a legitimate cause of upset or angst for most Americans. The 6 tightest instances of this aspect correlated with the natural death in office of Presidents William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor, the onset and culmination of the American Civil War (including the attack on Ft. Sumter, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson), America’s sudden entry into WWI, and the Wall Street crash of 1929 and subsequent Great Depression. The inaugural Moon-Mars aspect for precisely 12 noon on January 20th, 2013, would be the 5th tightest in American history. For a complete listing of these 17 inaugural moments, see TCOTH.

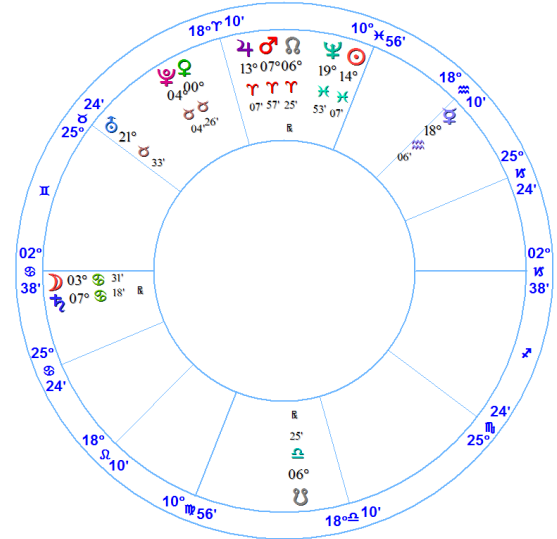


The second striking feature of this chart also involves this Moon, but in a different fashion. Briefly outlined, the Moon in an Inaugural chart describes the people, not the President. In the vast majority of these inaugural moments in American history it is the significator of the President, the Sun, that is most prominent (if only for technical reasons having to do with

the Noon inaugural time stipulated in the United States Constitution, coupled to the Sun's position around the Midheaven at Noon in the Northern Hemisphere). Thus, except in the instance of a significantly delayed inaugural moment (and I know of no instance of such an extended delay), the President will naturally be the central figure in any analysis.

The Moon, signifier of the citizenry, has periodically been angular in these charts - but only once before has it been in a virtual conjunction with the Ascendant in the first house of the chart, indicating both the likelihood of a dramatically heightened emotional response by the public as well as a leading role in events.

The sole precedent in inaugural history for such a lunar placement is for the year 1857, the term of office immediately preceding Lincoln's election, and the start of the Civil War. This was the inauguration of James Buchanan, the 15th President of the United States. In 1857, inaugural Moon was within 1 degree of the Ascendant at 12:00 noon, in a relatively close conjunction with Saturn, which itself was almost exactly square Mars. This symbolism aptly describes the slow, inexorable culmination of sectional tensions that gripped the nation during the years 1857-1860, amplified by Americans' impassioned yet disparate reactions to, first, the Taney Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, and second, to John Brown's attack on the arsenal at Harper's Ferry and subsequent execution. Buchanan's term in office also included a financial panic, the *Panic of 1857*. This political climate proved so utterly disruptive that the Election of 1860 included four major Presidential candidates, including two different Democratic Party candidates – with one, Illinois Senator Steven A. Douglas, representing Northern Democrats, and the other, the then Vice-President, John C. Breckinridge, representing Southern Democrats. By the end of Buchanan's term of office in March 1861, seven Southern states, led by South Carolina, had already seceded from the Union, in response to Abraham Lincoln's mere election as President.



This 'hard aspect' between Moon and Mars was to be the first of three such aspects in consecutive inaugural moments:

- 1857 – Moon conjunct Ascendant (orb 1°) conjunct Saturn (orb 3° 40') square Mars (orb 40') conjunct North Node (orb 1°);
- 1861 – Moon sesqui-quadrate Mars (orb 17'), Pluto (orb 2° 45')
- 1865 – Moon conjunct Mars (orb 36') square Sun (orb roughly 2°) sesqui-quadrate N Node (orb 17')

This entire 12 year period was one of high-stress and extreme conflict – be that conflict military or political. This pattern will be roughly repeating itself in the years 2013, 2017, 2021, suggesting that whatever crisis emerges here will likely be an extended one.

Assuming President Obama takes the oath at around 12:05, the inaugural map for 2013 does not involve quite so precise a conjunction of the Moon and Ascendant as did the 1857 chart. The orb would be roughly 4 degrees at 12:05 – still uncomfortably close for my taste, but not quite as overwhelmingly so. However, the later in the hour this ceremony happens, the more precise this conjunction will become. The larger issue with this Moon is, as I noted in TCOTH, the precise hard aspects it makes with inaugural Mars and Uranus. Whereas in 1857 Buchanan's challenges developed slowly, given this symbolism, one expects that whatever crisis is likely to emerge will do so much more quickly.

To offer a measure of perspective, while the symbolism of Moon in Taurus conjunct the Ascendant, in the First House, square Mars and semi-square Uranus could suggest the potential for extreme rebelliousness and violence on the part of ordinary Americans, it could also merely suggest an extraordinarily agitated American citizenry. I would point out that hard aspects between Moon and Mars were present in the inaugural moments in both of Woodrow Wilson's terms - in 1913 (with Moon at the midpoint of a reasonable tight conjunction of Mars and Uranus) and in 1917 (another private Sunday inaugural, with Moon in an exact 135 degree aspect with Mars). In the instance of this first Wilson inaugural, America did not go to war, at least in Europe – even if Europe was at war within a few months of this inaugural, with the shock waves being felt across the Atlantic. Wilson did, in fact, unexpectedly deploy American military forces during that first term, sending General Pershing into Mexico in hot pursuit of Pancho Villa.

It is also worth noting that the Moon can symbolize women in a mundane chart, such as an inaugural chart (with men symbolized by the Sun); and it was during Wilson's two terms in office that the suffragette movement fully gathered steam, with women forcefully demanding, and finally winning, the right to vote.

The inaugural moment for George W. Bush's first term, in 2001, also featured a Mars – Uranus aspect, a square of roughly 3 and half degrees in orb, with Mars conjunct the Descendant, persuasively suggesting the potential for sudden military engagement. I anticipated just such a development in my 2001 Inaugural study, *The Bush Presidency: Storm Clouds at High Noon* [<http://hpleft.com/highnoon.html>]:

“The chart for George W. Bush's inauguration as president on January 20, 2001, however, suggests that world peace and domestic tranquility are not especially likely during his first term. The pregnant question embedded within the likely presidential inauguration chart is not whether Mr. Bush will be under attack, but why, and from whom.”

And later:

“A third option, which could manifest regardless of whether either scenario outlined above comes to pass, is that Mars in Scorpio suggests the dramatic projection of military power somewhere outside of the continental United States – perhaps in response to a series of terrorist attacks, or even an attack upon the presidency itself. An old enemy of the Bush dynasty, Saddam Hussein, has been making noises as of late -- and is said to be extremely interested in testing the resolve of the new administration. Bush's natal Pluto and Venus MC lines run through Iraq, with their midpoint falling right through Baghdad, suggesting obsession with his father's old enemy – especially if Hussein continues in his attempts to manipulate oil prices, and evade the remaining U.N. sanctions. However, as seen from the perspective of AstroCartoGraphy, Bush's natal Mars is not angular in Iraq – so direct military action may not be likely (but covert CIA-inspired activity might). On the other hand, Bush's Mars Midheaven line runs directly through Afghanistan (where suspected terrorist leader Osama Bin Laden is said to be hiding). Natal Pluto MC runs not only through Iraq and much of the Middle East, but directly through Mecca, the spiritual center of the Islamic world (while the inaugural chart Pluto MC runs directly through Tehran) – with inaugural Saturn conjunct the MC for Jerusalem.”

In the instance of George W. Bush's 2001 inaugural moment, there was no aspect between Mars and Moon. Mars-Uranus hard aspects (conjunction, square, opposition, semi-square or sesqui-quadrate) in general appear to present themselves relatively frequently in recent American inaugural history – which shouldn't come as a huge surprise given America's recent history of repeated overseas military engagements. But it is the combination of Mars-Uranus with an angular 1st house Moon that more strongly suggests rebelliousness at home – rather than abroad. I would further point out this inaugural Mars is roughly conjunct the natal Moon for any morning-July 4th US chart (my strong bias, as well as the time of day that historians deem most likely for ratification of *The Declaration of Independence*), further amplifying this theme of an agitated, rebellious populace.

If these inaugural parallels were not enough, I need emphasize that the cosmic weather for the planet over the next four years is beyond stormy. To reiterate arguments that I previously offered in *“Size Matters: Understanding the Size-Related Dynamics of Our Emerging American Crisis”* [<http://hpleft.com/040810.html>] (and “Take Care of This House”):

Add to this the arrival of the transiting Uranus-Pluto square in cardinal signs, which will form its first exact aspect in June 2012, and make 6 more additional exact aspects through April 2015 - several of which will be in close proximity to any July 4, 1776 United States natal Sun. To give some sense of the generic impact of Uranus in hard aspect to Pluto, without involvement of the US Sun (which itself is typically associated in mundane studies with either the President / ruler of a country, or alternatively, a nation's 'direction', particularly in a democracy), consider this brief chronology (dates given are for the period from the first exact aspect in a series to the last, an orb of at least several months on either end is advised):

September 1792 - July 1794 (opposition): National unity lost, Republican & Federalist parties formed; Citizen Genet arrives in America and foments unrest against Washington's policy of neutrality; Louis XVI & Marie Antoinette executed; Jefferson resigns from Washington's cabinet; 'The Terror' in France, worst days of French Revolution; Robespierre executed; Whiskey Rebellion

January 1820 - September 1821 (waning square): Tensions over slavery rise, leading to Missouri Compromise; 'Relief Party' formed in response to 'Panic of 1819' and subsequent economic depression; Relief Act passed; George III dies; revolutions in Spain & Piedmont; Bolivar defeats Spanish army in Venezuela, guaranteeing independence; property qualifications for voting removed in New York

June 1850 - March 1951 (conjunction): President Taylor dies; sectional tensions in US escalate; Compromise of 1850, including new Federally-enforced Fugitive Slave Law; Louis Philippe dies; Louis Napoleon coup d'état in France

October 1876 - September 1877 (waxing square): Custer massacred at Little Big Horn; contested election of 1876, Hayes becomes President via deal to end Reconstruction; great railroad strike of 1877, accompanied by substantial violence and casualties

January 1901 - November 1902 (opposition): McKinley assassinated; Teddy Roosevelt takes over as President and announces centrist 'trust busting' plan; Queen Victoria dies

April 1932 - January 1934 (waning square): Hitler & Nazis win majority of seats in Weimar Republic election; FDR elected; Hitler named Chancellor; Reichstag fire; Hitler granted dictatorial powers; first concentration camps erected; boycott of Jews begins in Germany; US goes off gold standard

October 1965 - June 1966 (conjunction): Race riots in Watts and other major American cities; escalation of American involvement in Vietnam War; Voting Rights Act signed into law.

To give the reader some sense of when the Uranus-Pluto square's impact is likely to be most intense (and it should be thought of as already significantly impacting the entire planet's cosmic weather), the following table may prove useful:

Aspect / Event	Degree	Date	Distance from US Sun
Pluto retrograde station	11° Cap 25'	04-12-2013	1° 26'
Uranus square Pluto	11° Aries-Capricorn 14'	05-20-2012	1° 47'
Uranus retrograde station	12° Aries 31'	07-17-2013	0° 30'
Pluto direct station	8° Capricorn 59'	09-20-2013	4° 00'
Uranus square Pluto	9° Aries-Capricorn 26'	11-01-2013	3° 35'
Uranus direct station	8° Aries 35'	12-17-2013	4° 26'
Pluto opposition US Sun	13° Capricorn-Cancer 01'	02-26-2014	0° 0'
Uranus square US Sun	13° Aries-Cancer 01'	04-11-2014	0° 0'
Pluto retrograde station	13° Capricorn 35'	04-14-2014	0° 34'
Uranus square Pluto	13° Aries-Cancer 34'	04-21-2014	0° 33'
Pluto opposition US Sun	13° Capricorn-Cancer 01'	06-02-2014	0° 0'
Uranus retrograde station	16° Aries 31'	07-21-2014	3° 30'
Pluto direct station	11° Capricorn 00'	09-22-2014	2° 00'
Uranus square US Sun	13° Aries-Cancer 01'	11-18-2014	0° 0'
Uranus square Pluto	12° Aries-Cancer 35'	12-15-2014	0° 31'
Uranus direct station	12° Aries 34'	12-21-2014	0° 32'
Pluto opposition US Sun	13° Capricorn-Cancer 01'	12-27-2014	0° 0'
Uranus square US Sun (final aspect)	13° Aries-Cancer 01'	01-23-2015	0° 0'
Uranus square Pluto (final aspect)	15° Aries-Capricorn 18'	03-16-2015	3° 17'
Pluto retrograde station	15° Capricorn 33'	04-16-2015	2° 32'
Pluto opposition US Sun	13° Capricorn-Cancer 01'	09-10-2015	0° 0'
Pluto direct station	12° Capricorn 58'	09-24-2015	0° 3'
Pluto opposition US Sun (final aspect)	13° Capricorn-Cancer 01'	10-09-2015	0° 0'

The above referenced periods should be thought of as those of maximum psychic intensity, both across the planet and within the United States itself. **The periods highlighted in bold represent squares or planetary stations happening within a 1° of orb of the United States Sun – and hence likely to encourage extraordinary responses from both citizenry and government.**

As I also referenced in "Take Care of This House":

As anyone familiar with my recent essays will also be well aware, Pluto's current placement in the tropical sign of Capricorn coupled to Neptune's recent ingress into Pisces add additional ammunition to this already extraordinarily volatile cosmic mix. Briefly outlined, Pluto's last two passages through Capricorn (1515-1529, 1762-1778) coincides with the onset of, arguably, the two most influential revolutions in western history – the Protestant Reformation and the American Revolution. Neptune's last three passages through tropical Pisces (1520-1534, 1684-1697, 1847-1862) coincides with periods of intense, often faith-based political volatility – (a) the earliest phases of the Protestant Reformation, including its iconoclastic phase (in which religious images, be they statues, stained glass, or paintings, were destroyed by roaming hordes of 'reforming' believers) and the bloody Peasant's Wars of 1524-25; (b) the decidedly anti-Catholic, anti-absolutist Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England; (c) a series of more-or-less spontaneous political uprisings that erupt throughout Continental Europe in the years 1848-49, the Revolutions of 1848 or Springtime of the Peoples; and (d), in the United States, the slow, inexorable rise of irreconcilable sectional tensions over the 'peculiar institution' of slavery which culminate, at the very end of this time band, with the outbreak of the American Civil War.

Returning to specific examination of this inaugural map, yet another worrisome element is the position of the South Node in Taurus, conjunct this aforementioned Moon. This suggests that thoughts of separation, of one sort or another, might well become prominent during this four year period. In the original and interim versions of TCOTH (including one I actually sent to the White House), I included a line stating that if President Obama won re-election in a close, contested race, there could be calls for secession in the Red States. I deleted it from the final version, concluding that it was too extreme a possibility. Imagine my regret at deleting that line from the final version when petitions calling for secession began widely circulating within Red States in the aftermath of the President's re-election! Pollsters report that perhaps 25% of

Republicans currently support secession from the Union – despite the fact that Red State citizens profit enormously from their financial relationship with Blue America.

The word ‘separation’ can have a coded meaning in astrology – and suggest a need to say goodbye to a loved one or possession that one held dear. Hence, the placement of the South Node in Taurus (and North Node in Scorpio), coupled to this larger Moon-Mars-Uranus configuration, might well suggest a return to the kind of soul-quaking domestic terrorism and political assassination that Americans have mercifully avoided since, alternatively, the 1990s (Timothy McVeigh), and the Uranus-Pluto impelled 1960s.

At the very least, this South Node position would indicate a strong archetypal pull towards separatist impulses, of one sort or another, during this four year period – coupled to a stubborn unwillingness to renounce puerile calls for “2nd Amendment remedies” in favor of a politics of Union, of personal and societal healing and transformational. This latter form of politics is not revolutionary but evolutionary. It demands we embrace America’s multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-ethical destiny, and the realities of living in a complicated, advanced industrial economy, rather than attempting to resist or deny them.

Venus in Capricorn exactly trines the ascendant of this next inaugural moment – suggesting that, despite the insatiable passions of the few, a majority of Americans still retain great affection for both the ideals of effective government and earned economic prosperity, and would welcome a truly pragmatic, balanced approach to getting the nation’s fiscal house in order. The average American does not seek to “soak the rich”, as apparently do some in France – but merely insists that the wealthy pay their fair share (**and perhaps more crucially, not seek to impoverish everyone else**), and that government puts the interests of the American people, most of whom will never be wealthy, but who nonetheless enjoy doing an honest day’s work for a living wage, first and foremost in any discussion of future economic policy.

Saturn’s placement in Scorpio, in a precise sextile to Pluto in Capricorn (and, more widely, this Venus), lend support to the view that Americans would be prepared to make sacrifices if they were convinced that it authentically furthered the nation’s long-term fiscal health – as opposed to a fanatical agenda to roll back the welfare state apparatus that allowed America to emerge triumphant from the Cold War, and that today continues to insure that most Americans, though not all, are not left utterly destitute when adversity hits home, or in old age. Saturn’s position in the 6th house, on the Descendant of this chart, however, also suggests the possibility that the nation may face strong economic headwinds (perhaps originating in Europe or elsewhere in the global economy) during this four year period, not to mention the prospect of stubborn, emotionally-based ideological estrangement further taking hold.

Through a glass, darkly

Given both this chart and our highly unsettled political landscape, it would be a fool’s errand for any astrologer to attempt to predict specific developments in our national life. Nonetheless, let me offer a few general observations as to how I expect the next four years to go.

My primary expectation is that the next four years (and possibly the next 8-12 years) are going to be extremely turbulent – and possibly violent. Given this chart (and the chart of the next Inaugural moment, which features the same exact Moon-Mars aspect that America went to war under in 1861 and 1917 – see TCOTH), the incoming Uranus-Pluto squares, and the placement of Uranus in Aries, Neptune in Pisces, and Pluto in Capricorn, it is only prudent to expect a period of intense political and societal turmoil to engulf America and the world. The specific nature and extent of this turbulence is yet to be determined – **and may indeed be much dependent on how consciously, and benevolently, human beings respond to the cosmic weather of our times.** This much is certain: we are living in interesting times, in times that historians will write volumes about in the years to come.

For instance, consider the Arab spring. Very few foreign policy experts apparently saw it coming. Yet the student of planetary cycles understood that this was at least a possibility. As I wrote in “A Brief Look Forward at Pluto in Capricorn” [<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2007/12/06/418519/-A-brief-look-forward>]

“We are about to enter what the Chinese might have described as “interesting times” - potentially, a new age of rebellion and revolution. Pluto will enter Capricorn in early 2008, immediately after the beginning of the Presidential Primary season. It will remain in Capricorn through 2024, at which point it will enter Aquarius.”

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“On the international front, if my historical models are correct, I’d expect the Mullahs’ of Iran, the despots of Sunni Islam, and Communist Party in China to all have also taken more than a few black eyes by the end of this period – assuming that they’re still even around to tell the tale.”

The Arab Spring’s progression has been uneven and unpredictable – but is nonetheless continuing, and could next impact the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nick Campion, in the *Book of World Horoscopes*, gives a date of April 1, 1979, at approximately

3pm, for the moment when Ayatollah Khomeini announced the establishment of the current Iranian Republic. That birth moment would give the regime a Sun degree of 11° Aries 06' – and thus position it directly in the path of the Uranus-Pluto square of 2012-15. If this birth moment is indeed valid, then we must expect the winds of change to pummel Iran over the years 2013-2014 (just as we must expect them to pummel Washington in 2014-2015). But will those winds be generated by the fury of the Iranian people, perhaps in reaction to yet another attempt at a stolen election – or by Israeli and American planes and cruise missiles? I don't know – but my prayer is for the former rather than the latter.

From the perspective of AstroCartoGraphy, President Obama's Venus Midheaven line runs directly through Iran – suggesting that he harbors great personal sympathy for the people of Iran, a people that I might add who have suffered under one form of tyranny or another ever since the 1953 US-led coup d'état. Based on this single astrological factor, I believe that he would prefer to avoid attacking them if there were peaceful ways of keeping the regime from acquiring a nuclear weapon. But if the Iranian people indeed take the lead, in the same fashion that the people of Egypt, Libya, and Syria have before them, and then ask for our help, my guess is that Obama would give it – especially given that inaugural Jupiter Midheaven (that is, the Jupiter of the Inaugural chart when projected onto a world map via AstroCartoGraphy) runs straight through Iran. This suggests to me a United States that in 2013-2016 is more likely to come to the rescue of the people of Iran than to attack them. But the first step will have to be theirs.

In contrast, both Obama's natal Pluto MC line and the Mars IC line of the 2013 inaugural moment line run through North Korea, suggesting that the President would be much less reluctant to confront that regime, given sufficient provocation – of which this regime appears incapable of avoiding.

Just to note all the potential hot spots, inaugural Uranus and Pluto Midheaven run directly through central Russia, western China and eastern India. Inaugural Saturn Ascendant also runs along the Pacific coast of China, directly through Shanghai (and previously mentioned North Korea) What this might auger with regard to US relations with these nation is unknown – but it certainly suggests a more challenging set of relationships.

Before leaving behind the perspective of AstroCartoGraphy, let me note that inaugural Pluto MC runs directly through Dallas, TX (and the entire Midwest region north of Texas) – as does Obama's natal Saturn MC line and Neptune DSC line. This could suggest that these parts of the country might prove particularly hostile to the President over the next four years (especially Texas, where the secession movement is perhaps strongest and gun ownership broadest) or that the President might make extra efforts to keep them in line. My advice to the President would be to exercise as a light a touch as possible when dealing with matters relating to that state and that larger northern geographic corridor. I'd also advise the Secret Service to take extra precautions were the President or some other high Administration official to visit that part of the country.

On the financial front, there are a number of planetary cycles that are thought to influence the economy, of which Saturn-Pluto is arguably the most important. The first half of this cycle is typically economically bullish, and the second half more bearish. Briefly outlined, we are currently in the fourth quarter of the most recent Saturn-Pluto cycle. Our current cycle began with the conjunction of Saturn and Pluto in Libra of November 1982, at roughly the absolute bottom of the Reagan recession. Reagan espoused an economic philosophy which came to be known as supply-side. This philosophy emphasized unlimited wealth creation by an elite, low regulation and taxes, weaker unions, and given the obvious disconnect between small government ideology and the services demanded by citizens and businesses within advanced industrialized nations, larger deficits. I would personally argue that this philosophy is the antithesis of Libra, which is intimately associated with the ideals of balance and fairness.

The deficit had become worrisome by the time of the first quarter square of Saturn and Pluto in Aquarius-Scorpio in 1993. In response to this problem, a then Democratic Congress instituted modestly higher marginal tax rates, which consequently allowed the nation to finally achieve a measure of fiscal equilibrium later in the decade – while proving no impediment whatsoever to the extraordinary economic growth of the middle-to-late 1990s. However, in response to this tax hike, Democrats lost control of the House of Representatives for over a decade.

The midpoint of this cycle was achieved in August 2001, with the opposition of Saturn and Pluto in Gemini-Sagittarius (a few weeks before 9/11). Despite having lost the popular vote in 2000, and having only triumphed in Florida due to his brother's (and Kathryn Harris's) electoral chicanery, President George W. Bush nonetheless elected to use his post 9/11 popularity as a means of pushing through yet another round of supply-side tax cuts, while also advocating for fewer regulations, the partial privatization of Social Security, and unfunded wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I think it's fair to argue that Barack Obama's response to the World Financial Crisis that he inherited from Bush 43, while neither bold enough for progressives nor draconian enough for libertarians, helped avert a second Great Depression. Yet,

in 2010, at the 3rd quarter square of this cycle, with Saturn in Libra square Pluto in Capricorn, Americans handed over control of the House of Representatives to the most fanatical adherents of Reagan's supply side gospel, the Tea Party.

This Saturn-Pluto cycle will draw to a close in 2020, to be succeeded by a cycle next beginning in pragmatic, realistic Capricorn. Hence, I submit that Americans will be asked over the next 8 years to soberly confront the implications of Reagan's supply side ideology, which Republicans have championed since his Presidency as if it were one of nature's laws. I submit that it is not.

In this regard, I argued in TCOTH:

"Given the precedent set by the 1929 Inaugural moment, it is conceivable that the next President will be confronted with yet another world financial crisis – a crisis that might have little to do with the actions of his or his predecessor's Administration. While most Americans are relatively familiar with the October 1929 Wall Street crash, far fewer understand that the stock market rebounded immediately afterwards, and that the first phase of the period we call the Great Depression was initially deemed merely a recession – at least until a German bank failure in 1931 led to a general freeze-up of credit in the tightly intertwined European and American banking systems, and the true onset of the period of economic futility that posterity remembers. In light of the austerity-driven crisis that continues to plague a European Union that has yet to decide if it desires an authentic political union or merely a likely unworkable economic "friends with benefits" relationship, it is prudent to expect the fate of the Greek, Italian, and Spanish peoples to impact every nation that participates in the globalized economy. Why any American of sound mind would want to replicate Europe's failed experiment with austerity is beyond me – but this is nonetheless what the oligarch-funded Tea Party movement advocates should Republicans assume total control of government."

It's possible that some of these European countries had gone too far in the direction of social welfare legislation – and indeed had to make accommodations to reality as part of their response to the World Financial Crisis. That said, it's also possible that they were merely caught up in the backwash of our faith-based financial tsunami. As Paul Krugman has pointed out in the *New York Times*, it is the nations in Europe with the strongest safety nets – namely, Germany and Sweden – that are doing the best on the continent, while everyone else sinks deeper and deeper into recession. And it is the nations with the strongest tradition of tax avoidance and personal corruption, namely Greece and Italy, that threaten to bring down the entire European economy.

What's crystal clear to me is that, given the continued economic instability in Europe, and repeated conservative attempts to blackmail the President into adopting an ill-advised austerity stance, their latest being a threat to sabotage America's credit rating unless they get their way, a return to recession and possibly depression remains a serious possibility. The American people's likely response to such a loathsome, self-inflicted wound is unpredictable – but amidst this intense cosmic weather, my bias is that everyone would have ample reason to regret it.

Congress' New Year's deal to restore the Clinton-era marginal rates on Americans earning over \$450,000 a year, while retaining the lower Bush rates on everyone else, bought time – but assuredly not the revenue necessary to either make a serious dent in our deficit or fund the kind of stimulus and reinvestment program that might be necessary should Europe go under, taking with it a number of European-American banks. Neither did it bring long-term stability to the nation, as negotiators merely kicked the can down the road – with Congressional Republicans vowing in March to extract major cuts in vital social net programs that serve, not their often obscenely wealthy campaign contributors (many of whom, like the Koch Brothers, did not even have to earn their start-up money, but simply inherited it), but the most vulnerable Americans imaginable. And they may even be joined in this effort by well-heeled 'centrist' Democrats, who will never have to personally confront the human implications of their 'courageous' decision.

Given the lunar symbolism embedded in this 2013 inaugural moment, I offered this warning in TCOTH:

"...another option that could easily manifest, either as an alternative to these scenarios or alongside them, is the emergence of a large-scaled people's movement for governmental reform and economic justice, a supersized version of Occupy Wall Street that would coalesce in response to any Congressional attempt to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class, working poor, and unemployed at a time of double-digit U-6 joblessness. The American middle and left's patience with this nation's political elites may not prove inexhaustible, especially amidst this intense cosmic weather – and even a restored Democratic Congress should not consider itself immune to such a reaction. In fact, given these potential scenarios, I would argue that this last scenario is the most positive expression of this emerging zeitgeist that I can imagine. Perhaps it will take an aroused, angry, but nonetheless non-violent popular movement to convince Democrats and Republicans to pay more attention to the authentic needs of the nation, and less to those of ideology-driven fanatics or corporate lobbyists."

If the American middle- and working-classes come to feel that they have been sold out by the President and Congressional negotiators this spring, or later during this term, I can easily see a profound disenchantment with the two party system taking hold. American political parties have disappeared before – and they can disappear again. Moreover, when people

lose faith in the political process, a certain percentage act out in profoundly unproductive ways – such as happened during the Uranus-Pluto fueled riots of the 1960s.

In light of the radical ideology held by many Republicans in the House, and the profoundly adversarial approach that Boehner, Cantor, and company have pursued since regaining the majority, the possibility of nuisance impeachment proceedings against President Obama should not be ruled out, especially if the GOP manages to acquire a majority in the Senate in 2014. That said, as I suggested in TCOTH, given this Inaugural map, any such attempt would likely lead to massive demonstrations, possible riots, and very likely ordinary Americans battling in the streets.

Given the recent violence in Tucson, Arizona, Aurora, Colorado, Newtown, Connecticut, and Webster, New York, momentum is quickly building for a new attempt at banning what I describe as personalized weapons of mass destruction – assault weapons, and magazines that allow a civilian shooter to dispense as many as a hundred rounds without having to reload. The response of some gun owners to these same tragedies – driven by their fear of new regulations on these weapons being imposed – has been the purchase of even more of them. What would their likely response be to a common sense law requiring each and every one of these weapons to be registered and accounted for – or even surrendered in a buy-back program? Given this inaugural map, my fear is that we could be looking at violence directed at government officials, incidents of domestic terrorism, and an escalation of calls for secession or insurrection.

My greatest fear for this cycle, bar none, is that violence, both institutional and interpersonal, is likely to be on the rise over the next 4-to-8 years. There's simply no way to sugarcoat this. As I wrote in TCOTH:

"...times of extraordinary psychic and political intensity have a tendency to encourage extreme reactions from both otherwise sane and seriously deranged individuals, many of the latter whom have yet to even be diagnosed, much less treated. Hence, the potential for domestic terrorism, directed either against civilians or high government officials, should be thought of as exponentially higher during this period. While one man's incendiary rhetoric may not be intended as an invitation to assassination and mayhem, it can easily be heard that way by the clinically or collectively insane."

On hallowed ground

When Barack Obama takes the Oath of Office on January 20, 2013, he will be doing so at an extraordinary moment in American history – a moment when two great cosmic cycles that have powerfully shaped American history will have entered their final phase. The first of these cycles is the United States' individualized Pluto cycle – that is, the 248 year cycle that began on July 4, 1776, with a retrograde Pluto at 27 Capricorn (in tight opposition to a retrograde Mercury in Cancer), and which will conclude with this planet's return to its natal position in February 2022, immediately after the next Saturn-Pluto conjunction. This culmination will, of course, also signal the initiation of a new cycle. As I've argued extensively in my Pluto cycle essays, Pluto in Capricorn inspires the deconstruction of unhealthy hegemonic institutions – such as the 16th century Catholic Church that Martin Luther and other brave religious freethinkers chose to oppose, in the name of individual conscience; and the authoritarian political model that the Founding Fathers upended when they bid adieu to George III and membership in the British Empire in 1776. But as powerful as this cycle might be, it is not the only cycle that has entered its climatic phase – and perhaps not even the most important to our American moment in time.

The other cycle coming due involves Neptune's conclusion of its universal zodiacal cycle, a cycle dedicated to the progression of human ideals, modes of thought, art, and spiritual inspiration, that last commenced in 1862 when Neptune last entered Aries, with our nation engaged "in a great civil war"; and then one year later, with 266 immortal words that forever altered the trajectory of American political thought. Those words belonged to Abraham Lincoln's in the *Gettysburg Address*.

As historians like Gary Wills explain, what Lincoln does in the Gettysburg Address is to re-integrate Thomas Jefferson's vision of universal human rights - so long set aside by its author, his generation, and their posterity, in favor of barren constitutional arguments and racist, classist, and sexist assertions of superiority - at the heart of the American political narrative. Lincoln puts an end to this cowardly intellectual evasion and insists that we take seriously the vision – one that would electrify the world for centuries to come – that the Founding Fathers signed on to when they agreed to Jefferson's *Declaration*.

Lincoln begins at Gettysburg:

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.

Four score and seven years ago amounted to 87 years, or the number years that had passed since the ratification of *The Declaration of Independence*. Today, some seven score and ten years since Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, doesn't it feel as if

we too are about to be engaged in a great civil war? It'll not be the Blue and the Gray this time - but rather the Blue and the Red. And if so, what might this war be about?

In my humble opinion, it will be over one side's adherence to a vision of the Constitution that turns modern men into the slaves of ancients – as opposed to a vision in which thinking men acknowledge their primary responsibility to the living, and their need to interpolate a Constitution that the Framers made fiendishly difficult to alter in any controversial area, and which did nothing to prevent a ruinous Civil War.

It will be over our vision of the Founders and Framers themselves – were they political avatars, whose every thought we are compelled to worship as if it were holy writ; or were they simply men, exceptional men to be sure, especially for their time, but also Enlightenment-era thinkers who would assuredly prefer we emulate their intellectual brilliance in our era, instead of worshipping them (and their ideas) as if they were religious icons.

It will be over a profoundly narcissistic conception of liberty, a conception that strikes me as precariously close to an ethic of every man out for himself, which renders the notion of nationhood an absurdity – as opposed to a vision of authentic Union, and of a people whom are both healthily autonomous yet fully committed to the ideal of working hand-in-hand to solve collective problems, like the challenges inherent in creating gainful employment for everyone who wants to work in a complicated 21st century advanced industrialized economy.

It will be over a vision of de-facto inequality under law, in which the wealthy and powerful (especially after *Citizens United*) are granted far greater access and influence over the gears of American government and media than the ordinary, educated man or woman of authentic character and virtue, who has elected to pursue 'meaningful work' instead of setting out to make the most money possible.

It will be over this curious perception that government - which is ultimately nothing but the direct expression of the voters who yearly elect it, and also comprise it (and who too often seek to corrupt it) - is something to be feared, while businessmen, whose sole concern must be the perpetuation of their private interest (lest they not be in business for much longer!), are the leaders best entrusted with the solemn responsibility of accommodating the national interest.

And finally, as it was 1861, it will be over a fear of (and perhaps need to feel superior to) people who don't look like you, or speak your language as well as you do, or worship God in quite the same way as you do, or seek to marry partners of the same gender as you do.

To return momentarily to the culmination of the aforementioned Pluto cycle, the signature of retrograde Mercury in Cancer in tight opposition to retrograde Pluto in Capricorn suggests to this astrologer quite a number of these problematic expressions. It suggests, for instance, an unhealthily paranoid way of seeing the world – and a tendency to see vast conspiracies where more clear-thinking observers only see autonomous actors. It suggests a people who tend to see powerful institutions as being profoundly dangerous – even if they are the de-facto directors of said institutions, especially in the modern era, with the power every two, four, and six years to utterly change the leadership of those institutions without having to so much as even think about loading a weapon. It suggests a people overly suspicious of immigrants – and any idea that didn't begin here in America (as if the Founding Fathers had never read and been influenced by foreigners like Locke, Montesquieu, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Tacitus, and Cicero). Finally, it suggests a mythology likely to be overly focused on fear, violence, and a need to prepare for some apocalyptic turn in history – and, thus, to be armed to the teeth – even if it means other people dying in order to enable our perpetual addiction to ever more numerous and powerful weapons.

To be healthily skeptical of government, or indeed anyone or any institution likely promising more than they can or should deliver, is a good thing. It suggests a critical thinking person – and I would that argue that critical thinking is the highest expression of a perfectly functioning Mercury opposition Pluto. But to be perpetually in search of alternative explanations of events, in order to fulfill one's preconceived suspicions of either an institution or your political opponents, is not critical thinking. It's simply paranoia – and it's again driving this nation to the brink of madness, if not disunion. One can only pray that Pluto's eventual return to its natal place, in the decade yet to come, will be accompanied by a miraculous upgrade in our collective mode of perception – inasmuch as Americans could likely never afford to pay for the many years of individual, group, and collective psychotherapy it would ordinarily take to correct this type thinking.

Returning again to exploration of this culminating Neptune cycle, its last passage through Pisces (1847-1861) was a remarkable one, in so many areas – in music, literature, science, and progressive political thought. We should be proud that the thought of an American of this era, Henry David Thoreau, has had such a lasting impact on the way we live and fight today. For it was Thoreau's vision of non-violent non-cooperation, in *Civil Disobedience*, published in the dawning years of Neptune's last passage through Pisces, which profoundly influenced the strategy that Mohandas Gandhi would

successfully employ, first in the liberation of his countrymen in South Africa, and later in the liberation of his native country from the yoke of British Imperialism. And it was that same vision that would inform the strategy that Dr. Martin Luther King would employ in the deliverance of African Americans from the bondage of the Jim Crow South. Thoreau gave us a method for fighting those great battles that need be fought – but need not become violent.

Thus, if we are truly compelled to fight a second Civil War, then let us fight it in the resurrected spirit of Neptune in Pisces. For our opponents in this battle, however much we might disagree with them, are not bloodthirsty Nazis, Stalinists, or Maoists – but other Americans, a majority of whom are disciples of Jesus, an advocate of non-violence. And if we must fight, then let both sides mutually pledge to never speak of puerile “Second Amendment remedies”, to never return to the ways of “the killer angels”; and to make our ultimate goal, not victory, but mutual enlightenment. For Nature’s God, the Enlightenment-era conception of the Deity that Jefferson invokes in his *Declaration*, the *Declaration* which the blood of a martyred Abraham Lincoln ultimately sanctified – and the conception of God that this contemporary Deist argues works specifically through the unfolding of planetary cycles – may indeed be watching.

Lincoln concludes his remarks at Gettysburg with these immortal words:

“It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

Lincoln’s luminous words at the dawn of our current Neptune cycle, now entering its climactic phase, encapsulate for me what this entire 164 year traversal has been about. The previous universal cycle climaxed with a Russian Czar emancipating his serfs and Confederate forces initiating a conflict that would inadvertently lead to the emancipation of America’s slaves; and in the years since Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, the spirit of participatory democracy has spread to every corner of the earth. It is this spirit that we need defend in the battle to come. For Lincoln did not speak of a government of the multi-national corporations, by the heirs to family fortunes, for the investor class of the planet - but rather, of a “government of the people, by the people, for the people”. If we can each, in our own way, rise to meet the spiritual and intellectual challenge of these extraordinary times, then we can have a government capable of meeting the multitude of challenges that our great nation faces in the decades to come – not the least of which is standing toe-to-toe with multi-national behemoths and master-of-the-universe types, some fully intent on turning the American people into the modern day equivalent of serfs, and compelling them to behave.

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

– Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863

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Chart wheels produced in Cosmic Patterns **Kepler 7.0**.

For more on the cosmic weather impelling our times, see:

Take Care of This House – <http://hpleft.com/010412.pdf>

A Brief Look Forward – <http://hpleft.com/120307.html>

Size Matters – <http://hpleft.com/040810.html>

America at a Crossroads – <http://hpleft.com/090809.html>

Beginning of the End or End of the Beginning – <http://hpleft.com/012608.html>

“Protestant Wave” – <http://hpleft.com/020212.pdf>

A Bubble in Time – <http://hpleft.com/040303.html>

Winning the War for Hearts and Minds – <http://hpleft.com/110603.html>

The Bush Presidency: Storm Clouds at High Noon – <http://hpleft.com/highnoon.html>

About Matthew Carnicelli

Matthew Carnicelli became a political activist in response to 9-11.

"As I watched American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175 crash into the World Trade Center's twin towers, I was overcome by a sense of dread. I feared that the planet was in danger of being overrun by yet another wave of collective insanity. I groped for a few days for something that I could do that might make a meaningful difference; and after the initial shock and numbness had worn off, I began to write."

A native New Yorker and experienced practitioner in the personal growth field, Matt quickly came to the conclusion that the President's way of thinking about the world was nearly as dangerous as the people he was trying to stop.

"The world changed for all of us on September 11th in ways that Bush clearly didn't understand. If God can still be said to exist, then He, She or It must be beyond all human understanding – even that of an American President."

As Matt saw it, the war against al Qaeda was, above all, a war of ideas. It could only be won if the United States continued to maintain the intellectual high ground with regard to world opinion – and, hence, crippled the terrorists' ability to further recruit or fundraise. Thus, the post-9/11 era ushered in a time when critical thinking, sensible strategy, and a return to an old fashioned American skepticism about the ability of any one person or branch of government to know the right way, would be required to once again make the nation safe and secure.

Although still a political novice, he became an early supporter of John Kerry, and one of a small group of committed online activists who would continue to ferociously argue his case long after the pundits had left the Massachusetts Senator's candidacy for dead. He was later asked to become a formal volunteer for the online campaign and worked as a moderator on the campaign's blog through the November 2004 election.

Matt considers himself a contemporary Deist and representative of an emerging "secular and spiritual" movement in American politics. This is a segment of the American electorate that is redefining the definition of spiritual in America.

"The Founders and Framers were products of the Enlightenment. They were freethinkers in every sense of the word, committed to the search for truth wherever it might lead. They weren't perfect, and didn't always live up to their ideals. But as human beings go, they were pretty darn remarkable – especially for their time."

"I see myself as also being the product of an Enlightenment tradition – but a twenty-first century, cross-cultural, spiritually-informed Enlightenment tradition, rather than a purely Western intellectual one. The search for truth, even the truth of God, cannot possibly be limited to a single tradition or approach."

"Some people will find God while practicing an organized religion. Some encounter Him while practicing yoga or Qi Gong. Others will experience Her through the study of comparative religion. Still others will glimpse It through a synthesis of the discoveries of evolutionary biology and modern physics. And some will experience their connection to a living, breathing cosmos through a descent into the psyche and embrace of their wholeness and essential humanity."

According to Matt, *"pluralism isn't just an ideal in America, or around the world; it's already a reality. And people who have a problem with pluralism ultimately have a problem with everything the Founders and Framers set out to create."*

This era of conservative backlash has been a trying time for anyone who believes in the virtues of modernity, and the embrace of a sustainable, stable human future. But in the spirit of John Adams and Thomas Paine, Matt urges commitment rather than surrender or appeasement.

"It's time that men and women of conscience, faith, and spirit stopped playing defense, and began taking the fight to the enemies of human freedom and human potential, be they foreign or domestic, political or theological."

Matt's principal role models for political leadership – Mohandas Gandhi, Winston Churchill, and John Adams – mirror his eclectic approach. Refusing to blindly accept anyone's ideology, Matt adheres to Gandhi's tenet that truth exists on all sides of every issue. Consequently, the ideal solution to a conflict will not so much reflect a compromise between the competing sides' positions as an entirely new synthesis that incorporates the fundamental principles that actually motivate each at a core level. He believes that the most efficient approach to moving forward as a nation, and as a species, will inevitably incorporate an appeal to the human center – those core experiences and values which men and women of good will readily acknowledge regardless of race, color, sexual orientation, or creed.

Matt was a founding member of the Democracy Cell Project (an IRS-approved 501C3 spinoff of the Kerry 2004 online campaign), for whom he wrote a Sunday morning column entitled *The Tao of Politics*, in which he explored the intersection of religion, spirituality, and politics. When not digging ever deeper into the cycles of history and the foundations of comparative religion, he is at work on his first two books, ***What God Tells Me: The Confession of a 21st Century American Deist*** and ***The Spiritual Template of America: A Self Help Book for Our National Life***.