

Dane Rudhyar
On Books

In its deepest meaning, the word "book" refers to a place, a sacred place — in Hebrew you would say Magom — for the coming together of an idea and a person within the vaster field of a culture, in terms of the language of that culture. An idea, or a series of ideas, is seized by a person who gives it a form. In that form, the idea and the person are joined in a sometimes holy, and occasionally unholy, matrimony. There may be numerous progeny. The idea maybe multiplied or barely reflected in the minds of many readers. But these reproductions in the minds of many readers still carry the stamp of the person having written the book. There are no impersonal books, only books which reflect the collective personality of a generation, a fashion. Textbooks, of course, are produced by, one might say, artificial insemination — books of data, how-to books and so on. Many best sellers are merely mental food cooked according to a highly publicized kind of recipe. And as you know, cook-books are highly profitable for publishers and bookstores alike. Ideas, however, are not data. Ideas are, can be, and should be transformative agents. They exist in themselves within the vast process of man's evolution. They exist in a world of their own. They exist with a power which is only a potentiality until they have found a person, a mind to unite with. Then they start a love affair with a person, letting that person believe it was *their* idea. This I would call "woman's power." The power of a woman is to let a man feel that his idea was his own — which of course it usually is not.

In today's metaphysical and "New Age" bookstores you will find mainly books in which ideas have a life of their own: great books — books that can produce transformation and can stir you into becoming greater human beings, books which can set you on the quest for new horizons, ever expanding, ever deeper, ever higher. The owners and managers of today's bookstores, love ideas. We might think of them as spiritual descendents of the people who gathered manuscripts in the library of Alexandria some twenty-two centuries ago. Or, it may be a little less than that — at the time of the building of the last library of Alexandria after the first ones had been destroyed. That was the time of the neo-Platonic Schools and other movements of great spiritual import which carried up, as it were, the seed of the Hellenistic Greco-Roman civilization that was about to end. It may be also that instead of Alexandria it was Byzantium and that we are a little closer to the end of the cycle than we think.

Years ago I felt very certain that New York was a reincarnation, as it were, of Alexandria, that Los Angeles and San Francisco, where I was living, were sort of a re-embodiment of Byzantium. At the time when I came to California in 1920 there were already many people who were expecting that a new continent would rise from the Pacific (and the Channel Islands were supposed to be the eastern shore of that continent) the water would have to go somewhere, so it would flood California. Well, in 60 years it hasn't happened, perhaps in 600 years it may, who knows. But, anyway, it is possible that we are more like Byzantium and that there is a "Europe" which is going to rise in the Pacific behind us, of which we will be the end prolongation along the East.

Of course we have all heard of a great many prophecies of such cataclysms — earthquakes and floods, and changing of the poles and so on. One might ask, then, what is the use of books if all that is going to happen and half of the continent will be under the sea? Well, books are carriers of the seed of a new world of ideas. And if there were no seed in the ground, through the winter, then there would be no spring. That is what I believe the few people who can really think of themselves as seed-men and seed-women are working towards: to plant seeds in the ground of the collective subconscious mind of humanity, so that when or if there is a new wave or renaissance of culture, then those seeds will be there to germinate and produce new vegetation. Of course, there are seeds that are products of great species of plants, and there are also lots of weeds. One of the greatest tasks of our generation is to try to discriminate between the chaff and the wheat. Not too long ago seeds of wheat were found in Egyptian tombs of some two to three thousand years ago, and when those seeds were planted and watered, they produced plants. So seeds have a very long

span of potential existence. All they need is the proper soil and conditions for growth. So it is with books and ideas. They can last many millions of years. All they need are human beings to unite with in a productive kind of marriage, as it were.

I used the word 'discrimination,' because I think it is a word that has become somewhat unfashionable with many people. Many people today believe that there is nothing greater than eclecticism — that one must be open to every idea, every concept, and feel uncommitted to any particular approach. I think this is the greatest mistake one can make at the present time. It was a very valuable approach for awhile, and it is still very valuable for many people to pass through a period that I call *deconditioning* during which they can free themselves from bondage to the stereotypes, taboos, preconceptions and prejudices of our Euro-American culture. For the generation that revolted in the late 60's and early 70's, deconditioning is not an end in itself. You are only deconditioned so that you are free to find your own way and the way that is the most fruitful, the way of the future — the way of wheat, instead of weeds.

There is a dualism, as it were, involved in the transfer of creative potency from one generation of culture to another. Two great factors are involved in that transfer: Ideas, which are symbolically the living bread, the living flesh of the Christ; and a new quality of relationship which will quench the thirst of human beings — the living water, symbolically the blood of Christ. Reading a great book is like holy communion. It may be a communion with an ancient Christ-figure, a savior, or communion with a future great figure, a builder of a new humanity. It is for all of us, and each of us, to find that purpose and that goal which is the most appropriate to our own nature which is our dharma, our truth of being.

I have, as you know, written a great many books — perhaps 30 to 40 counting only the published ones — and my first book was written in the winter of 1911-12 nearly 70 years ago. I have developed two basic intuitions that I had at that particular time in my life. The first intuition was that existence is the manifestation of a cyclic kind of movement. The second was that a culture, or as people in Europe say, a civilization, constitutes a whole. It is born, it matures and it disintegrates. Those two ideas are not new. They are very old ideas. But they were not accepted in the Europe in which I was born and educated. You might say, and I think it is not merely a figure of speech, that they sought me as a person and that my life united with them and became a cyclic process of work — to give these ideas a public, viable form.

I have also written a great many books on astrology, and I am still mainly known for them. Astrology has been for me an extremely valuable tool. It has lead the ideas that I was united with to the soil of young generations in which they could grow. Every mode of expression can be a tool for the spread of vital, transformative ideas. What matters is not the means but the end. A person also is or can be a tool for humanity to move on through. Or, alas, very often, he or she is immobilized in personal fears and inertia and stands in the way of the process of evolution.

The basic thought I would leave with you, in concluding these few words, is that whatever one does, one must go on with the universal movement. Do not set goals that would immobilize you or other people in the future. Flow with the movement. Become an agent through whom humanity acts and moves on and on and ever on. This is human destiny. It is the destiny that is latent in all of you, if you are not opposing or blocking its manifestation — if you allow the great ideas of great books to find in your soul and in your mind a fertile soil in which they can grow.