

Charts in the News

with commentary by Elisabeth Grace



Margaret Atwood, November 18, 1939; 5:00 p.m. EST; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (45°N25', 75°W42'); A: from memory; David Fisher quotes Shelagh Kendal by letter for “approximately 5:00 PM” from her.

The Canadian teacher, environmentalist, inventor, critic, poet, and author of more than 50 books is best known for *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Atwood’s Scorpio Sun is driven by the Moon in Aquarius (see **Chart 1**, at left), a combo suggesting visionary ambition backed by “a great understanding of the suffering and combat within life.”¹ Such empathy is given prominence by Jupiter close to the Aries Point (0° cardinal) at the end of Pisces, opposing Neptune. Moon–Mars conjunct in Aquarius suggests that she is “a rebel with a cause.” It’s all fronted by a multitasking, pixie-chatterbox Gemini Ascendant, which needs to be seen as the smartest kid in the room.

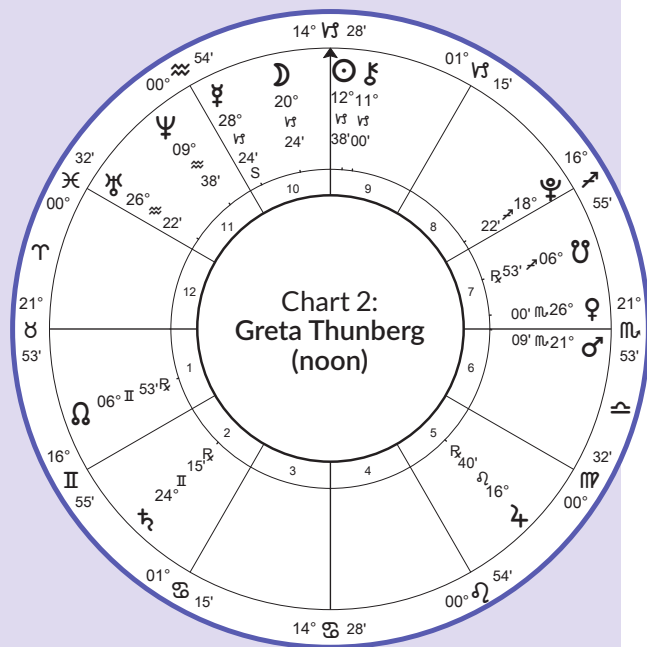
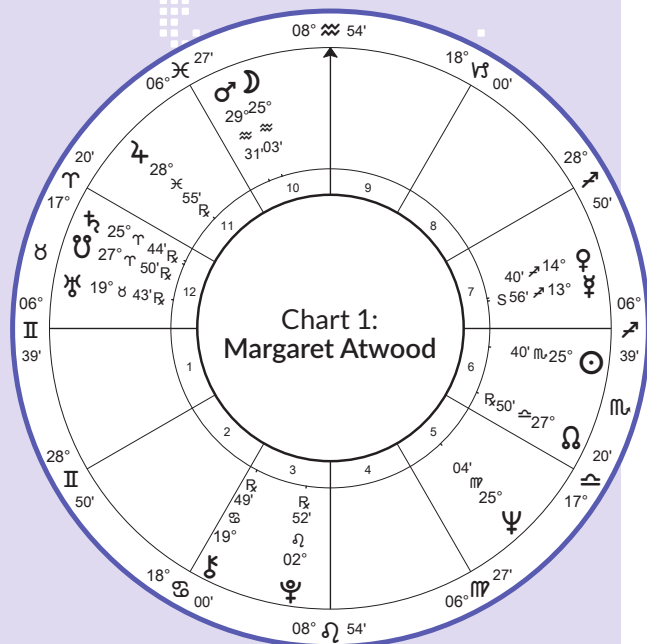
Atwood started writing *The Handmaid’s Tale* in the spring of 1984, but the original inspiration — initially resisted — hit her a couple of years earlier. “It seemed to me a risky venture,” she says. “I’d read extensively in science fiction, speculative fiction, utopias and dystopias ever since my high school years in the 1950s, but I’d never written such a book.”² It’s no surprise to find that, at the end of 1982 and into 1983, transiting Uranus opposed her Ascendant. Of course, she was feeling pressure to make a fresh start, especially since Uranus rules her MC! Nevertheless, she resisted. Fortunately, transiting Mars was retrograde in Scorpio in early 1984, and it opposed her Uranus, conjoined her Sun, and squared her Moon three times between February and August. That was the spark she needed!

In 2017, transiting Uranus was conjunct natal Saturn — a shake-up of structures involving career, publishing, and broadcasting. Transiting Neptune (film, glamour, inspiration) squared her boundary-pushing Mercury–Venus conjunction in Sagittarius. *The Handmaid’s Tale* became a smash TV series and a cultural phenomenon. That Neptune square coincided with the announcement of a fan’s dream come true: A sequel was in progress! In September 2019, with transiting Jupiter near its third conjunction with her Mercury–Venus, that sequel — *The Testaments* — was published, to rave reviews.

Greta Thunberg, January 3, 2003; time unknown (noon CET used); Stockholm, Sweden (59°N20', 18°E03'); from various Internet sources, including Wikipedia.

Greta Tintin Eleonora Ernman Thunberg gained worldwide fame on August 20, 2018 by going on strike. She ditched school and sat outside the Swedish Riksdag (parliament) building, to call attention to the urgent climate change crisis. Since then, the 16-year-old has inspired massive similar protests around the globe.

Greta is a goal-oriented Capricorn Sun, driven by the Moon in Capricorn. (See **Chart 2**, at left.) If she can’t make things happen, no one can — especially when supported by the ruthlessly



All charts use Placidus houses and the Mean Node.

effective action of Mars in Scorpio. Her Mercury in Capricorn suggests a practical and strategic mindset; its sextile to Venus in Scorpio adds idealism. With Venus and Mars squaring Uranus in Aquarius, she can be innovative, humanitarian, and daring. When she couldn't get others to join her first strike, she did it by herself.

With Mercury stationary retrograde, she needs to run ideas over and over again in her mind before making a pitch. She also might need a push. In July 2017, Uranus activated her Mercury by square; the series ended in April 2018. In May 2018, she won an award for an essay about climate change — just weeks before solar arc (SA) Sun = Mercury. Her August strike coincided with transiting Mars stationing direct within minutes of an exact conjunction with her Mercury, turning her idea into action.

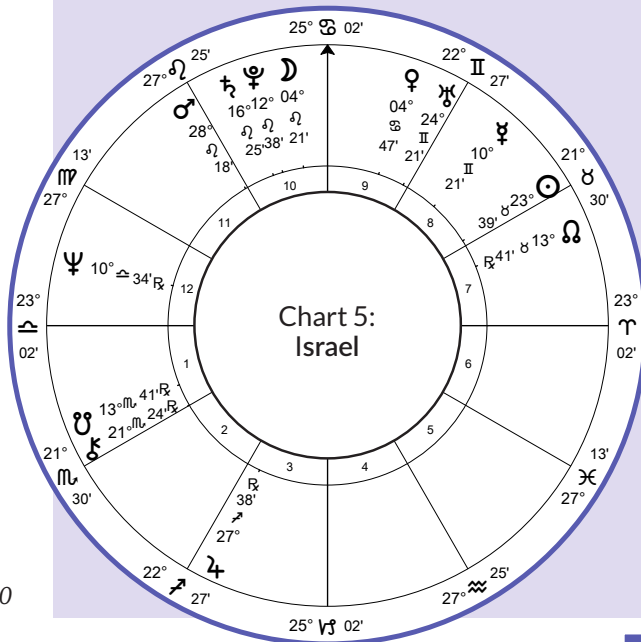
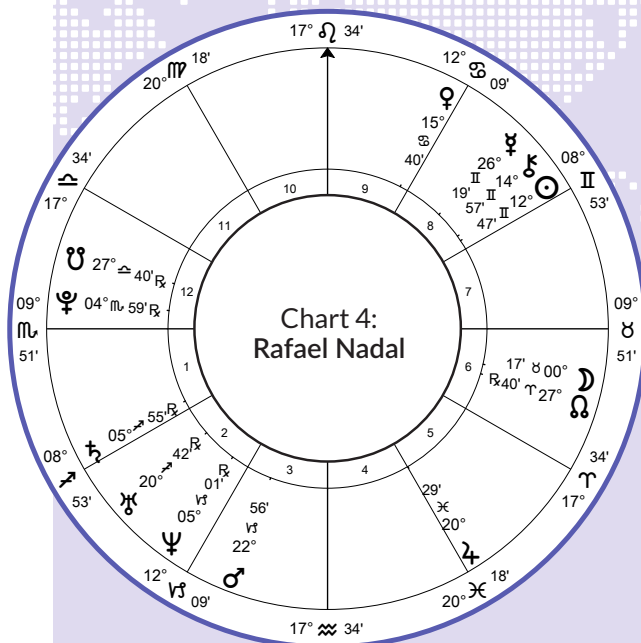
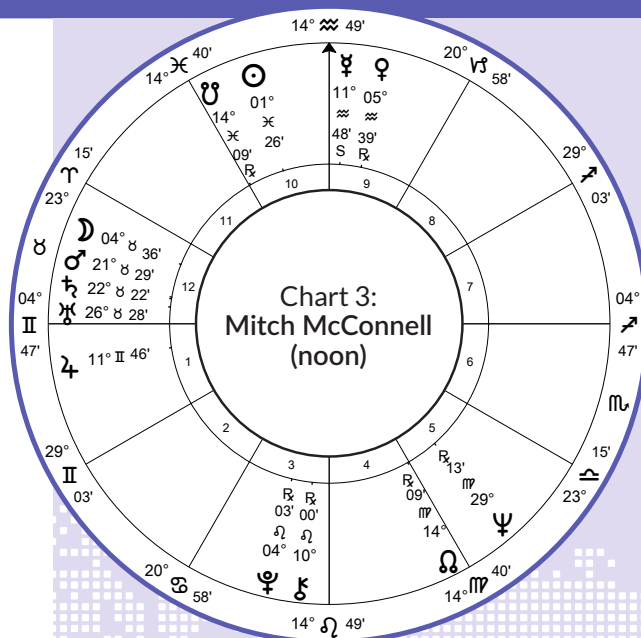
Jupiter has hovered near her Pluto for most of 2019. She expanded her resources and personal power by joining other power brokers at exclusive gatherings, e.g., Davos, the European Union, and the U.S. Congress. She was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize and featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. In August, she sailed across the Atlantic to New York, to address the United Nations at its Climate Summit on September 23, two days after the third Jupiter-Neptune square. Her impassioned speech demanding action went viral.³ Her vow to “never forgive” her elders should they fail to act reflects her Scorpio Venus and Mars, as well as that week's exact planetary patterns: Venus in Libra square Saturn, and Mercury in Libra square Pluto. *Fun fact:* Two potent midpoints at the Aries Point reflect her awesome personal magnetism: Mars/Neptune and Sun/Pluto. Keep an eye on the first week of December, when Jupiter will be at 0° Capricorn.

Mitch McConnell, February 20, 1942; time unknown (noon CWT used); Sheffield, AL, USA (34°N46', 87°W42'); from various Internet sources, including Wikipedia.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has Sun in Pisces, a sign often associated with sensitivity, empathy, and adaptability. (See **Chart 3**, upper right.) If born before 3:00 a.m., he is driven by a me-me-me Moon in Aries. If born after that time, he is driven by a Moon in Taurus, which needs to build material security and preserve the status quo. What do you think? Taurus is strong in the chart, regardless; note the stellium of Mars, Saturn, and Uranus in that sign. Mars conjunct Saturn suggests militant control and endurance; its proximity to Uranus adds daring.

Mercury and Venus are conjunct in Aquarius, opposed by Pluto in Leo. With at least six planets in fixed signs, we expect patience and tenacity. Both Mercury and Venus are retrograde, suggesting that what he thinks and what he values may be kept close to the vest (see Greta Thunberg re: Mercury retrograde). Venus retrograde is rare — and presents a challenge in relationship. It often has a double agenda that is not at all obvious to the other party.⁴ When the real needs of the Venus retrograde person are finally expressed, it can be startling to that “other.”

Pluto's opposition to Mercury and Venus suggests a persuasive mindset and extremes of emotion. Let's focus on the Venus-Pluto opposition, as it is activated by transiting Uranus in 2019 and 2020.⁵ The last time this happened was in 1997, when Uranus was conjunct McConnell's Venus, opposing his Pluto. In a horoscope, Venus refers to who, what, and how we love. Transiting Uranus



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conjunct Venus suggests opportunity for something new and exciting; Uranus opposing Pluto suggests sweeping change. When I Googled “Mitch McConnell 1997,” the top result was “The Man Who Makes Money Talk,” published in *The Washington Post*:

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) lives modestly. He picks up his own dry cleaning and often does the shopping and cooking for himself and his wife. But he loves money, perhaps more than any other politician on Capitol Hill. He likes to raise it and he likes to spend it. It’s what made him the father of the modern-day Republican Party in Kentucky, and it’s what he sees as the key to expanding influence for the GOP in Washington.⁶

McConnell’s stance on campaign financing in 1997 was apparently a complete reversal from a few years earlier, when he opposed “soft money.”⁷ How might conflicts involving the innovative (Uranus) seeds he planted in 1997, regarding money (Venus) for the sake of empowerment (Pluto), arise as Uranus t-squares natal Venus and Pluto over the next several months?

One conflict brought to light has a double-Venus symbolism: money and his wife. On June 1, 2019, in between the first exact Uranus squares to his Venus and Pluto, *The New York Times* ran a story on how his wife, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, failed to divest from certain investments and may have used her Cabinet position to benefit her family’s shipping company in China.⁸ Days before the second exact square to Venus (October 1), the House opened a formal investigation into Chao’s possible conflicts of interest.⁹ The second square to Pluto is exact on November 10; the third squares to both will be exact in March and April 2020.

Meanwhile, McConnell’s bewildering refusal to allow a Senate vote on a bill protecting U.S. election security, combined with reports of Russian investments in his home state of Kentucky, prompted *Morning Joe* host Joe Scarborough to dub him “Moscow Mitch”¹⁰ at the end of July 2019. McConnell is “enraged” by this moniker — which has stuck!¹¹ Here, his usual implacability has been disrupted, prompting an outburst of extreme emotion and — after two months of apparent inner contemplation — a “sudden” shock. On September 19, he was the “proud” co-sponsor of a bill providing \$250 million to states to safeguard elections!¹²

Rafael Nadal, June 3, 1986; 6:20 p.m. CEDT; Manacor, Spain (39°N34', 03°E12'); AA: Spanish newsletter Cyklos (December 2010) gives 18:20 from birth certificate.

Tennis superstar Rafael Nadal earned his fourth U.S. Open title and 19th Grand Slam title in August, after a grueling match against relative newcomer Daniil Medvedev. I thought it would be fun to write about patterns in Nadal’s horoscope that reflect his victory and overall athletic prowess

— but his horoscope had other plans. Sure, Nadal has Mars in Capricorn, where it can execute a game plan with brilliant strategy (Mars is in the 3rd house) and practical efficiency (Mars rules the 6th house), supported by the intuitive flow of a sextile to Jupiter in the 5th house. (See **Chart 4**, page 15.) This high-functioning Mars is currently supercharged by transiting Pluto, suggesting a period of intense effort. And yes, we see that Nadal’s natal Pluto is conjunct his Scorpio Ascendant. He needs to be seen as a masterful powerhouse, and Pluto certainly supports that potential, adding an ability to re-invent himself time and time again, rising like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes.

But look at his current solar arcs! Run them on your computer right now! At the top of the chart, we see SA Venus = MC and SA Sun = Venus! As Venus rules Nadal’s 7th house of partnerships, I had to wonder if he was in a relationship. Apparently he is, with Xisca Perello — they’ve been together since 2005. In January 2019, it was rumored that they were going to be married, but no date was set. However, on August 14, the newspaper *Ultima Hora* announced an upcoming wedding on October 19 in Majorca.¹³ Can this be true? I don’t know, but Nadal’s SA Venus = MC will be exact on November 4, which is also the date of transiting Saturn’s third opposition to his Venus. Getting serious about a partnership? Assuming that the *Ultima Hora* story is true, note that Nadal will have the third conjunction of transiting Jupiter with natal Uranus (ruler of his 4th house) on October 17, followed by the second opposition of transiting Uranus to his natal Pluto on ... October 19. That measurement suggests a big change in how he is seen by the world.

Nadal’s upcoming solar arcs in 2020 are simply spectacular: SA Uranus = Mars in March; SA Jupiter = Mars in May; SA Sun = Venus and SA MC = Jupiter in November; SA Ascendant = Sun in December; and SA MC = Uranus in February 2021. We see strong potential for personal happiness and professional success, with a move or a fresh start suggested in early 2021.

Israel, May 14, 1948; 4:00 p.m. EET; Tel Aviv, Israel (32°N04', 34°E46'); Nicholas Campion, The Book of World Horoscopes, The Wessex Astrologer, 2004, Chart 183.

Like Mitch McConnell, Israel has a fixed-sign emphasis. Its Taurus Sun is set on building material security, driven by the Leo Moon’s regal need for love and honor. (See **Chart 5**, page 15.) Mars in Leo square the Sun suggests that Israel assertively stands its ground — with drama and entitlement — though its Libra Ascendant needs to be seen as fair, diplomatic, and rational. Yet, as people-pleasing as Libra can be, let us not forget the astrological chestnut that Libra is “an iron fist in a velvet glove.”

I’ve been watching Israel all year, fascinated by events reflecting transiting Saturn and Pluto activating its Ascendant as these streamlining planets prepare to cross Israel’s IC in 2020 (Saturn) and 2021 (Pluto). Grab your Oct./Nov. 2019 issue of *TMA*, and compare Israel’s horoscope to Boeing’s. Boeing’s Ascendant is 20° Libra; its MC is 24° Cancer. Interesting, yes?

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Another marker for disruption is transiting Uranus squaring Israel's 4° Leo Moon, ruler of the MC (its public status). A few days after the first Uranus square, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, was re-elected, even though it had been recommended that he be indicted on corruption charges six weeks earlier.¹⁴ Gosh, is it hard for a horoscope with so many fixed signs to change! *But* although Netanyahu won, he failed to form a government, which meant that a new election had to be held on September 17.¹⁵

As of September 25, the result is too close to call, but challenger Benny Gantz is ahead of Netanyahu by a "razor-thin margin." Still, neither candidate has enough of a majority to prevail. By law, Israel's president must decide by October 1 who will serve as Israel's prime minister and form a governing coalition.¹⁶ The coalition must be formed within 42 days ... and on November 3, transiting Uranus will square Israel's Moon for the second time. Surprises are definitely in store.

References and Notes

(All URLs were accessed in September 2019.)

1. Noel Tyl, *Synthesis & Counseling*, Llewellyn Publications, 1994, p. 93.
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/books/review/margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale-age-of-trump.html>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/23/greta-thunberg-speech-un-2019-address>
4. Another pattern in McConnell's horoscope, suggesting that things may not be as they seem, is Neptune at 29° Virgo, close to the 0° cardinal Aries Point. All things Neptunian could potentially demand prominence: shipping, oil, faith, illusion, etc. It's fascinating that his wife is in the shipping industry.
5. If McConnell's Moon is in early Taurus, its need for material comfort and security is being disrupted by transiting Uranus. Without an exact birth time, we just don't know.
6. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/campfin/stories/cf090797.htm>
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14. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/28/benjamin-netanyahu-corruption-charges-decision-expected-today>
15. <https://time.com/5598156/israel-lieberman-netanyahu-elections/>

16. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/25/israeli-talks-ramp-up-as-final-election-count-tightens-deadlock>

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Elisabeth Grace, ISAR-CAP, earned her B.A. in Philosophy from Wellesley College. She is a consulting (modern psychological) astrologer and an STA-certified horary practitioner. Freelancing at WNBC and CNBC inspired her must-read forecast on the astonishing synchronicity of headlines and planetary patterns — get it delivered to your e-mail or book a consultation at: <http://www.elisabethgrace.com>

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with the greatest eclipse occurring at 19:11 UT. The Earth casts both a direct umbral shadow and an indirect penumbral shadow. During a penumbral lunar eclipse, the Moon only enters the penumbral shadow, which causes the Moon to dim rather than disappear.

For visual aids that help you to locate the planets, visit "The Mountain Astrologer Sky Maps" tab at Julene's website: <http://julenelouis.com>

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Julene Louis, ISAR-CAP, Jyotish Visharada-CVA, is a co-founder of the Sky Astrology Conference (<http://skyastrologyconference.com>) and a full-time consulting and teaching astrologer. She lectures at conferences and local groups throughout North America. Julene is available for consultation, group lectures, and tutoring toward CVA Jyotish Visharada certification. She can be reached via her website, or e-mail: julene.louis@gmail.com

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