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Meaning of Humanistic Astrology

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[Note from 2015: I have posted this paper online because it has not been available in any form for many years, an incongruous fate given its significance for astrology – as shown for instance by citation of it at: Nicholas Campion, History of Western Astrology Volume II (London: Continuum, 2009) p.256. Campion cited a URL - <http://www.stand.cz/astrologie/czech/texty/rez-ru-a/rez-ru-a.htm> - that is no longer valid. I was however able to retrieve this copy from it via the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>) on 28th June 2015.

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It is a great pleasure for me to be here in Prague and to share with you the result of many years of reflection on what astrology is, or rather, could be, if astrologers had more imagination and were more in alignment with the most modern astronomical discoveries. Instead of wanting to bring back to the present day old archaic formulae which had meaning in the past but which have not the same creative possibility for us today.

I had the very great privilege of knowing an outstanding man the name of Dane Rudhyar whose work I first met back in 1936, uhm which completely changed my way of living, my way of understanding of what we are here for. And for over 50 years I was in contact with Dane Rudhyar and his expression of ideas, ideas which were trying to help us understand the meaning of the transition through which humanity is passing, unfortunately, in a very unconscious state. And that unconsciousness is, I feel, is very largely the responsibility of us, astrologers, whose task in the past was to give the meaning of what society had to face at any given time in their history.

Unfortunately, astrologers today do not seem to want to fulfill their true vocation. There are very few astrologers who try to express the meaning of what is happening, the meaning of these great conjunctions about which pages of which have been written and hours of talks have been given without ever really getting down to the essential fact. That has always made me very sad: to realize that we are still 19th century brains instead of 20th century brains. So you will forgive me if certain of the ideas which I will present to you may be rather different, to put it mildly, from the general way in which we practice and use astrology.

We are still subconsciously conditioned by the idea that our lives are dominated by outside influences of some nature. It is an attitude which is not particular to astrology, even in the occult disciplines the matter is presented to you as a question of "forces" to which one has to "submit", one has to "discipline", one has to "master". All that is archaic language which was useful for human beings in the past, where the development of individual consciousness was not yet present. There was a big change possible, since the time when

Kopernik explained to us officially that the Earth turns around the Sun and not the Sun around the Earth. A very big change that had taken place in our way of looking at the symbols: when we realized that the Earth was not flat and stationary and the center of the universe as the ancients believed, but it had two movements - two movements which made it possible for the Earth to orient itself in a very special way through two cycles towards the universe.

In other words, since the time of Kopernik, which coincides rather strangely with the growth of individualism in our psychological development, we have a solar system with a strong central Sun, the eye which wants to dominate everything, but we have also for the first time the idea that we are not just passive receivers of outside influences, but we have the responsibility and the capacity to develop our individual consciousness in order to relate ourselves in our particular way to the universe and to its meaning.

Those are basic facts, which should be translated into the expression of astrological symbols. The dominating importance of the zodiac in the minds of most astrologers is a thing which should not dominate in the same way today, if we interpret astrology in terms of what astronomy gives us as being the reality of our solar system. The zodiac is still in the minds of many people related to the constellations or to some vague regent in the sky, which emits particular influences and which even dominates the planets that happen to be in the signs, which shows how very little we have understood of modern astronomical data.

The signs of the zodiac have nothing to do with the constellations - we say, we say so. There are a group of astrologers who base their work on the constellations -the pseudorealists as they are called but as the constellations were never invented in the first place to be a mathematical representation of what happens in the sky, a constellation was never considered to be 30 degrees of space. All the constellations are of uneven size, no one knows where a constellation begins and where a constellation ends. So talking about the age of Aquarius beginning at such and such a date precisely is ridiculous because nobody knows, nobody can measure it today.

There is symbolism behind what we call the Aquarian age and so forth, but giving the name of Aquarius to this second phase of the polar cycle of the Earth is merely one way of explaining what is happening. The importance of the second phase is not necessarily linked to the imagery of the sign Aquarius, that's merely one way of looking at it. And it is not necessarily the deepest way of looking at it. And if we talk about the era of Aquarius based on the constellations, and at the same time, when scientists criticize us because we do not take into consideration the 23 or 24 degrees difference there is between the signs of the zodiac and the constellations, then we are in a very peculiar situation.

The truth is that the signs of the zodiac today correspond to a movement of the Earth. It is the yearly cycle of the Earth around the Sun. It has no relationship whatever to various zones in the sky having peculiar influences. The signs are now merely twelve phases of a cyclic process, and because of the cyclic process we can give meaning to each of the phases. What we call the houses in astrology are also based on a earth movement. The movement on its axis every twenty four hours. You can have the complete experience, therefore, of the universe, through the symbolism of the zodiac, either in 24 hours on the level of the houses,

in twelve months in terms of the yearly movement of the Earth around the Sun, or in about 26 thousand years if you take the third polar movement of the Earth on its own axis. Three different measures for a complete cycle for a complete zodiac; the zodiac is merely one way of symbolizing any complete cycle which can be divided into twelve parts. It is quite simple there's nothing esoteric or extraordinary behind that idea.

Astrologers were the first to feel that there was order in the sky, when the sky first became visible to them and it was through the work of astrologers that the solar cycle and the lunar cycle and the lunation cycle became evident and measurable and finally, after many centuries, there were repetitions of other cycles, which is one of the reasons why we say even today that "Astrology is the mother of all the sciences."

And it is that desireful order which is in the heart of each of us which makes us be attracted to the astrological explanation of that order and our participation in that order. Until the time that scientists decided to look at things differently, in what they called "an objective way", as if themselves as subjects did not exist, it was a pure illusion, astronomers and astrologers were usually the same person.

But then, science came along and decided to look at the universe as if it existed outside of what we, men, contemplate, with our mind. We quite forgot that we were subjects trying to be objective. And we thought that we were describing a universe which existed with its laws outside what we happen to be or feel. And that is one of the reasons why astronomers say that astrology has no scientific meaning. That order with which human beings felt they were synchronized in some way, was an order in which people imagined that the positive power pole was up in the sky, where there were the gods, where there were these constellations of forces which stream down upon the Earth and which made us behave in certain ways, according to the time of our birth. Although the individual horoscope as such was a very recent development, it did not exist in the olden days because individuals as such did not exist. Human beings were merely members of a tribe, they were reflections of a collective process, and even today in our societies the majority of us merely repeats all those values and things that they have been taught to be the truth by their particular society. They are not individuals in the psychological sense, even if they say "I".

The important fact is, now, that science realize that the universe does not exist outside the way the human mind formulates it, the scientific view comes back to what astrologers have always felt, that we are not only observers of that universe and that our particular observation is peculiar to each one of us, but we are participants in that universe, we are not outside it, we are not different from it, we are not there just to receive passively influences from it, we are a part of a global movement which is dynamic on many different levels throughout the universe as we know it. And astrology exists to understand more fully how the human component of the universe should work in harmony with that collective cosmic movement and purpose. We are expressions of the universe, we are born at a given time, because each of us has potentially certain qualities of character and human nature which are necessary for humanity to take the next step forward in its evolution. That is our true destiny for each one of us.

That is what we should be trying to do, astrologers should be there to make us aware of that responsibility very early in our lives, so that we live, consciously, with a purpose, and not only in terms of superficial values dating from centuries back and based on superficial values which have no intrinsic worth at all. So we astrologers today, if we are true to our vocation, we should be playing a quite different role from the one which we are actually playing, trying to help people progress in terms of social cultural values that is useful on a very superficial level, that is the only level which seems to interest most astrologers. All the difficulties - psychologically speaking - which touch people when that type of superficial living does not attract them any more and when they do not know what to do to live differently, they become psychically ???disequilliberated, as we say, and they need psychologists to try to bring them back to normal, which is a very unfortunate process, because the psychological difficulties through which most people go, is not that they should be re-fitted into the traditional normal way of living. But they should be helped to change the dimension of their existence, take the next step forward out of that collective way of being and be born as true individuals, such as Carl Jung tried to help us to do and to understand.

We can no longer treat people as if they were all on the same boat as we say in English. We are not all trying to do the same thing, achieve the same part, the same prestige, the same desire. There are differences in level in terms of what we consider reality to be. All the levels are worthwhile but they **are** different and it is the astrologer's job to try and find out on which level the person which consults him or her happens to be living in order to explain the meaning that life could have for that person in terms of his or her reality. It is not our job to force them to change level, even if that is a possibility, but he should - the astrologer, I mean - should be capable of understanding the different levels of reality which are possible to a human being and he should be personally working towards the development of his understanding of reality in order to meet up with all the different problems which human beings can have.

That is why Rudhyar has decided that we needed four different levels of interpretation of the elements in the birth chart. You cannot just say that Sun or Moon means this for everybody. It can mean four different things on four different levels, and the same applies to every planet which you have in the birth chart. Even the signs of the zodiac and the houses can be understood in depths in a way in which the average astrologer unfortunately knows nothing, because he merely accepts what he finds in books and which is therefore merely the sum of accumulated data of the past. He has no living experience of the symbols of astrology so that he can create his own meanings in terms of the needs of the present moment.

So, with the birth of humanistic astrology, which Rudhyar initiated back in 1964, there was that attempt to help astrologers develop their own understanding of these different levels of being possible, so they could really become creative astrologers and realize that the birth chart is not something to which you are submitted as an object who is going to be obliged to do this or to feel that, at such and such a moment because there is a progression or a transit in the sky which indicates traditionally something awful, if it's Mars or Saturn. Or something meant nice and expensive, if it's Venus or Jupiter.

Nothing existential exists in the birth chart. Each person creates his own reality, he lives the symbols of his birth chart, without knowing anything about astrology, at the level he is able to understand. The astrologer also, he cannot see in the birth chart something which is beyond his own understanding of what life is all about. He is obliged to bring every person down to his level when he makes his interpretation, because all that astrologers can do, is interpret. He is not God the Father telling you what things are, just because he happens to have a birth chart before his eyes. We are human beings, unfortunately with very partial understanding of reality, and we inevitably bring everybody down to that way of looking at things.

So, I have realized that although most astrologers seem to think that there is an astrology with a capital A which exists somewhere, has always existed, and which we should all submit ourselves or be faithful to, I would submit to you that such an astrology is a merely the result of our imagination - we make entities out of things. All that exists are astrologers, that is, people who try to interpret the relationship they have with the universe, through astrological symbols. Each astrologer has his system, his way of looking at it, that's why there are so many schools each saying that they have all the truth and always running down the others because we are an individualistic society and we use astrology rather to put ourselves forward as people rather than as a means of understanding what reality is about.

So, because the only reality is that there are hundreds of astrologers each with his understanding of what reality is, we should become more tolerant of the different ways of interpreting. We should also be more humble when we interpret, and explain to people who come to ask us for advice that we are human beings like they are, that we have our problems like they have, that perhaps together and with the help of a birth chart we could understand something more globally than alone.

So, the birth chart is a potentiality and it can be lived out on many levels and in many different ways and nobody can tell you in advance on what level a person is going to live his birth chart. It is completely ridiculous to interpret a chart of somebody you know nothing about, you are merely projecting abstractions onto a person according to your imagination, you are not treating reality or doing anything positive. If I give you a chart established for a birth time and a birth place, it could be a birth chart of anything, not necessarily a human being, not necessarily a man or a woman, not necessarily a Czech or a Frenchman or a German, not even a human being, it could be a cow, it could be a dog, it could be an enterprise. So until the astrologer knows to what that chart refers, he cannot say anything specific at all. And that is why, according to his way of understanding human nature, even if he has the chart of somebody he knows, he will interpret it in terms of his or her understanding of human nature and interpretation.

So, because this chart is a series of potentialities, if we want that to work out concretely in our lives, we have to work with it consciously, we have to understand what all those factors in the birth chart mean, and how they modify themselves according to the way they are integrated. And we should try to develop our manifestation of those potential qualities, especially when the different ways the astrologers have of interpreting the development of human life, either through transit cycles, or through what in the anglo-saxon countries are called progressions, or primary directions, because in certain countries in the west of

Europe, unfortunately there has been a tendency to use only transits to try and see how a human life develops, because for them the development, the subject of spiritual development of a person is not so important as what they consider to be outside pressures making you do or have such and such an experience.

There is nothing personal in a transit which is a position of a planet in the sky today which affects everybody on this planet in the way it can be understood to have according to its sign. It is a collective factor, it is not a personal factor. But it is useful to know the positions of transits, to know in what outside conditions the interior development we are seeking according to your progressions could manifest. You have to use both measures if you want to be complete and really help people to live more completely.

Because that is the aim of astrology. Not to predict events, trying to see whether you tell the outer character of somebody correctly or not. That is a drawing room game, there is nothing serious behind it at all. But helping people to become more fully what they could be according to the symbolism of their chart, that is something worthwhile. And that is what astrology is there for. And there should be astrologers who realize that, because in their own lives they have wanted to develop their interior qualities and become more complete human beings.

But we have to fight, unfortunately, an immense inertia in this materialistic society, where everything is decided by power groups on all levels, and where we think that human progress is merely economic. Progress in terms of human nature - nobody talks about it. We have forgotten the essential values and astrology should be one of the ways to bring us back to more profound realities than wanting to gain more money or to be more comfortable economically or otherwise.

It's what we do with what we have and not what we do what's important. The deep motivations we have, all that can be seen and developed and helped through astrology, and become truer to our proper nature, play the role for which we are here because we have something to do which nobody can do in our place. Our chart is different from any other chart. Therefore waiting for other people to do the essential, that is merely the inertia of human nature because we are not yet true human beings. We have not yet developed that central will, that sense of purpose, the sense of destiny everybody should have.

So, what we call humanistic astrology is merely the use of astrology for each person to develop his or her own truth according to his or her particular rhythm to help them become what they are potentially capable of becoming. Nothing is a given at birth. We take too much for granted as astrologers when we read a birth chart. Things can be developed in a far deeper way. So my suggestion to you is apart from tradition literature, traditional psychological literature, there is another dimension that astrological can also serve. And that literature exists written by Dane Rudhyar and other people that have understood and have followed his suggestions. So all of you who are looking for something deeper in astrology, take heart, there is help for you.

An astrologer can be so much more worth while when it is practiced in terms of living values instead of putting people in artificial categories: "You are an Aries therefore you are this or

that and in the third house you are going to have that type of experience" and so forth. We have to change our whole way of explaining the chart to people. It is based on the old conditioning at we are influenced from outside and that we as particular persons have nothing to do.

It is just the opposite, we are responsible for what happens. We meet events, events don't happen to us. We give them the meaning which our tradition way of thinking and feeling gives to the event. The tradition way is not necessarily the truth. And we may suffer deeply for years through our misinterpretation of the meaning of what happens to us. An astrologer can transform your life in explaining the real meaning of that situation which has been painful because he can place it in terms of a whole process of development which needs all your life to manifest itself, and that suffering on that moment very difficult may be a very positive process enabling you to have different experiences later on because of that suffering.

Nothing is good or bad in an absolute sense. That is again a sort of astrological nonsense which we have unfortunately in our literature. You cannot talk about spiritual development if there are absolutely evil things. Therefore, the idea of Mars and Saturn being bad and square aspects and oppositions being bad is all in terms of a very archaic simplest way of looking at things. There is no truth to that at all. Things are bad according to the way you look at them. If you are attached to old ways, any tendency to change towards the new will be viewed as being bad. It is not the situation which is bad, it is your way of looking at things which creates the notion that it is bad for you because you think and feel that way.

So there again in humanistic astrology where there are no good or bad values, you are beyond all ethical considerations all particular moral interpretations. You are trying to see things as they are and letting each person vibrate with that in his or her own fashion, you individualize the whole process of interpretation and consultation. You are treating the person who comes to see you as a human being, not as an object to which something is happening, or he is going to prove to you that your astrology is able to tell the truth about everything.

So, my plea is to have had the fortune to be open to what astrology means, a subject which filled the academic mind is considered to be something quite negative and useless, to have the courage to stand up for astrology in a modern society means that you are beginning to individualize yourself. You are beginning to live your life according to your own rhythm. That process is, as I said earlier on, can be helped and made more conscious, more under control, through the understanding of cycles in the astrology. And we shall talk about the most basic cycles of all that tomorrow in our workshop on the Lunation Cycle, which is **the cycle** on the basis of which you interpret ALL planetary cycles.

I believe that I have told you the essential of what I had to communicate to you today, the rest will probably be too technical for many of you. My main plea is that astrology enables us to understand the importance of planetary crisis through which we are living, the transition from one state of living to another by which humanity is passing. And the fact that we are alive and we are living through this crisis of transition means that we could be doing much more than we are doing personally to make that transition a positive thing. But in

order to be positive, we must realize that behind every particularity with which we identify ourselves, we are first of all human beings, we are part of one humanity, part of one planet which is a living organism, on which we have a particular function to fulfill. And if we want things to go well, we have to realize what that function is and we have to give up doing all the negative things we happen to be doing to destroy this planet, to destroy people who are not thinking and feeling the same way as we are, and who want to separate rather than to unite.

The foundation reality is what Rudhyar calls "man's common humanity". We have forgotten the existence of "man's common humanity". We are attracted to the labels we have at birth, a particular name, a particular nationality, all artificial things, and we forget the essentials which unite us. And I'd like to give you to end a very potent symbol which Rudhyar suggested to make us perhaps feel our relationship to our "common humanity". Now that we know that we are living on a globe, if you can imagine all of us standing erect on that soil, and if we project our spinal columns downwards, we will all meet in the center of the Earth. And it is in the center of the Earth, where there is man's common humanity. That is where our roots are, and without roots, the flowers and the fruit will not be very convincing, and because we have cut ourselves off from our roots, the flowering of humanity is not very pleasant to see during this 20th century.

So, if we want to have a better flowering of human nature, if we want to see again exceptional human qualities active everywhere, let us contact that central root. And then look up to the sky. And as we progress up our spinal column, each of us will be directing towards his own particular star, that means we have each our particular place within that greater whole, which is a question of conscious realization. But it can never be a conscious realization if you do not accept your common root with all that is human.

I thank you very much.

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