The Wisdom of the Stars: Dane Rudhyar's wise modernism

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Abstract. Dane Rudhyar (1895-1985) was one of the most influential astrologers of the twentieth century. He wrote over twenty astrology books, beginning with *The Astrology of Personality* in 1936, and has been hailed as a very significant influence on psychological astrology, a form of astrology integrating the psychological ideas of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). As a musician, artist and writer, Rudhyar has been identified as one of the most important, 'yet still fairly unrecognised' modernist American composers. Discussions of 'modern' astrology in relation to the categories of modernity, modernism and postmodernity have focused on whether astrology can be thought of as belonging to modernity or postmodernity, with the majority asserting that astrology belongs to postmodernity. Little consideration has been given to the category of modernism despite this having been identified elsewhere in scholarly debate as one of 'the two modernities'; this debate recognises important differences between modernity and modernism in addition to their similarities. In this paper I discuss Dane Rudhyar's innovations in astrology, arguing that the features of his reform make it an excellent example of modernism, and as such that his astrology is at home within the modern world.

Dane Rudhyar

Dane Rudhyar was born Daniel Chenneviere in Paris, France on 23 March 1895.[1] He died in 1985 as one of the most respected astrologers in the Western world.[2] According to his wife, Leyla Raël, he suffered some ill health as a child and lost his father in 1911 when he was 16.[3] It was shortly after this that he had a realisation that all life was cyclical and that European culture was in its autumn phase, meaning that it was advanced

[1] Deniz Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*: *His Music, Thought, and Art* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: University of Rochester Press, 2009), p. xvii.
[2] See Charles Harvey's 1991 introduction in Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Personality* (Sante Fe, NM: Aurora, 1991), p. xix.
[3] Leyla Raël, 'The Essential Rudhyar' www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/ess (accessed: 18 April 2021).

Laura Andrikopoulos, 'The Wisdom of the Stars: Dane Rudhyar's wise modernism', *Culture and Cosmos,* Vol. 28 no 1 and 2, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter 2024, pp. 128-142.
www.CultureAndCosmos.org

in a cycle consisting of four seasons (starting with spring and ending with winter).[4] In contrast, he felt that America was in a spring phase where new seeds could be sown and Rudhyar decided to sever ties with France and start a new life in America, which he did at the age of twenty-one.[5] Part of this embrace of the new was his adoption of a new name, Dane Rudhyar. Rudhyar's first passion was music and he arrived in America as 'a composer of orchestral and piano music and as a writer of books and articles about music'.[6] As a musician, artist and writer, he has been identified as one of the most important, 'yet still fairly unrecognised' modernist American composers.[7]

Later he found astrology and used this as an 'unsought avenue of contact with the American consciousness'.[8] He became one of the most influential Western astrologers of the twentieth century. He wrote over twenty astrology books, beginning with *The Astrology of Personality* in 1936, and has been hailed as a very significant influence on psychological astrology, a form of astrology integrating the psychological ideas of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961).[9]

According to Raël, Rudhyar studied with a view to developing a new type of consciousness that could grasp 'universal, spiritual, and metaphysical principles' and 'cyclic processes' and came to the view that his destiny was to 'reformulate ancient and traditional metaphysical and occult concepts in terms that would, both, nourish the development of and be understandable by this kind of mind'.[10]

Deniz Ertan, Rudhyar's biographer, sums up Rudhyar's contribution to music, art and astrology as follows:

> Over the years, his ideas did not change direction but continued to grow and deepen, providing a body of work that is essentially consistent throughout. In his creative output one can sense a collision of the

[4] Raël, 'The Essential Rudhyar', p.1.
[5] Raël, 'The Essential Rudhyar', p.1.
[6] Raël, 'The Essential Rudhyar', p.1.
[7] Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*, pp. xi, xvii.
[8] Raël, 'The Essential Rudhyar', p.1.
[9] Roy Wilis and Patrick Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 72; Olav Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p.50; Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology*, Vol 2, The Medieval and Modern Worlds (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), pp. 248-9, 256-7.
[10] Raël, 'The Essential Rudhyar', p.2.

> evolving dynamics of distinct philosophical and conceptual leanings. In the early twentieth-century Western European model, he sensed decay, sterility, a tendency towards quantity (rather than quality), and a separation of the soul from the intellect.[11]

Ertan sees Rudhyar has having embraced multiple ideas, with his music aspiring to 'reconcile distinct forces and tensions' and being 'like a cathartic agent for wholeness and/or dynamic equilibrium'.[12]

Twentieth-century astrology and ideas of modernity

According to Jürgen Habermas, the word modern was first used in the fifth century as a means of distinguishing the superior present, the official Christian age, from the inferior heathen and Roman past; consistent with this first use, the term modernity denotes the consciousness of an era that defines itself by referencing an inferior past, seeing itself as the transition from old to new.[13] Scholars of the twentieth century generally conceive modernity or 'the modern period' as having begun around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the Renaissance having laid the foundations, and to have extended at least up until the late nineteenth or mid twentieth century.[14] In the words of Anthony Giddens modernity, 'refers to modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence'.[15]

The idea of the postmodern or postmodernity extends ideas on modernity. According to Jencks, the term was used in the 1870s although did not become widely used until the 1980s when it became a means of discussing the values and meanings of contemporary life.[16] Jencks refers to the 'post-modern' project as follows:

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[11] Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*, p.199.
[12] Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*, p.201.
[13] Jurgen Habermas, 'Modernity: An Unfinished Project' in Charles Jencks (ed). *The Post-Modern Reader* (London: Academy, 1992), p.158.
[14] See Michael Saler, 'Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review' *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No. 3 (June 2006), pp.692-716, p.694 and Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.9.
[15] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p.1.
[16] Charles Jencks, 'The Post-Modern Agenda' in *The Postmodern Reader*, p.10.

The attempt to go beyond the materialist paradigm which characterises modernism; an intense concern for pluralism and a desire to cut across the different taste cultures that now fracture society; an obligation to bring back selected traditional values, but in a new key that fully recognises the ruptures caused by modernity…[17]

Scholars have grappled with the question of whether astrology is better aligned with modernity or postmodernity, with some ascribing different types of astrology to different categories. In Willis and Curry's analysis, astrology requires an animated universe and an interested, benevolent divine presence, capable of dialogue with diviners.[18] For them, this suggests a tension with the characteristics of modernity, which they view as including the inanimate cosmos of modern science, and as such astrology is better classified within ideas of postmodernity. Brockbank draws out the problem of placing astrology (which to his mind can only work in what he terms a Responsive Cosmos) within the cosmology of modernity:

> For a cosmology to be compatible with the Responsive Cosmos it will have to allow for two things: first, for a non-human agency interested in the minutia of human lives; and second, that there are no rules or laws which the non-human agency must conform to…. In most cases the first requirement will mean that the cosmology must allow space for the spirit or for a living cosmos with a consciousness of its own. This would exclude any modern cosmology which seeks the universe in purely material terms.[19]

A similar view is taken by astrologer Robert Hand, who argues that 'astrology makes no sense unless we postulate that life, mind and consciousness are central to the functioning of the Universe… astrology, and the metaphysics of science – also known as scientism – are indeed incompatible'.[20]

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[17] Jencks, *The PostModern Reader*, p.7.
[18] Patrick Curry and Roy Willis, *Astrology, Science and Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p.1.
[19] James Brockbank, 'The Responsive Cosmos: An Enquiry into the Theoretical Foundation of Astrology' (PhD Thesis, University of Kent, 2007), p.92.
[20] Robert Hand, 'Towards a Post-Modern Astrology' www.astro.com/astrology/in_postmodern_e.htm, (accessed: 18th November 2013).

This view sees astrology as better placed in the category of postmodernity, in which the limitations of science have been acknowledged. However, Hand talks about 'modern astrology' in which he includes psychological astrology, asserting that the 'tragic flaw' of modern astrology is 'its complete lack of a philosophical foundation rooted in any coherent philosophical of spiritual tradition of the world'.[21] Thus, in his view, psychological astrology is modern but somehow also not fully modern in that it does not conform to the worldview of modernity; Hand asserts it cannot stand as a science nor is it part of a recognised modern religion or spiritual tradition. The argument from Curry is similar. Whilst astrology, due to its underlying divinatory nature, properly belongs to the category of postmodernity, psychological astrology is modern because it falls into what Curry calls 'the modernist trap' of having to either side with the material/objective or the spiritual/subjective; he claims psychological astrologers have opted for the spiritual/subjective half, albeit one that has been turned into something secular through planets as psychological functions rather than divinities.[22] Curry's use of the term 'modernist' does not separate modernity from modernism, but rather contrasts what he sees as one 'modernist' category with postmodernity.

In contrast, Munk considers psychological astrology to fit into ideas of postmodernity; she argues that postmodern life entails a fragmentation of social life that means identities are continually changing, being constructed and reconstructed multiple times.[23] Psychological astrology contributes to this because horoscopes 'can play an important role in constructing coherent and meaningful individual biographies'.[24] For Munk, the multiplicity of ideas that a horoscope can stimulate make it applicable to a post or late modern world:

> Multi-interpretability and polyvalence in modern aesthetic experience reflect the world and invite the individual to become a co-creator of it.[25]

Some scholars adopt a wider conception of modernity within which psychological astrology may fall. In his ethnography of astrology in contemporary Brazil, Luis Vilhena examines the relationship between

[21] Hand, 'Towards a Post-Modern Astrology'.
[22] Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.74.
[23] Kirstine Munk, 'Signs of the Times' (PhD Thesis, University of Southern Denmark, 2007), p.146.
[24] Munk, 'Signs of the Times', p.148.
[25] Munk, 'Signs of the Times', p.246.

astrology and modernity, suggesting that the problem is of particular importance, given that those using astrology recognise that it does not fit with the principal criterion of truth in modern Western society – science.[26] He concludes however that modern astrology is neither anachronistic nor an activity that is deviant and marginal but is a system that expresses the tensions of modernity, it being very difficult to classify as clearly science or religion.[27] Vilhena thus adopts a view of modernity which is wide enough to incorporate practices which do not conform to the demands of modern science but which may still be considered a natural part of the modern world, modernity itself being a complex notion which contains paradoxes.

More explicitly, Nicholas Campion has argued that twentieth-century astrology can be seen as a natural part of the modern world; it fits into the variety of practices which have been labelled 'New Age' and can be seen as a product of the tendency for modern Western societies to become increasingly secular.[28] As Campion argues, this is consistent with a view of modernity in which religion and spirituality diversify rather than decline outright.[29] Campion has further noted the links between modernism and esotericism, pointing for example to Wassily Kandinsky's theosophy and André Breton's practice of astrology.[30] Both of these are often classified as part of modernism. In particular, Campion questions the idea that modernism is materialist whilst esotericism belongs to postmodernity, given the artists' interest in spiritual and esoteric practices.

The two modernities

Much of the debate to date on whether astrology is more closely aligned with modernity or postmodernity has ignored the complexity of notions of the modern, particularly the idea that there are two modernities: modernity and modernism.

Several scholars have discussed the idea of 'two modernities' in the first half of the twentieth century, one being the modern proper (hereafter

[26] Luis Vilhena, *The World of Astrology* (Ceredigion, Wales: Sophia Centre Press, 2014), p.66.
[27] Vilhena, *World of Astrology*, p.187.
[28] Nicholas Campion, 'Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement: The extent and nature of contemporary belief in astrology' (PhD Thesis, Bath Spa University, 2004), p.289.
[29] Campion, 'Prophecy', p.290.
[30] Nicholas Campion, 'Astrology's Place in Historical Periodisation' in *Astrologies* (Ceredigion: Sophia Centre Press, 2011), pp. 217-254, p.223.

'modernity'), and one being modernism. An early scholar promoting the term modernism was Graham Hough, who in 1960 wrote that 'the years between 1910 and World War Two saw a revolution in the literature of the English language' and referred to this period as modernist.[31] In discussing the split between modernity and modernism, Amanda Anderson argues:
The crucial point here is that there emerge two opposed projects that celebrate the freedom of autonomous self-authorization, one philosophical/political… one more self-consciously aesthetic (but certainly often still carrying philosophical and political elements) and allied with a corrosive scepticism [to the other].[32]

The two modernities are both concerned with freedom and autonomy, with the individual as the author of their own destiny, but modernism has a sceptical streak towards some of modernity's characteristics. Calinescu draws out the features of these two modernities:

> The first, bourgeois idea of modernity… by and large continued the outstanding traditions of earlier periods in the history of the modern idea. The doctrine of progress, the confidence in the beneficial possibilities of science and technology, the concern with time (a measurable time, a time that can be bought and sold and therefore has, like any other commodity, a calculable equivalent in money), the cult of reason, and the ideal of freedom defined within the framework of an abstract humanism, but also the orientation toward pragmatism and the cult of action and success… By contrast, the other modernity, the one that was to bring into being the avant-gardes, was from its romantic beginnings inclined toward radical antibourgeois attitudes. It was disgusted with the middle-class scale of values and expressed its disgust through the most diverse means, ranging from rebellion, anarchy, and apocalypticism to aristocratic self-exile.[33]

Calinescu's analysis suggests that, in his view, the key features of modernity are progress, a concern with science and technology, time as a commodity, reason, freedom and orientation towards action and success. In contrast, modernism may exhibit some of these features, but at the same

[31] Graham Hough, *Image and Experience: Studies in a Literary Revolution* (London: Duckworth, 1960), p.5.
[32] Amanda Anderson, 'Victorian Studies and the Two Modernities' *Victorian Studies*, Volume 47, Number 2, Winter 2005, pp.195-203, p.197.
[33] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity* (Durham: Due University Press, 1987), pp.41-42.

time contains radical, critical undertones, which undermine and critique those very qualities it sometimes appears to evoke. Pippin argues that modernism allowed art to become the leading force in modern culture:

> Modernism has also been understood to propose (or to threaten) a great shift in European high culture, or at least an implicit insistence on a shift in authority, from philosophy primarily, but also from science and religion, to art as the leading or "legislating" force in a genuinely modern culture.[34]

In simple terms, science, religion and philosophy could be categorised as belonging to modernity, whereas art primarily belongs to modernism. Daniel Bell characterises the tension between ideas of modernity and modernism as a 'disjunction of realms' which may be clearly observed in twentieth century culture. On the one hand there are the technological, economic and legal structures organised along the lines of roles and specialization (belonging to modernity) and on the other culture (modernism) which sees the individual able to:

> ransack the world store house and to engorge any and every style it comes upon. Such freedom comes from the fact that the axial principle of modern culture is the expression and remaking of the "self" in order to achieve self-realization and self-fulfilment.[35]

Whilst modernity may be said to be a more straightforward version of the characteristics associated with the modern age, modernism contains a stronger element of critiquing the modern whilst also having elements of the modern, and has a stronger association with art and aesthetics.

Rudhyar's wise astrology: modernist features

Rudhyar's astrology can be viewed as belonging to modernism through an examination of its key features, namely: the attempt to put astrology on new foundations; the conception of freedom; the embrace of qualitative mathematics; the recognition of cultural relativity; and exploration of the unconscious.

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[34] Robert B. Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, Second Edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p.29.
[35] Daniel Bell, *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p.13.

New foundations

Rudhyar explained his early encounters with astrology as disappointing, describing it as 'a language which seemed to have lost contact with the basic human experiences of cosmic order and significance as revealed by the night sky'.[36] Rudhyar stated that astrology was used in an 'egocentric, narrowly empirical, superstition-laden, and typically 'American' manner'. His dissatisfaction with what he saw as an empirical and superstitious practice did not lead to a deep interest in the subject. This came only later with his encounter firstly with the work of the astrologer Marc Edmund Jones[37], and secondly in 1932, when he encountered the work of C. G. Jung. Rudhyar wrote that he was 'deeply impressed' upon reading *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, a treatise on Chinese esoteric doctrines with a commentary by Richard Wilhelm and Carl Jung, and that this marked the 'beginning of my work in astropsychology'.[38]

Rudhyar's first astrology book carried the subtitle, 'A Re-formulation of Astrological Concepts and Ideals, in Terms of Contemporary Psychology and Philosophy', indicative of its ambitious agenda to reform astrology.[39] His stated purpose was to 'pave the way to a new type of astrology which would be philosophically sound and whose application to modern psychology would help men to live more significant, therefore more spiritual, lives'.[40]

Rudhyar's ambitions to place astrology on a new philosophical footing, and to break with past astrologers, were in line with modernism's focus on the new. Pippin calls this feature 'a decisive break in intellectual tradition'.[41] As Latour argues:

> The adjective 'modern' designates a new regime, an acceleration, a rupture, a revolution in time. When the word 'modern', 'modernization', or 'modernity' appears, we are defining, by contrast, an archaic and stable past. Furthermore, the word is always being thrown into the middle of a fight, in a quarrel where there are winners and losers, Ancients and Moderns. 'Modern' is thus doubly asymmetrical: it

[36] Dane Rudhyar, *The Planetarization of Consciousness* (Santa Fe, NM: Aurora, 1977), p.v.
[37] Rudhyar, *Astrology of Personality*, p.vii.
[38] Dane Rudhyar, *Astrology and the Modern Psyche*, Second Edition (Vancouver, WA: CRCS, 1976), p.vii.
[39] Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*, p.xxiii.
[40] Rudhyar, *Astrology of Personality*, p.81.
[41] Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, p.10.

> designates a break in the regular passage of time, and it designates a combat in which there are victors and vanquished.[42]

The quest for starting anew, for continually revising knowledge and revisiting assumptions, leads to the idea of progress as a fundamental characteristic of modernities and the associated process, modernisation. As Bauman describes it, modernity is 'a perpetual, compulsive, obsessive and addictive *modernisation*'.[43] The obsessive revision inherent in both modernity and modernism has been described by Vattimo as 'the era of overcoming and of the new which rapidly grows old and is immediately replaced by something still newer'.[44] Inherent within ideas of the modern is an endless process of revision; Rudhyar's reformulation of astrology is in tune with this characteristic.

Radical freedom

For Rudhyar, the horoscope reveals potential which may never be realised, 'the birth chart will tell what will be the form and quality of the Soul, if it comes to be'.[45] Rudhyar's astrology did not allow prediction, because it was the choice of the individual whether or not to become like their horoscope, which he saw as a 'message' from the universe; 'I have taught for many years that a person's birth-chart thus constitutes a "message" from the universe; it is a set of instructions given to him or her at birth by the Sky'.[46] Ultimately, the study of astrology for Rudhyar allowed a person to 'make of the individual psyche a cosmos'.[47]

In Rudhyar's astrology, the individual has a choice whether or not to follow the instructions contained within the horoscope. This is a radical departure from earlier astrologers, who would usually have ascribed a greater level of determinism, observable from the horoscope, to the individual. The nineteenth century astrologer Raphael, for example, had written that astrology could be defined as the 'art of foreknowing and

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[42] Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.10.
[43] Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), p.6.
[44] Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), p.166.
[45] Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Transformation* (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), p.404.
[46] Dane Rudhyar, *Astrological Insights into the Spiritual Life* (Sante Fe, NM: Aurora, 1979), p.63.
[47] Rudhyar, *Astrological Insights*, p.119.

predicting future events'.[48] For Raphael, this meant that the destiny of each individual could be read from the horoscope, whether they would likely be rich or poor, or what quality of marriage they might have.[49] In contrast, Rudhyar's view focused on the form of the Soul with an individual choosing whether to become like that form or not. This embodied a significant degree of freedom.

In postulating radical freedom, Rudhyar promoted an astrology entirely in tune with modernism. The acceptance of freedom as a 'good' is a strong characteristic of both modernity and modernism.[50] As noted above, Anderson describes modernism as a philosophical project that celebrates 'the freedom of autonomous self-authorization'.[51] This is what Rudhyar's astrology allows, through the freedom to choose whether or not to become like the horoscope.

The algebra of life

Lying at the heart of Rudhyar's reformulation of astrology was the idea that astrology is a system of qualitative mathematics that can be applied to a variety of organic systems. Rudhyar's term for this characterisation of astrology was 'the algebra of life'.[52] He claimed that the celestial realm of planetary movements is like the realm of propositions, which are 'purely formal, symbolical, and conventional'.[53] One may view the astrological system as a whole and apply it to any other suitable organic whole, such as the human being, with the planetary meanings deriving from their position in the system as a whole. Thus Jupiter and Mars for example, 'mean no more, no less, than 3 and 4'.[54] By this Rudhyar did not mean that Jupiter and Mars did not represent certain principles but that the principles could not be interpreted without the context. He stated that 'Jupiter will symbolize the power of expansion' and 'Mars the power of out-going impulses' but stressed the difference this might mean in the context of a human being or atmospheric pressure.[55] This formulation differed from earlier astrologers who stressed the correspondence theory as a universally true rationale for astrology; Alan Leo (1860-1917), an important astrologer

[48] Raphael, *A Manual of Astrology* (London: Tegg and Son, 1834), p.19.
[49] Raphael, *Manual of Astrology*, p.152; p.156.
[50] See e.g. Anderson, 'Victorian Studies', p.197.
[51] Anderson, 'Victorian Studies' ,p.197.
[52] Rudhyar, *Astrology of Personality*, p.16.
[53] Rudhyar, *Astrology of Personality*, p.43.
[54] Rudhyar, *Astrology of Personality*, p.44.
[55] Rudhyar, *Astrology of* Personality, p.45.

from the early twentieth century, for example, had referred to there being analogies throughout nature.[56]

The focus on qualitative mathematics links Rudhyar's astrology to wider currents in modernism such as Cubism in the history of art. Cubism developed in the early twentieth century and is often hailed as symbolic of a move away from the traditional painting of representation to abstract paintings containing geometrical shapes that only loosely resemble their supposed subjects.[57] An example may be found in George Braque's *Clarinet and Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece*, from 1911, which contains numerous triangular, spherical and other geometric shapes that loosely depict a clarinet and bottle of rum.[58] Armstrong argues that non Euclidean geometries, which were being proposed at the time by leading physicists, were an important reference point for cubists.[59] Like Rudhyar, modernist painters incorporated mathematical ideas into their work.

Cultural relativity

Rudhyar claimed that astrology is culturally relative. He asserted that 'each cultural or religious tradition to which these astrologers belong interprets the order and meaning of the universe in a different manner'.[60] His own view was that astrology should be categorised as a 'symbolic language':

> Indeed, as I see it, there is no such thing as astrology per se, as an independent entity having strictly defined methods of operation absolutely valid under any circumstances. As I stated already I consider astrology as a symbolical language.[61]

Rudhyar recognised that not only was astrology culturally relative, but that it was also relative to individual astrologers within the same culture. He stated that 'every consistent astrological system seems to work for the astrologers who are thoroughly familiar with it and fully believe in its value'.[62]

Rudhyar's view of astrology as culturally relative place it firmly within the category of art as opposed to science. Whilst it is accepted that art is

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[56] Alan Leo, *How to Judge a Nativity* (New York: Astrologer's Library, 1983), p.12.
[57] Charles Harrison, *Modernism* (London: Tate, 1997), p.9.
[58] www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/braque-clarinet-and-bottle-of-rum-on-a-mantlepiece-t02318 [accessed 5 September 2023].
[59] Tim Armstrong, *Modernism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p.116.
[60] Rudhyar, *Astrology of Transformation*, p.192.
[61] Dane Rudhyar, *Astrological Timing* (London: Harper Colophon, 1969), p.236.
[62] Rudhyar, *Astrological Timing*, p.194.

influenced by cultural context, science is generally conceived as something universal and objective. For Pippin modernism allowed art to become the leading force in modern culture.[63] Whilst art fitted with ideas of modernism, science fitted with those of modernity. The cultural relativity within Rudhyar's astrology identify it as an art, placing it within wider modernist culture.

Integration of the unconscious

Rudhyar's interest in Jung's work accelerated in 1933 when he was given a gift of all of Jung's works currently available in English translation.[64] According to Ertan, the impact of Jung's ideas on Rudhyar was immense, and in his project proposal for his third Guggenheim application in 1934 Rudhyar singled out Jung's ideas of the collective unconscious and psychomythological symbolism, citing their 'invaluable assistance'.[65] Ertan argues that Jung's depth psychology allowed Rudhyar to make the connection between the psychological and the cosmic, which turned his mind to astrology.[66] As such, Rudhyar overtly set out to bridge the split between inner and outer, by linking psychology with the cosmos through astrology. Adopting Jung's model of the psyche Rudhyar stated:

> We shall distinguish between planets referring to the conscious and planets referring to the unconscious – using the terms "conscious" and "unconscious" as used by C.G. Jung… Outside of these two categories we shall place the Sun as the symbol of the integrating energies of the Self, which is described by Jung as the "center of the totality of the psyche." The psyche includes both unconscious and conscious contents. To integrate these contents – that is, consciously to assimilate the contents of the unconscious – is the essence of the process of individuation, of which the Sun is the active symbol.[67]

Rudhyar asserted his intention to adopt the key tenets of Jung's psychology, that is, the model of conscious and unconscious whose integration through the Self constitutes the process of individuation. He also related the astrological Sun to this integrating process as the active factor in the process.

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[63] Pippin, *Modernism*, p.29.
[64] Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*, p.xxiii
[65] Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*, p.80.
[66] Ertan, *Dane Rudhyar*, p.88.
[67] Rudhyar, *Astrology of Transformation*, p.219.

In promoting an astrology that explored the unconscious, Rudhyar's astrology was in tune with movements within modernism such as Surrealism, which drew on the idea of the unconscious. The writer André Breton, a key figure in the surrealist movement, became acquainted with the theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) whilst serving as a medical orderly in the French army during World War One and became interested in the relationship between psychoanalysis and poetry.[68] This inspired Breton's 1924 *First Surrealist Manifesto*, which stated that Surrealism was based on previously neglected associations such as the 'omnipotence of dreams' and 'the disinterested play of thought'.[69] Whilst it had begun as a literary movement, it was also applicable to painting, with Breton claiming Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) an early pioneer.[70] According to Hopkins, proponents of Surrealism wished to erase the boundaries between art and life and reclaim the rights of the imagination, by relinquishing the control of reason.[71]

Salvador Dalí's 1931 *The Persistence of Memory* is a well-known example of Surrealist painting.[72] The painting has a dreamlike quality and contains a range of images that distort the world of everyday perception. Subverting the orderly timekeeping of the modern world, the clocks in the painting have lost their solidity; they are melting, elastic. The metal watch is being swarmed with ants; instead of attacking what seems to be a dead creature on the beach, the ants ignore the creature and swarm the metal timepiece instead. The painting's eerie quality is enhanced by the dead creature on the beach. The juxtaposition of the attractive coastline in the background with the distorted and deathly foreground exacerbates the haunting quality whilst the links in colour between foreground and background suggest a link between the frightening realm of the unconscious and the safer, more familiar world of conscious awareness.

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[68] David Hopkins, *Dada and Surrealism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.16-17.
[69] Hopkins, *Dada and Surrealism*, p.17; see also André Breton 'First Manifesto of Surrealism', trans. R. Seaver and H. R. Lane' in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford, Blackwell, 2003), pp.447-453.
[70] André Breton , 'Surrealism and Painting', trans. David Gascoyne in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford, Blackwell, 2003), p.461.
[71] Hopkins, *Dada and Surrealism*, p.17.
[72] www.moma.org/collection/works/79018 [accessed 5 September 2023].

Just as painters like Dalí had sought to explore the unconscious through their art, Rudhyar explored it through his astrology. This places both within similar strands of modernist culture.

Conclusion: Twentieth century astrology and modernism

Literature to date on astrology's periodisation has focused on broad concepts of modernity or postmodernity and neglected to consider modernism in depth as a possible categorisation for twentieth-century astrology. Dane Rudhyar provides an excellent counterpoint to this, with his astrology clearly displaying features of modernism.

Rudhyar's reformulation of astrology for modern men and women was in tune with the key theme of the modernities: starting again and revisiting assumptions. The inclusion of radical freedom in his conception of astrology, with an individual able to choose whether or not to become like their horoscope, represented both a break with tradition and an embrace of a key modernist idea – that the individual has significant personal autonomy. Citing astrology as 'the algebra of life' and as a system of qualitative mathematics, Rudhyar' s astrology exhibited features found in other modernist movements such as cubist painting, which had also utilised mathematical ideas as a key characteristic. Rudhyar's embrace of astrology as culturally relative placed it firmly within the category of art, which has been identified as the leading force in modernist culture. In his integration of Jungian ideas into astrology, and exploration of the unconscious, Rudhyar's astrology was similar in aim to the art of the surrealist painters, who also attempted to evoke the unconscious in their work.

Rudhyar's astrology clearly exhibits characteristics found within modernism and as such is an excellent example of an astrology which is at home within the discourses of modernity.