

Horoscope Interpretation

Part 1- Preliminary Considerations

LET NO ONE TAKE the reading of a horoscope lightly, for it is a serious matter. A horoscope is the key to another person's character, and whether we recognize it or not, it has a great deal of power to influence that person. An interpretation executed in an improper spirit can do much damage, from misleading a person to disillusioning him, and from giving him unfounded hopes and confidence to investing him with disappointment, despair, and depression. Rendered in the proper spirit—that of loving, self-forgetting service that asks nothing in return—a horoscope interpretation has tremendous power to help a person understand the patterns of his life and on that basis to be able to live a more meaningful, purposeful, and productive life.

When a person gives his birth data to an astrologer he is expressing his faith in the astrologer's ability to be of help. Woe to the astrologer who betrays such a trust!

Some who criticize astrology claim that any degree of accuracy that astrology may seem to have is due, not to any inherent validity of its own, but to the power of suggestion. Such a claim is only half-truth and the product of one-sided thinking. It is quite true that the trust which an individual places in an astrologer makes him susceptible to suggestion, but there are different kinds of suggestion.

From the esoteric point of view, we understand that nothing that is not in harmony with a person's nature can have any real power to affect him. That is, unless he surrenders his will to it. Such a situation would be similar to hypnosis, wherein the subject (victim) surrenders his will to that of the hypnotist. (Hypnosis is very harmful and not to be thought of as beneficial in any way. Any benefits that may seem to accrue from hypnosis result from the fact that the hypnotist



Astronomical manuscript of Wenceslaus IV, Prague, 1400, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

Court astronomer Terzysko sits at the center of the zodiac recording and interpreting the angles of the stellar rays.

imposes his will on his subject.)

Spiritual evolution demands greater and greater self-mastery, which requires development and discipline of the will. Free will, the spiritual birthright of man, is not to be equated with "strength of desire," as so many people do. Rather, free will is the power to choose and decide what path one will follow. Of course, one must also accept the consequences of his choices. Free will does imply the power to choose to give up one's will to another, but the consequence of this is a retardation of spiritual development due to the failure to develop one's own will.

At worst, hypnosis ranges from unconscious to malicious black magic, which is the subversion of the free will of another either unwittingly or purposefully.

(Contrary to what some people may say, a person can be hypnotized to do anything within the limit of his power. All that is necessary is the proper suggestion technique.) Such is the danger of surrendering one's will. At best, hypnosis is extremely questionable grey magic.

Generally, however, one is not susceptible to hypnotic suggestion unless he is already weak-willed, or unless the imaginative faculty is overdeveloped in relation to the will. Also, the more one is striving for self-mastery and trying to pull his own weight in life rather than trying to "have a good time" and get by with as little individual effort as possible, the less susceptible to suggestion he is.

May this be a warning to all aspiring astrologers. It is not our role to make people's decisions for them or to tell them what they should or should not do on the basis of their horoscopes. This is an infringement of their free will and borders dangerously close to black magic. The role of the astrologer is to help people understand what choices lie before them and then let them do their own choosing.

It is best for the astrologer to inform a person of this intention at the outset of an interpretation, for many people, conditioned as they are by a materialistic, self-seeking world, expect to have their whole life, from the cradle to the grave, laid out for them on a silver platter. They expect the astrologer to do all the work and resent it when this is not forthcoming; they are irritated when they discover that they are expected to make an effort to understand and make use of the interpretation. It is not to be denied that pulp astrology and money-seeking astrologers have done much to foster such an attitude toward astrology. It should be the aim of the astrologer to strengthen the will of others. This is done by enabling them to choose more intelligently and understandingly due to a more enlightened outlook on their lives. The power that an accurate horoscope interpretation has to affect people is not due to any "hypnotic suggestion," then, but to the fact that the astrologer is waking them up to what already exists in themselves and in their relationship to things around them. Sometimes people will even become quite agitated when something inaccurate is said relative to their horoscopes, because it clashes with their inner makeup and creates a very uncomfortable feeling.

Thus, like any other truly meaningful and potent symbol, the horoscope accurately reflects a reality and can lead to a better understanding thereof through

study, and to power over it through application of such knowledge. This does away with a lot of wasteful experimentation and groping in the dark. It can lead right to the heart of a matter without so much beating around the bush. And so it is that when dealing with a natal chart, the astrologer can reach right to the heart of a person much more effectively than many other people can. Hopefully, the astrologer will learn how to use this power wisely, compassionately, and discriminately.

There are many types of people who come to the astrologer for information, advice, or assistance, and since the astrologer's time is usually quite limited, it becomes necessary for him to decide what kinds of situations he will train himself to deal with. The spiritually-minded astrologer takes astrology very seriously and, consequently, does not care to deal with people who are only superficially curious about their horoscopes, especially when there are so many other people with a real need who are crying for help. For the curiosity-seeker, there are the pulp astrology books and magazines, the computerized horoscope interpretations, the materialistically-minded astrologers who are in it for the money, and so on, which cater to such tastes. These people are usually the passive ones who want every step of their lives plotted out for them and are most susceptible to "suggestions."

It is a good practice for the astrologer to request that those who ask him for help write out their reasons for wanting a horoscope interpretation. In addition, he should ask them to write out any particular questions or problems that may be bothering them and on which they would like some insight. These requests serve two purposes: first, they help the person asking for assistance to be more clear in his own mind as to exactly why he wants a horoscope interpretation; second, they help the astrologer to know how best to approach the person and what particular points should be given special attention.

It is important that the person be required to write these things out and not just communicate them orally. The effort to write things down will make him stop and think more seriously about his reasons for wanting a horoscope interpretation. Sometimes, when he discovers that he really does not have any good solid reasons for wanting one, he will drop the matter because it would be "too much bother." This helps to weed out some of the curiosity-seekers. In addition, people who really do need help sometimes find it easier to write down their problems than to tell them to

the astrologer. Writing them down forms an “ice-breaker,” so to speak, which can lead to a more open and relaxed discussion.

The more vague a person’s reasons are for wanting his horoscope interpreted, the more vague and unsatisfactory will be the results that he is likely to get. The more clearly he understands his reasons, the more satisfying and helpful his encounter with an astrologer is likely to be.

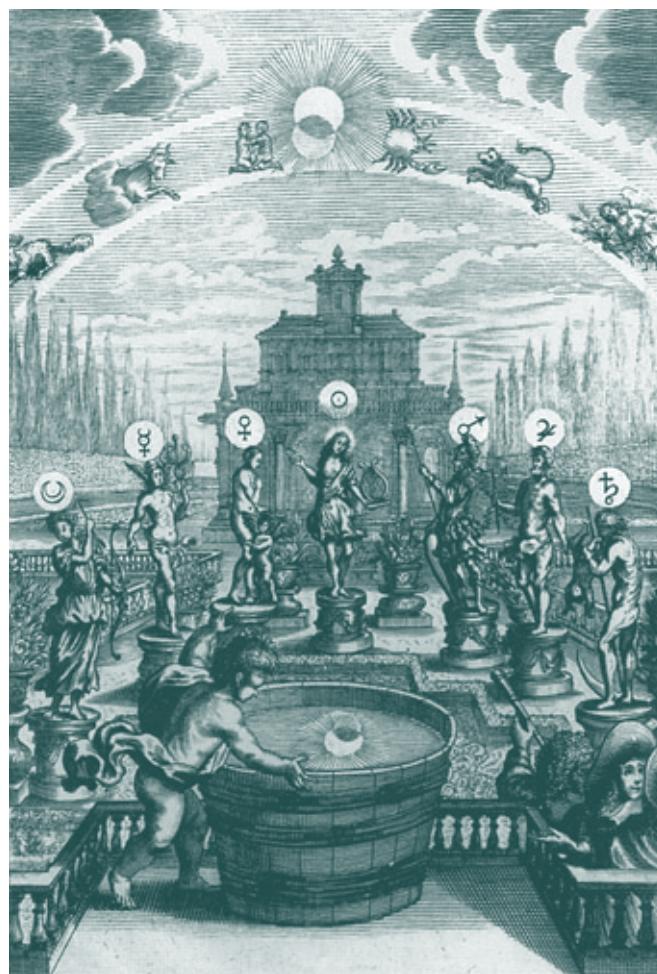
As to the form and scope this written information should take, it is not necessary to ask for a complete autobiography as some astrologers do. The person should be asked to state his case clearly and concisely; it should be neither oversimplified nor cluttered with unnecessary details. Furthermore, he should be asked to take at least a day to think things over before writing them down. If more information is found to be needed later, it can be brought out in the course of the interpretation itself.

It is not possible to set down any hard and fast rules as to what to accept as good reasons for an interpretation and what to reject. That must be left to the discretion of each individual astrologer and his evaluation of each particular situation. In some cases, the astrologer may feel it desirable to ask for more information or more detail on the information given. In other cases, he may feel it necessary to decline to give an interpretation. It is his prerogative to do so when he is not asking a price for his services.

The astrologer may have several reasons for declining to do an interpretation. He may feel that the person is not serious enough about the matter or that his reasons are too superficial or vague. Sometimes the astrologer just gets a feeling that he should not do an interpretation when he looks at the chart. If this feeling is reasonably distinct, it can usually be trusted. It may be that the person is not ready to receive the kind of information the astrologer would give him.

If people are too self-centered they will hear only what they want to hear, in which case the interpretation accomplishes nothing and the astrologer is wasting his time. If such people hear anything they don’t like, they either ignore it or argue with it until they convince themselves they are right. Such people are only looking for self-justification and for an excuse to continue what they are already doing. They have no true interest in self-improvement since they are already convinced in that what they are doing is right.

People who are worry-prone or emotionally unbalanced are apt to pay attention only to the negative



Erasmus Franciscus, *Das eröffnete Lust-Haus der Ober-und Niederwelt*, 1676, Nuremberg

In this illustration the conjunction of the sun and moon serves as an allegory for the marriage of the macrocosm and microcosm by alchemy and astronomy. The reflecting water in the tub symbolizes the astronomer's telescopic lens.

things that are said, and as a consequence, a horoscope interpretation is likely to make them even more despondent than they already are. Such people are so wrapped up in self-pity that they do not want to be helped. They are looking for sympathy and for some kind of justification of their behavior. “I can’t help it, my horoscope says...” etc.

It is advisable to stay clear of people who want their horoscope interpreted in order to “see if astrology works.” The astrologer should not feel obligated to “prove” astrology to anyone other than himself, though he may voluntarily choose to assist others in their endeavors to understand its mechanism. He would not be in astrology if he did not recognize some truth and value in it. That is to say, the spiritually-minded astrologer would not. He is too busy trying to improve himself and help others with his astrological

knowledge and has no time to be trying to prove his art and science to skeptics who are already convinced he is wrong. Ultimately, truth resides within, and people must have some inner perception of truth before they can respond to any outward expressions of it.

Generally speaking, if the astrologer is of a serious and spiritual demeanor, he will not attract many of the curious, self-centered, or skeptical people. If he does, he may politely inform them that he is not prepared to deal with their situations. There are plenty of other sources that cater to the jaded tastes of such people, so the astrologer need have no qualms about having refused them. He can be confident that, eventually, most such people will grow weary of a superficial, spiritually empty way of life and be ready for something of a higher, more satisfying nature.

To summarize, then, the astrologer should be careful to see that the people he endeavors to help are reasonably open-minded, mature, stable, willing to co-operate with him, and have some serious faith in astrology. If this is done, it will save much time and effort that would otherwise be wasted for little or nothing.

The procedure recommended above is for astrologers of some experience. For the beginning astrologer, it may be beneficial to gather many horoscopes of friends, family, and acquaintances, in order to acquire the basic knowledge and experience needed to get a good grasp on interpretation. In this case, it is not necessary to be so picky, because the astrologer is just "practicing." Of course, he should inform people accordingly. As more competence is gained, the astrologer can afford to be more choosy and concentrate his attention in a more useful manner.

The beginning astrologer should understand that he can never learn how to be a good astrologer from reading books and articles alone. Only as he gains experience through applying and refining his book knowledge will he gain competence. Too much indiscriminate reading and haphazard experimentation lead to confusion rather than competence.

Astrology is like any other true science in that a person can never learn so much about it that there is nothing left to learn. The astrologer should be able to learn something from every horoscope he interprets. The lessons learned from each interpretation should contribute to a better understanding of the next. When the astrologer ceases to learn from the horoscopes he interprets, which is more likely to happen

when money is one of the primary motivations, he ceases to be a good astrologer.

One of the obstacles to learning how to interpret horoscopes accurately is the inability to see beyond oneself. We are usually so indoctrinated with a self-seeking attitude that it is well nigh impossible for us to see another person as he really is. Instead, we tend to judge other people according to our own values, which we naturally assume to be correct.

As a consequence, there is a danger that the astrologer may tend to project his own beliefs and inadequacies on another when doing an interpretation. It is, perhaps, impossible to get away entirely from this, but in order to minimize the danger, the astrologer first and foremost should strive to face his own horoscope honestly.

Does someone object that this is no easy thing to do? No, it is not easy. When looking at our own horoscopes, we like to over-emphasize the pleasant things and gloss over that which is unpleasant. But it is only when we are able to be honest with ourselves that we can hope to see other people honestly. We must not only be able to see the proper indications in our own horoscopes, but we must also be able to admit their truth to ourselves.

Another safeguard is to encourage feedback. Generally speaking, older or more mature people tend to give more meaningful feedback, while younger or less mature people just tend to listen and not say very much during an interpretation. The astrologer should encourage people to feel free to comment on anything he says, to re-enforce the things which seem to be right and to question when something seems to be wrong. The astrologer is as likely to make mistakes as anyone else, and it is best to admit the fact from the very beginning. That way, when mistakes are made, people will not be afraid to point them out and the astrologer will not be embarrassed by his human fallibility. Furthermore, it will help to prevent the astrologer from getting off on a wrong tangent and never discovering it, and, thus, prevent him from making the same error again.

Sometimes, however, what appears to be an error in interpretation is actually a lack of mutual understanding. When the astrologer says something, he may have a certain meaning in mind, but another person may infer quite a different meaning from those same words. In such a case, a little discussion and clarification are all that is needed. (To be continued) □

—Karl Kleinstick