

***Statistical Astrology  
and Individuality***  
**by Dane Rudhyar**

**The fashionable thing today for any astrologer who wishes to show his or her intellectual competence** above the level of popular astrology is to start a "project" in which statistics will be used as a research tool. Many such projects have been started; some have led to "interesting" conclusions; others were given up, for the research produced only statistical nonsignificant results. The most publicized statistical results were those obtained by French statistician Gauquelin; but many similar projects and their conclusions have been made in England, and in the United States, and no doubt in Germany. Perhaps the first scientist-astrologer to approach astrology statistically was another Frenchman, Paul Choisnard, who died in 1930.

A great many problems are involved in any discussion of the validity of using statistics in investigating the traditional claims of astrology – claims which establish a direct connection, strictly causal or otherwise, between the interrelated cyclic motions of the planets (including in this term the astrological Sun and Moon) and definite events on earth or characteristic traits in human beings. Some very basic questions should be asked; yet one finds them publicly discussed only on rare occasions, and this only rather superficially.

**Why and to what extent should the use of statistics** according to procedures established by a certain class of officially recognized scientists be considered valid in the field of astrology? Are the astrologers who use this intellectual and analytical tool doing so in a truly significant manner, considering the traditional character of astrology or even in terms of a type of astrology fitting more meaningfully the need of present-day men and women? Why do they want now to use statistics?

The last question is the easiest one to answer. Astrologers are living today in a society which puts a premium on intellectual-analytical disciplines; and at a time when the public interest in astrology has increased in a rather startling manner, two things have happened: (1) such a popularity has brought into the field many people who are trying to profit financially from it yet have no significant and proven knowledge of astrological methods and no conception of the astrological danger of their misuse in satisfying even more ignorant clients; (2) the worthwhile and trained astrologers suffer from being still scorned and ostracized by more scientifically trained persons who consider astrology to be a primitive superstition and who in this have the backing of old-fashioned laws so that indeed an astrologer even of the highest stature not only is not accepted in any official institution of learning – or, more recently, shoved in by the back door – but actually in most places is engaging in an illegal occupation, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

Thus, the eagerness which many astrologers display to use tools and methods of empirical research which today characterizes most branches of scientific enquiry is quite understandable. They hope and trust that by so doing they will be accepted on an equal footing by "the scientific community" whose influence dominates the modern mentality, especially in America. To use scientific methods is, therefore, a crucial matter involving social prestige and even security from legal prosecution. Thus, there must be "research" – this sacrosanct word among the intellectuals and directors of wealthy Foundations! – and any adequate type of research is supposed to make use of statistics. Statistics are used because any claim which aspires to be recognized as valid by the scientific mind (generally speaking and exceptions notwithstanding) **must** refer to measurable quantities. Our entire Western society is indeed dominated by quantitative values – by the amount of money involved, the number of war casualties, the time it takes for something to happen, and the percentage of successes and failures or yes or no votes.

**The general approach featured by the scientific mind is also an empirical approach;** that is, it deals with observable facts. Besides, these facts must not only be observable with our senses or their mechanical prolongations, but they must also be observable by any "trained" observer anywhere and under rigidly defined circumstances which theoretically can be reproduced at will. The results of the experiments are said to

provide "knowledge" – knowledge of "reality," that is, of how anything in our environment (which is supposed to include the cosmic environment) **works**.

Astrologers claim, "astrology works." Their explanation of how and why it works are often naive and nearly always rely on some metaphysical principle which cannot be called "scientific" because it rests on assumptions which (1) are not clearly and consistently defined and (2) are not adequately supported by observable facts – or else these facts could be more simply explained by theories which have been found valid in other related fields of experimentation.

Modern science, of course, makes great use of "theories" which are at first assumptions based on intuitive feelings and imagination – that is, on man's capacity to produce images (or, as scientists say, "models") revealing as yet unperceived relationships between "events" or seemingly unrelated sets of operations. Certain characteristics make a new theory in science seem more likely to be acceptable and valuable; it should be as "simple" as possible, as "elegant" in its interpretation of known facts, and thoroughly consistent in all that can be deduced from it.

The first thing, therefore, that astrologers should attempt to do if they want to see astrology accepted as a modern type of "science" is to formulate its premises and its methodology in such a way that astrology as a whole should be presented as a simple, elegant, and consistent approach to human experience. This, however, is not done; and it is very hard to see how such a formulation of the "theory" of astrology could be accomplished when there is a great variety of astrological systems and schools which disagree on nearly everything except that somehow "astrology works."

**As a result of such a situation, astrologers who are eager to be accepted as "scientists"** have practically no other recourse except that of following some strictly empirical methods. In other words, what they really say is: "We don't know how it works or why it works, but we know from experience that it does work." Yet it quite obviously does not **always** work! There are any number of instances in which statements accepted as authoritative, or "aphorisms," when applied to this or that chart simply do apply.

Astrological textbooks, old and new, are full of such statements which apply to **some** cases but not to others. The difficulty is obviously that most of such statements refer only to one particular planetary aspect or the position of one planet in a zodiacal sign or house; and today there are ten planets used in astrology – which means, scientifically speaking, ten variables. To analyze in strictly scientific terms any situation which includes ten variables, not to mention rather ambiguous frames of reference, is indeed a very difficult problem. It would have been considered hopeless before the invention of computers.

About the only things left to do, therefore, is to try to tabulate the number of instances in which a particular astrological factor – a planetary position or an aspect between planets – correlates successfully with known actual events or personal characteristics according to what it is asserted to signify and of those instances in which it does not correlate.

**This at least would be the logical scientific way to go about establishing "empirical proof"** of the validity of the most important and widely accepted astrological statements filling our textbooks. Astrologers are recognizing a general hypothesis as valid beyond doubt: the positions of and interrelations between planets correspond to definite events on earth and traits of human personality. From this hypothesis, they make a vast series of deductions which they claim are justified if not by all facts, at least by a large number of facts. Let us, therefore, see in how many instances the celestial fact that Saturn is conjunct the Sun or Uranus is conjunct the Moon or Jupiter is square Saturn or Neptune is on the ascendant can be definitely and unquestionably correlated with a specific set of terrestrial events and human characteristics – and in how many other cases the correlation does not exist or is very doubtful.

Strangely enough, astrologers who today are involved in what they call statistical research

do **not** follow such a procedure. They have opted for what I might call the reverse method probably because it is an easier one to follow but also because they are reluctant to claim that astrology is a valid scientific theory – as inherently valid as, let us say, Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The latter could be proven valid by some rather clear-cut demonstrations or proofs; but, unfortunately, scientific theories which deal with human behavior (individually or in groups) and even with biological situations are not so easily "proven" true. Astrology today deals largely with psychological character and behavior of human beings; and it is indeed in that biological, psychological, and social field that present-day astrologers are mainly conducting their statistical research.

**If it were true, as Cyril Fagan stated before his death,** that astrology was born in Egypt as an empirical science and that astrologers in Egypt, Chaldea, and Alexandria developed the data and aphorisms which are still in use today by patiently listing, generation after generation, observed correlations between celestial and terrestrial events, then such a patient and "scientific" empirical approach should have brought forth a wealth of quite provable data, relatively easy to test. But, as I said before, these traditional data and aphorisms are certainly not 100% accurate. Then why not try to find out how accurate they are in, say, at least several thousand cases? Professional astrologers, having large files of charts which they interpreted for their clients, could easily provide such a number of authenticable cases. Every aphorism found in Ptolemy's and classical European astrologer's books could, thus, be tested statistically, one after the other.

But this is not the way statistically oriented astrologers have been proceeding. What they have done is to erect the birth-charts of several thousand generals, priests, artists, statesmen – or of people known to have a specific disease or social-sexual problem – and to see whether in the charts of one of these categories of people one astrological factor is present in a particular location in a more-than-average (i.e. statistically relevant) number of cases being studied. In other words, the researcher does not start with an at least relatively well-established astrological proposition then inquire whether, statistically speaking this proposition is valid or not. He starts with a bio-social category (professional, pathological, or whatever it be) "hoping" to find that there will be some astrological factor that will stand out as possibly referring to some basic characteristics of this entire category of people.

**But what does the category "medical men" or "general" actually mean** in terms of the individual persons listed in books referring to that profession? Very little indeed! A youngster may take the medical courses or enter West Point or enlist in some branch of the services for many reasons, some of which may have very little to do with the character of the profession. A good general today may be an excellent administrator, or he may attain top ranks for various political reasons – and in the past because of his aristocratic background. All these things do not tell much about his personal character and his individual responses to life.

This is, of course, the typically scientific way of describing "reality" – description by category or class. A German shepherd dog is "a dog," whether he is a dangerous, violent animal or a loving companion for a blind person. What makes him a "dog" is a certain set of biological features; but science does not deal with what the **individual** dog is like and what is his place and function in our human world. However, defining a complex set of biological features and stating that Mars is found in, say, 65% of cases near the midheaven or the ascendant in the charts of "generals" are two entirely different things. The astrological and the biological statements belong to two different orders of concepts.

In astrology, Mars refers essentially to outward movements and to what makes these possible or desirable; thus, it refers to all muscles but also to the psychological drive toward a desired action. This is the basic Mars character. From it many secondary characteristics are deduced, but all of them are not necessarily relevant to an individual person whose chart is being studied. Mars may mean aggressiveness, anger, intense desire, sexual potency,

jealousy, and instinctual attraction for using weapons or metal tools, leadership under strenuous circumstances, a tendency to accidents, etc. It can refer indifferently to physical or psychological characteristics; both types may exist, yet one may entirely dominate the other. Moreover, a combination of other planets may produce effects similar to those of Mars and either enhance, frustrate, or condition this Mars factor.

**This is astrology; it is not modern science.** Einstein once said, "Science knows more and more about less and less." This is the result of its analytical and reductive approach to the empirical data of human experience. Astrology, on the other hand, is based on the concept that ten or so variables in relation to a couple of frames of reference (zodiac and house mainly) can, singly and by their combination, enable us to understand the past, present, and future of not only human persons, but as well of any organized and steady system of activities, be it a living organism or a social institution.

How the fact that Mars is near the midheaven or ascendant of 65% of the birth-charts of several thousand generals can prove in any way the validity of the claims of astrology mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs, I personally am at a loss to understand. The only reason to make such an assertion of even minimal proof is that the astrologers are so frantic in their attempts to make astrology "respectable" and of having it taught in universities (whose astrology, I would like to ask – Alan Leo's, Fagan's, Marc Jones's, Ebertin's?) that any little fact which seems to point to some correspondence between the planets' positions in the sky and some terrestrial event or human feature is at once pounced upon with the exclamation: "Didn't we say that astrology works?" Such a reaction may be understandable, psychologically and emotionally speaking; but it certainly does not fit the scientific mentality and its overcareful approach to reality.

### **The Nature of Statistical Knowledge**

We are today so used to refer almost everything to the result of statistics, to quantitative measurements and percentages that not only have we forgotten what **qualitative** means, but we are even beginning to think of sexual experiences in terms of electronic measurements of the intensity of muscular action in orgasms. How tragic! Some scientists, I believe, will never be happy until they can measure love in terms of electric nerve responses or of the increase of pulse when two lovers meet – a kind of lie-detector technique. We can now measure the intensity of the reaction of a plant to even the thought of a man deciding to burn its leaves, so why not measure also the feelings of a wife at the airport waiting to embrace her husband returning wounded from Vietnam or a mother's love when she nurses her baby or perhaps cleans his diapers? These would be "interesting projects" – would they not – so that one could really scientifically see through the traditional glamour of love!

A U.S. president might also test scientifically the loyalty of his aides. Occultists have claimed at times that they could read anyone's mind or judge the nature of a person's emotions by watching the colors of his aura change. Theoretically, one could measure the intensity and frequency of these colors at least by comparison with the standardized color-chart.

These remarks obviously do not refer directly to statistics; yet in an indirect sense they do, for what is at stake in all such quantitative methods is the concept that quality can always be interpreted in terms of measurable quantities, vibratory frequencies or percentages. The basic question related to such a concept is whether real knowledge can be gained by considering categories (a collective factor) or only through a holistic approach to **individual** situations and persons.

**Bertrand Russell in his "Analysis of Matter" defined statistics** "ideally as accurate laws about large groups." Even if "ideally" considered, the fact is that they have no real significance except in terms of "large groups." How large the group remains a question. The basic point is, nevertheless, that statistical statements concern classes of phenomena but

**not** individuals included within these classes. Because of this, statistical knowledge is valuable only when one wants to know refers to the behavior of the class (or group) as a whole and there is no concern for the individual.

When an insurance company uses statistics of births and deaths to establish the amount of premiums which will allow the company a safe return above investments, overhead, and disbursements, it is of no consequence whatsoever to the managers whether insured Mr. Smith or another man dies. All that matters is the percentage of life-insurance policies for which each year the company will have to pay money to the survivors. Likewise, in electrical atomic phenomena, the knowledge that is required and statistically available is the number of particles which will behave in a certain manner. The behavior of an individual particle does not matter and may never be known.

The same is true of popular polls in politics – perhaps with the quite remarkable difference that apparently citizens do **not** vote as individuals, but as members of a social, ethnic, racial, or geographical class. If this were not so, the polls taken by questioning a few thousand supposedly representative persons would not possibly indicate what the votes of an electorate including many millions of persons would be. That is to say, these millions of people do not respond to the issues of the campaign "as individuals"; and this, of course, is the huge joker in the democratic system which is "ideally" based on the free decisions of individuals.

**The astrological approach to the problem of human existence has developed**, I believe, in contrast to the statistical method, for this characteristic astrological approach deals essentially with **individual whole situations or persons**. What individualizes the typical astrological situation is its position in time and space. Astrology is fundamentally the study of the significance of space-time positions in terms of the balance of bio-physiological drives and functions within **any** more or less well-integrated individual system of organic activities. An individual person is such a system.

Carl Jung's statement that all that happens at a particular moment of time is defined by the character of the moment is not completely true. The factor of location in space is also involved. What astrology studies is the relationship of any point in space to the whole surrounding universe at a particular time. The interpretation of what constitutes the surrounding universe (or the cosmic environment) may vary according to what is considered at any time to be relevant and usable factors; thus, at one time it may be seven planets observed on the background of relatively changeless star patterns (i.e., constellations) and at another time ten planets whose cyclic motions are plotted against the background of the cyclic Earth-to-Sun relationship (i.e., the Earth's orbit). In the distant future, astrology may consider other factors "relevant and usable" – factors perhaps related to galactic phenomena.

The important point in any type of astrology is the belief that everything displaying a steady organized structure relating a small number of functional activities to each other can be given a meaning in terms of the cyclic interplay of a few relevant and usable factors dynamically interrelated in the cosmic environment of that structure.

**More simply stated: the astrologer observes the interrelated motions of the closest factors in the cosmic environment** More simply stated: the astrologer observes the interrelated motions of the closest factors in the cosmic environment of a particular locality on the earth's surface – i.e., the ten astrological planets – and having identified these planets with the most basic functions and drives in the total organism of a particular human being, he **deduces** from the interrelationships of the planets at a particular time what the interrelationships between the constituent parts of this human being will be.

This may sound very abstract to a fan of astrology who is told that he must beware of accidents or feverish complaints because Mars is now moving over his Sun in his natal sixth house; but I cannot see how astrology, especially natal and horary astrology, can be

significantly justified in any other way. Only such an approach to the problem of the nature of astrology can explain why Jupiter, for instance, can refer to such diverse matters as wealth, authority, social prestige, good fellowship, a sense of self-righteousness, religious institutions, the condition of a man's liver and solar plexus, or whether he is slim or fat, etc. In other words, ten variables are considered sufficient to interpret and to attribute meaning to all past and present events and personal crises and to enable the astrologer to predict future developments. Moreover, the relatively simple formula which a birth-chart constitutes is said by the astrologer to define the very character of the "native" – even though human character is quite a complex affair! Obviously, it can only do so if the ten variables represents the basic qualities of existence which may manifest at any and all levels of human personality. We, therefore, are leaving altogether the scientific realm of quantitative measurements and in astrology we are operating in terms of the organic interplay between universal qualities or life rhythms. Each of these ten qualities – modified by their positions within frames of reference like zodiacal signs and natal houses – must, therefore, cover a multitude of cases. Mars can refer to **any** characteristic form of behavior, feeling-response, and mental activity which displays a "Martian" quality.

**Thus, if a person born with Mars close to the midheaven of his birth-chart,** it makes no sense at all to tell him that by temperament he should be, or will be, a successful military man. This would be a reversal of judgment, for even if 60% of all generals were proven to have Mars near their natal midheaven, it does **not** follow that 60% of the people having Mars near their midheaven should enter the military service, hoping for several "stars" on their uniform. Astrology deals with **individual persons**; it is meant to help these persons to live a more harmonious and significant, a richer and fuller life. In pursuit of such a goal, quantitative factors are of little value, for what is at stake is the quality of each of the persons' ten basic bio-psychic organic functions – the Sun function, the Moon function, the Mercury function, the Venus function, the Mars function, etc.

The specific "genius" of astrology resides in the astrologer's ability to relate every trait of character, every mode of behavior, every form of intelligence, every vital feeling-response to merely ten variables. The more complex human existence becomes, the more each of those variables has to be loaded with possible meaning – a process which seems to be in direct opposition to the ever more refined type of analysis developed by modern scientists so specialized that indeed they come "to know more and more about less and less."

### **Astrology as a Metaphysical Science**

Yet one might consider astrology a science if one thought of it as a "metaphysical" science; but let us not be startled by the term metaphysical in relation to science – and I am **not** referring here at all to Christian Science or "metaphysical" types of New Thought. A new type of very successful scientist in various fields is becoming deeply interested in the "philosophy of science." In his search for "simple" and "elegant" solutions to universal problems, he sometimes comes very close to concepts formulated in different terms by Pythagoras and even Hermetic philosophers.

When Einstein sought to reduce every basic activity and process in the universe to a universal formula, he was acting as a metaphysician. He was seeking to discover through the multiplicity of secondary phenomena a fundamental principle or formula of action, undertoning, as it were, all of the infinitely varied rhythms and modes of behavior found in the cosmos.

But this is really what astrology has attempted to do for millennia. It has sought to know that underneath the complexity of traits of human character and of types of natural events and processes of existence, one can distinguish a few basic qualities and patterns of relationships; and it has claimed that these few basic factors could be related to the simple motions and interrelationships of the main components of the solar system; i.e., of our closest cosmic environment. This is the fundamental fact about astrology. It implies a

metaphysical concept; and the problem it poses must be answered at two levels: (1) Can one really reduce all human activities and traits of character to the cyclic interaction of ten variables, **whatever these variables may be?** (2) If so, is the ever-changing pattern produced by the periodical changes in the environment of our planet, Earth, a relevant indicator of the operations of these variables?

The reader of this article may ask: What has all this to do with the statement that because Uranus is transiting over my Sun I should expect a quite radical change in my personal life or that because Saturn was in the second house below the horizon when I was born my financial affairs may be strained or frustrating and I may cling to my possessions because of a sense of insecurity? But he might as well ask: What has the quantum theory to do with the presence of radioactive "fallout" particles in a mother's milk? The strictly empirical scientist may be content to establish statistics based on the analysis of mother's milk in different parts of the world and at different times; and he may say that prospective mothers may go to live in the less contaminated localities. This, of course, would be "scientific"; but it would not deal with the basic issues and could produce peculiar social and psychological results.

In a similar sense, I do not feel that statistical research as it is being used today in astrology can ever touch the basic questions which astrology poses. As I stated some 36 years ago, if astrology is to be considered a science, it should not be as an empirical science, but as a kind of algebra based on a new and complex type of "holistic" logic dealing with the structural operations of a few variable factors which can be found at work in any steady and organized system of activities.