

CAN ASTROLOGY PREDICT OUR FUTURE?

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Astrology and predicting the future are often linked together. Does astrology predict the future and, if so, how does that work? You would think if astrologers could predict something like the stock market, the first thing they would do is run out and make a million dollars or so. This would make their lives easier. But that does not seem to be the case. Astrologers are not usually numbered among the very rich. In fact, it is more likely the opposite, and here is a little story of my own about that.

Many years ago, in the very early 1970s, I wanted to buy a programmable calculator. It was the beginning of my programming career and it led to my founding Matrix Software, the first astrological software company that offered programs for astrologers. And... Matrix today is the second oldest software company on the Internet (aside from Microsoft) according to an article written for Red Herring Magazine.

I had outgrown pencil & paper, log tables, and 4-function calculators and needed to borrow \$500, so I went to a local Ann Arbor bank and applied for a loan. When they asked me what my profession was, I foolishly (but honestly) told them that I was an astrologer.

Of course I did not get the loan. In fact, they laughed and made a big point of pulling out a long list of professions and somewhere near the bottom they showed me that the loan risk-value for astrologers was just immediately above migrant workers. Hmmm.

I had to go back to the bank three times and they finally gave me the loan, probably just to get rid of me, but that shows you that astrology is not exactly considered a right livelihood in this society, at least by the banks. Now in India, this is different, but that is another story. Now, what about astrological predictions?

I will attempt to explain this to you as best I can, but whether you can understand it or not will depend on your patience with me. It is a little subtle, but well worth the effort if you have ever wondered about what astrology can and cannot predict. There are, however, a couple of basic concepts you may need in order to follow this idea through, so get ready to think along with me.

First, we live in a universe in which (like the CPU in your computer) nothing much goes on, yet everything takes place. In other words, there are long stretches of time when no notable events happen. Teenagers are expert in this sort of ennui. I am not saying that nothing happens, because obviously everything does. I am talking about recognizable astronomical events like the New and Full Moons each month, and so on. Most non-astrologers know about only a few of these events and even then they have little idea what they might mean or portend.

In fact, and here is the first subtle point: it seems we tend only to measure time and duration by events that impact us and, astrologically speaking, these are recurring cycles like when something returns or happens again. If an event never happens again, does not persist by repeating itself, we seem to have no generational memory of it. It is a singleton that came and went right on by us only one time. Out of sight, out of mind. Goodbye and gone.

Everything has to somehow repeatedly persevere in order to stay in our mind, as in: cycles. This

is a whole other topic, but worth thinking about sometime. Here I will just scratch the surface.

To stick in our memory an event seems to require truth and persistence, persistence in that it continues to exist (happens again and again), and “truth” meaning it’s reality quotient (compared to our more ephemeral existence) is high enough to last into the future. Most things repeat or are cycles.

That is what defines a cycle, like the cycle of the dawn each day, the monthly cycles of the Moon, the yearly cycle of the Earth around the Sun, and on and on. Even the tiny electrons in atoms (and whatever) endlessly repeat their orbits. Repeat, repeat, repeat. I would not be too far off the mark to simply say, if something does not cycle and return on itself, it does not exist, at least as far we know it, as far as we can recall. We need help remembering and cycles endlessly remind us. They keep us awake by always being there. Make sense?

What is perhaps subtle here is the concept that everything ‘IS’ only by somehow having the energy or persistence to remain or exist – duration. Rocks last a long time; snow-cones not so long. So far I have pointed out that in this great expanse of time we call life, the way we measure time as we know it (clocks, etc.) comes from cycles that return and repeat themselves endlessly. This repetition of cycles gets our attention, and we can mark time by them, you know: days, months, years, etc. Is it not interesting that our measurement of time is based on celestial events that return, but most folks don’t “believe” in astrology?

Celestial or heavenly events like the New and Full Moons are events in time we can measure, but what do they mean? How do they differ from planetary returns and can we measure the difference? And here comes the second somewhat subtle point:

Just because a difference is small (even minute) does not indicate it has no meaning or importance. If the ‘only’ difference between an event and none at all is very small, it still may be all the difference in the world. If that tiny difference is all there is between nothing happening and an event, then by definition that difference is significant and perhaps even magnified because perhaps it is, and I repeat, “all the difference in the world.”

You may need to ponder this idea that small differences can have big effects compared to nothing. Think ‘Chaos Theory’ and homeopathy. As humans we routinely make mountains out of mole hills, so this should not be a new thought for us. So far I hopefully have given you a little understanding for what is coming next, what I have to say about astrological prediction. And this next part gets a little harder, so bear with me.

If we add up all the celestial factors that astrologers like to measure, we get a fairly long list of timed events, like exactly when this or that heavenly event takes place. In between these events, as mentioned, is (astrologically speaking) non-event-time, just plain-old time/space, with nothing much happening. In fact, aside from the astrological events themselves, we have only the coming to be of the event (prolog) and the passing away of the event (epilog). So these astrological events can be felt coming and going. As astrologers like to say, “Coming events cast their shadow.”

But sandwiched between the prolog and the epilogue is the event itself, the moment of its most ‘being’ or suchness. This event is what we mark time with (and from), like the Full Moon. We have the coming of the Full Moon, the Full Moon itself, and the passing away from the Full Moon, but the main event is the moment and time of the Full Moon.

So far we have been mostly talking about the astronomy, the physical heavenly events that we can locate and observe. Astrology is cultural astronomy, what astronomy means to us. Astrologers have spent many centuries and lifetimes determining what these various astrological events or signatures are about, what they mean, but they all seem to agree that, whatever they may mean, meaning arises from or is signified by and at the time of the event itself. I have run out of space. And in the next blog I will try to explain a more subtle point. I apologize if this is too abstract. Do you understand it so far?

CAN ASTROLOGY PREDICT OUR FUTURE? Part 2 of 2
May 12, 2012

Time, like space, is not something we can see with our eyes, hear with our ears, or feel with our fingers. We measure time only by being aware of the duration between the events that occur in it. With no memorable events, we have no memory of living. If we had room here I could describe to you why our social sense of time is merely a convention agreed upon by the majority and that individuals can (and do) fall outside (through the cracks) of conventional time. That is what shamans are all about, but that would be another, but perhaps interesting, blog.

This world of celestial time (aside from our personal happenings and society) is mostly empty of large events, astronomically speaking. The most meaningful or true moments (cyclically speaking) that most people are aware of are the various celestial events like the New and Full Moons, and of course the rising of the Sun each day. These heavenly events have been with us long before humans walked the earth, and they self-signify themselves. Their happening marks or articulates time from otherwise just being a relatively uneventful flow. They are so important that we count on them. After all, we measure time: days, months, years, etc. this way. But just what are they?

They are simply significant astronomical events that we all can see and acknowledge. These events stand out from or persist against the background of the normal stream of relatively non-eventful time. They serve to demarcate or divide time so that we can know of its passing. These events exist in some clear way in the heavens. And they last.

By "last" I mean they exist, persevere, and clearly separate or demarcate time, giving us our sense of duration. By articulating time, they make it possible for there to be a future. They define it. Compared to most events in life, these celestial events are significant. After all, they have been with us for thousands of years and we use them to measure time -- a vast astronomical clock.

In other words, these astronomical events that astrologers measure will last or persist long enough to make it into the future where they will still be. And they have been there for millennia. The fact that they are cycles and repeat themselves even gives them almost a kind of immortality. They are always going to be there long after we are gone, which is a significant point.

It is axiomatic that truth, whatever is 'true', will outlast whatever is false or non-essential. These true astronomical events have been there forever and will continue to be there in the future. Therefore, they represent or are "of the future. They are the future, because they actually define it in time.

It is this way (by defining the future), and only in this way, that astrological events predict the future. Yes, there are psychics or seers like Nostradamus who seem to actually predict the

future from dreams or from their minds, but this is not what astrologers do, unless they happen also to be psychic. Note the difference between astrologers and psychics. I am not knocking psychics. I just don't happen to be able to do that.

Astrologers, like astronomers, measure celestial events in time, make a list, point them out to us, observe them when they happen, AND astrologers (to the best of their ability) also attempt to tell us what these celestial events mean both now and for the future. That is how astrologers predict the future. And since this may appear a little abstract, let me rephrase it.

Astrological events like the Full Moon each month or the conjunction in the sky of Venus and Jupiter (from Earth's view) articulate (serve as place markers in) an otherwise relatively uneventful time. They signify or stand for something. Whether or not they are auspicious for this or that purpose we can debate about, but their occurrence is a simple fact that we can note and depend on. This is astronomy.

And these heavenly events are true events that actually happen. They have truth. And while we can argue about their significance (what they mean), we cannot argue about the fact that these events happen and exist. And they are even cyclic; they repeat themselves, so we can continue to muse on what they can possibly mean for centuries to come, but their possible meaning is not the point here.

I mentioned in the previous blog that our life is all about cycles, and not just the Sun and Moon cycles, but the cycles of our breathing, of our heartbeat, and so on. Cycles are everywhere. Astrologers note that in the warp and woof of time, in the relative emptiness of time (astronomically speaking), we have these recurring events such as the New Moon, Full Moon, plus scores of events of lesser note, all of which are distinct astronomical events.

Astrologers have found that these events are significant; they are 'significators' that articulate or mark time in auspicious ways. These events stand for something and they persist or have "truth" and that truth is true enough to persist and define the future. In this way, celestial events foretell the future. In fact, we can name the date and time when these astronomical events will take place from today far into the future. It only remains to know what they 'mean', which is what astrology is all about.

In this way, astrology is one way to look at our world and ourselves. Not the only way, but another way than what society has taught us. I call it a "second opinion" on what we have been programmed by society to know as ourselves. Astrology changed my life by giving me another look at myself aside from the conventions of society in the 1950s. I was relieved to refer to myself other than through the catch-words of modern psychology (then in its heyday), words like paranoid, manic-depressive, neurotic, etc. That is how we were programmed to think of ourselves back in the 1950s. Seeing myself through astrology was a big relief.

So the future contains a seeming endless amount of significant astronomical events. These events are waiting out there to happen and they have happened endless times before. Where astrologers differ and find their differences are in what these events mean or signify. Understanding the significance or meaning of astronomical events like the monthly New and Full Moons requires some awareness on our part. We can develop that.

It is not astrology to tell someone you have Venus Conjunct Neptune. That is astronomy. It is astrology to suggest what this might mean "a deep love of the sea" or "valuing togetherness," and so on. Everyone can learn to do the astronomy in astrology, but you can't really interpret

meaning from just reading books. As my teacher used to say “Michael, someday you must become the book.” In my blogs here I have tried to share with you some of what I understand is the ‘meaning’ of astrology. You can also develop that.

To do this requires that each of us read beyond the pages of a book and into our own mind and intuition. It is already in there waiting to be seen, but it requires awareness on our part to interpret these astronomical events, to become sensitive to them. That is why I keep harping on developing awareness. We astrologers are learning to better interpret and understand what these astronomical events mean. I have spent the better part of my life trying to develop this.

I hope this has been somewhat useful.