

Reconsidering the Zodiac's 29th Degree: Three Sides of an Enigma

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Within the 30 degrees that make up each sign of the zodiac, one degree has always contained a mystique that stirs curiosity. The 29th degree appears to carry both omen and overture; it speaks of some sort of unproven karma and stands out among other degrees as a harbinger of change. I am speaking of the pure 29th degree of a sign: This is not 28 rounded up; it is the degree that spans 29°00' – 29°59'.

The usual definition of a natal planet in the 29th degree has always seemed to miss the mark, in my opinion. The aura of endings that the degree implies has evoked an interpretation of a “last chance” to get something right, perhaps a task unfulfilled in past lives. While this definition may have merit, I don't think the degree is so readily defined.

The 29th degree appears to me to contain an encapsulation quality, which I will explain in more detail later in the article. To begin, however, I have observed a number of qualities in people who have planets or other factors in the 29th degree in their natal charts. These observations include:

1. *Pushing boundaries.* The 29th degree seems to involve both boundaries and individual limits. There is a risk-taking quality to the individual, tied to the planet at that degree, coupled with a need to see how far one can go. Here are some examples: **Charles Lindbergh**, aviation pioneer, had Jupiter at 29° Capricorn tied to travel, especially to foreign lands. Swimmer and author **Diana Nyad**, with the Sun at 29° Leo, swam 100 miles from Cuba to Key West on her fifth try at age 64. Comedienne **Joan Rivers** definitely pushed comedy boundaries and stayed at it until her death; she had a Mercury-Venus conjunction at 29° Gemini (and in the 3rd house, with both planets out of bounds in declination, indicating an extreme manifestation of the planets involved).

2. *Futuristic thinking.* People with the 29th degree prominent in their chart frequently have an unusual amount of foresight, whether in business or in specific work efforts. For example, **Walt Disney** had Venus at 29° Capricorn in the 5th house of entertainment and children. **Jules Verne**, science fiction novelist (*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and other works), had Uranus at 29° Capricorn; he predicted the use of submarines, helicopters, air-conditioning, and guided missiles long before these were actually invented. **Tim Berners-Lee**, considered the inventor of the World Wide Web, has Jupiter at 29° Cancer.

3. *Unusual childhoods or prodigy tendencies.* One often sees the 29th degree in the charts of people who display genius or great talent at an early age, or whose childhood was unusual in some way. This talent can sometimes be in a specific field. French prodigy **Jean-François Champollion**, who had earned a Doctor of Letters by age 19, eventually cracked the Egyptian hieroglyphics code; he had Saturn at 29° Pisces as well as a 29° Cancer Midheaven and Venus at 29° Sagittarius. **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, a legendary musical prodigy, had natal Venus at 29° Aquarius.

The 29th degree can also manifest as unusual conditions connected to birth. For instance, **Melissa Stern**, known in the media as “Baby M,” was a central figure in the 1988 battle between the surrogate mother who wished to keep her and the parents who had contracted with the surrogate to have the baby for them; she has the Moon at 29° Libra in the 3rd house.

4. *Tribal purpose.* Within the parameters of free will, I believe that we are all born to achieve an individual purpose and also to fulfill some sort of family destiny, with which our own direction may be closely tied. I think that explains, in part, why aspects, signs, and degrees, as well as element and mode emphasis, show up in the lineage of families. Sometimes the individuals have identities connected to the achievements of their ancestors. The person with a natal factor in the 29th degree has some sense of wanting or needing to carry out a family purpose, though they may not be consciously aware of this drive.

Examples include French emperor **Napoléon III**, who had a Sun–Mars conjunction at 29° Aries; he holds the distinction of being both the first titular president and the last monarch of France. **Lady Antonia Fraser**, English author of historical biographies, such as *Love and Louis XIV*, is from a family where scholarly research is a hallmark, and she has Saturn at 29° Capricorn. Actress **Drew Barrymore**, who comes from a family noted for dramatic talent, has the Midheaven at 29° Aquarius and Venus at 29° Pisces.

5. *Dynasty founding.* Perhaps related to tribal purpose, the 29th degree also shows up in the charts of dynasty founders, or in artistic expression involving fictional dynasties. For example, Queen **Catherine de Valois**, matriarch of French–English royalty, was co-founder of the Tudor dynasty, along with her lover, Owen Tudor; she had Mars at 29° Capricorn. **Joseph P. Kennedy**, patriarch of the American Kennedy family that produced a president and two senators, had Venus at 29° Virgo and Jupiter at 29° Scorpio. Film director **Francis Ford Coppola**, with Pluto at 29° Cancer, became famous for bringing the Corleone dynasty to the silver screen in *The Godfather* trilogy. [1] The 29th degree can also be found in the charts of people whose work lives on after their death.

6. *A shadow side.* Many times, a placement in the 29th degree can represent a shadow side that a person has difficulty assimilating. King **Henry VIII** was a gifted monarch who is remembered mainly for his multiple marriages, his break with Roman Catholicism, and the beheadings of two of his six wives; he was born with Pluto at 29° Libra, the sign of marriage, as well as the sign of law – in his case, Catholic canon law. **Billy Tipton**, also known as Dorothy Tipton, was a woman who lived life as a man in order to be taken seriously as a jazz musician in the 1930s, and had Neptune at 29° Cancer trining Venus at 29° Scorpio. American broadcast journalist **Charles Kuralt** had a secret lover who resided in a secret household for 29 years, unknown to his wife and family; his Midheaven was at 29° Capricorn, and his Venus was at 29° Leo.

7. *A sense of going it alone.* The late astrologer Bonnie Alexander said, in essence, that the planet at the latest degree in the natal chart is important, because it “represented a point of aloneness, describing energy that one had to act on their own to fulfill its destiny.” She noted that the energy nearly always was such “that a person not only acted alone, but that the feelings accompanying were a type of loneliness as well.” [2] Obviously, if the latest degree of a planet is 27 or 25 or another degree, this would apply to that planet. But any chart with a planet in the 29th degree would then have it occupying this “point of loneliness.” Two people with the 29th degree as the Point of Loneliness were cousins **Mary, Queen of Scots**, and **Elizabeth I** of England. Mary was imprisoned by Elizabeth after being ousted from ruling Scotland, so Mary functioned alone, without the support of her country. Elizabeth had her beheaded because of her alleged involvement in plots to assassinate Elizabeth in order to become Queen of England. Mary had Uranus at 29° Leo, the sign of monarchs, and she frequently acted without aid in her attempts to prevail throughout her chaotic reign and imprisonment. Elizabeth never married and had no direct heirs; with her Neptune being at 29° Pisces, her image and legacy were entirely of her own making. [3]

Janusian Thinking

It is not a new concept that the 29th degree, seemingly attached to two signs, contains a Janusian symbolism, carrying the quality of the god Janus with two faces, who looked both forward and backward and for whom the month of January is named. But there is more to the Janusian influence than its mythical symbolism of past and future. Janusian thinking is considered to be a hallmark of creative thinking at its most basic – bringing together opposites and creating a third entity in the process. Albert Rothenberg, a noted researcher on the creative process and a definer of Janusian thinking, says that it is “the capacity to conceive and utilize two or more opposite or contradictory ideas, concepts or images simultaneously.” [4] However, Janusian thinking is not only about creative art, even though that may be where it is most evident.

Arthur Koestler made a point about this quality in his book *Janus: A Summing Up*. He identified the natural polarity that exists between self-assertive and integrative

tendencies, with order being a characteristic of the balance of the two tendencies. [5] One can identify this polarity in the axis of the zodiac signs; one is not just, say, an Aries, but on the Aries–Libra axis. A type of polarity can also exist within the Janusian duality of the 29th degree, except that it tends to assimilate rather than to balance.

Napoléon III, for example, with his Sun–Mars conjunction at 29° Aries, carried the impetus of his dynasty. Yet, he was also true to the sign following Aries – Taurus. Under his rule, downtown Paris was renovated by clearing slums, widening streets, and constructing parks. He was sometimes called “the socialist emperor.” He also helped to bring about economic development based on a new type of banking institution, which sold stock to the public and then used the money to invest in French industry. [6] Yet, there was still something missing. Napoléon III obviously had to have significant vision to bring about the changes he began, something more related to the mutable mode than cardinal Aries or fixed Taurus.

The Missing Link

So, what is the missing link?

I believe the missing link to the 29th degree lies in the traditional *dwadashamsa* (or *dwad*) that it occupies. The *dwad* divides the 30 degrees of each sign by 12 into 2.5° segments, with each segment represented and influenced by a particular sign. Thus, the arc of 0.0°–2.5° Aries is assigned to Aries, and the arc of 2.5°–5.0° Aries is assigned to the next sign, Taurus, etc. (See the **Table 1 at end of article.**)

The table below shows how the 27.5°–30° segment of each sign is represented by the preceding sign. As examples, the 29th degree of Aries falls in the Pisces *dwad*, the 29th degree of Taurus falls in the Aries *dwad*, the 29th degree of Gemini falls in the Taurus *dwad*, and so on.

This is significant, because *the 29th degree will always have a dwad in the sign preceding its sign, and the sign will always be in a mode different from the two signs that the 29th degree straddles.* To illustrate, Napoléon III’s Sun–Mars at 29° Aries includes its own sign placement of Aries, a cardinal sign; the following sign, Taurus, a fixed sign; and its *dwad*, which would be the visionary Pisces (the sign preceding Aries).

Here’s another example: Charles Lindbergh’s Jupiter at 29° Capricorn reflects his attraction to great heights (literally), and the Aquarian influence of the following sign has to do with technology. But it seems that the Sagittarius *dwad* of 29° Capricorn speaks of his sense of adventure and his travel to foreign lands. (Lindbergh’s solo flights also carried out the “point of loneliness” in the 29th degree: He was frequently called the Lone Eagle and the Lone Wolf.)

In short, the 29th degree not only carries within it the creative Janusian quality, but *it also encapsulates all three modes: cardinal, fixed, and mutable*. Therein, I feel, lies the explanation for the all-encompassing urgency and expression of the 29th degree.

It should be considered that the symbolism of the modes plays out in a number of ways in astrology, besides the 29th degree. Depending on one's date of birth (and death), one can experience all three modes through the progressed Sun's positions. Within the three decanates of each sign, the triune mode experience is repeated again with the inclusion of all the elements of a sign. For example, the first decanate of the fire sign Leo (1°-10°) is ruled by the Sun; the second decanate of Leo (11°-20°) is assigned to the second fire sign of Sagittarius, ruled by Jupiter; and the third decanate (21°-30°), Aries, is ruled by Mars. Thus, the three fire signs — fixed Leo, mutable Sagittarius, and cardinal Aries — all reside in the decanates of the sign of Leo.

The three modes, combined with the four elements, are also reflected in that most formidable of aspect configurations, the grand cross.

So, astrology seems to show us that the experience of all three modes is something worthy of consideration. We can know and see this when planets and angles move into new decanates and new modes by progression and direction. But the encapsulation of all three modes within the 29th degree appears to function as a fractal of those larger changes, and may be a gift to the individuals with placements in that enigmatic degree. Those born with a planet or angle at 29 degrees of any sign perhaps have a more greater inherent need to express all three modes simultaneously. This can sometimes manifest as confusion or chaos, but creative solutions and Janusian thinking applications tend to emerge from those conditions.

This conundrum may be best explained by the late Richard Idemon's description of the modes, from *The Magic Thread*: "Cardinal is centrifugal, going out from self toward a goal. Fixed is centripetal, going inward from the periphery toward the center. Mutable is a pulsating, fluctuating back and forth function." [7] Thus, the modes form an undercurrent in the 29th degree, with the cardinal mode directing, the fixed mode sustaining, and the mutable mode visualizing and assigning meaning. The modes also seem to reflect what André Barbault observed as the "three primary instincts to be found in all living things — self-assertion, self-preservation, self-expression." [8]

This explains why a placement in the 29th degree in a natal chart can coincide with a nature that can't resist obsession, dedication, urgency, and inspiration. The 29th degree captures the modes with their mystical power of three into one entity, resulting in an energy that is clearly meant to be used, not feared.

Table 1: Dwadashamsa Table

	0°	2°30'	5°	7°30'	10°	12°30'	15°	17°30'	20°	22°30'	25°	27°30'
♈	♈	♉	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♉	♉	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈
♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈	♈

Chart Data and Sources

(in alphabetical order)

Drew Barrymore, February 22, 1975; 11:51 a.m. PST; Culver City, CA, USA; AA: birth record/birth certificate (BR/BC) in hand, from the Wilsons.

Tim Berners-Lee, June 8, 1955; London, England; X: date without a time; Paula Gassmann quotes him for the date, though he said he did not know his time of birth.

Jean-François Champollion, December 23, 1790; 2:00 a.m. LMT; Figeac, France; B: Ruth Dewey quotes biographer, C. W. Ceram.

Francis Ford Coppola, April 7, 1939; 1:38 a.m. EST; Detroit, MI, USA; AA: *Contemporary American Horoscopes*; *Gauquelin Book of American Charts*.

Catherine de Valois, October 27, 1401 OS (Old Style: Julian calendar); 9:34 a.m. LMT; Paris, France; AA: Martin Harvey in *Nativitas I* quotes Latin records.

Walt Disney, December 5, 1901; 12:35 a.m. CST; Chicago, IL, USA; A: Marion March quotes Disney studio.

Elizabeth I, September 17, 1533 NS (New Style: Gregorian calendar); 2:54 p.m. LMT; Greenwich, England; AA: Martin Harvey in *Nativitas I* quotes Latin records.

Lady Antonia Fraser, August 27, 1932; 2:45 a.m. GDT; London, England; A: David Fisher quotes Joan Revill, from her; Dana Holliday, same from her.

Henry VIII, June 28, 1491 OS; 8:45 a.m. LMT; Greenwich, England; AA: Martin Harvey in *AJ*, Summer/1972, quotes BR.

Joseph P. Kennedy, September 6, 1888; 7:06 a.m. EST; Boston, MA, USA; DD: various times given. (The placements of Venus and Jupiter in the 29th degrees in this chart do not require an accurate birth time.)

Charles Kuralt, September 10, 1934; 9:00 p.m. EST; Wilmington, NC, USA; AA: BC in hand from the Wilsons.

Charles Lindbergh, February 4, 1902; 1:30 a.m. CST; Detroit, MI, USA; AA: quoted BC/BR by Lindbergh's mother.

Mary, Queen of Scots, December 18, 1542 NS; 1:12 p.m. LMT; Linlithgow, Scotland; C: accuracy in question, but the date alone gives Uranus at 29° Leo. [

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, January 27, 1756; 8:00 p.m. LMT; Salzburg, Austria; AA: Lois Rodden quotes his father's letter in a biography by J. G. Prodhomme.

Napoléon III (Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte); April 20, 1808; 1:00 a.m. LMT; Paris, France; A: Arthur Blackwell quotes Pearce, data from news at the time taken from the French paper *Moniteur*.

Diana Nyad, August 22, 1949; New York, NY, USA; X: birth date (without time) from Wikipedia. (The Sun was at 29° Leo the entire day of her birth.)

Joan Rivers, June 8, 1933; 2:00 a.m. EDT; Brooklyn (Kings County), NY, USA; A: Shelley Ackerman quotes her, from memory.

Melissa Stern (aka "Baby M"), March 27, 1986; 1:32 p.m. EST; Long Branch, NJ, USA; B: *People* magazine 10/20/86.

Billy Tipton (born Dorothy Tipton), December 29, 1914; 2:00 a.m. CST; Oklahoma City, OK, USA; A: News clippings in hand from Spokane, WA newspaper, Joan McEvers.

Jules Verne, February 8, 1828; 12:00 p.m. LMT; Nantes, France; AA: Gauquelin Vol. 6/794. Same in *Sabian Symbols* No. 928.

References and Notes

1. Coppola also has relatives in the field of entertainment. His daughter, Sofia, is a film director; his sons work in the industry, and his nephew is actor Nicholas Cage. His mother had been an actress, and her father had been a playwright and songwriter. His sister, Talia Shire, is also an actress. It seems that the performing arts are often tied to a family destiny.

2. Leigh Westin, "A Tribute to Bonnie Armstrong," in *NCGR Research Journal*, Vol. 4, Spring 2014, p. 92.

3. It was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots — James I — who became king of England upon Elizabeth's death.

4. Albert Rothenberg, "The Process of Janusian Thinking in Creativity," in *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 24, p. 195
5. Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up*, Random House, 1978.
6. This is a reminder of how the sign of Taurus, the Bull, is naturally associated with the 2nd house, which is connected to money, and defines a market that even goes by the name of "stock." In the United States, upward trends of the markets are called "bull" markets.
7. Richard Idemon, *The Magic Thread*, Samuel Weiser, 1996, p. 19.
8. André Barbault, "Facing Janus: An Analysis of the Extremes of Saturn," in *Orpheus: Voices in Contemporary Astrology*, ed. Suzi Harvey, Consider, 2000, p. 13.