

# *Age Differences in Modern Marriage*

*by Dane Rudhyar*

**"Look Magazine" (November 28, 1967) featured an article,** illustrated with beautiful photographs by the famous photographer Yousuf Karsh, dealing with the happy marriages of half a dozen contemporary celebrities with much younger women. The greatest age disparity was that between Pablo Casals, the famous Spanish cellist, age 91, and his wife Martina, age 30. Other age differences were from over 22 years (Marchese Emilio Pucci and his wife) to 53 years (the great photographer Steichen, 88, and his wife, 35). Comments from the women regarding to their marriages were very warm and bespoke deep feelings for their marriage partners.

## **The Purpose of Marriage**

I believe that much confusion arises in the minds of the more progressive and mentally developed level of our modern society because they are reluctant to accept the fact that marriage can mean two quite different things at two different levels of consciousness and activity. It has always had **potentially** such a twofold meaning and purpose; but today this dualism is more than ever to be stressed, even though our old and largely obsolete religious and socio-biological traditions still stand in the way of a clear and totally conscious recognition of this fact.

We should realize that these traditions had their roots in what might be called the "tribal state" of human and social evolution. Men lived in relatively small communities insulated against each other, bound to biological and agricultural values, worshipping the processes of life and bent upon the multiplication of "seeds" — whether at the vegetable, the animal, or the human level. The divine command, "Increase and multiply," was indeed a justification of the practical imperatives inherent in societies constantly fighting against scarcity and seeking a larger "living space" — seeking also to develop intellectual means to discover techniques for the mastery of natural forces so as to overcome this state of scarcity.

The "Great Religions" of the last two or three millennia translated these biosocial imperatives into moral precepts. The laws of "life" became transfigured into the one great law of "love," whether in Buddhism or Christianity. Yet the life urges and the struggle against scarcity and underpopulation remained the very roots of our society and our religious traditional ways of life, even though much attention was given to the **flowering** of moral, cultural, and spiritual values.

In such a condition of personal, family, and social living, marriage is inevitably founded upon the twofold ideals of (1) the procreation of many children, to increase the spread of the human species; and (2) the perpetuation of the particular social, religious, and cultural values which characterize and indeed "ensoul" a particular racial group, community, or nation.

Marriage all over the world has been until around 1900 a social contract for a biological and social purpose. The biological aspect was mostly taken care of by the woman, the social-cultural by the man. At both levels of activity, the goal was the increase of "seed" — more children and more social-economic-cultural productivity. We are still being hypnotized today by the quantitative concept of the Gross National Product — the G.N.P. must increase by a certain percentage every year if the nation is to retain its world influence and prestige and there are still countries trying to stimulate a larger production of babies. These factors (the social, economic, and the biological) are intimately connected.

We have, nevertheless, come to a situation in which both the explosion of population and the explosion of technology have become the most crucial dangers facing humanity — dangers far greater than international tension because the latter is largely based on the basic philosophy at the root of the former. We are facing mass starvation and the wild rise of starving mobs in the so-called "underdeveloped" countries of Asia, Africa, South America; and we are witnessing the rapidly increasing poisoning of cultivated soil, air, and water in all "developed" nations. These are the facts we must face when we discuss the values of marriage.

It is clear that where an increase in productivity (biological and socio-economic) is the one basic goal, the union in youth of a man and woman of about the same age is the logical thing to be desired. As soon as the body of the girl and the nervous-emotional reactions following adolescence are stabilized, she should produce children — the more the better because it will increase the Gross National Product and provide more human substance to industry and military power.

Likewise, as soon as the mind of the boy has been sufficiently trained and is able to operate efficiently according to the basic concepts and ideals of our society and culture (so that it may contribute to the expansion of the G.N.P. and the international prestige of our country and our "way of life"), the boy should settle down. He should find his place in the vast scheme of national productivity; and, being safely married and with children to support, he will have less chances to be lured away from the social and economic role for which he has been trained by non-conforming and glamorous ideals, by individualistic and centrifugal self-assertion.

As today the educational process is based on co-education and boys and girls of the same age who constantly meet in school in an atmosphere of emotional and more or less sexual permissiveness, often leading to compulsive marriages, it is evident that marriages tend more than ever to unite youngsters born in the same year, or nearly so. In old Europe, before co-education and the spread of woman's crusade for equal rights, the man usually

did not marry until he had a good social situation; on the other hand, the parents of the sheltered girl were only too willing to see her married early so that it was considered best if the husband was at least four or five years older than the bride. Being older, he could be a stronger, more mature, and more authoritative figure in the girl's new home situation.

## The Astrology of Marriage

What does this mean in terms of Astrology? It means that today the major planets — at least beginning with Jupiter, then Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto — are to be found in practically the same zodiacal degrees in the birth-charts of the husband and the wife. If there are differences between the charts of the marriage partners, these differences apply only to the more personal planets — Mars, Venus, Mercury — and the two Lights — the Sun and Moon.

This matter of chart differences is a crucial and very important point in considering how the development and the expected purposes of the marriage will operate. A boy and a girl with the slower planets in their charts (Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond) at the same place in the zodiac will tend to respond to the larger social and spiritual issues of their generation in a manner that is basically similar, notwithstanding personal-emotional differences. Their **individual conformism** or their **individual rebellion** will be strengthened by marriage. They will tend not to question their joint, basic attitudes to life; but, on the other hand, they will also be led in many cases to stress their emotional-personal differences in order to find in these supports for any eagerness they may well display for personal independence from their mate.

A marriage between two persons with a great difference in age will bring all the slower and larger planets in the two birth-charts into different zodiacal signs. What this means is that the social senses, the drives for security, the relationships to transforming spiritual drives, and the modes of awareness of vast cosmic issues of the partners will tend to have a different quality or rhythm. Is that unfortunate? On the contrary, it should be a very positive factor in a marriage the purpose of which is **to help each partner to live fuller, deeper, more individualized and spiritually transforming lives.**

The real issue here is that of what constitutes a truly "human" life. A human being is a being who can always become more than he is. But this "becoming greater" is not accomplished, in most cases, through a life with those who are just like him — i.e., through sameness and group conforming. A life among people who are just like you and are reacting just as you do in terms of social conforming is a tribal kind of life. It offers to the individual no real distinction because he is hardly distinguishable from his group. His basic individual self is indistinct because patterned out by the same forces as those which have molded his or her partner. Distinctness in such a situation is sought in superficial personal and emotional reactions to small events or choices; and these are given an importance out of relevance to the essential individuality and destiny of the person.

The situation which is most conducive to spiritual growth in the partners is found where most of the smaller planets and the Sun and Moon are relatively close in both charts — perhaps in the same zodiacal signs — but where the big planets (starting with Jupiter) are in different signs, whether in so-called harmonious or discordant aspects. In such a case, at the more intimate and personal level, there is a similarity of response to everyday life and its challenges; but the two orientations to deeper issues are dissimilar. Because they are dissimilar, growth and self-transformation are made more possible. This may mean friction, tensions, perhaps conflicts; but these are necessary for real inner growth and the actualization of the birth potential of the two partners along the lines inherent in the essential individuality of each.

This is what I have called, many years ago, the principle of "dissonant harmony" — in contradistinction to the type of "consonant" harmony found in the tribal state of human society. In the latter, unity is found in the past: the same blood, the same tradition, the same way of life, the same bondage to some deified past root factor (a Great Ancestor, a worshipped Document, etc.). In the state of "dissonant harmony," unity is in the future; it is a goal to work for, instead of an actual (or, more often than not, symbolic) fact way back in the past, subservience to which is taken for granted and, indeed, **compulsive**.

### The Transforming Values of Tensions

In stating the above, I am evidently indulging in generalizations; and, in astrology as well as in any field, this is always a rather dangerous procedure. I am simply trying to bring to the attention of the astrological student — or of anyone asking for astrological advice — what can be the implications of the marriage of persons whose births are so close that there is little or no difference between their slower planets — planets which, after all, establish the native's personal orientation and response to society, to the universe, and to the ways in which basic transformations may occur in the life and the consciousness.

Marriages of persons of the same school class tend to limit the possibilities of individual growth and self-transformation because growth and self-transformation demand some kind of tension between opposite factors which affect only moods and small decisions, for these are in most instances disruptive at a level where quiet and concentration are much needed in everyday life. The "tensions" to which I refer should be basic.

Basic tensions cannot, in most cases, be resolved — and perhaps should not be resolved. Green and red, if considered to be opposite colors, should not be resolved into a grey kind of combination. Each will gain intensity from its juxtaposition to the other. This is the secret of dynamic living. But today people generally prefer easy living — and this can only mean **conformity**. I repeat, because there is in modern youth a gnawing urge to be "different" and "unique," they seek to satisfy this urge by seeking difference, freedom, originality in irrelevant and superficial self-indulgence in personal moods.

There are, of course, many cases in which a young person will seek a much older mate because there is the need to transfer an unsatisfied Father Image or Mother Image upon the

marital partner. But there is nothing wrong about this, for if this need exists, marrying a person of one's age is very likely indeed to lead to deep dissatisfaction and divorce. Marriage with a much older person may be the only way a second marriage after separation or the partner's death may bring the kind of more natural fulfillment which the older person could probably not entirely provide.

It is usually easier for a young woman to marry a man twice or even three times her age than for a young man to marry an elderly woman; and the reason for this should be quite obvious because of the nature of the two sexes. Yet there are significant cases in which a man reached great happiness in union with a woman 20 years or so older. The main problem here is, in any case, the character of the attraction and the quality and achievements of the older person.

In the instances given in the issue of "Look Magazine" to which I referred in the beginning of this article, the older men were all men of notable achievements. Their young wives had been their pupils, models, or admirers; and several had notable talents in their own individual fields — all of which definitely helps, including the fact that the men were in very satisfactory financial situations. But the general principle can apply even without these advantages. Yet, in other cases, obviously the situation is made very different because the **motives** for the marriage may be superficial, social — or, in the older person, purely a matter of sexual attraction.

A marriage between two persons nearly 30 years apart in age will bring their two Saturns in the same sign. A 12-year age difference will do the same for the two Jupiters. These situations can be very significant in that they may well emphasize the Saturn or Jupiter approach to life in the marriage. Theoretically, if these larger planets in the two charts form sextiles, quintiles or trines, this is a better indication for harmony in diversity; but squares and oppositions also have their values where the marriage can be the means through which the scope and quality of the partners' consciousness and of their approaches to life need being transformed and perhaps transfigured.

In the matter of comparison of birth-charts, I feel that most astrologers take only a very narrow and spiritually inadequate view. Yet if the partners-to-be are looking for a marriage of conforming productivity, of child-bearing and help to the G.N.P. — and their comfort in Suburbia — then indeed the astrologer should recommend combinations supposed to guarantee blissful conjugal happiness — if there is such in our age of personalized conflicts and overwhelming social and cosmic pressures.

In this brief study, I have not mentioned the relationship between the planets and the angles (or houses) of the birth-charts of marriage partners — nor the Moon's Nodes. To study these factors would require many examples and technical discussions. Every case has to be seen and studied individually. Yet the change in the trend of modern marriages is an important factor. So, of course, is the change in the character and the motives for marriage. From being a strictly biological and social-cultural-economic matter solved mainly by the parents and including clear-cut class distinction, marriage — since only a relatively few

decades, not even a century! — has become in most cases a private affair decided upon by two persons intent upon finding through this union personal fulfillment, happiness, and deep stimulation. This is a tremendous change which poses big problems.

It poses them also to the astrologer who is being consulted in such a matter; and it requires from the consultant a type of understanding and wisdom which should take into consideration the vast challenges which our age of world-wide crisis and transformation poses to all men and women, young and old alike. It is indeed a challenging area for thought and consideration.