

Great Turning Points in a Human Life by Dane Rudhyar

We all know that a human body goes through a pattern of changes during its life span; it grows up, matures and gradually loses its resilience and vital energy. Its organs — particularly its endocrine glands, which produce all-important hormones — undergo at times processes of readjustment; the harmonious and delicate balance of their activities becomes disturbed, then re-establishes (if all goes well) in a different way. Of these periods of organic and glandular readjustment, what we call adolescence and the "change of life" are the most frequently mentioned, for they have a quite obvious repercussion upon the emotional life and behavior of persons passing through them.

There are other turning points in the development of an individual which, though related to less-noticeable body changes, are nevertheless of profound importance in the unfoldment of character. One can define "character" in several ways. For the purpose of this article, I shall say that the word refers to a person's attitude toward his (or her) self (or individuality) in relation to the world at large, particularly in relation to the people with whom he (or she) is closely associated, either in kinship, friendship or business comradeship.

Let me explain: what establishes your character is what, in the deepest part of yourself, you feel, **you are** as a person, as a self. You may feel inferior or superior, frustrated or self-assured, depressed by your own inability to act successfully or buoyant and ready to conquer the world. You may feel that you are an individual unique and filled with a sense of mission or destiny; you may by instinct, and perhaps out of fear or deep-down insecurity, seek the comfort of a conformist's attitude. You may love to single yourself out by what you do, what you wear, what your unusual feeling responses are to ordinary or extraordinary life situations; or you may fear to be conspicuous, are shy, hate the spotlight, rely heavily on tradition.

I mention only the most obvious opposites of character attitudes, but there are endless varieties. Each type of character represents not only a particular inner feeling of what you are **as a self**, but also a way of meeting all human **relationships** and the small or big challenges of everyday life. "Self" and "relationship" are the two poles of every human action; and in an astrological birth-chart, these two always interconnected and complementary poles of character are represented by the ascendant and the descendant — i.e., the cusps of the first and seventh houses, which are the actual eastern and western sections of the horizon at the time of birth. The signs and degrees of the zodiac found there and whatever planet or planets may "rise" and "set" are the main astrological indicators,

respectively, of what self means to you, the native, and of how you approach most characteristically all human relationships.

The two periods of organic changes above mentioned, adolescence and the "change of life," have a profound effect upon the development of character; however, what I consider the most fundamental turning points in this development do not come at these times, but years later.

More accurately, what is noticeable is a kind of wave pattern of development which is based upon a 7-year and 14-year rhythm.

The 7-year cycle in a human life has been known to ancient civilizations; we find references to it as well in the Christian-European society. The Jesuit educators used to say that, provided they can take care of a child during the first seven years of his life, it did not matter what would happen later. Seven was considered to be the "age of reason," after which the child was supposed to be "responsible." Some European occultists have claimed that at that time the "soul" for the first time enters into, and can act from inside of, the personality of the child. Fourteen is usually considered — depending on social heredity and climate — as the time of puberty. At twenty-one, a boy or girl definitely "comes of age," is accepted as a voting citizen, can sign business contracts, etc.

Then comes the twenty-eighth birthday; and it is to this period that I want to pay special attention. It used to be said that the normal or theoretical length of a human life was "three score and ten" years; but now the life expectancy in America is reaching beyond 70. Significantly, since Uranus was discovered at the dawn of the industrial and democratic era, we have now a new archetype — a theoretical pattern — for a human life, as Uranus' cycle of revolution around the zodiac is almost exactly 84 years. Fourteen years have been added to the old-type of human life pattern. Eighty-four is 12×7 ; thus, we have, a complete twelvefold "zodiac" of 7-year periods.

This twelvefold zodiac subdivides itself very significantly into three 28-year periods. It is, we might say, as if, from this Uranian point of view, a person was born in Aries, became 28 in Leo, 56 in Sagittarius. Many years ago, in my book **New Mansions for New Men** [coming to the Rudhyar Archival Project during Autumn 2007], I spoke of these three periods as the first, second and third births — i.e., birth as a physical organism determined by parental heredity and developing biologically, then psychically, within a particular social and cultural environment which from the very beginning moulds its emotional and intellectual attitudes, then, rebirth as an individual, asserting (if all goes well) his other self in an individualized manner in order to fulfill a more or less unique destiny; lastly, a possible final readjustment of this individuality by means of which a more mature, more mellowed, wiser participation in social affairs is made possible.

This means, thus, that there are two fundamental turning points in this 84-year long, theoretical pattern of development — around age 28 and around age 56. Whatever you have been born as, whatever your birth environment and your body started to be, there are two great turning points in your more or less mature life as an adult when you can **reorient**

and transform your character and the nature of your capacity for human relationships. You can "see" yourself inherently; as a result, you can meet others also in a new way. You can do that between the ages of 27 and 30; you can do it once more between the ages of 56 and 60.

Of course, the change is likely to be gradual throughout your life, particularly every seventh year. Yet during the two age periods just mentioned, the possibility of a very basic transformation of your character and of your most essential response to people and to society is usually very strongly emphasized. It can often be emphasized to the point of a radical crisis — and "crisis," etymologically speaking, means a period of **decision**.

The reason I speak of periods of years (27 to 30 and 56 to 60) is because during these periods, several important astrological cycles come to an end and a new-beginning. By considering the nature and significance of these cycles, one should be able to understand better the meaning of these two great turning points.

Individual "Rebirth": 27 to 30

The main cycles to consider are:

- (1) the about 27 1/2-year cycle of the progressed Moon, at the end of which the latter returns to its natal position;
- (2) the cycle of Saturn, which takes nearly 30 years to bring the planet to its natal position;
- (3) the progressed lunation cycle of almost 30 years, at the end of which the Sun and Moon are in the same relative position to each other (i.e., phase) as they were — at birth.

One should also realize that Jupiter and Saturn are at age 30 in an aspect opposed to (thus, complementary toward) their natal aspect. If, for instance, they were conjunct at "birth, at around 30, they must be in opposition. This is significant because in the second great turning point of individual development, they will be, at about 59, in the same relative position as at birth — and, what is more, at about the same zodiacal places. The great Jupiter-Saturn cycle is actually a 59- to 60-year cycle, even though the two planets meet every 20 years.

A similar and less known situation occurs with regard to the Moon's nodes, which constitute a very important axis in a birth-chart, nearly as significant psychologically speaking as the natal horizon or meridian. The north and south nodes are, of course, always in opposition to each other, as the nodes are the two ends of a line which cuts the zodiac — a line produced by the intersection of the plane of the ecliptic (actually, the orbit of the earth) and of the plane of the Moon's revolution around our globe.

The nodal axis relates symbolically the entire yearly path of the apparently moving Sun and the monthly path of the Moon — thus, the solar and lunar components of a total personality. The north node is essentially a point of reception of energy, of ingestion and assimilation; the south node, a point of release and letting go — whether it be the excretion of unassimilated and unwanted material or the projection of seed; and there can be a

psycho-mental seed (as in the works of a great artist or prophetic figure) as well as a biological seed.

The nodes take between 18 and 19 years to make a complete cycle of the zodiac. It is closer to 19 years; and this 19-year cycle was much venerated in antiquity, particularly in Persia. It is still the basis of the calendar of the religious movement started by Persian prophets a century ago and now spreading widely, as it seeks to establish a new "World Order" — the Bahai faith. Three of these nodal cycles make almost exactly 56 years on an average — a very interesting fact. Thus, when a person is about 28, the positions of the Moon's nodes in the zodiac are inverted in comparison to their natal positions — a cycle and one-half have taken place. The north node is at the place occupied at birth by the south node, and vice versa.

This means that around 28 to 30, a definite inversion occurs in the relationship between Jupiter and Saturn and similarly, with regard to the Moon's nodal positions. On the other hand, the progressed Moon ends its first complete cycle. The Sun-Moon relationship, by progression, is similar to what it was at birth; and Saturn also — has reached back to its natal place.

If we interpret these cyclic indications together, we can see how they fit what, theoretically at least — or potentially — is occurring to a human being from 28 to 30. The Moon and Saturn represent essentially the two parents — or, in a more general and psychological sense, the kind of "images" a young person builds up within his other consciousness of **mother** and **father**. The actual parent may be quite different from these images; yet the images constitute the effective reality of the relationship which has been built through the years between the child and adolescent and his other parents. This relationship usually goes even farther than the parents themselves; it expands and generalizes itself into a relationship between the youth and his religion or his community (an extended "Mother Image") and between the youth and all symbols of authority and legality ("Father Image").

From age 28 to 30, a cycle ends with regard to all these relationships. The first period of growth of character and individuality closes; a new one begins — or at least can and normally **should** begin. The first period, which began with physical birth, has been obviously dominated by the development of the physical body and by the need gradually to assimilate something of the culture and social-religious heritage of the child's human environment. The youth may have readily fitted in this environment and the traditions of his people; or he may have to a greater or lesser extent rebelled against what was presented to and mostly forced upon his growing personality. In either case, he is bound by this biological, social and cultural set of influences, for we are bound by what we rebel against, or hate, as much as (in a basic sense) by what we follow passively or love.

The first period of 28-30 years is a kind of **thesis**; and it is quite naturally followed by an **antithesis**. That is to say, the youth who for these near 30 years has actually lived dominated, whether he likes it or not, by **collective** influences now has come to the great

turning point when he can really begin to assert **his true individuality** — his unique destiny, his particular function in the universe, his (to some degree) creative "vocation." However, he is not at all certain that he will make such an assertion of individual selfhood. He may live merely as one of the many who follow passively the ancestral ways, undistinguished as well as indistinct. But if he does assert his individuality, it is because he has gained a new perspective upon his tradition; and in astrology, this gaining of perspective is represented by the opposition aspect.

The Jupiter-Saturn relationship of his birth-chart is reversed; and Jupiter and Saturn are the planets symbolizing all social processes and a person's relationship to the institutions of his society, his culture, his religion. This reversal gives the maturing youth a more objective outlook upon the traditions of his people. There was a similar reversal when he was 14-15 — thus, during or immediately after the crisis of adolescence. But at 30, the adolescent rebelliousness should have become more stabilized because transiting Saturn is now located **where it was at birth**. The 30-year-old person touches bottom; he can tap once more his roots — but now this Saturnine strengthening can operate at a new level.

We should add also that there is a Jupiter-Uranus cycle of 14-years' duration which can be related to the changes of social consciousness **potentially** occurring very 14 years — thus, at 28.

At age 28, the moon's nodes have also become inverted. One might almost say that the solar and lunar forces have exchanged places. The solar vitality received throughout the years can be released through the lunar agencies — i.e., through the personality facing creatively the everyday problems of life adjustment. A similar situation exists during the tenth year and the thirty-eighth year. These often witness important turns in the pattern of destiny — though, of course, they may not do so in the lives which become quite set at an early age and are, therefore, less sensitive to **potentialities**, of transformation; and potentialities, rather, than fated events, are what a birth-chart reveals.

The nodal cycle of 9-10 and 18-19 years, I should recall to the reader's mind, establishes also the pattern of eclipses. Thus, if there have been eclipses around the birth-time affecting sensitive natal planets or angles, these will recur at the ages above-mentioned; and eclipses can be highly stimulating factors, even if they often because problems and dilemmas — particularly the lunar ones, which occur when the Sun and Moon are in **opposition** (Full Moon time).

Fulfillment versus Old Age: 56 to 60

Nowadays, a person is often considered still "middle-aged" at 56. What happens, theoretically at least, is that between 56 and 60, one decides unconsciously or consciously) whether the years ahead will be years of creative fulfillment and harvesting or of gradual settling down to the inevitable sclerosis of body and the mind losing organic intensity and the power of self-renewal.

Just as what occurred at the time of puberty, around 14, gave rise to organic and psychological factors which set the stage for the character crisis of self-expression from 28 to 30 so what took place during the mid-forties (normally, the beginning of the "change of life," at least at the psychological level) conditioned largely the manner in which the individual (if he is really an "individual"!) will meet the challenge of the person from age 56 to 60.

Around age 59, both Jupiter and Saturn return to their natal places Saturn for the third time, Jupiter for the fifth. This relation of three Saturn cycles to five Jupiter cycles could be considered quite significant with regard to its numerical symbolism — the three referring to the basic structure and the five to the mental contents of the individuality.

At 56, the cycle of Jupiter to Uranus comes for the fourth time to an end; and a fifth cycle begins, with the possibility of change of social-religious attitude. At the same time, the third Moon's nodes cycle is completed; and a fourth one opens, indicating a potential renewal of the pattern of destiny and personality integration at a fourth level (from 56 to 74).

The progressed Moon has completed its second cycle around the birth-chart during the 55th year, but the natal Sun-Moon relationship repeats itself by progression (progressed lunation cycle) around 59. This age of 59 seems to be actually in the majority of cases the turning point; but what reaches a climax then has actually begun to unfold around the age of 56. By the time the sixties begin, the new trend should have become clearly defined. A keynote has been set for the remaining years of the life — or, at least, for the 14-year period ending around 70 to 72, after which what can be normally considered today as "old age" begins. It may, of course, actually begin at 60 if the individual does not take a **positive** attitude toward the change of life vibration and of opportunities.

Such a positive attitude may have a great variety of meanings and results, the more so the more the person reaching age 56 to 60 has lived a truly **individualized** life — that is, a life unpatterned by the regular routine associated with the social average, the altogether collective and un-distinctive norm. In Greece, 60 was considered the "age of philosophy" because philosophy implies, in its deeper sense, a search for essential meaning and fundamental values.

If the first 30 years can be seen as a "thesis," the second thirty years as the "antithesis," the years after 60 should witness an effort at "synthesis." Then the full meaning of the relationship of the collective life of his people (thesis) to his own **self-asserted individuality** (antithesis) should become clear. On the basis of this meaning, he may act more wisely, he may help others to see the way **which** he may have missed or to be more efficient and productive and serene while being efficient and productive. He may become indeed "philosopher" or "elders statesman," able to realize the meaning of confusing events on the background (1) of his approaching death (Saturn perspective) and (2) of the continuing life of his community, his nation, humanity (Jupiter perspective).

The various cycles of transiting progressed planets beginning between 56 and 60 open to the individual the possibility of a "third birth." I repeat, the first birth is the beginning of biological existence — birth as a body and a personality based on the exercise of body functions and of their overtones in the psyche. The "second birth," at 28 to 30, is the theoretical beginning of maturity as an individual person — birth of the true individuality. The "third birth," if it happens at all, is a birth in "light," in wisdom, at the level of the superindividual soul in which collective and individual values — the race and the individual person — find their adjustment of destiny. The individual brings the spiritual or cultural-social harvest of his experience to his community. He may receive for it honor and relative fame — or, at least, some degree of social security. In other cases, his people or the intellectual leaders of his society may not appreciate the value of this harvest; and the later years of life may be years of increasing Saturnian isolation.

A study of the planetary transits and progressions at the beginning of each of these cycles, starting at 28-30 and 56-60, should tell the astrologer — able to "feel" the pulse of such cycles — what might be expected of the over-all development of the individual during the 28-year or 30-year periods which follow — that is, what this development is more likely to be, in what direction it will proceed, how easy or rugged the path.

For instance, **Franklin D. Roosevelt** was elected to the New York Senate as he came close to his 29th birthday. Saturn was then moving back and forth, by transit, over its natal position at 6° 05' Taurus. At that time, Pluto was passing over his natal Mars, retrograde at 27° 01' Gemini in his tenth house. Gemini rules the nervous system; the tenth house, the public life. Within eleven years, he was stricken by polio, which paralyzes sets of nerves. His public life centered around the vast crisis of a deep economic depression and later on World War II, quite accurately symbolized by Pluto conjunct a particularly crucial and elevated Mars.

In 1941, when he was 59 years old, Saturn and Jupiter came to the same relative positions they had in F.D.R.'s birth-chart, after repeated conjunctions in Taurus. At birth, F.D.R. had Saturn, Neptune, Jupiter and Pluto in Taurus; in 1940-41-42, there were not only conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn, but also of Saturn and Uranus. The former occurred around his natal Neptune; the latter, almost exactly on his natal Pluto, some six months after Pearl Harbor ominous indications, yet promises of world-wide responsibilities.

Before this, in 1940, as World War II started — he was in his 48th year — Neptune was crossing Roosevelt's probable ascendant. Uranus crossed his natal Neptune and his Jupiter through 1938, as the Moon's nodes were returning to their natal places, just before — his 56th birthday (1938). Jupiter was vitalizing, in his natal fifth house, his Aquarian Venus-Sun conjunction; the transiting Venus was also there, once more in conjunction with the Sun and the Moon and Jupiter. Thus, this entire period was marked by significant and powerful transits. These could well evoke something of the world destiny which became his after his 56th birthday — and the possibility of a tragic, yet glorious, end.

What reached a climax at 56-57 with World War II had begun at 28-29, when FDR entered the political arena as New York Senator. The crisis of the mid-forties in his case took a particular tragic character: his fight against paralysis. But on the basis of that fight, he gained true strength of character which made possible the forceful carrying out of vast responsibilities. Saturn had been conjunct FDR's ascendant as he contracted polio. Saturn moved over his natal Venus and Sun just as he was about to assume, in 1933, the Presidency.