

Stars and Stripes - The Astrological Character of a Nation

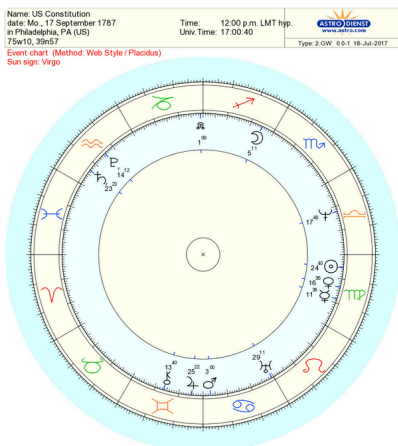
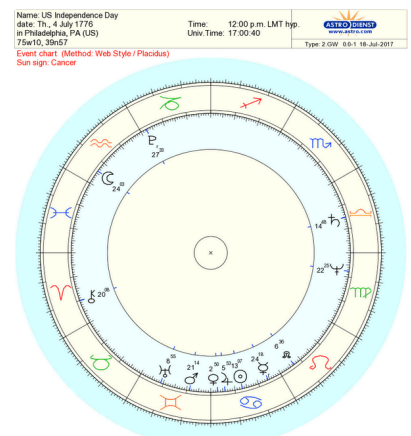
by Adam Hamilton



Horary astrology is the approach of drawing a chart for the moment a question is asked in order to divine the answer, while natal astrology is the drawing of a chart for a moment a person is born in order to divine their character. Despite their manifest differences, Dane Rudhyar, in *Astrology of Personality*, pointed out that horary astrology is fundamentally and philosophically no different from natal astrology: Horary astrology is charting the birth of a thought, while natal astrology is answering out the question of a life.

What then of mundane or political astrology – the astrology of politics and nations? By charting the birth of a people and its government, we can hopefully divine the character of a nation and answer the problems which face it, especially in these troubling times.

In the history of the United States, two dates loom large as the birth moments of the country. Most obviously is July 4, 1776, the date in which the leaders came together to shrug off the oppressive bonds of their parent nation, and which is celebrated annually as the nation's birth. More esoterically, but no less and possibly more important, is Sept 17, 1787, the date of the ratification of the United States Constitution: the moment when the people conglomerated their several powers and created a unified government. Both dates have stelliums in their respective Sun signs – Jupiter, Venus and Mercury with the Sun in Cancer on Independence Day and Venus and Mercury with Sun in Virgo at the ratification of the Constitution.



More importantly – and so distinct that one almost suspects the forefathers of astrological forecasting – is the Grand Trine in air signs on both dates. A Grand Trine is a rare astrological formation where at least three planets in three separate signs, usually of the same element, form a great equilateral triangle on the ecliptic. Each planet in the Grand Trine is in an angle of 120 degrees to each other, inducing a blending and strengthening of each planet's respective energies. At that particular astrological moment there is a great influx of energy, channeling the planetary influences and zodiacal elements in which they fall. Persons born under Grand Trines have distinctive, passionate, and excessive personalities (for example, Grand Trines in air signs mark the natal charts of Mashall "Eminem" Mathers, Oprah Winfrey, and H. P. Lovecraft – innovators of language, art, and media, all three). In the United States'

case, on July 4, 1776, the Moon was in Aquarius, trine (or in 120 degree aspect to) Uranus and Mars conjunct in Gemini, and trine Saturn exalted in Libra. By Sept 17, 1787, Saturn had moved to Aquarius conjunct Pluto, was trine to Neptune in Libra, and Jupiter was in Gemini, in wide conjunction to Mars in Cancer.

What does this all mean? Following Rudhyar's suggestion, there are two approaches to looking at these dates: the problem of the moment, and the birth of a character. Regarding the stellium in Cancer on July 4, 1776, Jupiter in the same sign as the Sun, Mercury and Venus is decidedly auspicious with Jupiter exalted. Sending a document to one's oppressor is an extremely decisive move, and exercising that task with a stellium in cardinal Cancer punctuates the decision. However, Cancer natives tend to hide their language with humor and take sideways, defensive tactics for fear of being vulnerable, and only issue direct injunctions to others after they have wrestled with an idea and even talked about it with friends. However, if they do declare something directly, it is with the effort and armor to win the confrontation. Fittingly, the colonies' declaration of independence only came after pondering and considering amongst each other for years, and after they had assured themselves that resources were sufficient for a victory

against Mother Britain. Nevertheless, Venus indicates a placement of value on the emotions, and independence was certainly what they felt they wanted, and the feeling oppressed spurred the revolution, rather than a rational deduction, a fiery blaze of rebellion, or an earthy demand for needs.

The stellium in Cancer is both fortuitous and detrimental when it comes to the birth of the character of the American people. When it comes to political behavior, Americans are decidedly sentimental – political scientists predict voting behavior not based on citizens' needs and rational interests, but on their family relationships, traditions, associations with friends, etc. In other words, the stellium in Cancer marks indelibly our political behavior as Americans, with Cancerian values of friendship, loyalty, and trust being better predictors of voting behavior than practical needs, self-interest, or rationality. Jupiter in Cancer means that the nation, as a whole, is lucky – both in the endeavor begun on July 4, 1776 as a declaration of war, and as the birth of a nation that is fortunate on the whole. The United States tends to win almost every major political conflict it enters, and when losses are breached, they are not losses of territory so much as losses of face and pride, as in the Vietnam War. The American people are decidedly patriotic – a trait that Llewellyn George notes is prevalent with Jupiter in Cancer, due no doubt to a confidence and trust in paternalistic loyalties. However, that Americans channel their Jupiter energy at the expense of Saturn is evident in Americans' marked obesity, a trait that occurs whenever individuals channel their Jupiter energy to an extreme. This may be the physical manifestation of excessive pride, as is visible in Americans' exceptionalism.



The Grand Trine in air signs also characterizes the American people and the historical moment. Freedom of the press and freedom of speech generally is something that citizens of the United States prize desperately, and this is evident in Uranus's placement in Gemini, sign of interpersonal communication. More so than other countries which have similar Western values, the United States rarely sanctions certain types of volatile speech which can be offensive or hurtful or simply false – something bombastic Uranus conjunct volatile Mars in Gemini clearly indicates. When we consider the problem of the moment, however, Uranus is certainly the planet of rebellion, which the Declaration of Independence embodied, and while many revolutions begin with a violent act, indicated by the element fire, the United States revolutionary period kicks off with a declarative text. Mars, following Stephen Arroyo, indicates psychologically the way in which a native gets what he or she wants, and the element of that sign placement identifies the energies that most stimulate the native's ambition. How better to enact your rebellion (Uranus conjunct Mars) than by sending a letter (Gemini)?

The rebellious, rational Moon in Aquarius offsets the at times sentimental, though more decisive stellium in Cancer. The trine to Saturn in Libra, furthermore, blends with the Moon and makes the American character one that is obsessed with industry, hard work, and pulling oneself up by one's boot straps. Psychologically, self-made men and women often have Sun/Saturn or Moon/Saturn aspects, and the Moon/Saturn trine in Libra and Aquarius speaks to the United States' centuries-long tradition of strict adherence to this particular, individualistic value. Of course, the Grand Trine in Air signs speaks to the importance of rationality, intellect and communication, not compassion and sympathy as a stellium in Cancer could otherwise indicate. Instead, we see the harsher side of Cancer with the United States' development over the centuries: a fearfulness of being vulnerable, isolationist behavior except in the greatest extremes, and often times an extension of ostensible humanitarian aid which is ultimately connected to ulterior motives and self-serving ends. As I tell my Cancer native clients, the capacity for sympathy and empathy is quite great, but first the native must develop past the irrational fear of being hurt in order to recognize their own developmental nurturing power. Hopefully the United States, which is still a young country, can learn that lesson.

The birth of the American Government, however, in contrast to the character of the American people, occurred on Sept 17, 1787, and the auspicious elements of this natal chart bear considerable foreboding as well. At first, we see the stellium in Virgo, and we might hope that the governmental apparatus of the country would remember that the government is supposed to serve. If astrologers were involved in the ratification of the Constitution, this may well have been their intention. However, the ugly sides of Virgo – pedantic attention to detail, indecision, and over-organization are also things which have marred the United States' governmental process. We need only look to the problems with legislation (tax codes and



the ACA being literally thousands of pages) to see Venus and Mercury in Virgo run amuck in our government. Nevertheless, the problem of the moment was probably begun with the ratifiers' good intentions – as aspirational Moon in Sagittarius would indicate, despite this detrimental outcome.

On Sept 17, 1787 Saturn was transiting the natal Moon (that is, the Independence Day 1776 Moon) at 23Aquarius23 and 24Aquarius03, respectively. The rebellion symbolized by the emotional foundation of July 4, 1776 had by then

transformed into the restricting, structuring and limiting need of a new government (Saturn conjunct Pluto in Aquarius). According to Dane Rudhyar, the Sabian symbol for 24 degrees Aquarius is "Utilization of experience and passion by the intelligence that remains un-involved. Self-conquering. Genuine dispassion." All the exuberance of the rebellion had died away, and it was time in September 1787 to look at what they had accomplished rationally, and put to forward a rubric for governing the people of the United States in the centuries to come. Yet Saturn/Pluto in Aquarius is trine Neptune in Libra, transiting the natal Saturn at 14Libra48 earlier that year. The spirit of tenuous and respectful partnership between the separate colonies in 1776 (Saturn in Libra) transformed, through the ratification of the constitution, into a federalism that dissolved and further unified the separate states into what would become one great conglomerate nation (Neptune in Libra transiting natal Saturn). During the time after Neptune's transit of Saturn in 1787 and 1788, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison wrote and circulated *The Federalist*, advocating for the unification of the states into one nation after their successful rebellion, rather than a republic of effectually separate states. Jupiter in Gemini at the ratification of the Constitution no doubt spurred on Hamilton, Jay, and Madison in their ambitious writing project. However, just as poignantly, Mars in Cancer conjunct Jupiter would indicate that a sideways, tactful maneuver might color their decision: Hamilton, Jay and Madison all wrote under a pseudonym, 'Publius', intended to spark and inspire all the more loyalty for the new government.

Using astrology and transits, we can see how powerful the moments chosen by the Fore Fathers were in shaping the character of the United States. However, because of the nature of astrological moments, we today are still dealing with the astrological baggage of July 4, 1776 and September 17, 1787. Regarding Independence Day, it might be that Saturn exalted in Libra has made the American public mind too focused on those who have entered into partnership with us (the Fifty States, the European West), to the detriment of those whom we have not included (the Global South). The struggles of individual persons to

naturalize or even emigrate to the United States at all speaks of the ugly side of the partnership made between states, to the exclusion of territories and foreigners. On the other hand, there is potential for us as a nation to tap into the humanitarian side of our Aquarius moon (rather than the emotionally detached and obstinate aspects of the sign) and open up our Cancerian arms to foreigners and those that need us, rather than being fearful. Regarding the ratification, it seems all too easy for us to see the strengths and weaknesses of the chart – the over-emphasis on heady bureaucracy and adaptation, to the detriment of effective service and self-sacrifice. Maybe by channeling the Jupiter/Neptune trine in happy Gemini and balanced, equitable Libra we may be able to attract subliminally the things that would most help our country through kind words (Jupiter in Gemini) and just laws which are more accepting of others (Neptune in Libra). Otherwise, it may be that we as a nation will tap into the more detrimental sides of the trine: that Jupiter in Gemini may indicate superficiality and excess, and that Neptune in Libra may indicate our own self-undoing.

