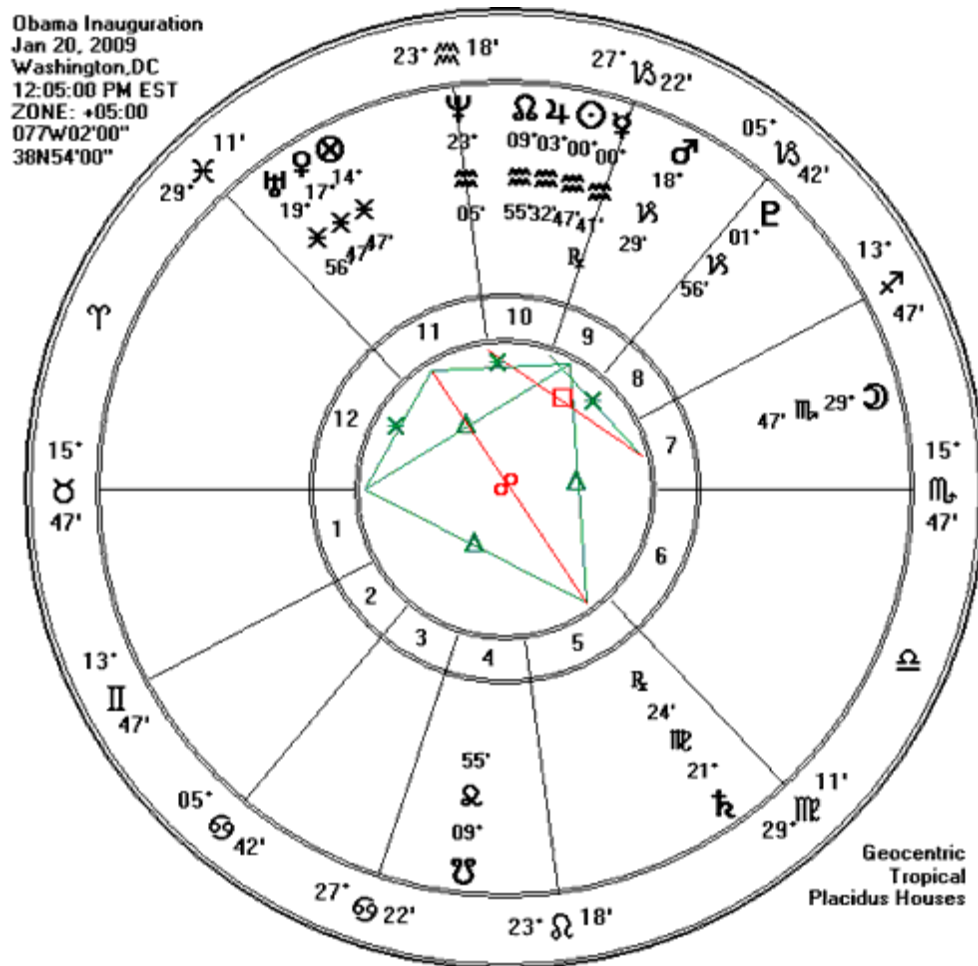


THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

By

PENNY THORNTON

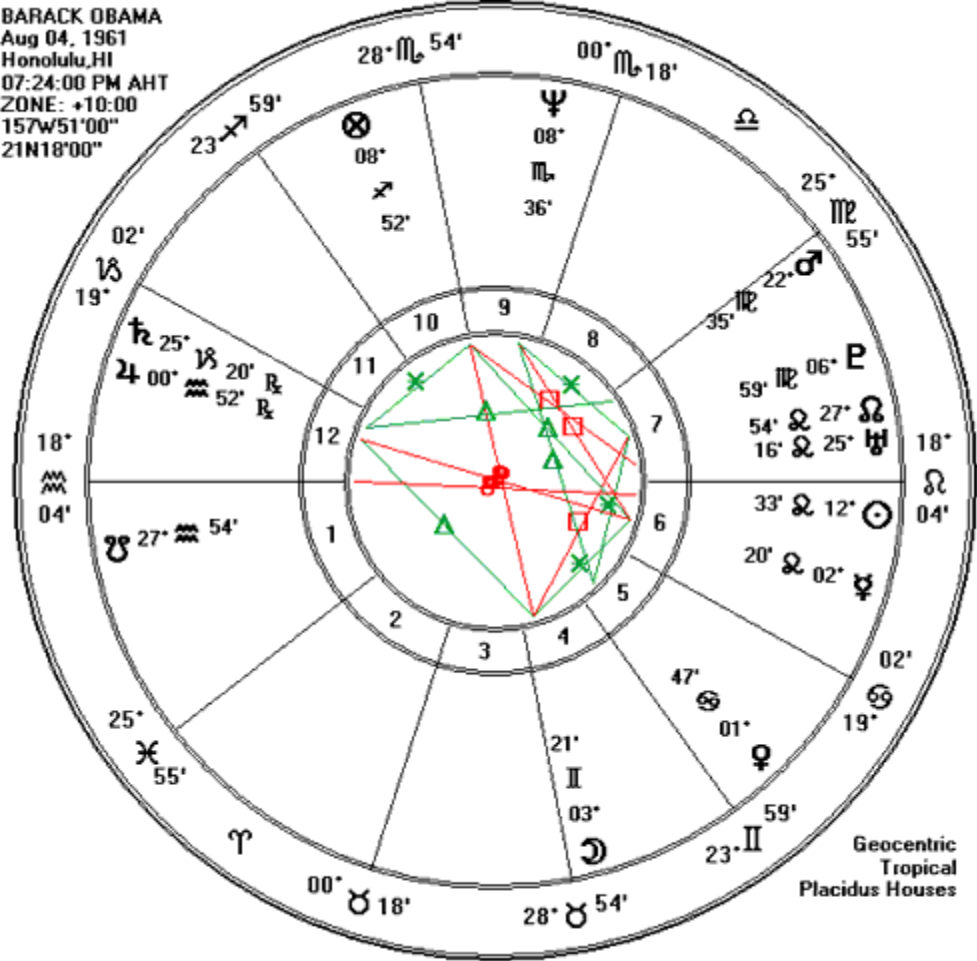
A new era for the United States of America began on 20th January 2009 when Barack Obama was sworn in as America's forty-fourth president. In keeping with his Aquarius-rising spirit President Obama promised to meet the demands of a New Age and to right the wrongs of the previous administration.



This articulate, sometimes eloquent, president (moon in Gemini *trine* Jupiter in Aquarius and *sextile* Mercury in Leo) described the times as those of 'gathering clouds and raging storms', in so doing echoing Winston Churchill's famous words during World War II. He urged Americans to rebuild their shattered spirit and chided them for 'our collective inability to make hard choices'. And however charming and measured his manner no one should doubt the fierce resolve of a man with seven planets and points in Fixed signs.

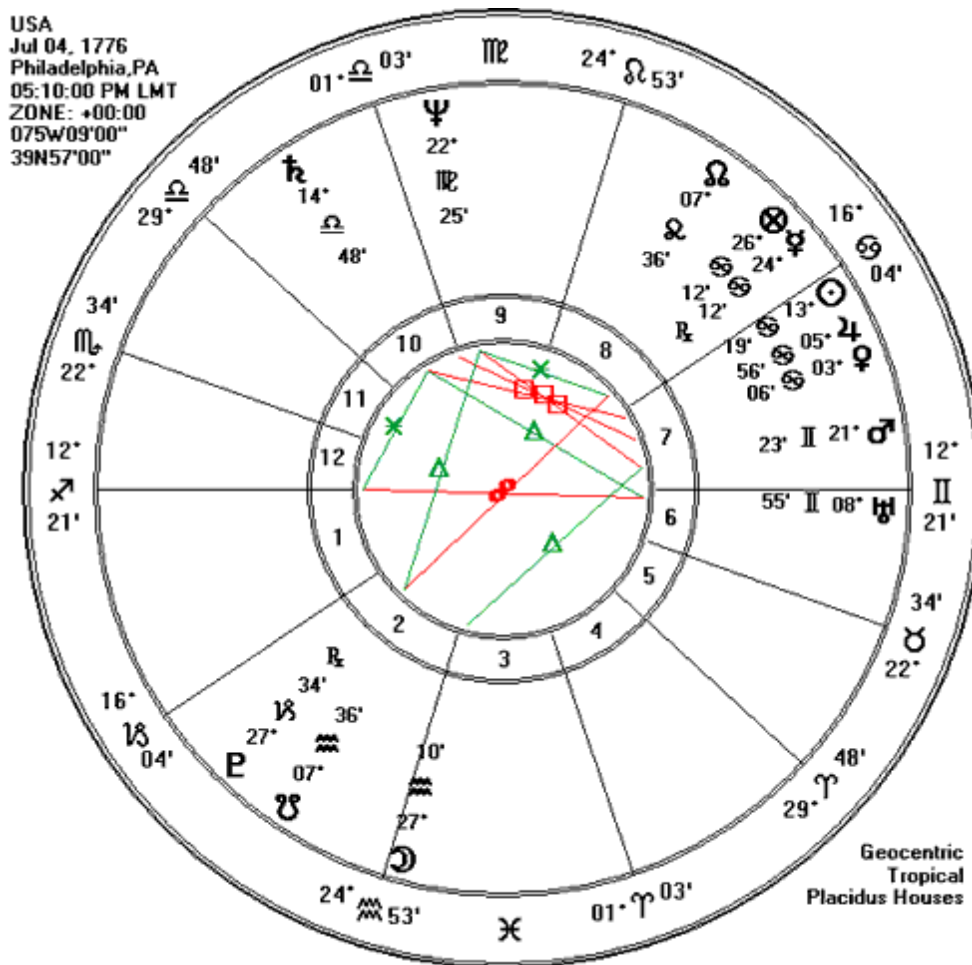
The day was joyous and reminiscent of a Royal Wedding, but not quite a Coronation, and it was hard not to believe that the US was not on its way back to former glory.

(Apologies for the double negative.) Yet one glance at the chart of that moment – 12hrs



05 on a freezing Capitol Hill - throws some doubt on the effectiveness of this administration and the fulfilment of these early promises.

For a start, the swearing of the oath was flubbed: Obama came in too early then the Chief Justice, John Roberts, put the word faithfully in the wrong place causing the almost-



president to fluff his response. The result of this Mercury-retrograde blip was a second oath-taking (this time sans bible) the following day at 19hrs 35 in the privacy of The White House. Astrologers will always have to bear both these charts in mind, although I am sure virtually all of us will feel the horoscope of the 20th carries more weight. Mercury is, of course, retrograde but this serves a useful purpose in that this

administration has a brief to 'restore the trust between the people and its government' and 'return to the old truths... and launch a new era of responsibility'. Also, Mercury is precisely conjunct the sun, which is in turn conjunct Jupiter – a very fortunate and protective aspect, guaranteeing more than a degree of success and certainly a restored image in the eyes of the world. Plus, this triple conjunction falls on Obama's natal Jupiter; in other words, he became President of the United States on his Jupiter return – a most impressive omen. But it's not the retrograde Mercury that is at issue in this chart, this moment in time, it is the void-of-course moon.

When the moon can make no further aspects to any planet or point in a horoscope before it changes sign it reveals a lack of integration and may deny all manner of otherwise positive influences in a chart. At best Obama may keep running into roadblocks when he tries to put major, even minor, strategies in motion but at worst he may not complete his term of office. To add to the complexity, the moon falls on the all-critical 29th degree of Scorpio. Nonetheless, these signs of incompleteness are offset to a degree by Obama's natal Mid-heaven at 28° Scorpio – an indication, perhaps, that his heart and soul are in this presidency and his finger will be on every button, so to speak.

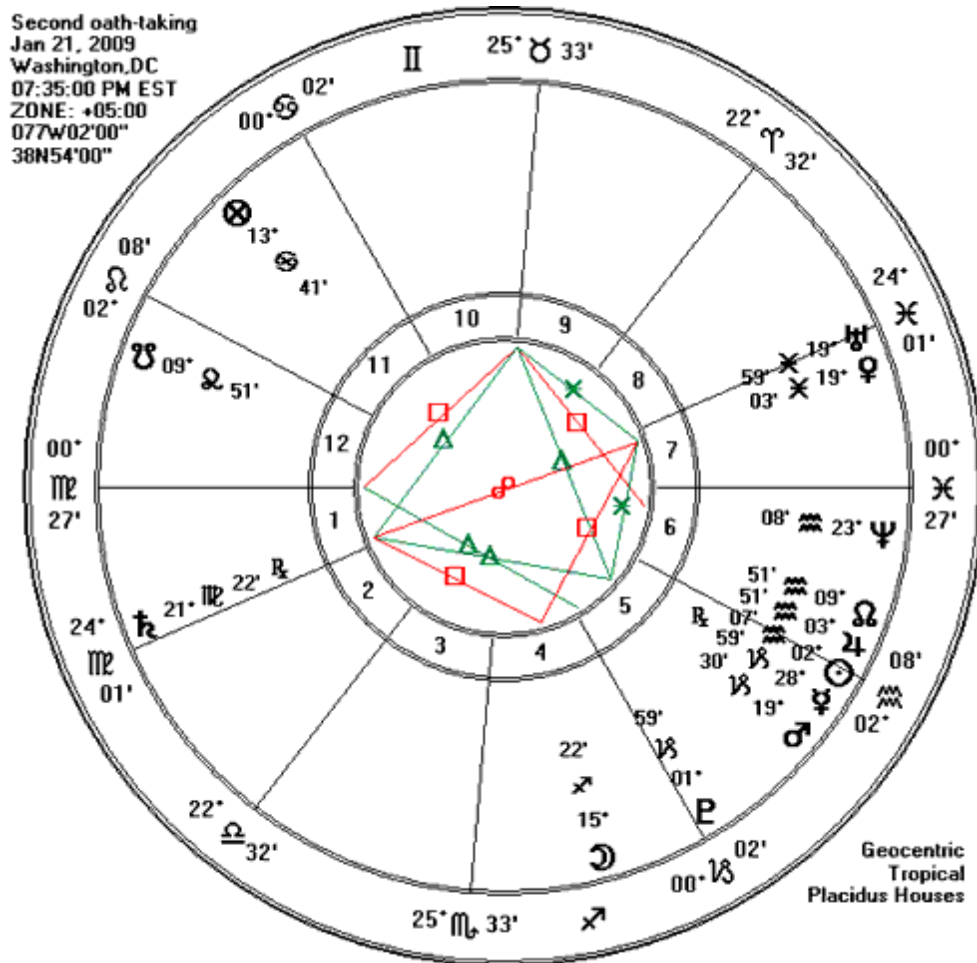
As we might imagine, the Plutonic theme of regeneration and retribution is strong in this inauguration chart: The Mid-heaven at 27° Capricorn is the USA's Pluto, the moon in the Pluto-ruled sign of Scorpio *sextiles* that Mid-heaven and Pluto at 1° Capricorn falls in its natural house, the eighth, and is in turn opposing the president's natal Venus. Thus, a huge amount of restoration and transformation will take place in the coming weeks and months and those who have erred will be held accountable for their crimes, whether they

be generals, attorney-generals or even presidents and vice-presidents... I believe also that despite Obama's open-handed attitude to the Arab world he'll take up arms against an enemy that shows its hand. 'There is no choice between the nation's safety and its ideals...' [The doubters] '... have forgotten what this country has already done, what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose and necessity to courage.'

The spirit of the day was somewhat marred by Senator Edward Kennedy's collapse during the ceremony. Fortunately, it turned out his seizure was a result of fatigue but nonetheless synchronicities cannot be ignored: this administration will not be without its upsets and controversies. Here we may need to cite the proximity of Venus (the chart ruler) to the Uranus-Saturn opposition. This difficult aspect is the main signatory on the global economic downturn, which I recognize is an understatement, and it may turn out to be Obama's Waterloo. Just how well his policies work in restoring faith in banks and within the banking world remains to be seen, and sooner than we might think. His phrase, this winter of our hardship, can be summed up in this one aspect.

The ascending degree of the first oath-taking, 15 Taurus, does not figure significantly in the US chart or that of Obama, but it produces an interesting image as far as the Sabian Symbols go: *An old man is attempting with a degree of success unsuspected by him to reveal the mysteries to a motley group.* Perhaps this image reinforces the idea that Obama in the pursuit of restoring 'old truths' and real values will succeed, and that the stated intention of this administration to make government more transparent will turn out to be its hallmark. (And who might that *motley group* be? Congress?) On the other hand,

if we look at the Sabian symbol for the second oath-taking ceremony - 1° Virgo: *A man's head is revealed; it is a portrait in which the artist has sought to idealize the best of human character* - this provides hope that we do indeed have the best of men in President Obama.



The horoscope of the second swearing-in is far less powerful, however. We lose the brilliant triple conjunction on the Mid-heaven and find it tucked away in the service-oriented sixth house. The sole angular planet becomes Neptune – on the Ascendant-Descendant axis – which does reflect the promotion of ideals and God calling on the American people to shape an uncertain destiny but it also produces an aura of loss and

lack of direction. There is a gain in the fact that the moon is no longer void-of-course and placed in optimistic, generous-spirited Sagittarius but at 15° of the sign it forms the apex of a 'T-square' involving Venus and the Uranus-Saturn opposition, thus the winter of hardship becomes ever more icy and the likelihood of crises of one description or another ever more imminent and recurrent.

Nevertheless, Obama is the Great White Hope (no pun intended) for the American people. He has taken office at a time when the country is at its lowest ebb, a time when the US has fallen so low under the gaze of the rest of the world that it needs the equivalent of a crash-cart and a team of first rate physicians to resurrect it. And I have hope in Obama, even though these charts provide little foundation for it. Maybe in time to come I will see my reservations reduced to mere dots on a page and Obama will march victoriously through two terms of office. I have to believe in the triumph of hope over horoscopes.

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But we're not quite finished with the Saturn-Uranus opposition...

This inauguration chart is dominated by a Kite formation – a powerful pattern generated by a Grand Trine (Ascendant *trine* Mars *trine* Saturn) and an opposition (Saturn versus Uranus and Venus) – these latter planets *sextiling* Mars, on the one hand, and the Ascendant on the other. A Grand Trine lends a certain grace and harmony to the chart, something we can already see in the speed and ease with which Obama is setting in motion his reformation, while the spiky opposition adds grit and adversity to the mix. Indeed it is the the very challenge of this opposition that releases the good fortune inherent in the Grand Trine. [There is no limit to] '*... what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose and necessity to courage.*'