

Astrology—Is an Old Science Coming of Age?

HISTORIANS OF IDEAS inform us that the concept of human progress is of relatively recent vintage. While Enlightenment writers of the 18th century popularized the perfectibility of man (against the long-standing opposition of the established Church), their musings fueled the French Revolution where sanguine ideas turned into sanguinary carnage. Quickly the rationalist zest for moral improvement was deflected onto the material plane where technology was seen as the most promising way to advance the human condition.

While some historians propound a cyclical pattern to events, occult science teaches a helical scheme, whereby basic patterns are repeated with a positive difference. It would seem that the occult revelations of the last century are bringing us full circle to the knowledge last practiced in late Middle Ages, prior to the advent of “modern” science and the branding of beliefs such as astrology as superstition or mere hokum. Recently a 15th century (1454) physician’s handbook was brought to light and purchased by the Wellcome Trust’s Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine. There is a piquant irony here: A subsidiary of the Glaxo-Wellcome empire, now known as Glaxo Smith-Kline, the world’s largest pharmaceutical company, spent £210,00 (\$243,100 US) to acquire a manuscript written in Middle English that invokes astrological data to calculate the best time to administer medical treatments according to a patient’s time and date of birth.

Astrologer and occultist Max Heindel expands on this use of astrological data to: determine the most opportune times to schedule surgery (while the moon is increasing, when the vitality is greater and healing is more rapid); predict, and therefore prepare for and minimize, recurrences of episodic

diseases, based on septenaries (days and years) and lunations; to indicate appropriate therapeutic minerals and herbs based on the ruler of the patient’s ascendant (mars, venus, saturn) and its medicinal correlates. Heindel writes in *The Rosicrucian Mysteries* that “Astrology is invaluable in diagnosing disease and prescribing a remedy, for it reveals the hidden cause of all ailments.” Welcome indeed would be Wellcome Trust’s decision to resurrect this rare tome from its antiquarian state and use its principles to make modern medicine more effective. That prospect is improbable.

As with many other “discoveries,” such as that “food is your best medicine,” our well-intending traditional doctors may be the last to know what is good for what ails us, and what is good to keep us healthy. The stars can guide us in this understanding. Indeed, the authors of *The Message of the Stars*, at least one of whom was an advanced clairvoyant, state that “were the alternative placed before us involving choice between loss of spiritual faculties and loss of our knowledge of Astrology, we should not hesitate one moment, but decide at once in favor of our beloved science, neither ought this surprise anyone who will give the matter a moment’s thought. It is true that spiritual sight, even in its rudimentary form, enables us to see the condition of the human body to the minutest detail, and thus affords a much easier means of diagnosis than Astrology, but though it penetrates to the innermost core of the bone, mere clairvoyance is superficial compared to Astrology for it shows only present conditions of the body. To find the causes which led up to the state and judge of future tendencies, it is necessary to consult the memory of nature. We should have to do that personally, and this, time would not permit, as we are handling hundreds of cases. But a simple astrological

figure, which we may commission one of our students to cast, reveals as much at a glance. There are delineated the causes of mental, moral, and physical disorders; it shows accurately the stages that have been passed and the crises yet to come. It also indicates the direction from which a remedy may be looked for and the most favorable time for administering the same. It helps people Here and Now, and the astrologer who lives up to his privilege has a mission so high and so holy that the office of priest (in the esoteric sense) pales into insignificance by comparison" (pp 606-607).

In an associated story, suggesting that Astrology may be coming of age, King 5 News (King County, Washington) reports that Kepler College in Washington state is accredited to offer both a B.A. and an M.A. in astrology, becoming the first College of Astrology in the Western World and, according to its spokeswoman Jillian Yuhas, the program will provide "the most comprehensive astrological education available in the world today." The claim is impressive and the offering is encouraging. But how helpful can Astrology be without knowledge of the worlds of spirit? If the twin laws of Consequence and Rebirth do not factor into this applied science of the stars, an element of determinism, even fatalism, is likely.

Students at the University of Arizona are mustering to influence the faculty to offer astrology courses at their school also. But astronomy professor Phillip Pinto expresses a standard position: "Astrology has always been around, but it has nothing to do with the real world." According to another astronomy professor, David Arnett, horoscopes shouldn't be viewed as something to rely on: "It's stupid, but there's a lot of stupidity." Sometimes descriptions are self-characterizations.

Unfortunately, most people are only familiar with the simplistic, cut-and-paste version of astrology in their newspapers. Others know better. Kepler College, named after the astronomer/astrologer Johannes Kepler, hopes to help restore astrology's reputation. It will offer courses in the history, philosophy, theory, and practice of astrology, including planetary cycles and zodiacal and planetary influences. In their home state, Kepler students and faculty have an uphill battle to gain

credibility and respect. For example, the Vice Provost of Research at neighboring University of Washington, Craig Hogan, intones the usual line: "It's important not to mistake astrology for a real scientific subject." It's "on a par with fairy tales."

At Kepler students plan to use their knowledge professionally; that is, for profit, by acting as consultants for small and large corporations to determine the timing of product marketing and advertising. This is not exactly what Max Heindel had in mind when he described Astrology as "an absolutely true science" and called his first correspondence course "*Spiritual Astrology*." The mathematical (quantitative) aspect of astrology must be supplemented with the spiritual (qualitative) side, for the latter is its "kernel" and its "essence." As the author writes in *Simplified Scientific Astrology*: "Each visible planet is the embodiment of a great and exalted spiritual intelligence Who is the minister of God in that department of His Kingdom, endeavoring to carry out His Will, the latter having in view the ultimate *highest good*, regardless of temporary ill."

The great loss that students at Kepler will not consciously realize, though some may intuit, is that what they will study is divorced from its spiritual firmament. The twelve zodiacal constellations that serve as the backdrop against which the sun and planets trace their apparent paths, the twinklings of these fixed stars from without our solar system, "are the pulsations of spiritual impulses sent forth by the guardians of the Greater Mysteries; and the Mercurians, the Gods of Wisdom, send out similar impulses pertaining to the lesser mysteries, hence Mercury twinkles like a star." What light years of difference between the Rosicrucian conception of Astrology and the mundane (literally) astrology that does not see the entire universe as a manifestation of God, and all manifest forms as vehicles used by spirits who are evolving toward conscious identity with God.

However, in due time, the true and complete form of Astrology will again draw the attention and credence of the general public, and this time around it will be enhanced with the mind-expanding, life-enriching insights afforded by stellar seers such as Max Heindel. □