

The War Within: The Trump Presidency, 2017-2021

By Matthew Carnicelli, Human Potential Left



There are wars in life that we cannot avoid, and wars that we do well to avoid. Some of these wars must be won with weapons and others can only won with the steadying of the breath, mind, and heart. Men and women incapable or uncomfortable with the latter are invariably the primary instigators of the former, of the wars that for millennia have needlessly laid our civilizations to waste. As fate would have it, on November 8, 2016, the increasingly unhinged passions of us all, aided by the convoluted electoral system mandated by our ancient constitution, set into motion a crisis unlike any we have known in over 150 years. If we hope survive this crisis intact “we the people of the United States” will surely require every ounce of emotional equilibrium, sound political thinking, blessed historical memory, and prescient vision that we can collectively muster.

Introduction

American presidents in the modern era take the Oath of Office on the 20th day of January, at approximately 12:00 noon. It is the considered opinion of this research astrologer that a chart set for this precise moment in time tends to roughly describe the tenor of the incoming administration and the nature of the challenges and opportunities that it will be asked to confront or embrace.

A chart set for noon on January 20th, 2017 strongly suggests that the emotions of the American people during this four-year period are likely to be dramatically inflamed, much like they were from 1861 to 1865, the last four-year period within which the aspect-angular configuration between Moon and Mars in our current inaugural moment was last present. This is not to suggest that the previous manifestation of 1861-65 is inevitable, but only that the cosmic setup is eerily similar - and that these inflamed passions will thus need to be contained, defused, redirected, or transformed in one fashion or another, lest another ruinous conflagration erupt.

The parallels between 1861 and 2017 are increasingly eerie. As I documented in my January 2013 inaugural essay, [“Of the People, by the People, for the People”](#), Americans have been collectively repeating a pattern in inaugural moments last experienced from 1857 through 1871. This was a period that witnessed a rise in irreconcilable sectional tensions, the outbreak, culmination, and conclusion of a bloody civil war, the passage of three amendments to the United States Constitution, and the imposition of Congressional Reconstruction on the defeated former Confederate states.

While many Americans assume that the Civil War began over the issue of slavery, the fact is that the crisis only commenced once seven southern states concluded that a President-elect was unacceptable, and that his mere election warranted their secession from the Union. As a country with four planets in the zodiacal sign of Cancer, the phase of the tropical zodiac emphasizing Union, family, collective intimacy, and “mystic chords of memory”, a declaration of secession will likely always feel like a stake driven through the heart, and thus a cause for war. Four additional states joined this original seven in rebellion once Abraham Lincoln attempted to reassert Federal control over the seceding states. In the author’s opinion, had these slave-holding states simply accepted Lincoln’s legitimacy as President – and recognized that he was not threatening any meaningful attempt at ending slavery, only promising to promote legislation to restrict its spread to the territories – it is likely that the Civil War would not have been fought, at least during the period of 1861-1865, with the ultimate resolution of the slavery question tabled for another day. And make no mistake: had both the requisite will and consciousness been present in 1861, the funds expended fighting this ruinous war could have easily have been redirected toward a settlement of the slavery question that would rendered all sides whole, and liberty and cultural evolution served.

The presenting setup of 2017 feels more than a little like, to borrow a phrase from Yogi Berra, “dèjà vu all over again.” The primary perception in blue-leaning states – a perception that it is only fair to mention that the author shares – is that Donald Trump is the least qualified, least intellectually prepared, and least temperamentally suited President-elect of the modern era, if not any era in American history. Not only did significantly more Americans vote against him than for him (once one includes the Gary Johnson ‘anyone but Trump’ voters and the Stein supporters) but he also lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by nearly 3 million votes. By any measure of elite opinion, Trump is an unacceptable President. And yet he is President – at least until the House of Representatives sees fit to send a Bill of Impeachment to

the United States Senate, and the Senate chooses to remove him. In contrast, the popular perception in red and purple states, states that pay far less attention to the niceties of elite opinion, and far more to a counter-intuitive (and often remarkably unreliable) folk wisdom, is that Donald Trump is both capable of ‘making America great again’ and fully qualified to serve in the position.

To amplify this tragic civil war analogy further, several governors of large blue states have vowed to oppose any attempt by a Trump-led Federal government to either deport undocumented immigrants within their borders or impose other draconian measures uncongenial to contemporary notions of personal liberty – and if this astrologer is correct in his analysis of the incoming President’s psychological makeup and character, he will seek to impose many such measures.

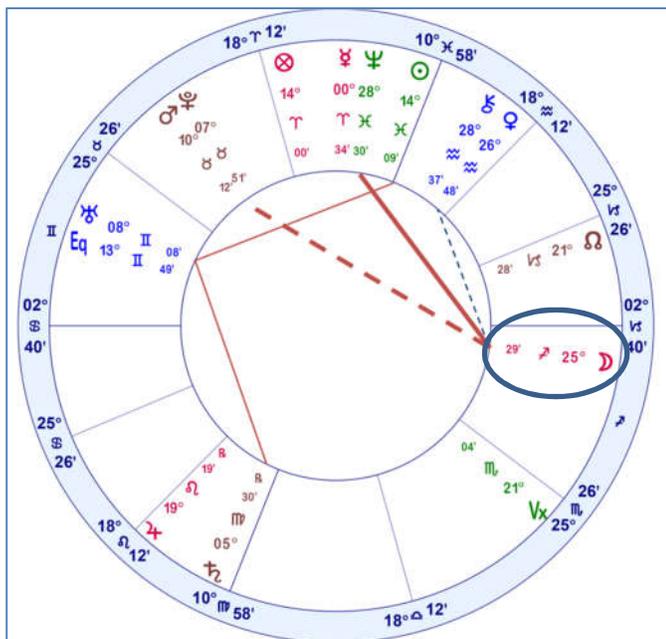
While not all Trump supporters are racists or bigots, a significant percentage of his supporters do appear to endorse a philosophy of either de facto white Protestant supremacy or white separatism – with flags of the defeated and long ago discredited Confederate States of America becoming a consistent symbol at his rallies.

Hence, the ghosts of the American Civil War are clearly with us – and will need to be skillfully exorcised over the next four years if we hope avoid our ancestors’ unhappy fate. And yet we cannot simply flee from war – and, in this astrologer’s opinion, must instead become capable of fighting the right kind of war, a war for the “better angels of our nature”, and for the salvation of a defensible American psyche. Our honored dead of Gettysburg, Omaha Beach, and Philadelphia, Mississippi demand nothing less.

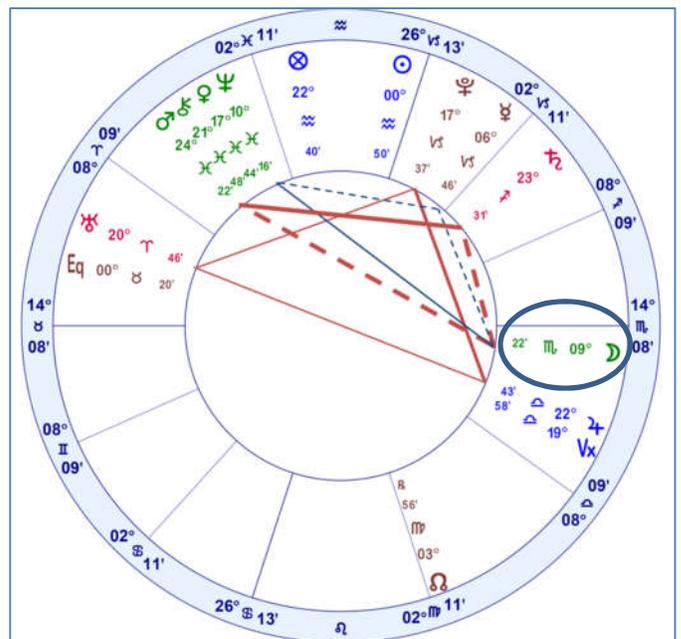
Our fateful inaugural moment

As I referenced in my formal 2013 Inaugural study, [“Of the people”](#) (hereafter referred to as OTP), four year periods in which the Moon in an inaugural chart is angular (that is, for the layman not conversant with astrological jargon, conjunct an angle) are relatively rare, and typically illustrative of a general population heavily involved in the unfolding of events. The Moon in our current inaugural moment is decidedly angular, within 5 degrees of a Scorpio Descendant in any chart set for 12:00 noon on January 20, 2017. It is also tightly aspected – the most prominent of these aspects being the sesquiquadrate (or 135 degree aspect) with Mars, the same exact aspect in precise orb that was present in 1861 (with the Moon also within 5 degrees of the Descendant), but additionally semi-square Saturn, sextile Mercury, and trine Neptune.

Lincoln Inaugural – March 4, 1861, 12:00 pm



Trump Inaugural – January 20, 2017, 12:00 pm



Perhaps the most significant difference between the charts for 1861 and 2017 involves the placement of Uranus, the planet of revolution – whose ‘discovery’ in 1781 roughly preceded George Washington's climatic victory at Yorktown, and this nation’s liberation from Great Britain. On March 20, 1861, Uranus was completing its first 84 year cycle of

national individuation (in other words, forming its first planetary return), and square both Saturn and the Midheaven for this moment – perhaps signifying that the tension between continuity and change had become unbearable, and thus an effort to initiate, in Lincoln’s words, “a new birth of freedom” was intellectually and spiritually consistent with the cosmic symbolism embedded within the US’ archetypal DNA. From 2017 to 2020, however, while Uranus will be impacting the collective cosmic weather, it will not be culminating any individualized cycle within the United States chart – and is hence less likely to impel so dramatic a rift as in 1861.

As originally cited in [“Take Care of this House”](#), my 2012 inaugural preview (hereafter referred to as TCOTH), a ‘hard’⁽¹⁾ Moon-Mars aspect has been present in 18 previous inaugural moments (including the recent 2013 moment that fueled the populist energy behind both the Sanders and Trump campaigns, and climaxed with Trump’s unlikely victory). The presence of this aspect in an inaugural moment 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. Excluding the 2013 instance, the 6 previous 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, the impeachment of Andrew Johnson, and the onset of Congressional Reconstruction), 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, 2017 would be virtually exact, and thus one of the two tightest instances of a Moon-Mars aspect in American history.

The Moon has been both angular and positioned slightly below the Descendant, the same placement as in our current inaugural moment, on three previous occasions, each of them extraordinarily fateful: 1861, 1929, and 1941. The 1929 moment is, of course, associated with the Presidency of Herbert Hoover, and the onset of the Great Depression, and the 1941 moment with FDR and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent US entry into the Second World War. I submit that in each of these moments the passions of the American people had become extraordinarily aroused and engaged.

As also highlighted in my previous inaugural studies, OTP and TCOTH, Moon-Mars aspects also tend to indicate periods when women’s issues are highlighted. This is archetypically appropriate inasmuch as the Moon symbolizes ‘the feminine’ principle in an astrological chart, with the Sun symbolizing ‘the masculine’; and it was during Woodrow Wilson’s two terms in office, both terms that commenced with tight Moon-Mars aspects in the inaugural moments, that the suffragette movement fully gathered steam, with women forcefully demanding and winning the right to vote.

The placement of Moon on the Descendant in Scorpio, sesquiquadrate Mars, semi-square Saturn, sextile Mercury, and trine Neptune, in our incoming inaugural map suggests a stubborn, emotionally-impelled public closely following events in Washington, firmly committed to a struggle for some great religious, spiritual or philosophical goal, and absolutely prepared to “pay any price, bear any burden” to see this goal accomplished. I submit with great sadness that this could easily describe a return to ‘the killer angels’ of that earlier era – although the symbolism could equally describe the non-violent heroism of Mohandas Gandhi’s Satyagraha movement in South Africa and India and Martin Luther King’s Civil Rights movement in America. We have a choice of how this symbolism is enacted during this period – and my advice is that we choose wisely, given the strong likelihood that our President-elect will not.

The Sun in this inaugural moment is essentially unaspected – or, in other words, unconnected to the remainder of the map. As with any 12 noon EST chart, it casts its shadow over everything else – but in this instance without making either challenging or supportive connections. Unaspected Suns in American inaugural moments suggest a Presidency curiously unconnected to the plight of the people – a tendency that makes so much more sense given the numerous accusations of narcissistic personality disorder hurled at Mr. Trump. The closest solar aspect here is a semi-square to Venus, with an orb of 1 degree, 56 minutes – the rough equivalent of a 16 degree conjunction in first harmonic terms (or, in layman’s terms, an extremely remote influence).

Returning to discussion of this aroused and angry inaugural Moon, it is worth noting that its placement on the descendant, in the house of work and service, could easily also come to describe the attitudes and emotions of an economic partner – particularly one traditionally associated with the sign of Cancer (for the layman, the sign that rules the Moon), like China. Seen through the lens of relocational astrology, I note that this inaugural Moon projects along the east coast of The People’s Republic of China, specifically through Beijing, Shanghai, as well as through North Korea.

This lunar placement in East Asia, in virtually exact aspect to Inaugural Mars, mirrors a feature of Trump's relocated chart for China.

2017 Inaugural moment Moon, Mars, Saturn & Pluto lines for Europe and Asia



Ever since the ground-breaking studies of Jim Lewis, astrologers have understood that the countries through which a President's 'Mars lines' run tend to be places where they express their aggression, through the insertion of American troops, via covert action, through the imposition of tariffs, or some other demonstration of national might⁽²⁾. In Trump's case, the fact that his personal Mars line runs roughly through the same geographical area as inaugural Moon suggests that his threats against China are more than mere posturing, and likely reflect an actual animosity within his psyche for this emerging superpower. It further suggests a possibility, especially when coupled with this inaugural Moon, of the projection of American military might into the region – perhaps in response to some provocation by Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader of North Korea. While the Chinese apparently remain wary of the antics of the Jong-un regime, they are also extremely wary of South Korean consolidation in the aftermath of a North Korean collapse, and the prospect of an American ally on their southern border. At the very least, these two overlapping lines indicate a serious possibility of a dramatic deterioration in US-Chinese relations over the next four years.

An additional Moon-Mars overlay between inaugural and presidential natal chart is replicated along a long vertical line running from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, the eastern frontier of Poland, western Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Greece, Libya, central Africa, right through to South Africa. This second Moon-Mars alignment would suggest the possibility of President Trump having to confront continued Russian expansionism, perhaps even an attempt to reconstitute the former Soviet Union, while simultaneously having to address continued political instability in Northern Africa and the Middle East. Given Vladimir Putin's strenuous efforts to swing the 2016 election to Mr. Trump, it further suggests an expectation on Putin's behalf that Trump will be a President unlikely to challenge him. However, any effort at Russian appeasement in the Baltic states on Trump's behalf would likely lead to a firestorm within nonpartisan national security circles – as well as throughout the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance – and a bipartisan effort to remove him.

Donald Trump's Moon, Mars, Saturn & Pluto lines in Europe and Asia



Alarmingly, inaugural Mars and Saturn lines come together in the nuclear state of Pakistan, as well Afghanistan, suggesting a likelihood of continuing burdens for the US in the latter country throughout this four year period or new burdens involving the former.

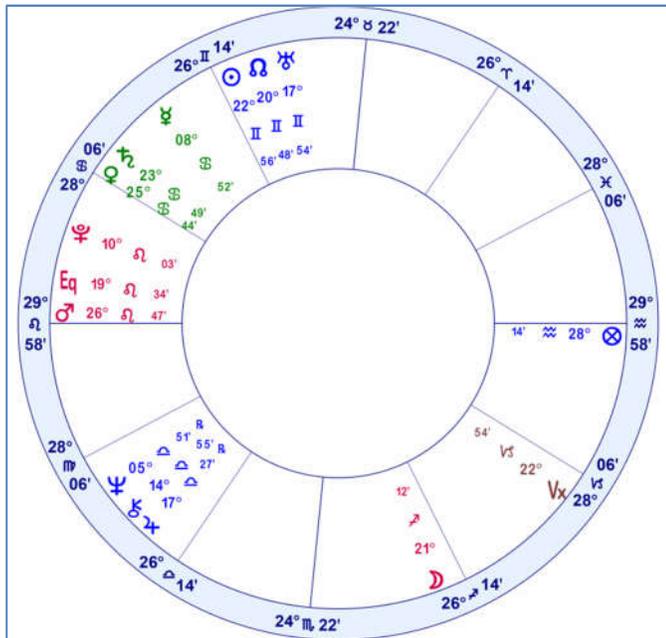
To underscore how volatile the geopolitical situation is likely to become during this presidency, I would further note that Trump's natal Pluto line, a line which mundane astrologers associate with a President's impulse to transform, control, or overthrow, also runs through roughly the same area of Eastern China and North Korea as does this inaugural Moon (and his natal Mars. As a point of reference, I would note that George W. Bush's Pluto line ran directly through Iraq (see my previous Bush inaugural study, "[The Bush Presidency: Storm Clouds at High Noon](#)"), suggesting that an unhealthy obsession with controlling events within Iraq was a determining factor in that President's fateful decision to invade a country not credibly implicated in the 9/11 attack. With Trump's natal Moon, Pluto and Mars running directly through the Pacific Coast of Asia, it suggests a dangerous fixation on China's role in our national economic discontent – a discontent that I would argue is more owed to American corporations eagerness to maximize profits by outsourcing manufacturing jobs to low wage nations than any serious attempt by this Asian superpower to 'steal' them.). Trump's Pluto line also runs through Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and central Europe, lending credence to the view that this President-elect would seek to either weaken or scuttle NATO if it meant placating his likely patron in Russia.

I've made much mention so far of where President Trump's Mars line runs. In understanding his Presidency, it is absolutely essential to note that Trump's Mars is nowhere more prominent than in Washington, DC.

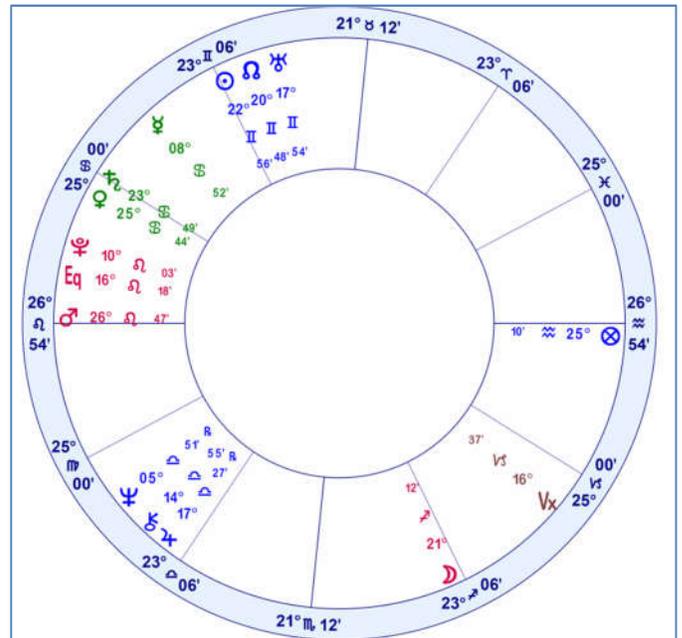
President Trump was born with Mars within three degrees of the ascendant, in Jamaica, NY. This single factor would suggest an extraordinarily combative, aggressive approach to life – a characteristic that anyone who has at all followed his campaign or previous career as real estate developer and reality TV star has observed. This Mars placement also fits the profile of the kind of man who would feel that he has carte blanche to 'manhandle' women – as nearly a dozen women so far have come forward to assert. The volatility suggested by this angular placement of Mars is amplified in Trump's natal chart by an equally volatile, tight Sun-Moon opposition in Gemini – Sagittarius, with the Sun conjunct both Uranus and the North Node. This combination suggests a person given to a perhaps broad yet superficial grasp of the fundamentals of any situation, wild swings in behavior, unpredictability, and a tendency to receive important feedback

only through intense personal confrontations. Furthermore, the Gemini phase in the tropical zodiac, the third phase in a twelve-fold cycle of consciousness, is associated with the archetype of The Twins. The Geminian personality typically displays an obvious duality that a less psychologically conscious individual might have difficulty even acknowledging, much less successfully integrating. This certainly appears to be true in the instance of the President-elect, who routinely projects out onto others those unflattering characteristic that are most characteristic of him. Also, with Mercury square Neptune in his natal chart, Trump has both long exhibited a tendency to treat what most consider indisputable facts as debatable assertions, and to lie on a scale that would make Joe Isuzu⁽³⁾ blush. One cannot know if this is merely a transactional negotiating strategy or evidence of a deep-seeded tendency to prefer a make-believe world to the real one that the rest of us must occupy. Finally, Trump routinely exhibits a persistent need for public adoration, a tendency likely spurred by painful feelings of inferiority, as suggested by his Venus-Saturn conjunction (and Saturn semi-sextile the Sun).

Donald Trump – June 14, 1946, 10:54 am



Donald Trump – Washington, DC relocation

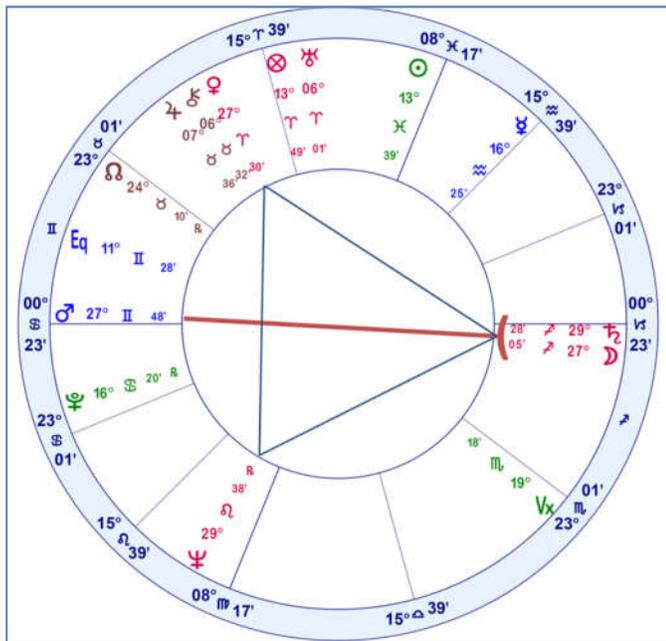


It's essential to note that when Trump's chart is relocated to Washington, DC, this Mars-Ascendant aspect becomes virtually exact – both exponentially intensifying the impact of the configuration, and suggesting that it will color literally every facet of his interactions as President. For instance, it suggests that far from being a domestically-focused President, Trump will seek to powerfully project American military around the world. It suggests that he will be relentless in attacking his perceived political enemies – be they in Congress, the media, or even members of the public. It suggests that he will further encourage the current tendency towards militarization of law enforcement, and order the use of force against disruptive yet peaceful protesters only seeking to express their Constitutional prerogatives. It suggests a reasonable possibility, especially given the overall tenor of this inaugural chart, that he and his allies will not be shy to impose martial law should the opportunity arise. Finally, it suggests a strong likelihood of bellicose rhetoric that will inspire vigilante violence among his more emotionally and spiritually undeveloped supporters.

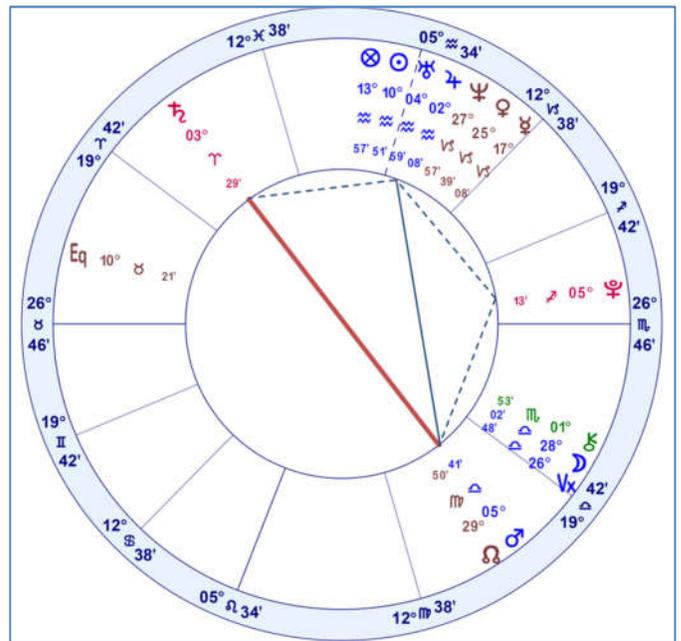
Before concluding this section, it is important to highlight two additional features of this inaugural map. As previously cited, inaugural Moon aspects both Mars and Saturn – two planets which themselves form a tight 'square' aspect. In astrological parlance, this is a challenging aspect, the equivalent of two powerful impulses being at odds with other, particularly when involving archetypes with uncongenial natures. Saturn-Mars in hard aspect tend to indicate blockages, intense frustrations, and fierce ideological struggles. For instance, Bill Clinton's 1997 inaugural featured a reasonably tight exact Mars-Saturn opposition (with no aspect to Moon), amid an otherwise exuberant chart. In hindsight, this opposition ably describes the bitter ideological struggle fought over the impeachment of the President, and his eventual censure. More on point, Herbert Hoover's 1929 inaugural featured a Mars-Saturn opposition, across the angles, tightly involving the Moon. This connection of Mars and Saturn with inaugural Moon, on the Descendant, aptly describes the intense frustrations that Americans began to feel after the great Wall Street crash of 1929, and the persistent economic

adversity that they experienced thereafter. That our incoming inaugural moment features an angular Moon in hard aspect to both Mars and Saturn suggest to me a reasonable possibility of rough economic sledding during this four year period, at least for the general population.

Hoover Inaugural – March 4, 1929, 12:00 pm



Clinton Inaugural – January 20, 1997, 12:00 pm



The inaugural map also features another planetary configuration suggesting the rise of a great economic bubble during this four year period, a bubble like those that rose in the late 1920s and mid-2000s, only to implode later with disastrous consequences. This configuration is a t-square between Jupiter, Uranus, and Pluto. By itself, this combination suggests an extraordinary potential for both exuberance and volatility. Coupled to the symbolism of Pluto in Capricorn, Jupiter in Libra, and Uranus in Aries, it hints at an exacerbation of current tensions over income inequality – tensions that the President-elect’s proposed tax cut plan would only escalate – coupled to a strong potential for mounting fears over a rapidly ballooning United States debt, debts that a Republican Congress will doubtless attempt to pay down by a dramatic curtailment of the safety net. Assuming installation of a prudent, responsible economic team, I would be more comfortable arguing for the exuberant side of the equation – but given both Trump’s problematic business history and the supply-side advocates that he has sided with during his President run, when viewed alongside the painful symbolism suggested by previously referenced Mars-Saturn square, my bias must be that this configuration describes a period of economic hubris followed by implosion and hardship.

Possible manifestations

To reiterate a cautionary point that I’ve offered in previous essays, I believe that astrology is most accurate when used to roughly describe the incoming cosmic weather and default tendencies of the individuals and collectives most impacted by this weather, rather than employed to make definitive pronouncements that discount the possibility of enlightened human interaction. I believe that human beings always have it within themselves to turn their mind’s eye to the light, and thus bring out the best possibilities of any given cosmic moment. That said, I acknowledge that an all-too-prevalent spiritual sloth and intellectual ignorance – especially when dealing with unwieldy national collectives – tends to produce outcomes that most often roughly approximate the default manifestation.

My first expectation is that the next four years will be extraordinarily turbulent – politically, economically, militarily, in every possible sense. Given this incoming inaugural moment, it is only prudent for Americans to anticipate that they will be engaged in major conflict – conflict significantly more intense than the limited wars and political squabbles that we have been engaged since the end of the Cold War. But will these coming battles be ‘hot’ wars or merely ‘cold’ ones (or wars where the respective forces rarely, if ever, physically engage in battle)? We must hope and pray that they will be cold.

Will they be domestic or international – or both? My bias is that the potential exists for intense conflict on both the domestic and international fronts – a cold war waged between the two leading factions of the American people coupled to trade and potential shooting wars, in all the usual places, but specifically along the western edge of Asia, involving China and North Korea, as well as on behalf of Baltic allies in Eastern Europe against Vladimir Putin’s Russia. I note that the previous two instances of Moon-sesquiquadrate Mars in inaugural moments coincided with American involvement in total war scenarios – the American Civil War (1861) and the First World War (1917). While correlation cannot imply causation, the juxtaposition of Mars and Moon lines in both Trump’s natal and inaugural moments in these locales, an alarming juxtaposition to be sure, coupled to the presence of his natal Pluto line in Eastern Asia, nonetheless suggest a potential for fierce conflict along these geographic lines during this four year period.

Furthermore, while Vladimir Putin had obvious economic interests in seeking a Trump victory (namely, the lifting of economic sanctions imposed after Russia’s invasion of Crimea), one must assume that he also has territorial ambitions as well – and either sees Trump as an undisciplined, erratic leader who will be easy to manipulate or as a compromised figure with so much Russian-related financial dirty laundry that he will be susceptible to blackmail (especially given the unconfirmed yet compromising and salacious information recently brought to the President-elect’s attention in a National Security briefing). Given the extensive efforts of government-sanctioned Russian hackers to impact this American election, coupled to Trump’s refusal to disclose the extent of his Russians contacts, the critical thinking nationalist must assume one or the other.

Perhaps the bitterest irony of World War II remains that while Britain and France went to war over Poland, the Poles and other peoples of Eastern Europe were ultimately sacrificed to geopolitical considerations – especially after the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe in 1945. As the presidential biographer and University of Massachusetts fellow Nigel Hamilton recently argued (at the 2016 *International Churchill Center* conference), while one can point to concessions made by a dying Franklin Roosevelt in Yalta during that same year, the reality on the ground was that the Red Army held territory that Britain and the United States were in no position to take back without a horrific fight. Consequently, it took another 40 years for the peoples of Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, and Romania to gain their freedom. While President Trump apparently fancies himself as an elite deal-maker – an assertion that is impossible to confirm without closer examination of the same financial records that he refused to reveal during the recent election cycle – both conscience and decency demand that the liberty of the peoples of Eastern Europe never again be a subject for ‘negotiations’ by an American President.

A hot war between the various states of this Union remains unthinkable to me – and yet this possibility cannot completely be dismissed, given Trump’s demonstrated authoritarian and militaristic tendencies, the extreme lunar volatility suggested by this inaugural moment, and the stated vow of several blue state governors to resist any attempt at depriving American citizens of their Constitutional rights. IMHO, this vow becomes highly problematic when offered in defense of a right of undocumented Americans to remain in this country – given the simple fact that their presence is not constitutionally guaranteed, and that we are a nation of laws, and those laws and that constitution must be our salvation during this four year period.

Moreover, I would reiterate for those who argue for physical resistance that the Civil War only began after seven southern states refused to accept the legitimacy of a President. Trump will be President, whether we like it or not, until Congress sees fit to remove him – or until the American people elect someone else in 2020. Based on my studies, I think it extraordinarily improbable that Donald Trump wins re-election. While many astrologers convinced themselves that Hillary Clinton could not lose in 2016, my presidential indicator⁽⁴⁾ always pointed to a dangerous fascination with Trump, married to an utter lack of enthusiasm for a Clinton candidacy – and thus a potential that he could win. The good news is that my indicator also reveals that this fascination will have likely run its course by November 2020 – especially if Trump manages to do precisely for America what he did for his Atlantic City casino businesses, which is my primary economic expectation. Hence, some battles are best fought another day, on better ground. If we are to remain a nation of laws, then everyone must agree to obey these laws – even those who have chosen to overstay their visas and welcomes.

That stated, Trump’s threatened campaign of mass deportations is exceedingly worrisome inasmuch as it is likely to subject naturalized Americans and wholly legitimate visa holders to violence, abuse, and discrimination at the hands of

his more emotionally undeveloped followers. And this abuse and discrimination is precisely the type of activity that right-thinking Americans will surely be challenged to confront over the next four years.

Trump's proposed Muslim registry is equally misguided. Most Muslims in the United States are patriotic, law-abiding citizens who are as horrified by the carnage done in Islam's name as anyone. Many of them, in fact, came to America to escape such madness. It serves no purpose to subject them to enhanced surveillance when they are not the problem. While there are deeply problematic passages in *The Koran*, there are equally problematic passages in the *Old and New Testaments* – and one cannot help but observe that the same people who seek to make a major issue of *The Koran* have no problem citing retrograde passages from *The Bible* as justification for their incessant attempts to impose a Christian theocracy on a spiritually diverse nation. In this mundane astrologer's opinion, the enemy we face is reactionary religious fundamentalism and political authoritarianism, in all its various incarnations – Islamic, Christian, secular, across the board. In my humble opinion, our government would be fully justified in keeping a much closer eye on any individual or group advocating religious or political totalitarianism – be they Islamic radicals or Christian Dominionists and authoritarians. To be protected by the First Amendment, I argue that one should first agree to accept the larger implications of the First Amendment – that is, its vision of a secular society where all are free to worship or not worship as they see fit, and of a society where religious adherence is purely a matter of the heart and conscience and not a license to impose one's subjective ethical or supernatural understanding on everyone else. IMHO, our government would be fully justified in carefully observing anyone participating in a tradition that sought to impose any style of totalitarianism on America or propagate a totalitarian ideology via the Internet. But I would sooner break bread with American Sufis than a Christian fundamentalist advocating the imposition of biblical law on a nation that was once the sweetest fruit of the *Age of Enlightenment*.

On the economic front, picking up on the points made earlier in this essay, when framing the likely economic scenario for 2017-2020, it is essential to note that two extremely important planetary cycles will exhaust themselves by mid-to-late 2020, a 20 year Jupiter-Saturn cycle that last commenced in Taurus in May 2000 (and precisely coincides with the last hurrah of the 1990s bull market in technology) and a Saturn-Pluto cycle that formally commenced in Libra in November 1982 (the month marking the technical conclusion of the Reagan recession), ending nearly a decade of oil- and energy-related stagnation, which became the foundation for the great economic expansion of 1982-2020.

Given the extreme volatility described by this inaugural moment, coupled to the likely high frustration level of the American people, further coupled to the exhaustion of two powerful economic cycles, one of which encouraged an experiment in gross economic inequality as a means of lifting all boats, my instinct is to expect a final top in financial markets by 2020 (if not sooner), followed by an implosion that is likely to shake the foundations of our economic systems to its core – thus forcing everyone to question the assumptions upon which the unequal prosperity of last 40 years have been based. I could be wrong, of course; but with Donald Trump at the helm of this economy, running deficits as far as the eye can see in order to fund tax cuts for high net worth individuals who routinely hide their assets overseas, while simultaneously inciting a trade war with the same Chinese economy that proved so powerful an engine for worldwide economic growth over the last 20+ years, thus potentially bringing into question the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency, the safe bet is to prepare for the worst – and opportunities that will come later, perhaps much later.

As an extended aside, let me take the opportunity here to note that while capitalism and socialism are typically framed by political polemicists as arch enemies, the student of long-term astrological cycles notes that their fortunes rise and fall simultaneously. It may well be that these two seemingly incompatible models require each other as a honest foil or counterbalance – and that the ultimate 'end of history' in the coming age of automation will not see the triumph of one or the other, but rather the stormy marriage of both.

I further note that Donald Trump, running for President in the waning days of a third-quarter Saturn-Neptune square, a cycle that commenced in 1989 with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, won the swing states of Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania by running to the left of the Hillary Clinton on the trade issue. I sincerely doubt that Trump will be able to deliver on his promise to return a significant number of manufacturing jobs to America – but to echo the immortal words of Arthur Miller (from his *Death of a Salesman*), "attention must be paid".

The next scheduled developmental crisis in the cycle of utopian socialism (as one of my favorite teachers, Charles Harvey, described the Saturn-Neptune cycle) arrives in 2026-27. If our current experiment in radical inequality concludes with the YUGE crash that I'm expecting, it may take the President unlucky enough to have to clean up after Trump until that period to get all our ducks in a row (just as it took FDR a decade, and the onset of the Second World War, to get the US out of the Great Depression). The Saturn-Neptune cycle has been impelling human beings towards a more collaborative economic model even since the emergence of capitalism and socialism. To offer a favorite analogy from the spiritual literature, the Buddha taught the middle way to enlightenment. He taught that if you pull a string on a lute too tightly, it will break; but if you don't pull it tightly enough, it will not play. I humbly submit that this analogy of the middle way can easily be applied to the art of economics; and that once we get beyond these insane polemics, the middle way will prove the surest, sanest course.

Given the extreme tightening of Trump's Mars conjunction with the Ascendant in Washington, my expectation is of a would-be political strongman with little reluctance to use force to get his way – and thus apt to run roughshod over every possible enemy, foreign or domestic, so long as the Courts and Congress allow him to get his way. My fear is that unless these Court and Congress exert a heroic counter-balancing influence rather quickly, Trump will create more than his share of widows and widowers before he is done.

With Mars in faith-oriented Pisces ruling the Descendant and Moon of this inaugural map, and so very many impulses to violence permeating it, the possibility of new terrorists attacks, carried out by radicalized religious persons, cannot be discounted –although, were they to occur, I think it unlikely that they would constitute the major story of this four year period.

Given the intense lunar symbolism of this inaugural moment, coupled to the Republican Senate's refusal to give Merrill Garland, President Obama's final selection to the Supreme Court, a fair hearing, it is probable that educated women will be among the loudest voices during this period, especially if anything were to happen to one of Justice Ginsberg, Kennedy, or Breyer while Republicans have control of the United States Senate. While a reversal of Roe v. Wade would not end abortion in the United States, it would allow many red states to ban it – thus restricting the access of poor women in red states to the procedure while further amplifying a truly dangerous gulf in our national religious, spiritual, and ethical understanding.

In a truly spiritually-conscious America, an America in which women and men were ceaselessly urged to take responsibility for acknowledging and then managing their unequal sexual impulses, via, for instance, employing an appropriate form of contraception in every instance where pregnancy is unwelcome, abortion would be legal and rare. But in an America where willful ignorance and denial of our unequal appetite for sexual intercourse is considered virtuous, abortion is the bitter fruit of our collective prudishness. Moreover, given the typically large ecological footprint exhibited by pro-life Americans, one can only pray that they will one day come to understand how their sentimental advocacy for life up until birth – but conspicuously not after it – tends to put every future generation of unborn life in dire peril in our era of looming catastrophic climate change. While they imagine that they serve a higher power, the evidence more strongly suggests that Nature's God is rapidly losing patience with a species reluctant to evolve beyond pre-industrial age norms.

Finally, with regard to the possibility of an impeachment and removal of the President (or a Trump resignation for health or business reasons), my thought is that the prospect seems most likely during the year 2019, perhaps after the 2018 mid-term elections – given various indications in the charts of Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, and our inaugural moment. For instance, although we lack a proper birth time for Pence, his baseline 2019 Solar Return (using a natal chart set for noon) nonetheless suggest the possibility of an exhilarating, intoxicating rise to power.

The War Within

We have been collectively traveling the road to a war within for decades. There are many reasons for this, some of them unavoidable, some of them eminently avoidable. On the red side of our political divide, the conflation of fundamentalist religion and conservative political and economic ideology has utterly overwhelmed a respect for evidence, the right of a political opposition to govern, and a concern for the long-term financial and ecological health of the United States. On the blue side, the elevation of identity politics above a more populist 50-state economic renewal strategy has increasingly alienated Democrats' traditional working class constituency – the constituency that has been

compelled to bear the burden of a globalization run amok – and left many of these voters feeling that they have nowhere to turn.

Desperate men have an unfortunate tendency to make desperate choices; and the choice of white working class Americans to throw their support to a congenitally reckless entrepreneur, who was not even required to demonstrate his actual net worth or disclose his universe of business connections during this election cycle, will likely come back to haunt us all – but most of all them.

Donald Trump has never been a sagacious, controlled, consistent businessman. Trump's natal chart reveals him as the epitome of a man at war with himself, a man craving any form of excitement that his capricious nature deems fit in the moment. With a virtually exact Sun-Moon opposition in mutable signs, and an egotistical, vindictive Mars in Leo conjunct both his natal and relocated Washington, DC Ascendant, Trump thrives on conflict – conflicts that a man with no conscience to speak of, a history of unchecked power at his fingertips, a persistent self-esteem issue intimately intertwined with a seemingly infinite need for adoration, and little experience of the restraints that the rest of us must routinely live within or find ourselves either outcast or behind bars, is unlikely to ever allow himself to be on the losing side of.

If all this isn't worrisome enough, the fact is that Trump has been on a roll. Trump's exhilarating 2015-2016 rise has surely only encouraged every problematic tendency he possesses. If pride cometh before a fall, Trump's fall is likely to be steep – with the American people accompanying him all the way down.

We are currently in the 6th year of an economic recovery – an uneven recovery to be sure, thanks to the continuing impact of globalization run amok and voodoo-vampire economics, coupled to the dramatic divergence between the economic fortunes of urban and rural Americans. A recovery in its 6th year can be a bit long-in-the-tooth. Seen from the astrological perspective, a recovery in its 6th year facing the simultaneous exhaustion of Saturn-Pluto and Jupiter-Saturn cycles in 2020 is almost certainly on borrowed time. That government will even be capable of effectively responding in the aftermath of this next implosion is uncertain, given the gigantic debts that the Trump Administration is likely to incur over the few years if it follows through on its plan for an orgy of new tax cuts and ramped-up military spending.

As I offered in OTP in 2013, however, there are even bigger cycles to be considered. There is the US' individualized Pluto cycle, which is approaching its planetary return in 2022-2023 – an immense 248 year cycle that few nation states have survived long enough to even experience, much less provide a template for, which will likely further shake this country to its core, by inciting yet another wave of mistrust and paranoia, before hopefully also awakening a recognition of our need to truly drain the swamp that is American politics, a swamp that Trump will have only made exponentially more toxic between now and the inauguration of the next President, and the role that every citizen must play in insuring a honest, responsive government .

There is also, as I wrote most passionately of in OTP, the final climax of Neptune's universal cycle – that is, the completion of its most recent 168 year full traversal of the zodiac, a traversal dedicated to the evolution of ideas, ideals, and imagination – a cycle that commenced in 1862-1863, and whose most recent keynote is best thought of as Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, with its luminous ideal of a government “of the people, by the people, for the people”.

Trump is as un-Lincolnesque a figure as I can imagine – utterly devoid of the latter's reservoir of humanity, soulfulness, wisdom, and vision. Trump played the role of a populist on the campaign stump but has, throughout his career, demonstrated nothing but contempt for the interests of others. He has also assumed the stance of a nationalist; but I argue that a narcissist cannot credibly be an authentic nationalist, inasmuch as a man constitutionally incapable of caring about others cannot model what it means to care about your neighbor – and exhibiting a reasonable degree of concern for the plight of your neighbor is the prime requirement for a lasting political union.

In any democracy the individual citizen is either its weakest link or the tie that inexorably binds. He or she is either its saving grace or its Achilles heel. The people are necessary sovereign – at least so long as they refuse to give their power away to a strongman – but frequently as wrong as wrong can be. The sole remedy that I know of for addressing this design flaw in the democratic model involves the widespread embrace of a passion for life-long learning. The more we know about every facet of human affairs, the better our government can be. The more emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually developed we become, the better the class of political actors we elect surely will be. If we truly wish to

again be an exceptional nation, as we were at the beginning but surely are not today, then the only means that I know of for accomplishing this is for each one of us to take it upon themselves to become an exceptional person – the kind of person who wouldn't so much have given a Donald Trump's colorful resume a second look had it come across our desk, much less elected him President of the United States. But now that we have him, it has become our job to help manage him, by managing ourselves and our Congressional representatives and civic officials – for you can rest assured that, at this late date, Trump lacks the wherewithal to emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually manage himself.

We hear much talk in the air of resistance. It is essential that Americans choose the right kind of resistance – a resistance that, when necessary, demonstrates Trump as the outlier in any scenario, a style of resistance first espoused by Henry David Thoreau (in his *Civil Disobedience*) in the 19th century, and then successfully modeled by Gandhi and Martin Luther King in the 20th century. With this President in power, and these charts imprinting itself upon the American psyche, be forewarned that if you lose your head, you could easily lose your life.

It is essential that we frame every objection to his policies on sound constitutional and textual grounds – thus forcing conservatives to constantly choose between loyalty to foundational documents that they claim to love and a leader that they have to know is seeking to operate far beyond the norms of precedent.

It is essential that we remind him every day that he was elected President for a four year period, not dictator-for-life, and that he, his family, and lackeys will be prosecutable later for every crime they commit, even if this requires using international and civil courts to secure final justice. They are not, and never shall be, beyond the law.

It is essential that we not merely act out, but rather, when internally prompted to do something, first breathe deeply and serenely, connecting with the deepest source of inner, collective, or spiritual wisdom available to us – and then only afterwards act strategically and humanely, letting this President be consistently revealed as the angry, irrational man bringing shame on our great democratic experiment.

Finally, while we routinely speak nowadays of blue and red states, the simple truth is that even the bluest blue state is meaningfully purple, as is the reddest. Thus, you can only consistently triumph in this war within by capturing the center – some say the political center, but I say the human center, that ground within the body politic where the reasonable man or woman cannot help but acknowledge his neighbor's essential humanity, and the real world economic and philosophical concerns that they inescapably share. If we are to survive this crisis as one nation, as a Union of ethnically, philosophically, and intellectually diverse Americans, then it behooves us to occupy this human center, this holy ground, and then hold it as fearlessly as did the soldiers of the 20th Maine the Little Round Top on that fateful 2nd day of the battle of Gettysburg.

"He alone sees truly who sees the Lord the same in every creature, who sees the Deathless in the hearts of all that die. Seeing the same Lord everywhere, he does not harm himself or others."– The Bhagavad Gita

Matthew Carnicelli, © 2017, All Rights Reserved

Originally published on January 14, 2017; revised January 16, 2017

Chart wheels produced in Cosmic Patterns Kepler 8, AstroCartoGraphy maps in Winstar 4.

1. The 'hard' aspect series includes the conjunction (360°), square (90°), opposition (180°), semi-square (45°) and sesquiquadrate (135°).
2. For instance, George W. Bush's natal Mars line ran directly through Afghanistan, and on the basis on that indicator, and the presence of Inaugural Mars tightly conjunct the descendant, I previously forecast in "[Storm Clouds at High Noon](#)" (January 2001), American military involvement in that troubled country.
3. For more on the character of Joe Isuzu, see – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Isuzu
4. My presidential indicator involves creation of a Davison style 'relationship' chart for candidate and country, and the systematic delineation of a short-term timing chart (either a ennead or lunar return) for the period immediately surrounding a general election. I assert that this indicator effectively describes the likely response of a majority of swing voters in any Presidential electoral cycle.

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

Of the People, for the People, by the People (2013) – <http://hpleft.com/010513.pdf>

Take Care of This House (2012) – <http://hpleft.com/010412.pdf>

The Bush Presidency: Storm Clouds at High Noon (2000) – <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 is a regular contributor to the comment section of *The New York Times*, and in 2015 was featured in story honoring its most influential reader contributors. 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***.