

Astrology is Not Science

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Here's a hypothetical situation, followed by a serious question:

Let's say that a person buys a ticket from a commercial airlines for an international flight. He boards the plane along with 100 other passengers, and the flight begins. A malfunction occurs mid-flight, however, and the plane strays into the air territory of a hostile foreign nation, which then shoots down the jet airliner with a missile. Everyone onboard is killed.

This tragic scenario has actually happened. In fact, commercial jets and other non-military aircraft have been mistakenly shot down many, many times. Google "airliner shoot down incidents" for a Wikipedia list of 39 such occurrences starting in the 1930s. The most recent mistaken shoot-downs were two incidents in 2020.

Here's the serious question: *Is the symbolic indication of such an event indicated by astrology, either through astrological conditions at the time that apply to everyone, or by alignments in the personal astrological charts of all the individuals who died — passengers and crew?*

Let me address first the latter part of the question and then come around to the earlier part. If, as some devotees seem to believe, astrology is a "magical key" to the interconnectedness of everything that occurs in the universe and reveals all the major events in a person's life, then we should be able to look at a given natal chart and its active cycles at a certain moment in time, and see the symbolic signature of whatever event transpired. Fair enough.

There's a problem, though. In our hypothetical scenario, where more than 100 people die in one event — meaning at the same moment and in the same way — we need all the natal charts of the individuals involved, which means accurate birth-data (full date, time, and place of birth) for each of those 100+ people. This might be possible in Europe, where birth-times are public record, but it would be impossible in the U.S., where such records are private, and in many other countries, where no such records are kept. Even in Europe, however, a complete list of all those killed in the crash or shoot-down would probably be difficult to obtain — permissions from grieving families and all that. Group studies with specific and very select subjects are notoriously difficult to mount,

and, with almost no exceptions, astrologers have neither the deep pockets nor the cultural pull to get past all the hurtles.

As far as I know, no such post-event astrological study of an airliner shoot-down has ever been conducted. Compared to other disciplines, the total number of “scientific studies” undertaken in astrology remains very small. And there’s a good reason for that.

Astrology is not and never has been “scientific.” Science requires strict control of variables, and astrology works in exactly the opposite way — it throws together everything into a single pot and then looks to see how the many different flavors commingle into a tasty stew. This doesn’t mean that astrology is irrational, crazy, or useless. It’s just that science and astrology aren’t looking for the same things. Science is a methodology for investigating how the universe works, especially the tangible or material universe. By contrast, astrology illuminates what life means for human beings from a psychological or spiritual perspective.

So, all the “true believers” in astrology who assume that “everything is written in the heavens” and that all events — whether in the life of an individual or for collective humanity — can, will, or should be revealed by astrological charts are barking up the wrong tree. They want astrology to be science, but it’s not. They also want astrology to be simple and straightforward, but it’s complicated and paradoxical.

Can astrology sometimes provide us with insights about events, either for an individual or for all of us together? Yes, it can, and the insights are often quite revealing. Astrology may or may not have much to say about the structure or form of a particular event — meaning what the event looks like and how people will tend to characterize it — but astrology can always give us at least some information about the ebb and flow of *meaning* at that time.

For instance, astrology was downright brilliant at describing the milieu of the September 11th attacks in 2001. At that time, the Sibly chart for the U.S. was undergoing the final pass of Pluto over its natal Ascendant. Using a standard transiting orb of $\pm 1^\circ$, this momentous alignment (which occurs only once every 250 years in a natal chart) began in January 2000 and ended in October 2001. On the day of the attacks, Pluto was less than one-half of one degree past the USA Ascendant.

That transit implied a time for the U.S. of volcanic disruption with Machiavellian overtones. It began with the Y2K Computer Scare, which proved to be mostly a fizzle. Things got serious a year later, however, with the contested Presidential election of November 2000 between Bush and Gore. Then, at the end of the second year, the 9-11 attacks rounded out the transit and set the stage for the profound and violent retaliation that was to come. With major Pluto cycles especially, the long-term implications of how we change and what we become

are often more important than the momentary expressions of what happens during the transits. In addition, 9-11 occurred while Jupiter was transiting over the USA natal Sun in Cancer, implying a social expansion of “family unity,” in this case, a welling up of patriotic fervor.

In fairness, not many astrologers predicted beforehand either the 2000 election debacle or the 2001 attacks. A few did, quite presciently, but no one paid any attention to them until after the fact. The fundamental problem with predicting such events using astrological charts is that the symbols are multi-ordinal. That is to say, each symbol has many different meanings, all of which share a resonance, but which will vary widely in structure, shape, and form, depending on the circumstance and where we direct our attention. Once we begin putting symbols together (the most basic approach to astrological interpretation), the number of realistic possibilities for what might happen multiplies algebraically, going from a few to a gazillion in no time flat. It’s almost holographic. Every piece reflects the whole. In short, the possible expressions are simply too vast in number for astrologers to pin down a specific and definite manifestation. We are likely to be able to see the tone of a given time period, but that’s usually more poetic and psychological than concrete and literal.

Another noteworthy event was the SARS CoV-2 COVID-19 pandemic that first came to light globally in January 2020. That corresponded perfectly to the alignment of Saturn and Pluto coming together in the zodiac (at 23° of the sign Capricorn) to kick off another of their 38-year cycles. Both of these events — one literal and the other astrological — made it obvious (and quite worrisomely so) that the new decade of the 2020s would bring something very different from how life had felt in the 2010s, and that we probably wouldn’t like it.

Was there something in the Saturn-Pluto conjunction that implied a pandemic? Some symbolic signal? Not that I’m aware of. I simply don’t know the symbolic signature of a medical catastrophe, such as a viral pandemic. Most astrologers don’t have much experience with disease epidemics, and whatever is known doesn’t amount to much in the technical literature of astrology.

What *was* indicated — very plainly and in no uncertain terms — is that the response of government and major institutions to whatever happened (in this case, the pandemic) would be draconian, ruthless, authoritarian, manipulative, and quite probably based on lies. Now, after two and a half years, all that is finally coming to light.

As with 9-11, only a few astrologers predicted a viral pandemic for 2020. Honestly, I don’t know what they saw in the charts that the rest of us didn’t. What I could see (and wrote about at the time) was not what happened, but rather our reaction to what happened (meaning how we dealt with the pandemic), which is only now being more fully revealed and realized.

When Saturn conjoined Pluto in the zodiac in January 2020, their alignment was a single-pass transit, over and done very quickly (in about two weeks). And yet, that was the birthing of a cycle whose dark and extremist symbolism has taken root and spread horrifically. So far, the 2020s are all about manipulation and domination. Some people want to impose their will on everyone else — coldly, ruthlessly, with no reasonableness and no compromises. It's my way or the highway, and that insistence on absolutism is wreaking havoc on our ability to even minimally get along and live with each other. Meanwhile, the monsters and their minions lick their lips and keep us enthralled and addicted to Death Culture consumerism, as more and more of what wealth remains is funneled upwards to the 1%.

But I digress. The point of this commentary is that astrology is lousy at predicting concrete events. OK, but so what? Astrology is brilliant at revealing trends in the ever-changing psychology of the zeitgeist.

No, astrology is not science. Never was, and never will be. But what it is can be just as good.