

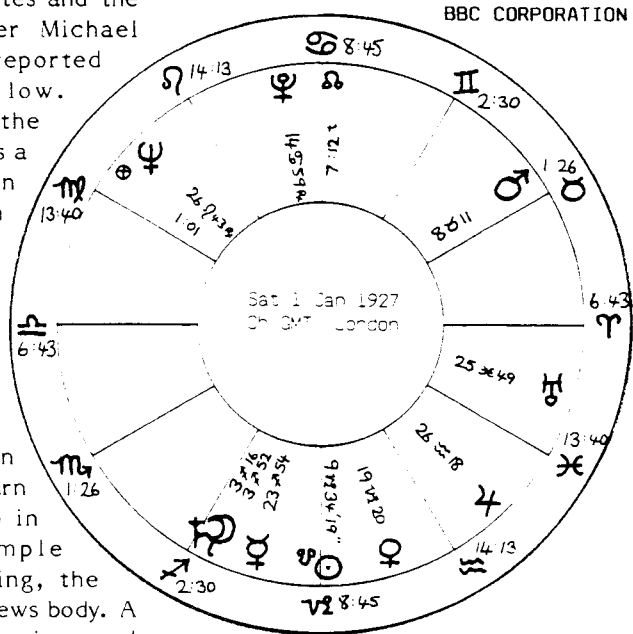
# Transits at the BBC

*As major transits make contact with the horoscopes of the BBC, the cultural role of television is called into question, raising conflict between government and media. We look here at an astrological signature of television.*

There are three possible inception charts for the BBC: one for Radio (1922), one for becoming a Corporation (1927) and one for Television (1936). All three interconnect with contacts in the last decanate of the mutables, and all three have been transited by the Saturn-Uranus conjunction. Recent changes within the BBC have included the amalgamation of the News and Current Affairs directorates and the defection of Controller Michael Grade. Staff morale is reported to be at an all-time low. Transition hangs over the Corporation as it awaits a move to a new building in the White City. In addition, the role of the media is being increasingly called into question, with repeated conflict between the government and both the BBC and IBA.

In the 1927 Corporation chart, the Moon and Saturn straddle the third cusp in Sagittarius - a simple signature of broadcasting, the BBC as an authoritative news body. A dual function of informing and entertaining is indicated by Jupiter, lord of the third in the fifth, mutually receiving with Saturn, lord of the 5th on the third. Jupiter is in Aquarius, sextile Mercury in Sagittarius in the third: freedom of speech. This sextile also signifies a broader aim

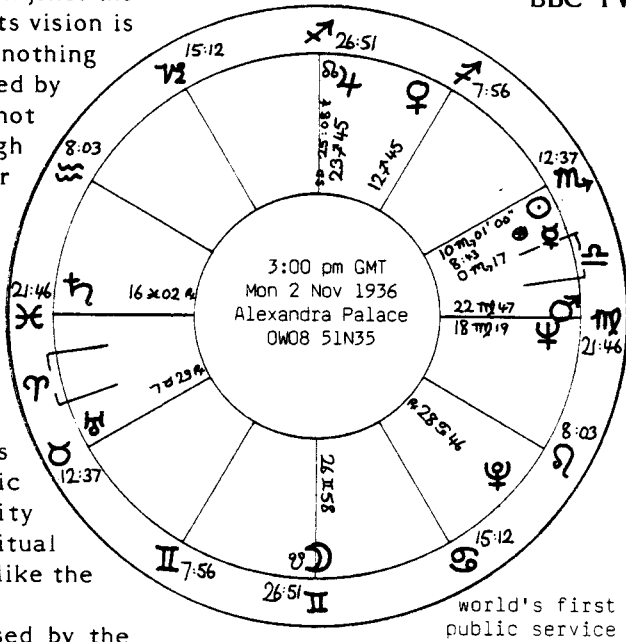
of international communication, made possible by television. The Ascendant ruler of the 1936 television chart is Jupiter at 23 Sagittarius, in close conjunction to the Mercury of the 1927 chart. This contact echoes the original Mercury-Jupiter sextile of 1927, and is beautifully expressed in the BBC's Coat of Arms: "Nation shall speak peace unto nation".



BBC television was the world's first public television broadcast. The 1936 chart may therefore be taken to symbolise both the BBC and the role of all television in the modern state.

Pisces rises, Jupiter is marvellously dignified, in Sagittarius, in

the ninth, near the MC, conjunct the North Node, almuten. Its vision is all-embracing, there is nothing that could not be reached by it, nothing that could not be shown or known through television. As the greater benefic, Jupiter is keeper of all good things, an ever extending vision of reality and hope. Any challenge to Jupiter is like a challenge to human freedom and dignity itself, hence it stands as the protector of the public good, a moral authority guiding ethical and spiritual views, like the church, like the law.



Yet Jupiter is opposed by the Moon in Gemini. The Moon is thrown down, cast onto the IC, conjunct the south node, void, ruler of the fifth: in a passive condition, receiver of projected images, armchair entertainment. The Moon - Jupiter opposition brings information into the living room, showing us images of the world at large. The world becomes a smaller place, the personal is made public. All reality is presented before us.

The opposition indicates the same problem of dual function existing in the 1927 chart, that of both informing and entertaining:

"The problem is not that television presents us with entertaining subject matter but that all subject matter is presented as entertaining." (1)

The passive viewer looks to Mercury in Scorpio, lord of the seventh, combust, disposing the Moon and in dissociate trine. This Mercury is in mutual reception with

Mars on the Descendant. Mute, non-participating voyeurs, we silently watch the act of the other. It is never our own act but is reported to us, square the Moon, imposing itself, as if it should be our concern. The Mercury-Mars reception may also signify those who try to take hold of the media's power in order to announce their own causes.

Mars is conjunct Neptune, the camera shot, a distorted and selective analysis. Unreal action, clean violence, perfect sex, Mars anaesthetised. With Neptune co-ruling the Ascendant, we have the illusion of being there, with the act of the other beaming up the cathode ray tube, Mars-Neptune opposing Saturn in Pisces on the Ascendant. The eerie ghostly light of television through which reality is seen and enframed on the box.

These interlocking mutable T-squares on angles create television's own subtle reality. Although there are complicated checks and counter-checks and a

mutual influence between media and audience, no-one has ultimate authority over it. As the vehicle of free speech, the media is a political force in its own right, a law unto itself, identified with Jupiter. Like this Jupiter in Sagittarius, it holds life's fire and vision for the passive Moon, but is challenged by a square from Mars. The television makers find themselves in conflict with the world they are bound to show, reporting war, not peace.

These T-squares connect by minor aspects to a Sun-Mercury opposition with Uranus, away from the angles, less visible. I find the symbolism of Uranus difficult to interpret. Obvious takes include electricity, the principle of free speech, a potential voice of revolution, free trade. The Scorpio Sun trines Saturn in Pisces, signs of power and manipulation. Mercury in Scorpio must decode the news. Alone, commanding these configurations, Pluto stands near his station in the 5th. Television is his entertaining world of the Shades. Are we "amusing ourselves to death"? (1)

### Recent Transits

Legal conflict over openness and secrecy of information has been the theme of transits to Jupiter and the Scorpio Sun. One incident epitomising this was the Zircon Satellite affair in "The Secret Society" series. The raid by the Special Branch on the offices of BBC

#### **MORE TROUBLE IN '88**

*Power struggles and de-regulation threats make 88 troublesome until Saturn ends its MC transit (early Oct). Crisis points: Pluto on the Sun (mid-June & mid-August), Uranus 27.703 S/R (5 Sept).*

Scotland led to an emergency Commons debate (3 February 1987) on the role of the Attorney General in the incident. This appeal to the highest law of the land coincided with the general period of Uranus transiting Jupiter. More precisely, one week before the raid, Pluto went stationary retrograde three minutes of arc away from the BBC's Sun: spy satellites, and the 'Secret Society'. Then, on the very weekend of the raid, Jupiter itself, planet of law, was crossing the Ascendant opposing Mars, and Saturn was square to Neptune. Note the exactness of the description of Mars-Neptune in Virgo: three vanloads of film and research material, "inter-woven and needing to be disentangled" were removed. The Government defended the Special Branch action on the grounds that it suspected a national security leak by a **mole at the Ministry of Defence**: Mars in Virgo, Mercury in Scorpio, mutually receiving. The small helpful animal tells us someone is moving to seize power, and gives a suspicion of censorship.

Clashes with the government were repeated this year in relation to Northern Ireland. Unionist resistance towards the Anglo-Irish agreement was noticeably absent from our screens for many months until the cemetery violence. Fast on the heels of this incident, further violence in the province and in Gibraltar has raised important ethical and legal issues about trial by television and the rights and freedom of the media.

The Prime Minister has been vocal on these matters: the BBC's Ascendant of 22 Pisces is conjunct her natal Uranus. The main progression in her chart for this year (May 88) is Sun to the square of Uranus in her fourth house. The

## BBC COAT OF ARMS

In the summer of 1987, as Uranus crossed 23 Sagittarius, the BBC re-vamped its 1927 Coat of Arms. The symbolism is explained in the 1930 BBC Yearbook:

" Ancient symbols have been found for the electrical nature of broadcasting (the thunderbolt and lightning flash), its speed (eagles), its work of public proclamation (bugles), its scope and breadth (the world and universe) and its ultimate ideal (the motto: 'Nation shall speak peace unto Nation.') The Lion indicates the Corporation is British. "



In the 1936 chart Jupiter, the thunder-bolt and lightning flash, culminates. The eagle as bird of prey shows the Mars-Jupiter square and the strength of Scorpio. Public proclamation (bugles) is shown by Moon-Jupiter in Gemini-Sagittarius; the world and the universe are indicated in their meridian placing. The idealistic hope of the motto is suggested by Venus in Sagittarius in the ninth, square Neptune.

struggle between freedom of the press and Thatcherism looks like continuing throughout the year whilst Uranus remains in orbs of the BBC's 1936 Moon and MC. Pluto must cross the Sun twice more, while Saturn struggles to hold some sort of a boundary.

There may be less to fear in terms of government censorship than appears at first sight, and more to worry about concerning television's effect on culture, especially with the coming of satellite T.V. Its role as entertainer pacifies public discontent and whatever is not amusing tends to get ignored. Censorship may not even be needed in a culture in which politics and entertainment become identified:

" Censorship, after all, is the tribute tyrants pay to the assumption that a public knows the difference between serious discourse and entertainment - and cares. How delighted would be all the kings, czars and fuhrers of the past to know that censorship is not a

necessity when all political discourse takes the form of a jest."

Look again at the Jupiter-Saturn reception in the 1927 chart for this blend of politics and entertainment, and consider its connection with the 1936 chart. The first Saturn-Uranus conjunction coincided with the decision to televise Parliament. The Moon-Jupiter opposition in the 1936 chart is realised as we sit back and watch the performance of our law makers. The Moon is in Gemini. Perhaps there's a good movie on the other side.

- Maggie Hyde

(1) from Neil Postman: "Amusing Ourselves To Death" Methuen 1987

### BBC First Radio Broadcast

Tues 14 Nov 1922 6pm GMT

(for central London)

MC 20♌31/Asc 26♌13

other cusps: 20♌36/7♄18/12♄32/29♄39

☉ 21♌35'24" ☽ 23♌22 ♀ 9♌02

♀ 7♌47R ♂ 10♌33 ♃ 4♌06 ♄ 15♌30

♅ 9♌41R ♆ 18♌10 ♁ 11♌00R

♁ t 28♌28' (d) ⊕ 28♌00

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