

Age Difference in Relationships

by Dane Rudhyar

Because of social and educational conditions which I shall discuss presently, a very large section of the American youth recently has been adopting an attitude toward the age problem in marriage which has results far more important than they seem to be when considered superficially. The parents of these youths have helped in many cases to encourage this attitude, not realizing what it is leading to. It has become fashionable for teen-agers to marry in college, even often before ending high school. The prevalent idea is that the boy and girl should be very nearly the same age.

Seen from the astrological point of view, this trend has significant results — and results which can well be considered to be rather unfortunate, generally speaking. Not unlike results follow also the vast multiplication of births; and to a lesser extent, these are also influenced by the lengthening of the average life of human beings past, let us say, age 60. All these trends have been discussed and studied by sociologists and economists, for they affected deeply the balance of forces in a society and in any specific grouping of people. But they have not, to my knowledge, been seen on the background of astrological ideas; and I believe they should, for astrology gives to them an added meaning.

The Teen-Age Marriage Problem

Many articles and books have been written to explain why young people today tend to marry very young. The most obvious reason is, naturally, that co-education and the constant and quite free "dating" of boys and girls since an early age, plus the ever-increasing stress on sex made by television and movies (and as well the subtle pressure of advertising, "glamour" products and seductive styles for teenagers), have all built up a sexual stimulation which has to find some effective release. This gives rise to many problems, as everybody knows; and in spite of the rather tragic example given by some of their parents' marriage (or most often marriages), the teen-agers see in a socially respectable union and a "home life" the most satisfactory solution. The youthful love affair in the back seat of a car may have its charm, but it assuredly can lead to much trouble; at best, it is only a stopgap or preliminary measure. The parents — especially those of the girls — also add their pressures, as the marriage removes some of their anxieties.

Quite obviously, as in schools and colleges, the various ages or grades keep more or less separate from each other. The logical result is for boys and girls of nearly the same age to "go steady" together. A year or at most two years represent, therefore, the maximum difference of ages in the majority of cases — even though, of course, a boy and girl can

meet and fall in love in various places and a college friend may well have an older brother or younger sister who may arouse a deeper feeling, just because they are not as familiar and chum-like as the boy or girl in one's own class.

The sense of "familiarity" and a common social background are factors which are generally regarded (at least theoretically) as productive of "happiness" and "understanding." The principle seems to be that the more alike in age, experience and background a boy and a girl are, the smoother their marriage is likely to be. This is a relatively new concept, especially as far as the age similarity is concerned. Forty or more years ago, it was considered far better for the prospective husband to be some five or more years older than his fiancée. For one thing, the man was to be definitely the head of the household and the provider of income; he, therefore, was expected to have an already somewhat established position in society and business. He was really to be the boss, to replace the father for the innocent and sheltered girl he was to marry: thus, he had to be in every possible way somewhat older in order to fulfill well his "social role" — and marriage in the past had always been a mostly (often exclusively) social affair.

Today, evidently, it is not — that is, not primarily. It is the result of an attraction between two personalities who somehow feel that they will do better in life and fulfill their separate natures more effectively by living together and building a home and family — for their own joint personal purposes. If marriage does not produce this expected result, then one quite logically starts, or falls into, some other relationship. As from the personal (or ego) standpoint, we feel more at ease with what is similar, or at least familiar, to us — as every ego is basically enamored of itself — the logical result is that we look, unconsciously if not consciously, for someone very much like us and who has gone through experiences similar to ours. Thus, we fall in love with someone in our school, our milieu — someone of our age. We might call this love with a close "relative."

Here, astrology enters the picture. Someone about my own age will be someone whose birth-chart is not too different from mine, at least insofar as the slower planets are concerned. Both of us have entered together as human persons the cycles of the large planets. We are linked by time similarities; we are carried by the same wave, perhaps within the same cycle which the solar ingress of the precedent spring opened.

The difference between the faster planets' positions, the house positions, and so on, can be very important; **yet we love to feel the basic similarities.** The same fashions of our same generation have molded us. Perhaps it is because there are so many conflicts, so much chaos in the modern world that the youth instinctively yearns for the familiar, the known, the safe, the socially rational — even though now, **in our period,** they could choose mates from very different races, temperaments and ages, in view of the easy way in which modern people mix particularly in America. But what is familiar is basically like ourselves. Perhaps it would be fine to marry a variant of ourselves . . . if we were at peace with ourselves! But we are not. Two persons, each of whom is torn by the same conflicts and the

same anxieties, each of whom is unable to live with himself, cannot be expected to live with each other happily, harmoniously, fruitfully.

If the conflicts within the boy and those within the girl were basically different, then each partner might contribute to the other's search for a solution. Marriage could be a sharing of solutions independently arrived at, from different points of view. Today, in most youthful marriages, marriage is a sharing of insoluble problems: indeed, it is often not even a sharing of problems, when neither the boy nor the girl is really aware of what the problems are, or often that there are problems — ego problems above all, problems forced upon the youth by ineffectual parents and a society teetering at the edge of a total precipice.

If the partners are born with their Jupiters, Saturns, and so on, relatively apart, they look at the social and spiritual challenges of their lives from somewhat different points of view. Each partner can see the other's difficulties from an angle which the other has not experienced. Each one may bring to the other treasures of understanding and experiences unknown to him. The more different the partners up to a certain point — which varies with the scope of the intuitive and mental perceptions of the partners — the richer will their togetherness tend to be. But, alas, modern youth is led to believe — by their elders and by advertisements, books, movies, and so on — that a "rich" existence means "to have fun" in a Jaguar, in and out of a suburban home (mortgaged to the hilt, of course).

Likewise, astrologers tend to advise marriage to people whose birth-charts make many "good aspects" to each other. However, as I see it, the only aspects which count essentially are conjunctions (or, at times, oppositions) between planets; they count as potential links through which a circulation of energies may flow. But they are not to be judged good or bad. The real problem is only: will the union be significant or not? The planets linking the two charts simply inform us as to what the significance of the union would be, if it takes place at all.

There are significant linkings when it is not the same planets in both charts which are found on the same degree (or very near the same degree) of the zodiac. We need to be completed and harmonized by what we are not; we do not need to face mirrors to reflect what is in us. If I see myself in another, I have that less reason to be fully myself. Do we want marriages of hermaphrodites? No; we need real men meeting real women. Of course, a man can (and indeed should) have at some level feminine characteristics. If his wife, at that level, has masculine qualities, then their union is indeed for both a source of total growth and fulfillment.

Astrologically speaking, an ideal contact between boy and girl would be one bringing the Sun in one birth-chart in conjunction with the Moon in the other chart, Mars with Venus, Jupiter with Saturn. Real marriage should be a union of opposites who know themselves to be complementary. The more two persons have the same planets in the same signs, the more the birth-charts are alike, the less they can add to each other's life fulfillment in terms of increased scope of understanding and richness of experience.

The birth-charts should have contacts, but contacts between different planets. If all the planets outside of the earth's orbit are in the same signs in both charts which tends to happen if two people are born a few days or weeks apart something is missing in the marriage. It may turn out to be pleasant comradeship if the two partners are more or less at peace with their own selves, but it is not a real "marriage." A notable difference of age adds to the possibility of such a real marriage, such a union of different approaches to the challenges of life.

Human Automation

Alas, the idea of "being alike" and conforming is sweeping the world in one form or another. In the past, relatively small tribal groups of men stressed their community of origin — one ancestor, one blood, one creed, one land, one culture. But there were quite a few of these homogeneous groups — and each was fighting the other **just because** they each worshipped similarity, sameness and ritual conformism. **The more you believe in similarity, the more you are psychologically bound to fight those whose own type of sameness differs from yours.** Wars between tribes were necessary for the very reason that within each tribe, homogeneity and the group narcissism of an unchangeable tradition were worshipped.

If the whole world believed in the same thing with a quasi-absolute sameness, this would be ghastly. Indeed, it could not happen, psychologically speaking. The trend to a global conformity has to be offset today by a cold war between two seemingly basic ideologies, by racial conflicts, and so on — or else mankind as a whole would have to be facing the "humanity" of some other planet whose background is basically dissimilar, a confrontation which does not need to mean a "war of the planets"!

The only other solution is that every human being should believe essentially and practically in his or her own uniqueness of selfhood — but believe in it with the added urge to become enriched by closest contacts with persons who are different from him or her. There is no real greatness in the merging of individuals who are similar, but only in the harmonizations of individual dissimilarities, through love — **the real love of a true individual for another true individual.**

The obvious astrological fact is that the number of human births keeps on increasing enormously, more and more people will be born with the same, or nearly the same, birth-charts. We are moving toward not only industrial, social and cultural conformity, but also astrological conformity. We will not be able to claim our birth-chart as our own! Every minute, ten babies may be born with the same ascendant. While the Moon passes through one zodiacal sign, thousands of infants will cry out the same astrological "name" (i.e., birth-chart) to a tired-out God-father Sky. Our "humanhood" is being diluted into sameness. Collectivism is overpowering the singleness of individuals; and each year's or month's crop of babies and adolescents will be pastured in the same school, blending their samenesses in

crowded communal barracks. The picture of modern China should make one stop and wonder.

Here we come to the deeper meaning of "time." An individuality should, I believe, be regarded as a moment of time — as one single phase of the cosmic process of existence. Each individual is, as an individual, a characteristic phase of this process. By living as an individual, he or she fulfills a particular, non-duplicatable function in the universe of man. One function — one individual person! Any duplication or multiplication of persons born to fill one particular function dilutes the human potential of every one of these persons. The great advances in human civilization have been made by small groups of individuals bursting forth with creative energy. Births, in these groups, were at a significant distance from each other. Every man had — at least symbolically speaking — his own unique birth-chart, signature of his unduplicated individuality and destiny.

The present wild proliferation of human births is indeed a kind of biological-spiritual automation. The "mass man" is the inevitable result — many persons stamped with the same cosmic dye, with the same birth-chart! Of course, each person's reactions to this same cosmic structure of individuality and destiny can and will be to some extent different; but the effort to react must tend to be diluted — the drive toward individualization (or, Jung might say, "individuation") will inevitably lose something of its essential dynamism, for we know what happens when ten persons are there to do a single job! This is bureaucracy in its worst aspect.

Indeed, we seem to be heading toward an astrological kind of "bureaucracy" of mankind in which no man will dare claim and assume individual responsibility for his own particular task. Marriages will be between narcissistic persons whose ideal will be to conform as pleasantly as possible to the same fashion of living and the same age type!