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The Introspection of Astrology

Colored Pencil

An aspect of research that inspired my work was the article I came across called *Misogyny and Astrology* by Raveena Jhaj. In summary, it is about the underlying misogyny of the way women are treated as non-intelligent for believing in astrology. This was the most impactful source I came across because it was not necessarily scientifically but worded thoughts and ideas I already had within myself. Many elements from my past experience shaped my work. I was nervous at first to create my final project around astrology because of how much I have been looked down upon for it in the past. It is a very common thing for teenage girls to be made fun of for whatever is popular in the current time. Whether it is boy bands, Vampire TV shows, or *astrology*. However, my acknowledgment of the ridicule is what ended up motivating me the most to make this. I know within myself my beliefs in astrology and relationship with spirituality (in this project specifically zodiac signs) are valid and much more complex than others will ever know.

The medium of colored pencil informed my final piece because it makes it feel more personal. There were many different steps I went through to create my artwork. I started out by brainstorming how I perceive each zodiac sign. I wrote out colors and the first words I thought of for each one. My artwork evolved in the process by the pace I was working on and the way I felt about it. At first, the drawings seemed plain and undeveloped, then there was a moment towards the end where I realized *wow this really is how I envision the signs in my head*. This project was about myself and a way to visually express the way my mind works.

Are You a Libra?



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This paper addresses my own personal experiences with astrology and explores why astrology is not scientifically proven on a universal level, with the driving question of “Is astrology actually real?” I also discuss the underlying misogyny that often happens when interactions of mentioning astrology occur, and explain my own beliefs as well as why I have them.

All my life, being a Pisces was very apparent to me. This was because growing up, my mom would frequently mention zodiac signs. She would usually talk about how my friendships made sense in terms of compatibility between signs. I did not pay much attention to it and was not sure if I actually thought those ideas were legitimate. It wasn't until freshman year of high school that I began to notice *my own* opinions on astrology and how real it can be. I was having a really tough time that year when it came to social dynamics, paying attention in school, and family. Learning more about spirituality gave me something to focus on and believe in, as well as becoming more self-aware and growing as a person. I started to look up compatibility between my friendships on Google and went from there. I gradually became more observant and familiar with each zodiac sign, noticing similarities between different people with the same zodiac sign and eventually got a sense of how I perceived each sign. Eventually, I began researching the effects of the moon and how planets not only affect each sun sign but an entire natal chart and events in the world. I had many experiences that I just could not explain. Astrology is very real to me and I think it will continue to be. For my final project, I want to explore questions surrounding why it is I believe in astrology: Is there any explanation to back up why certain planets affect energies in certain ways? Why psychologically do people believe in it or not believe in it?

At the very start of my research, I became slightly disappointed with the articles that explained how astrology is not scientifically backed up whatsoever. According to a source on *early*

science and medicine, “The Marginalization of Astrology: Introduction” by Vermij, Rienk, and Hiro Hirai, “the casting of horoscopes fell into disrespect before the theory of celestial influences was abandoned in university education, or even among philosophical reformers.” Astrology has become classified as a pseudo-science, although astrology has become a blossoming field of research in recent decades, researchers are still required to fight against prejudice that is a subject of superstition and unworthy of serious consideration. This is a common theme in the concept of astrology. The older “positivus historiography” (the belief that historians should pursue the objective truth of the past by allowing historical sources to “speak for themselves”) assumed that the rise of early modern science was the factor of downfall in “superstition.” It was taken as self-evident that new methods and theories of nature made a field like astrology obsolete. This means when attempting to find any sort of scientific reasoning or explanation, there are slim options. There are many articles that repeat the concept that astronomy is real, but astrology is not. However, something else factual that I came across in my research was the concept of misogyny and astrology. The source “Misogyny and Astrology ” by Raveena Jha, highlights and prefaces the fact that astrology has roots from thousands of years ago with birth charts and potential occurrences rather than definite projections. The field of Astrology has a higher population of women than men, and those who do not believe sometimes heavily ridicule those who do, often showing evident roots of misogyny. “Firstly, astrology's mockery tends to be because of a simplified version of the practice and belief. There will be viral tweets stating an extremely basic horoscope such as ‘Today you will breathe’ and attach that to what girls believe to be true. I've seen several tweets similar to ‘Girls believe,’....and then it trails off into a horoscope. This ties into connotations that these ‘feminine’ hobbies are unintelligent.” The sexism that follows after discussion of astrology is shared, is not talked about enough. Those who are into it versus those who are not, is not just a

typical situation of one person not understanding another. It is the attitude that men evidently have when it is brought up, that shows they have intelligence complexes. Truthfully, “In many cases, men are much less logical than women...the emotions that follow a bruised ego, such as anger, are common in men...in many cases, this pushes towards only enjoying ‘logical’ things and pushing away any spiritual or intuitive practice leads to negative behavioral patterns.” This excerpt voices many of my own experiences. I have had many occurrences in which I will ask a guy friend “what is their zodiac sign?” just for fulfilling my own interest and curiosity and get a response along the lines of “you believe in that bullshit?” It is interesting because most of the time these guys have never taken it upon themselves to look into astrology or even have a general respect for other people’s beliefs. I understand that to some people it is just not for them, but why shut down something that excites another person, even if it doesn’t excite you?

To explore more on why it is that many women or the general population of spiritual people believe in astrology, we must acknowledge the psychological factors. Statistically, a 2014 National Science Foundation poll found more than half of millennials think astrology is a science (Waxman, Olivia B). One substantial reason for its popularity is the way astrology surrounds an understanding of others’ emotions. “Your self-talk begins to shift, and you are more in tune with all facets of the personality. There is real validity to astrology as a self-discovery tool, the signs reflecting archetypes of our collective consciousness” (Firth, Courtney. “The Psychology behind Why People Feel so Connected to Their Zodiac Signs). The mention of becoming in tune with all facets of the personality resonates with me majorly. Learning about astrology and how it fits into your own world requires the understanding that it has much to do with balance, and being a zodiac sign does not mean you are just those said characteristics. Every person has all different planets in their natal chart, containing all facets of the personality. This makes the belief a helpful tool in

understanding humans: “many of us turn away from religion because we actually *crave meaning*, we just also happen to equally crave personalization” (Firth, Courtney). Another excerpt from the article *Astrology and Misogyny* says, “It’s a tool primarily used for introspection and hope, like many other spiritual beliefs and practices that garner less ridicule.” It is a good sign that many girls are interested in astrology since it regards emotional intelligence, and is an empathetic spiritual practice. “I believe it should be valued rather than criticized,” said Jha, which I heavily agree with. In my own experience, astrology has caused me to look into the introspection of myself and practice more mindfulness. In the past, when tracking the moon cycle, I would meditate and attempt to manifest on full moons, which helps clear my head with stress and anxiety.

As previously mentioned, there is more to be discovered about the origin of astrology. Zodiac signs have been an apparent belief throughout history, even though they are treated as if girls came up with the attributes associated with them in the current time. An excerpt from an article by Time Magazine says that “this whole idea that there were 12 signs along the zodiac that were 30° wide, and [that] the sun moved through these signs regularly during the year, that was codified by Ptolemy,” says Odenwald. Even the word “zodiac” comes from the Greek, from a term for “sculpted animal figure,” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, and the order in which the signs are usually listed comes from that period too” (Waxman, Olivia B. “Are Zodiac Signs Real? Here's the History behind Horoscopes”). There are real historic origins and meanings behind astrology’s popularity today and it should be treated with respect as much as many other beliefs are. One source says “Babylonian astrologers *were* considered scientists in their own time, credited with being the first to notice that the stars and planets moved in patterns.” They realized that these movements would tend to connect with events on the earth, like the moon moving with tides and supposedly women’s menstrual cycles. There is much more mystery and questions in the world

that cannot necessarily be proved by science, but in my own opinion have the potential to still be true. Hand in hand with the title of the source, what does real actually mean? “Real” by definition from the Oxford Dictionary means “actually existing as a thing or occurring in fact; not imagined or supposed.” Astrology exists as a thing and is believed by many people, which means in a way it *is* real. It is the same as how any religion does not need to be proved as science. Although astrology is not a religion, it is still a spiritual belief in correlation to a higher power. Something I have been curious about throughout this research process was other people’s reasoning as to why they personally do believe that the planets have an effect on our characteristics and events, which I could not find in a source online. The most common explanation, and what I believe as well, is the concept of how even scientifically, energy cannot be created or destroyed. I think that if we are each born in the world at a specific place and minute, in which the planets are aligned in a certain way, from then on we will each be affected differently by the universe. My best friend Julia is a Pisces as well, meaning she was born within a similar time range to me, and I have found she is in fact very similar to me. I have some other close friends but nobody understands me and my emotions quite as she does. We have had many strange coincidences and experiences that could be labeled as chance but I believe hold more spiritual meaning. One example of this is when we were walking into a different neighborhood, which is rare as we like to lazily stay inside, and were discussing the ending of a recent friendship that she had. I tried to keep my advice to her positive and hopeful as a best friend would and as we walked down the street at that moment on the left was a piece of artwork on a door that said “as one door closes, another door opens.” We thought it was hilarious and resonated so well with the situation and I was happy to share that moment with her. I feel that everything is connected and happens for a reason and it is moments like that which make me proud to believe in something other than science.

In conclusion, I would say that astrology deserves a lot more respect than it gets. It is not just teenage girls saying they hate a certain guy “because he is an Aries.” People who believe in astrology have already considered the concept of zodiacs having certain general traits so that they can fit any person and have looked into it and discovered that is not the case to them. In my own life and with my friends, we almost even use the ridicule in astrology for humor. At this point, if someone is disrespectful about it I will talk about it in a targeting non-intelligent way just to ironically joke to myself. I know that my beliefs are valid and others should treat them as so, considering astrology has much more to be discovered in this world.

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