

The Veiled Pulse of Time

SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET said "There's a divinity that shapes our ends/Rough-hew them how we will." Author William Bryant might elaborate that the rough hewer is our personal self while the "divinity" is our suprapersonal Self. *The Veiled Pulse of Time, An Introduction to Biographical Cycles and Destiny* (Lindisfarne Press, Hudson, New York, 1993) is less about shaping our ends than shaping the shaper, the doer; or, expressed in Rosicrucian terminology, it is about nourishing the threefold spirit, the I, with the soul content derived from experience in the threefold body.

Bryant identifies three forms of time, which may be experienced as a unity:

- 1) all-at-once Great Time, paradisaal, mythic, and eternally now;
- 2) rhythmic time, which is cyclic, harmonizing, coordinating, and reiterating events;
- 3) linear, chronological, juggernaut time, lean, face-forward and breathless.

As Bryant sees it, cyclical time mediates between linear and all-at-once time. It "enables the eternal in us to live and grow in the passing time of the mortal world."

In a figure familiar to Rosicrucian students, Bryant suggests that the best way to visualize time is to imagine it as a synthesis of linear and cyclic time, a three-dimensional spiral or helix—showing the evolving results of the soul mediating between body and spirit.

Linear time currently reigns over Western culture in technology, science, and economics, impelling us to worship progress, to live in tomorrow today.

It is the time of high blood pressure, ulcers and tyrannizing schedules. The arrow of linear time "has wounded the spirit of humanity. The spiritual human being seems to dissolve in this stream of time, only the skeleton feels comfortable in it."

But altering our state of mind changes our experience of time, as in dreams, meditation, also through drugs, and eventually, through initiation.

Bryant is interested in the coil of biographical time as both objectively studied and subjectively experienced. He uses the term "time organism" to mean "the active organizing principle responsible for regulating the cyclic behavior found in every process, from the mitotic minuet of the amoeba to the changing states of human consciousness." At the heart of this time organism is rhythm, the alteration of passive and active phases, of inhalation and exhalation, contraction and expansion, life and death. Rhythm is instilled in our life's mental archetype existing in the World of Thought. It also characterizes the vital body, a time-body that is organized and functions on the basis of rhythm and orderly recurrence.

That human and cosmic rhythms are interrelated is made clear by a number of astonishing correspondences, particularly as they relate to "breath cycles" of the macrocosm and microcosm. The Great Sidereal Year—the time required for the vernal equinox to make one circuit of the zodiac—is 25,920 years, and a zodiacal age is 2,160 years. Now consider that breathing eighteen times a minute, humans breathe about 25,920 times a day, suggesting that a human day is a microcosmic reflection of the Great Year. Also, a seventy-two-year

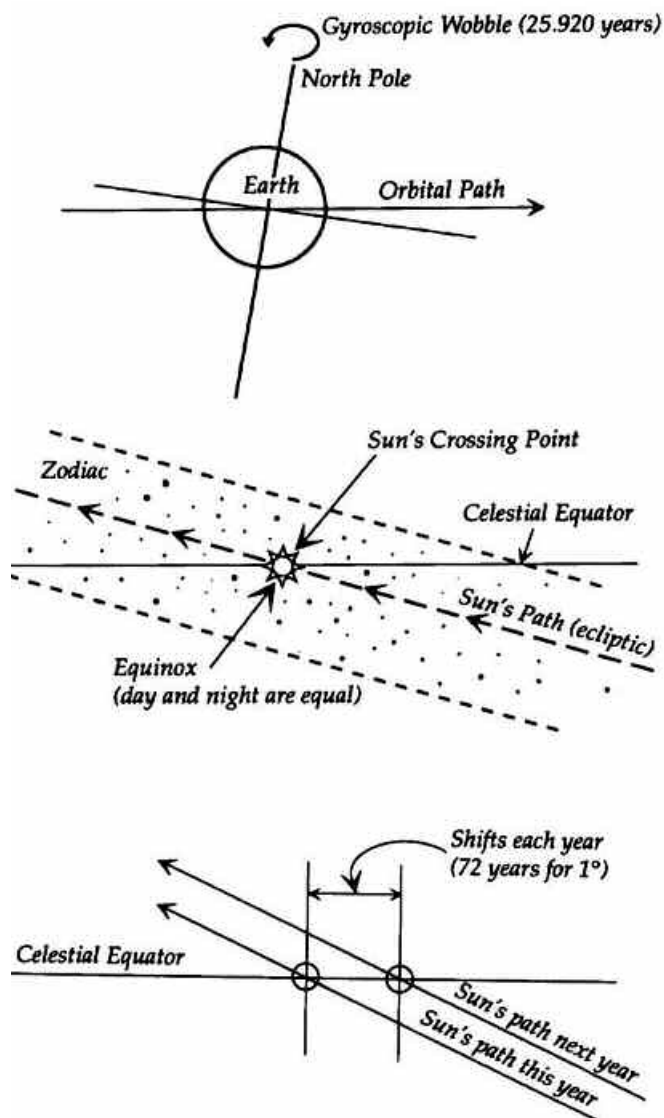
life span is just three months over 26,000 days. The normal human pulse of seventy-two heartbeats a minute has its macrocosmic equivalent in the seventy-two years required for the vernal sun to precess one degree.

Saturn and Jupiter, cosmic sources of contracting and expansive energies, also participate in these rhythmic cycles. Saturn takes twenty-nine years and 168 days to orbit the sun; that is, it makes seventy-two revolutions in a sidereal month, passing through 25,920 degrees of the zodiac. Jupiter orbits the sun 2,160 times in a Sidereal Year, passing through 25,920 signs (one a year). Its cycle in hours is close to the number of human heartbeats per day (103,680 [72x60x24]), and the number of days in its annual cycle are nearly the same as the number of human heartbeats per hour—4,320.

If our physical life is so attuned to cosmic cycles, we might expect to find some evidence that our mental and spiritual development is also responsive to these same cycles. Bryant convincingly details the influence of three of the longer planetary cycles in human affairs. He identifies the seven-year (Uranian) cycle and characterizes each of its twelve phases, from the first seven years (“Trailing Clouds of Glory”), to the “Closing Years.” The seven-year cycles “regulate the relationship between the inner metabolism of the soul and the conscious mind’s experience of itself,” whereby raw experience is converted into psychological capacities and faculties. “Swallowed by time at birth, we are disgorged at death into other dimensions of time—even timelessness.”

The second major rhythm is the Chronos cycle, the thirty-year (29⁺ years) rhythm which “sounds a deep basal tone beneath the complex rhythm of the shorter cycles.” There is a “remorseless inevitability about this cycle.” Saturn-Chronos is the “Lord of necessity and cosmic memory” who, as “Lord of the Measures,” coordinates past, present, and future. He is the source of order and destiny.

Bryant calls the three successive thirty-year spans of the Chronos cycle the formative, constructive, and reflective periods, respectively. This cycle shows the synchronizing between personal and social destiny, a “time mesh between personal and



Solar and planetary cycles are intimately correlated with recurring patterns of human physiology, emotionality and thinking. The biographical clock individualizes cosmic rhythms.

national genesis.”

Biographies of a number of statesmen, artists, and scientists are cited (including J. F. Kennedy, Nehru, Emerson, Martin Luther, Charles Darwin and Albert Schweitzer) in illustrating the Chronos cycle. On his thirtieth birthday, Martin Luther wrote in his journal: “It is neither safe nor prudent to do aught against conscience. Here stand I. I cannot do otherwise.” So does Saturn inform conscience!

Bryant studied the time charts of hundreds of individuals and found that “the more advanced the being, the more their time life, their preparation and mission, both confirms and affirms the spiritual

laws working in time.” That is, evolved Egos make optimal use of their stellar opportunities. They are masters of their stars.

The third major planetary rhythm Bryant studies is the Jupiter cycle. While the seven-year rhythm “regulates the cyclic pattern of our inward descent through the psychological layers of the personality,” the twelve-year Jupiter cycle “translates this changing self-awareness into the sequential steps of our life’s work, the psyche’s *expression* in the world.” This is a vocational rhythm, marking phases of scientific, artistic, or philosophical activity when ideas and relationships mature and yield fruit.

Biography, in Bryant’s original terms, represents a kind of individualized planetary clock. He illustrates the influence of Jupiter and its twelve year “rhythm of wisdom” cycle by analyzing the life of Leo Tolstoy in detailed depth.

Clearly, the author of *The Veiled Pulse of Time* is conversant with many esoteric truths familiar to the student of Rosicrucian teachings, but he has a light touch in proposing them. He knows that many people think the human will is captive to star influences and they reject astrology because it seems to impose a necessity on human behavior, for which, furthermore, they see no compelling evidence.

While materialism attributes all human form and behavior exclusively to material causes, the spiritual view of causality identifies the Self as the selector and transformer of heredity and environment: “The Ego is the primary source of human causality....Each Self *selects* its genetic constitution with an interior wisdom infinitely more profound than that achieved by the rational intellect....One can always detect the presence of an irrepressible wisdom at the helm of biography....The psyche must obey its rhythms; all the impatience in the world cannot intimidate the cycles of transformation. No matter what the surface phenomenon of our existence, the psyche faithfully prepares new opportunities and a stage for synchronizing to create new connections.”

The more advanced the Ego, the freer it is to determine what it shall become and how it shall use cosmic energies and temporal rhythms to effect its intentions. What a person lacks in freedom he will gain through necessity. And invariably necessity is

experienced in some degree as pain and suffering. “Suffering is an *inhalation* which concentrates our attention.” Pain commands obedience. As C.S. Lewis writes in *The Problem of Pain*, “God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

The collision of two contrary thoughts, as well as two physical bodies, galvanizes consciousness. Our personal destiny is forged not only by our intentional will but by the shocks arising from encountering the thrust of other’s wills upon our material, passionate, and mental being. These impacts and the suffering some of them cause us is beneficial, for by them we grow and by growing we heal ourselves. “The metal of being is painfully shaped between the hammer of experience and the anvil of destiny.” Suffering is our servant, not our master. We rightly view it when we realize that we have called it to us to teach us. Adversity happens *to* us; later we know it is *through* us; finally we realize it is *for* us.

Time cycles mark out the patterns and propulsions of our being and becoming. This process is continuous, as the single life represents but a phase, a day, in the life of the Spirit’s journey to self-conscious divinity. “If the world is an arena of experience, being allotted only one entrance and exit is an affront to eternity. After all, how much progress can we be expected to make in one lifetime?” Bryant reasons that the idea of rebirth is “a totally sensible concept of human continuity...the concept of repeated earth-lives promotes a healthy self-reverence which fortifies the spirit and adds meaning to daily existence and human relationship.”

It is difficult not to quote Bryant because his writing is poetic, persuasive, and profound. So it may be fitting to conclude this review with a final passage from *The Veiled Pulse of Time*: “Without a time structure, biography is nothing more than ‘a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.’ Without destiny, however, time is itself without meaning, while personal evolution without reincarnation is capricious, restricted, and indefinable. Finally, reincarnation is meaningless without the greater goals of immortality.” □

—C.W.