

The Future of Astrology
Profession or Revelation?
by Dane Rudhyar

Should natal astrology — the astrology that deals with the birth-charts of individual persons — be considered a profession?

This is a very basic question with far-reaching implications. They do not deal only with the social position of practicing astrologers and the value of attempting to legalize such a practice and officially organize and legitimize schools teaching astrology as a profession; these implications reach to the basic nature of what astrology not only is, but above all, is **for**.

The situation produced by the professionalizing and legalizing of astrology is not without parallels. Without trying to compare the practice of astrology with that of medicine, psychotherapy, and psychological counseling along legally defined lines, we should nevertheless try to clearly see what the manner in which medicine and legally permitted forms of psychotherapy are conducted has produced **in our modern Western society**. Even at the risk of generalizing and simplifying an obviously complex situation, it can be clearly shown that what has been produced is a large group of professionals who have developed a remarkable expertise in knowing **how to** deal with abnormal, painful and more or less critical symptoms of disease of body and psyche, so that these symptoms no longer appear. Once the symptoms disappear the person is said to be cured. The trouble has been repaired.

Professionalism in our Western civilization deals essentially with the "how to" of some type of activity — thus, with the officially sanctioned acquisition of an at least relative proficiency in the use of standardized technical means to produce objective results. These results may be some object of utility or the removal of visibility or clearly indicated symptoms of malfunctioning, but they must be objective. Even if the symptom of malfunction or dysfunction is psychological and thus largely subjective, still the "cure" should produce objectively perceptible changes in a person's behavior and perhaps in his or her physiological state.

This applies even to the type of philosophy and metaphysics taught in officially recognized and validated institutions of learning, and for teaching which a legal certificate of proficiency is legally required. Proficiency in what? In "how to" formulate thoughts objectively according to intellectual rules set down by the tradition of our Western culture — but **only** of our Western culture. A PhD in philosophy is not meant to guarantee the ability to deal philosophically with the situations human beings living today are meeting, or to think in an original, creative manner. It refers only to a kind of expertise in **formulating thoughts** in a systematic manner thus really in how to write technical papers on what our culture believes to be "philosophy."

Proficiency in producing objective results of this or that type evidently is a most valuable asset. The question, however, is whether something of still greater value and crucial importance is sacrificed in the process of gaining the expert's "know how." For instance, is the physician's detailed knowledge of what drug or kind of treatment should be used in order to remove the symptoms of disease (pain included) sufficient, and is his symptom-removing approach to disease truly sound and completely effectual if it is not founded upon a much deeper awareness of what health — the harmonious and total functioning of **the whole person** — really means? Should not the physician be concerned **first** with life, the quality of life of the person seeking his help, and this person's ability to experience health, rather than with disease symptoms? Should medicine not be based on the maintenance, and even more the optimization, of health rather than on curing illnesses which might have been prevented? This was what medicine was in ancient China.

Likewise, should not the psychiatrists be concerned first and foremost with what the psyche, the inner life, the mind, the soul are and how to arouse their creative potency, rather than with helping a neurotic to feel calmer and a psychotic to go back to the very life-situations which had broken down his psycho-mental integration? Should the philosopher not deal with consciousness and man's relationship to the universe, to life, to other human beings and to

his own center of consciousness and ego, rather than write treatises on the way words are used and logical systems function?

Similar questions can be asked with relation to astrology. What is important, and indeed valuable and sound, in astrology is **not** the prediction of events, the **exact** nature and timing of which is always uncertain, or even a kind of X-ray analysis of "how the person ticks" — his supposed strengths or weaknesses, his assumed bad or good times. Would the knowledge of all this help him to live a fuller, richer more harmonious or creative existence — or would it not merely satisfy his intellectual or ego curiosity, or soothe his emotional yearning to "know the future?" And just as many people are sent to hospitals to deal with illnesses induced by the physician's carelessness or reliance upon dangerous drugs, so there are many persons who psychologically suffer from what an astrologer told them; and after 40 years of experience in the astrological field, I can readily say that well-trained professional astrologers, just as well as less competent ones, may make statements to their clients which are not warranted because their validity is questionable or the client was not in a state of mind enabling him to understand, correctly interpret or emotionally accept in a constructive way what the astrologer said he saw in the chart.

There are various reasons why such non-constructive situations arise. I shall not mention some which refer to the psychological motivation and ego-patterns of astrologers, the pressure of time, or the insistent demands of the client for definite and quick answers; these operate as well in psychoanalysis and any form of psychotherapy. I want only to insist here on what, in my opinion, is the crucial need for any deeply concerned and "humanistically oriented" astrologer to do more than calculate correctly a birth-chart and all that is derived from it and to apply to the chart a text-book knowledge of what every zodiacal sign and house, planet, aspect, progression and transit is stated to indicate. What there is, not to know but **to understand**, beside all these professional bits of "how to" is what astrology essentially deals with, particularly when applied to modern individuals. What it deals with is not prediction; it is not even psychological analysis of personality traits. These are secondary matters. Astrology in general, but especially natal astrology, is primarily and essentially an answer to the universal human need for being deeply certain that the universe in which we live not only is a universe of **order**, but a universe full of **meaning**. This universe has "meaning" **for us**, mortals and sufferers; it is a meaning we can be made to see, to feel, to understand once we are led to realize that all events, all crises, all traumas since our birth **make sense** in terms of a whole-view of our entire life. Each is a necessary phase of our total development as a whole person.

Does it mean that everything is "fated?" No, not everything, because we have to differentiate between **structural changes** needed for generic and personal growth and how we, as individuals, respond to them and give them meaning. The crises of puberty, of marriage or close sexual partnership, of child-bearing, of entering the business world or the Army, of menopause, of a loved one's death, of aging, are **natural** crises which practically all human beings must face. But how different is each person's response to them! These responses produce psychological and physiological (or psychosomatic) effects, which in turn cause other things to follow. A negative response to a crisis like puberty, may lead to unhappy or traumatic reactions to love-making and marriage, which in turn may produce difficulties in raising children, etc. Astrology can reveal to us the basic turning points, the moments of crucial choice, the times of opportunity or of retrenchment and consolidation for more secure growth; but it cannot tell us how we respond, **as individuals**. No statistics can tell us that, as they deal only with large groups and have no validity in terms of individual cases.

Most people ask the wrong things of astrology, because they have not been made by astrologers or philosophers to understand what is essential in astrology, and how or why mankind in every land and at all times developed some form, however rudimentary and what we call "superstitious," of astrology. Most astrologers are not bothering to seek for this

"how" and "why." They are concerned with recipes (this indicates that), not with fundamental questions which, because they are fundamental, can only be metaphysical. Yet there is no practical application that is not founded, unconsciously through it be, on some metaphysical postulates, some indemonstrable assumptions, some "paradigm" or basic religio-cultural symbol. Modern science, even the most exact science like physics, is based on indemonstrable assumptions — for instance the principle of exclusion (two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time), the ideal that physical laws apply anywhere in space and at any time, the refusal to accept evidence unless perceived by the senses or measured by machines in repeatable experiments under what is defined as "strict control," and the refusal to think of the cosmos as a living organism when all we actually deal with are organized systems of interdependent activities (our planet Earth obviously is such a system) or fragments separated from such systems.

How did astrology arise? From the universal human experience of the startling contrast between the sky and the earth: the sky, a mysterious realm, brilliant by day when cloudless, dark by night but filled with a multitude of points of dots of light regularly moving with predictable accuracy — the earth, a confused jungle where death was menacing at every step and unpredictable changes were forever occurring. Thus a realm of order and a realm of chaos — and separating (or linking them) the horizon circle growing larger as one climbed high mountains. Because the sky was thus the great symbol of order and predictable motion, and man's entire being was longing for order and security, the obvious idea arose that if life on earth could be made to become attuned to and synchronous with the dynamic and periodical interplay of celestial points or discs of light, that life would partake of the quality of celestial order. Astrology was born. The next step was to give meaning to this celestial order, because man also must find meaning in his existence, or become insane — a fact recently emphasized by the great Austrian psychologist, Victor Frankl in his psychological system he called **logotherapy** (healing through meaning) and which he had ample opportunities to see at work during years in the worst Nazi concentration camps.

How can one give meaning to the ordered motions of celestial objects? The answer is: through the use of man's creative imagination — the capacity to discover **significant relationships** between entities or events. If a steady relationship can be established between a permanent or regularly appearing entity, and a particular kind of fleeting, uncertain and puzzling change in one's experience (be it an inner or an outer experience) the former can be taken as the symbol of the latter.

For instance, if when a certain brilliant star is shown rising for the first time in the sky each year when a river (like the Nile in Egypt) upon which agriculture depends for irrigation, begins to flood over the parched land, the star becomes associated in man's mind with the river's rise, and consequently with the quality of fecundant activity. If the Sun reaches a certain group of stars every year when spring begins and vegetable life is renewed, that group of stars is given the meaning of "creative beginning". This meaning is, in the deepest sense of the term, logical; it is astrological. But even before such agriculture related meanings are formulated the most basic fact of human life is the alternation of night and day. During the day everything on the earth is active and revealed as an objective sense-perceived fact; during the night most earthly events are in the dark and human beings sleep and rest while the world, of stars reveals its mysterious patterns of light.

Dawn and sunset are the moments of transition; and the special character of the transitional state between darkness and light is essentially perceived by man at the horizon. By contemplating what takes place when sky and earth meet, man can realize the meaning of the contrast, but also the relationship between the two aspects of his experience of an outer world. The horizon became thus the symbol of consciousness; because consciousness is born out of relationship. Objective consciousness — the awareness of separate things and their interaction — requires light; thus dawn (and the Ascendant of an individual's birth-chart) came to represent the rise of that power in man which makes objective

consciousness possible by establishing a point of reference for all experiences, the Self — that mysterious spiritual center at which the conscious and the unconscious meet and are apprehended intuitively in relationship to each other.

At the theoretical or symbolical sunset (thus, at the astrological Descendant) man, having ended his daily hemicycle of objective activity in the world of things, should pause to contemplate the meaning and value of all that has happened during that period, how he has been impelled or compelled into concrete actional relationships by other entities, and how he has responded to these meetings and their impacts. The Descendant symbolizes therefore an individual's capacity for relationship, and the way he meets the opportunities for growth and the conflicts raised by relationship.

The fundamental factor in every conceivable mode of existence is **activity**. Where there is no activity whatsoever — physical, mental or supermental — one should not speak of "existence." One can conceive of "being" as a totally inactive and changeless state, but whatever exists must act, or include some form of interior activity. Activity, in the conscious human sense of the term, takes place in light as well as in darkness, in summer heat as well as in wintry cold, in terms of vernal growth or autumnal disintegration, gradual hibernation or withdrawal of energy to some root-state of relative latency. **Astrology is a method — a symbolical language — devised by human beings in order to understand the rhythmic patterns and the basic significance of the varied forms activity assumes within the Earth's biosphere, and first of all within their whole person.**

This astrological method uses the motion of celestial bodies — or rather of what we infer to be celestial bodies! — but this obviously is not the only method. Likewise older clocks used the controlled weight of a heavy object, or the release of wound up metallic springs to measure the **rate of change** — what we call "time" — in existential processes; but now scientists are using atomic phenomena for the same purpose. Sundials once measured the daily relationship of light and shadow; now the astrologers read their ephemeris with little or no real awareness of what the columns of figures represent in terms of **either living experience, or philosophical concepts.**

This is the real trouble with modern astrology. It is neither based on **actual experience** of cosmic activity and cyclic change, nor on cosmological and metaphysical concepts that have for the mind **a vibrant and moving meaning**. Because they give to existence in all its forms — personal, social, universal — value endowed, for the individual person, with a character of incontrovertibility and intuitive evidence. If astrology has such evidential meaning and value for a person, it is of **entirely secondary importance** whether some event that could be predicted by using some astrological technique occurs or does not occur. Astrology "works" if by concentration on it a person expands his or her consciousness by obtaining a new, far more extensive, impersonal and ego-transcending **frame of reference** for his or her activities and experiences. This is what counts. Likewise the value of modern science is NOT that it can produce amazing gadgets and control missiles by radio millions of miles away, but rather that it has helped human beings to communicate directly all over the globe, to react to each other, to vividly feel their oneness, and to realize that they all live on a small planet ("spaceship Earth") by enabling them to look at that planet **from the outside.**

This transformation of human consciousness as a whole — and not merely of the minds of a few special and secretly "initiated" individuals — is the one essential achievement of modern Western science. Everything else science is accomplishing is secondary, unessential; and mankind and the whole biosphere is paying so heavily for it, that the accomplishment might prove a curse — even if a redeemable one. Astrology may point to the redemption in terms of a coming New Age; yet the strange thing is that so many astrologers — so completely have they sold their minds in exchange for their possible acceptance into the club of official science — fail to see that what they interpret as signs of this New Age having already begun are actually what such a New Age will have to at least totally repolarize, if not supersede. If we can speak of a coming New Age, it is because we may have deep-seated intuitive

intimations that mankind is ready and, at the level of its deeper (or higher) collective and planetary Mind, eager to experience a new kind of order and meaning. It would be a new **kind** because of its far greater inclusiveness and its acceptance of what today we call irrational paradoxes and irreconcilable contradictions.

In my recent book **The Sun is also a Star - The Galactic Dimension of Astrology**, I spoke of a galactic dimension of astrology that would enable us to see our old heliocentric approach (and the Saturn-bound heliocosm of which the Earth is a part) in a new light. This new light thrown upon our activities would make available to us a new quality of consciousness — a "night-consciousness" which paradoxically could have a greater intensity than our Sun-illuminated ordinary waking and day consciousness. But are we not already seeing the material reflection of such a night-consciousness with its galactic frame of reference in modern living since Edison produced the electric bulb and made possible an enormously intensified and immensely varied spectrum of nocturnal activities?

Yet it is **only** a "material reflection", mainly focused upon the greed-infested, productivity-mad and psychological chaotic activities characterizing human life in our megapoles — the monstrous "tentacular cities" of which the Belgian poet, Verhaeren, warned us even before World War I. The positive, all-inclusive and cosmically ordered aspect of such a galactic (or supermental) consciousness is still far ahead of all but an extremely small minority of human beings. Yet it is this "creative minority" (as the British historian Toynbee called it) which only matters — just as in autumnal days it is the small, inconspicuous, hardly visible seeds, and not the decaying once-golden leaves, that carry within their hard decay-resisting envelopes the promise of futurity.

Simply to give to the masses what they want to soothe their restlessness and indulge their escapism into predictive phantasies to which statistical research cannot add the living and personal reality of an individualized as well as cosmically significant meaning, is of itself of no value. It nevertheless can have a very significant value if it is clearly and consciously accepted and used as a **means to the end of leading human minds to an interior change of perspective**, and as a result to an inner expansion and transformation of consciousness. To the extent popular astrology does this, deliberately and with an optimum of efficiency and compassionate understanding of psychological and strictly personal problems and sufferings — to such an extent popular astrology is indeed valuable. Yet to consider it as an officially recognized and regulated profession would only, in most instances, simply legalize the confusion now existing as what is really a valid use of a predictive and psychoanalytical type of astrological interpretation. Astrology should not be oriented to what mankind today **is**, but to what individual persons may become once the spirit of a New Age integrates in them the potentially immense "night consciousness" and the limited objective realities of the day. When astrologers fully realize that, in our age of transition, this is astrology's creative function, they will have, let us hope, a different attitude toward the rigidly legal type of professionalization that, to many, seems so desirable.