

An Astrological Portrait of a Humanitarian Revolutionary:

Thomas Paine

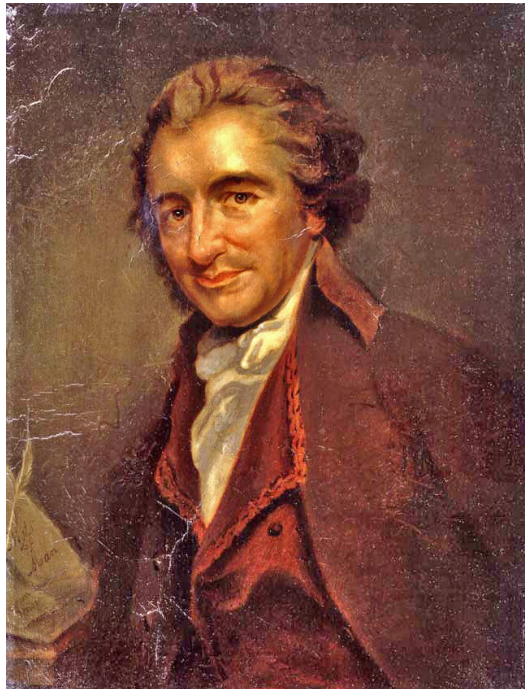
by Tina Eden

Born on January 29, 1737, Thomas Paine was an Aquarius with a Capricorn Moon. On Christmas Eve, 1793, he was arrested in Paris. This information, along with his large, expressive eyes, and progressive thinking, were used to rectify his chart for a birth time of 9:15 a.m., making Paine a Pisces rising. The exact time of his birth will never be known, but the 9:15 birth time yields an interesting hypothesis on his life.

At any given moment in time, hundreds, if not thousands, of human beings are born across the planet. Those born geographically close together will have similar astrological charts. One might assume that said persons would lead similar lives, yet rarely is this true. The same could be said about Paine. Surely there were others born very close in time and place to him, but it was Paine who chose to publish revolutionary ideas, and leave his mark on history. One might ask what motivated Paine to pursue this life. Looking at his astrological chart, it can be seen that at the time of his first wife's death he was undergoing difficult *progressions*, that is the location of planets unique to his natal chart, as well as difficult *transits*, that is the location of the planets currently in the sky.

Paine's reaction to these celestial events which manifested in the death of his wife, probably during childbirth, was to channel his energies into work. (Keane, 50) He remarried some years later, but the marriage, it is thought, was never consummated.

(Keane, 77) It is also reported that he preferred the company of men to women, never again to seek female companionship. (Keane, 52) The possibility exists that he entered into homosexual relationships, but if that is so, it is a well-hidden fact. The location of Mars in Paine's chart suggests a strong sex drive, yet just the opposite appears to be true of his life. Additionally, Mars' location suggests him to be materialistic, and once again, this appears to be untrue, as Paine gave away much of what he earned. (Keane, 342) His Capricorn Moon, which is *isolated*, meaning it makes no aspects to the rest of his chart, instilled a strong sense of responsibility in Paine. The celestial occurrences at the time of his wife's death, it can be hypothesized, altered his personality. As the father of her child, he may have felt responsible for his young wife's death. The new Thomas Paine would not seek gratification through either money or intimate relationships. Instead he would travel a more lonely path, that of a humanitarian revolutionary.



The Natal Chart of Thomas Paine

As an Aquarius, Paine was predisposed to progressive thinking. A typical Aquarian is concerned with the progress of mankind in a scientific manner. Combined with an isolated Capricorn Moon, one would expect Paine to be practical, driven and cool. However, he probably came across as charming due

to the planet Venus conjunct his ascendant. This location of Venus also endows him with the desire and ability to be a peace-maker. Paine was born while the planets Neptune and Uranus were opposed. Astrologer Robert Hand's interpretation of this aspect is found below. (Hand, 319)

Many people of this generation are confused and upset by anything out of the ordinary...However, a few individuals [are] able to break through...and come to a new synthesis of consciousness. They [are] able to bring forth radical ideals and unconventional points of view.

In Paine's case, this generational aspect applies to his individual personality because of the angular relationships between his chart and these two planets.

As a Pisces rising, he was probably known to be a good listener, and genuinely felt the pain of those around him. However, the cool portions of his chart would prevent him from taking an interest in the plight of individuals; rather he was destined to be concerned with the system, and how to correct it.

Other noteworthy facets of his chart include Mercury conjunct Jupiter. This instills idealism, and made him a forceful speaker. Paine's Sun is square Mars and trine Saturn. The Mars aspect caused him to be unafraid to challenge and even provoke others. Saturn gave him good health, a long life, and mental stability. Neptune is square his ascendant, which indicates he was likely to be misunderstood.

Paine's chart is self-

determining, and his Moon phase is that of a visionary. Statistically, one out of eight charts will contain this Moon phase. This phase and the signs involved are shared by Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Edison. Margaret Sanger was also born under the visionary phase of the Moon. Paine, like Lincoln, Edison and Sanger, was concerned with humanity-at-large, and was willing to stand his ground against those who were reluctant to accept new ideas.

Paine's Life as it Relates to his Astrological Chart

In the introduction of Paine's essay *Common Sense*, he tells the reader that he is progressive, almost apologizing for his words:

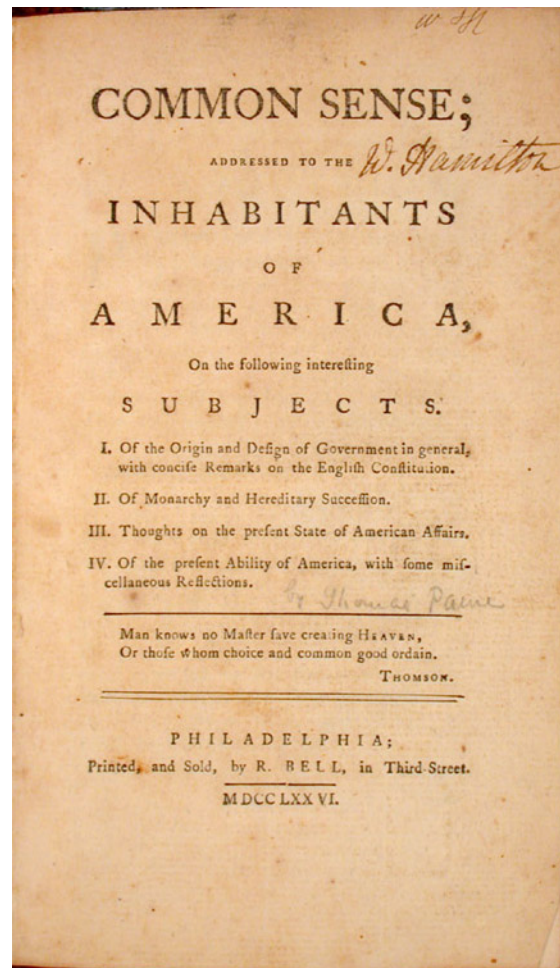
"Perhaps the sentiments contained in the following pages are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor..."

A few paragraphs later he writes:

"The cause in America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances have, and will, arise which are not local, but universal, and through which the principles of all lovers of mankind are affected..."

It is here where we see his Aquarius Sun, the idealism and higher consciousness of the four planets Mercury, Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune in full view. Paine reached deep within himself to write these words, the words he had an innate ability to write, if he so chose.

In March of 1775, Paine wrote an essay attacking slavery under the pseudonym "Justice, and Humanity." He argued logically as well as strongly criticizing



those who claimed Christian justifications for slavery:

“None can lawfully buy without evidence that they are not concurring with Men-stealers; and as the true owner has a right to reclaim his goods that were stolen, and sold; so the slave, who is proper owner of his freedom, has a right to reclaim it, however often sold.” and “Is the barbarous enslavement [of] our inoffensive neighbours, and treating them like wild beasts subdued by force, reconcilable with all these *Divine precepts*?” (Paine, cited in Keane, 99)

We can attribute Paine’s progressive Aquarius Sun, his humanitarian Pisces ascendant and the opposition between Uranus and Neptune to his writings denouncing slavery.

In 1774 Paine met Benjamin Franklin. At this point in this life, Paine had not done anything extraordinary to merit a letter of recommendation from Franklin, nevertheless, he secured one. In 1771 he married his second wife, Elizabeth, who was “intelligent and pretty,” and also much younger than he (Keane, 76). How was Paine able to convince Franklin to help him, and Elizabeth to marry him? Venus on his ascendant made him a charming and likeable person on the surface, and it masked his problematic Moon. Franklin would not come to know the real Paine,

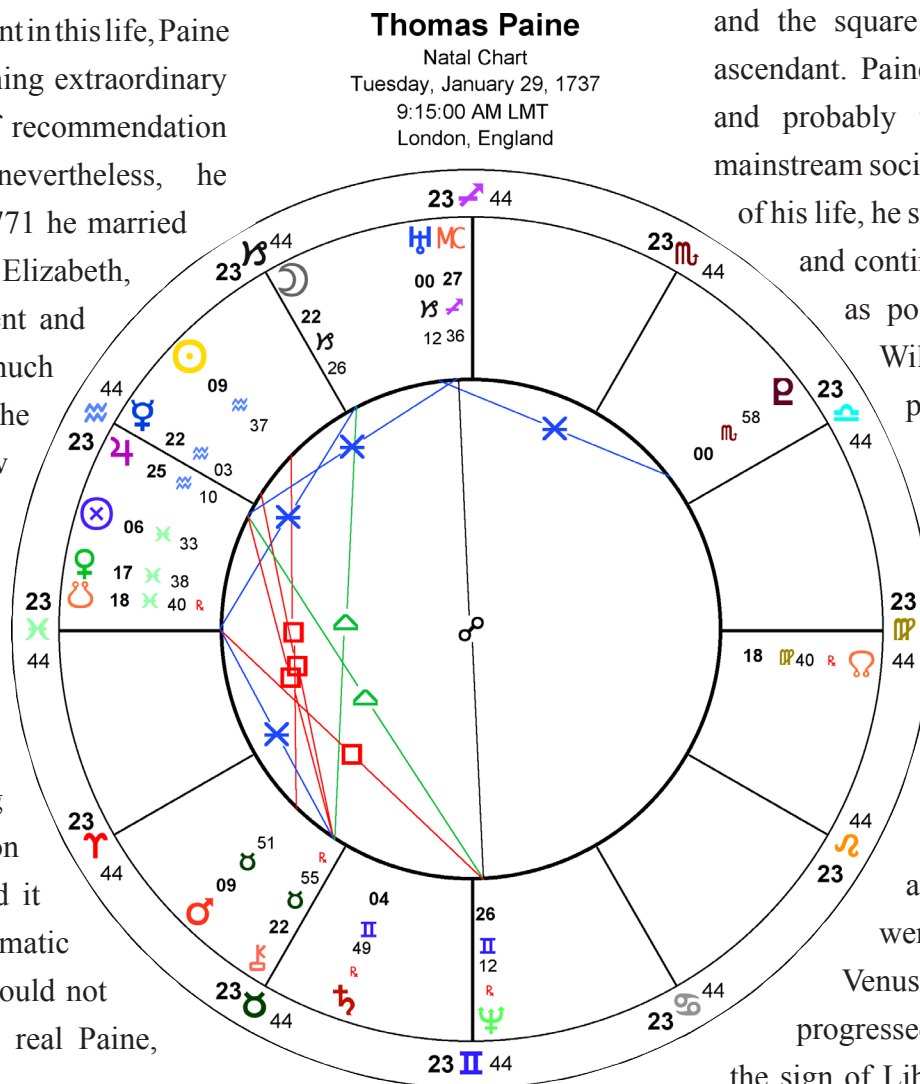
but his wife would, and within a short time after marrying, the couple separated. This is not to imply that Paine fell out of favor with those once they came to know him better, but only to show that without Venus on his ascendant, it is unlikely Paine would have gained favors and been as readily accepted into society as he was. And, it is unlikely he would have had the opportunities in life without the help of Venus conjunct his ascendant.

To say the life of Thomas Paine was eventful would be an understatement. While in France he was heralded, then jailed. Likewise, in American, where he was once warmly greeted, and acquainted with Presidents Washington and Jefferson, upon his return in 1803, “he was repeatedly snubbed.” (Wilson and Ricketson, 105) The charm of Venus on his ascendant could no longer carry him. As others came to know him better, he became the victim of his isolated Moon,

and the square on Neptune to his ascendant. Paine was misunderstood, and probably too progressive for mainstream society. Yet, until the end

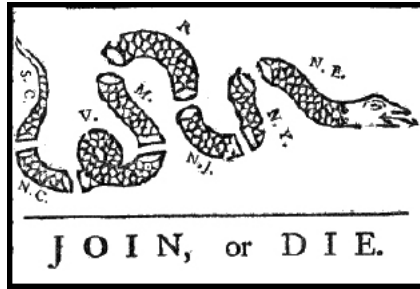
of his life, he stood by his principles and continued to write as long as possible. According to Wilson and Ricketson, page 105, “Though his body grew steadily weaker, his mind remained clear, and he continued to read and to write letters.”

On June 8, 1809 Paine died. His progressed Moon and the transiting Sun were squaring his natal Venus on this day, and his progressed Sun had just entered the sign of Libra. Interpreting this



configuration is highly speculative, but this astrologer feels the planets were giving their blessing to Paine.

Looking back on his life, one can note that he was a capable man in fields other than writing. Before emigrating to America, Paine worked as a staymaker, school teacher, exciseman, and grocer. (Wilson and Ricketson) Yet, he chose to put aside these secure professions in search of a new life and, more importantly, a new occupation in America.



Familiarity with his astrological chart allows one to see how he was capable of his accomplishments, but it also shows that he was not *destined* for such a life. Rather, Paine *chose* the harder and nobler path. The hurt from the death of his first wife, was the turning point in his life. He chose to turn his anguish into something greater than himself. Using Abraham Maslow's terminology, Paine self-actualized during his seventy-two years of life.

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