

Project 4:
What do astrologers believe? (The insider perspective)

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Introduction

The aim of this project was to gain some insight into what professional astrologers believe about how astrology can work. The research was designed to look into the insights professional astrologers could provide, with opportunities to uncover whether some might justify it from a religious, philosophical, anthroposophical or other perspective. I was keen to discover whether there would be similar answers, or a particular focus within the responses given. To this end, I sent out a questionnaire to a total of 21 members of German-speaking astrological societies and one student from my master's programme. The survey consisted of a questionnaire. In addition, a total of five interviews were planned with the participants of the questionnaire. The questionnaire and the structure of the interview guide with an introduction, opening questions, key questions and closing questions will be conducted according to the guidelines of the book 'Qualitative Research Methods' by Hennink, Hutter and Bailey.¹

For British astrologer Sue Brayne, the question 'How does astrology work?' is one that astrologers ask themselves time and again. In 2024, she interviewed eight professional astrologers and published her findings in 'The Astrological Journal.'² My survey is also aimed at possible answers to this question and I would also like to go into more detail with interviews. A specific example of research in astrology in another context is e.g. the PhD Thesis of Bernadette Brady 'Theories of fate among present day astrologers.'³ Trinity Saint David University of Wales, 2012. She interviewed professional astrologers regarding their attitudes and beliefs about determinism and/or fate. The methodological approach of Prof Nicholas Campion in his PhD thesis 'Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement - The Extent and Nature of Contemporary Belief in Astrology'⁴ is another concrete example of conducting a survey among astrologers on specific topics. He conducted a large survey of astrologers in 1999 and 2002 to gain an insight into their beliefs and practices.

In many cultures around the world, there has always been a great interest in cosmic rhythms and constellations of the sun, moon and planets of our solar system in relation to earthly conditions and developments. 'Astrology assumes that there is a significant relationship between the stars or planets and affairs on earth. From this simple principle have developed all the many forms of astrology practiced or studied across the world.'⁵

¹ Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajah Bailey, 'Qualitative Research Methods', 2011, pp. 108-132.

² Sue Brayne, 'So, how does astrology work?', The Astrological Journal, May/June 2024, pp. 7-11.

³ Bernadette Brady 'Theories of fate among present day astrologers', University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2012.

Nicholas Campion, 'Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement - The Extent and Nature of Contemporary Belief in Astrology', Study of Religious Department, Bath Spa University College, June 2004.

⁵ Nicholas Campion 'Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions', 2022, New York University Press, New York and London, p. 11.

‘Fixating on the future: An overview of increased astrology use’⁶ is the title of a review conducted in 2022. Based on keywords such as ‘belief in astrology’, ‘astrology addiction, and “fortune telling addiction” in the Pubmed, EBSCO, ProQuest and SCOPUS databases. A total of 99 studies were selected and analysed. The authors explain the increasing interest in astrology with an increased search demand for terms such as ‘birth chart’ and ‘astrology’ in Google Trends. They refer to an article published on the BBC page in February 2021 by Hilarly George-Parkin, a reporter and writer who mostly writes about fashion, retail and consumer culture. She attributes this increase to the Covid-19 pandemic of that year and the associated fears of the population. In my view, it could be seen that due to the extraordinary situation with lockdowns, people had more time and were looking for ways to use it. The author links the increased search for ‘astrology’ with an increase in anxiety among the population, however, she does not write about investigations into whether the increase in searched for astrology related terms is due to an increased interest of belief in astrology from a greater segment of the population, or whether there was a general increase in leisure or social and personal related interests. For example, topics such as ‘balcony plants’, ‘hiking trails’ or ‘e-bike’ were also searched for more intensively on google in this extraordinary time of the Covid 19 epidemic.

Methodology

My project is carried out using qualitative research. The survey is conducted using a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire was made as short as possible. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Initially the questionnaire includes questions about age, gender and how long the astrologers have been working. The questionnaire is aimed to be followed/supported by estimated of 5 interviews hosted online (Microsoft Teams) for more in-depth understanding of the personal view. I use my university e-mail address for the questionnaire. I conduct the interviews via the university's MS Teams access. The length of the interview is individual and would last a maximum of 30 minutes. The interviews are semi-structured and I make sure to create a trusting atmosphere for a personal presentation within the framework of an in-depth interview. The questionnaire and the structure of the interview guide with an introduction, opening questions, key questions und closing questions will be conducted according to the guidelines of the book 'Qualitative Research Methods' by Hennink, Hutter and Bailey.⁷

Target group and survey distribution

I selected professional astrologers who are listed as members of German-speaking astrological organisations as my target group. For the recruitment, I referred to the member associations listed in the Association of German-speaking astrology organisations (VDA):

⁶ Abhilasha Das, Manoj Kumar Sharma, Himani Kashyap and Sritita Gupta ‘Fixating on the future: An overview of increased astrology use’, International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 2022, Vol. 68(5) pp. 925-932.

⁷ Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, Ajay Bailey ‘Qualitative Research Methods’ 2011, SAGE Publications Ltd London, pp. 108-132.

- Astrological Working Group Stuttgart (AAS)
- Astroclub Zurich (AZV)
- German Astrologers Association (DAV)
- International Association for Astrological Psychology (IFAP)
- Kepler Institute International (Kep-In)
- Austrian Astrologers Association (Oeav)
- Swiss Association of Astrologers (SAB)

When selecting the associations, I restricted myself to the organisations listed in the VDA with the largest numbers of members. The Swiss Astrologer Association (SAB)⁸ has 122 members listed on its website. The Austrian Astrologer Association (Oeav)⁹ has 22 astrologers on its membership list and the German Astrologer Association (DAV)¹⁰ has around 600 members.

I write to the first and second chairmen/chairwomen of each of the individual associations. The members are listed alphabetically by name. In addition, I randomly select 5 other people from the respective membership lists. For the SAB, for example, every 20th person on the membership list and for the Oeav every 4th person. The DAV has 16 training centers. I will select 5 of these heads. For the selection I create random numbers with excel. Overall, this makes a total of 21 astrologers.

It should be noted that these are only some of the existing organisations in German-speaking countries. There are also organisations that are not members of the VDA. For example, the Austrian Astrological Society (ÖAG), AGZ (Astrological Society Zurich (AGZ) or the Astrological Society Frankfurt (AGF).

Questionnaire

I developed the questionnaire using Google Docs. The questionnaire intentionally contains only a few questions to motivate potential participants to take part. There are 6 questions in total. Three questions are to be answered with a short answer. Two further questions are to be ticked and the last question offers space for a longer text.

The questions in detail:

- 1) In which year were you born?
- 2) What is your gender?

⁸ Schweizer Astrologenbund SAB: <https://www.astrologenbund.ch/beratungen/plattform-der-fachmitglieder/alle-fachmitglieder>

⁹ Österreichischer Astrologenverband Oeav: <https://www.astrologenverband.at/beratungsausbildung/astrologische-experten/>

¹⁰ Deutscher Astrologenverband DAV: <https://www.astrologenverband.de/astrologische-beratung-bei-expertinnen/>

- 3) In which country do you live?
- 4) How long, in years, have you been working as an astrologer?
- 5) Which directions and specialities of astrology do you work with?

Multiple answers are possible. You can tick the following boxes:

Classical Astrology, Psychological Astrology, Esoteric Astrology,
Mundane Astrology, Astro medicine, Horary Astrology, Financial
Astrology and Others with the possibility to
mention other specialisations.

- 6) How does astrology work - how do you explain the connection between
planetary rhythms, cosmic constellations and earthly correspondences,
effects?

Interviews

The interviews are semi-structured and I make sure to create a trusting atmosphere for a personal presentation within the framework of an in-depth interview. At the beginning there are introductory questions similar to the first 5 questions in the questionnaire. Then I would like to discuss in more detail each individual answer to the question, “How does astrology work?” Is a religious or philosophical background mentioned? Does the participant advocate an anthroposophical background, or does he try to argue scientifically? Does the participant see a connection through a morphogenetic field as described by Rupert Sheldrake, for example? Does the participant advocate the influence of individual planets, or only the sun or the moon, or are the fixed stars included? Or can a participant not give an explanation, an answer to the question?

Ethic issues

My research for this project adheres to the current codes and guidelines of the UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice from July 2022 and the UWTSD Research Data Management Policy. In preparing the project and during the project work, I adhered to the ethical guidelines described in the book ‘Qualitative Research Methods.’¹¹

The ethical guidelines of the European Union with the countries Austria and Germany are comparable to those of the United Kingdom in the case of my planned research project. For the Swiss guidelines, the central ethics committee ‘swissethics’¹² confirmed

¹¹ Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, Ajay Bailey ‘Qualitative Research Methods’ 2011, SAGE Publications Ltd London, pp. 61-81.

¹² Swiss Association of Research Ethic Committees, CH-3008 Bern, Switzerland

to me in an email dated March 5, 2025, that there are no concerns about carrying out my research project and that I do not need to submit any further documents.

My participants are Astrologers, who are working as professional astrologers in the three German-speaking countries Switzerland, Austria and Germany. I select the astrologers with the help of registered members of the respective astrological professional associations in each of these countries. Each participant received an information sheet. This describes the aim of my project work with the help of a questionnaire and interviews. I also emphasise the confidentiality and anonymity of the information and data received. The participation is voluntary. Every participant can cancel the questionnaire and the interview at any time. All data will be collected anonymously, cannot be associated personally and will be treated in strict confidence. Data will be used exclusively for scientific purposes. Every participant can withdraw their consent at any time.

Findings/Discussion

Out of a total of 21 questionnaires sent out, I received 5 back. Of these, 2 were from members of the Austrian Astrological Association (oeav) and 2 from members of the Swiss Astrological Association (SAB). All questionnaires were linked to a personal address. I hoped that this would increase participation in my project. Unfortunately, the response rate was only 19%. Bernadette Brady reports a return rate of 22% in her PhD thesis (Chapter 7, p 184). As I did not have a single participant for an interview by 12 April, a German-speaking fellow student from my degree programme agreed to take part in my project as an additional participant. She became aware of it via the chat forum of the Researching Contemporary Cosmologies module. She had a similar experience with her own project last year. She therefore contacted me and offered to take part. She therefore represents the one participant from Germany. This increased the response rate to approx. 24%, which corresponds to a total of 5 participants.

Evaluation of the questions

Question 1: In which year were you born?

The 5 participants were born between 1964 and 1974. It would be interesting to obtain a current average age of a larger number of practising astrologers. With only 5 responses, it may be a coincidence that all 5 are in an age group between 51 and 61.

Question 2: What is your gender?

All 5 participants are female. In the survey conducted in her doctoral thesis, Bernadette Brady describes the average participant as female and between the ages of mid-forties

and early sixties.¹³ This is also consistent with my findings. All 5 responses came from female astrologers. This correlates with the list of participants in the individual associations. The Swiss Astrologers' Association SAB has a total of 122 members. Of these, 105 are female, which corresponds to 86%, and 17 are male, corresponding to 14%. In the Austrian astrologers' association oeav, with a total membership of 22, 20 (91%) are female and 2 (9%) are male. Of the 16 training centres of the German Astrological Association DAV, 13 (81%) are run by women and 3 (19%) by men.

Question 3: In which country do you live?

Two astrologers from Switzerland and two astrologers from Austria took part in the survey. I did not receive any feedback from the seven members of the German astrologers' association DAV. The participation of one person from Germany is based on the additional participation of a female student on the Cultural Astronomy and Astrology Master's course from Germany. By selecting 7 professional astrologers from each of the three German-speaking countries, I took into account an equal selection from these countries. Historically, astrology in the Western cultural sphere developed in all three countries from the Greek and Roman eras.

Question 4: How long, in years, have you been working as an astrologer?

4 participants have been working as astrologers for between 12 and 20 years, 1 participant for 2 years. The majority of the participants have been working for an average of between 12 and 20 years.

In order to be a professional member of an astrological association, certain requirements must be met. As a rule, a certain minimum age, a professional qualification and years of intensive astrological training are required. Astrological counselling must be carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the respective associations. In the German Astrological Association DAV, for example, an association examination must be passed. The association examination can only be taken after the age of 25. In addition, a professional oath with ethical guidelines must be taken. In order to be a professional member of the Swiss Astrological Association SAB, the person must have completed training and gained experience as a professional astrologer. Therefore, they must have completed training or more than 5 years of professional experience. Completion of a technical college or a course of study is also recognised. Successful completion of training at an astrological training centre (national or international) with at least 800 hours of training is a basic requirement. Every professional member must comply with the statutes and the code of ethics of the association. The Austrian Astrologers' Association (oeav) requires the submission of proof of certificates of training in astrology and demands compliance with the ethical guidelines for astrologers. The professional profile

¹³ Bernadette Brady, 'Theories of fate among present day astrologers', Trinity Saint David University of Wales, 2012, p. 188.

of astrology is recognised in accordance with the decision of the professional association committee of the professional association of commercial service providers. A trade licence is required to practise the profession.

Question 5: Which schools and different types of astrology do you work with?

Multiple answers are possible. You can tick the following boxes:

classical astrology, psychological astrology, esoteric astrology, mundane astrology, medical astrology, horary astrology, financial astrology and others with the possibility to mention other specialist areas.

The following table shows the original answers in German. The table comes directly from my survey, which I conducted using Google Docs.

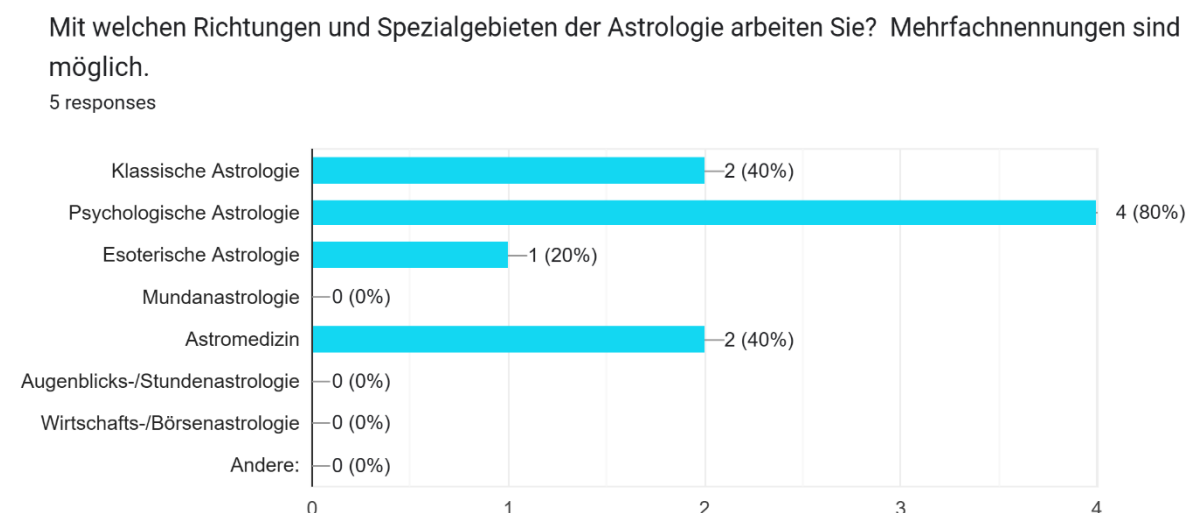


Table 1: Schools and different types of astrology

The chart provides information on the percentages of the directions and specialisations with which the respective astrologers work. Overall, there is a preference for psychological astrology. This is followed by classical astrology, medical astrology and esoteric astrology. There were no mentions in the special fields of mundane astrology, horary astrology and financial astrology. 4 out of 5 participants (80%) work with psychological astrology. Two out of five participants (40%) work with classical astrology. Likewise, 2 out of 5 participants (40%) specialise in medical astrology. One participant (20%) stated that they work with esoteric astrology. Mundane astrology, horary astrology

and financial astrology were not mentioned. Similarly, no other specialisms were listed by the participants under the item other specialisations.

Question 6: How does astrology work - how do you explain the connection between planetary rhythms, cosmic constellations and earthly correspondences and effects?

The five answers to question number 6:

Participant 1:

‘Astrology is an analogy for me, the planetary constellations indicate qualities of time, similar to a clock that shows the time. These constellations have no direct effect on living beings, they only indicate the quality of time. Astrology is an empirical science and is based on observations, decades of observations of celestial movements and events on earth. According to the current state of knowledge, we cannot explain why qualities of time can be read from these constellations and why certain constellations occur together with certain events. In short, this means that the mode of action of astrology cannot be explained today (my translation).’¹⁴

Participant 2:

‘Like a clock that shows the time for corresponding potentials, probabilities and changes (my translation).’¹⁵

Participant 3:

¹⁴ Participant 1: ‚Astrologie ist für mich eine Analogie, die planetaren Konstellationen zeigen Zeitqualitäten an, ähnlich einer Uhr, welche die Zeit anzeigt. Diese Konstellationen haben keine direkte Wirkung auf Lebewesen, sie zeigen ausschließlich die Qualität der Zeit an. Astrologie ist eine Erfahrungswissenschaft und beruht auf Beobachtungen, jahrzehntelange Beobachtungen der Himmelsbewegungen und den Geschehnissen auf der Erde. Warum aus diesen Konstellationen Qualitäten der Zeit abgelesen werden können und warum bestimmte Konstellationen mit bestimmten Ereignissen zusammen auftreten können wir gemäss dem heutigen Wissensstand nicht erklären. Kurz heisst das, die Wirkungsweise der Astrologie ist heute nicht erklärbar.‘

¹⁵ Participant 2: ‚Wie eine Uhr, welche die Zeit für entsprechende Potenziale, Wahrscheinlichkeiten und Veränderungen anzeigt.‘

‘I don't explain the connection, I can't do that, I simply recognise this connection in my interpretation practice and use it. For me, the principle that everything works in cycles is fundamental to everyone's life (my translation).’¹⁶

Participant 4:

‘In my view, planets indicate something that is already waiting to unfold in people. Through more recent developments, however, I am also inclined to assume that there is an energetic resonance, but not in the sense that the planets ‘force us’ or ‘do something’. However, since the entire cosmos (and also human beings) are vibration, resonance and frequency, there is probably such a connection (my translation).’¹⁷

Participant 5:

‘Archetypes are found equally in people and in celestial constellations, and the same patterns can be found here too, broken down by analogy from the cosmos to the individual person (my translation).’¹⁸

Quality of time

Participant 1 and Participant 2 describe how astrology works in the same way as a clock. In Participant 2's response, this clock shows the time for corresponding potentials, probabilities and changes. Participant 1 uses the term “time quality”. In ancient Greece, a distinction was made between “chronos” and “kairos”. Chronos stands for measurable time, which in modern times is measured in hours, minutes and seconds. Time with the unit second is one of the seven basic quantities in physics (Système International d'Unités) from which all other physical quantities such as force or acceleration can be derived. If chronos stands for the measurable quantity of time, kairos is associated with

¹⁶ Participant 3: ‚Ich erkläre den Zusammenhang nicht, das kann ich nicht, ich stelle in meiner Deutungspraxis diesen Zusammenhang einfach nur fest und nutze ihn. Das Prinzip, dass alles in Zyklen funktioniert, ist für mich grundlegend im Leben eines jeden Menschen.‘

¹⁷ Participant 4: ‚Aus meiner Sicht zeigen Planeten etwas an, was ohnehin im Menschen darauf wartet, zur Entfaltung zu kommen. Durch neuere Entwicklungen bin ich aber auch geneigt, anzunehmen, dass es eine energetische Resonanz gibt, aber nicht in dem Sinne, dass die Planeten "uns zwingen" oder "etwas tun". Da aber der ganze Kosmos (und auch der Mensch) Schwingung, Resonanz und Frequenz ist, gibt es wohl doch einen solchen Zusammenhang.‘

¹⁸ Participant 5: ‚Archetypen finden sich in Menschen und in Himmels-konstellationen gleichwertig, und durch analogen Schluss vom Kosmos heruntergebrochen auf den einzelnen Menschen finden sich auch hier die gleichen Muster wieder.‘

the concept of the time quality of the momentary point in time. This concept of time contains a subjectivity, an individual perception of time. Bernadette Brady points out the different meanings of the two terms for time in her doctoral thesis. She describes *kairos*: 'This is time which possesses quality, rather than *chronos* time which is clock-driven and carries quantity'¹⁹

Empirical science

Participant 1 describes astrology as an empirical science. The term is defined as a science based on observations and perceptions. This contrasts with a science based on rigorously conducted randomised and multi-centre scientific studies, which refers to evidence-based practice. In the medical field, for example, extensive, multi-centre and randomised studies are required for guideline-based, evidence-based medicine. In contrast, case reports from individual patients are used by the doctor or therapist to describe individual observations relating to individual patients and thus gain experience.

Cycles

Participant 3 recognises a connection and uses it, but cannot explain the connection. For this participant, everything works in cycles. The unit of time is contained in it, cycles are time-dependent, happen in certain periods of time. The rotation of the earth and the associated turning of the sun creates the day and night rhythm. The earth moves around the sun in approx. 365 days and thus describes the annual cycle. The planets also move around the sun in different cycles. Even our solar system moves at a rapid speed around the centre of the Milky Way. For participant 3, the fact that everything runs in cycles is fundamental to a person's life.

Energetic resonance

For Participant 4, the planets indicate something that is already waiting to unfold and develop in people. Due to recent developments, she is inclined to assume that there is an energetic resonance. In her view, the entire cosmos and therefore also the human body is vibration, resonance and frequency. She explains a connection based on this assumption. The term frequency describes the number of repetitions of an oscillation period. For example, the frequency of an adult human heart at rest is between 60 and 80 beats per minute. The international unit of frequency is the hertz and has the value 1/second. This also includes the unit of time. The term resonance stands for the resonance of one body with another.

¹⁹ Bernadette Brady, 'Theories of fate among present day astrologers', Trinity Saint David University of Wales, 2012, p. 286.

The participant does not describe in detail the more recent developments she mentions. Dr. James Oschman, biologist and biophysicist, deals intensively with energy fields in medicine, humans and the earth in his book 'Energy Medicine. The Scientific Basis.'²⁰ One example of direct resonance therapy is singing bowl therapy. Metal bowls of different sizes and therefore different frequencies are placed near or on the patient and are made to vibrate. The British biochemist and biologist Rupert Sheldrake is intensively involved with the concept of morphogenetic fields. The word morphogenesis comes from the Greek language and means the emergence (genesis) of form (morphe). Sheldrake put forward a hypothesis of form-forming causality and describes the properties of morphogenetic fields as a self-organising whole, an organisation of spatiotemporal patterns and oscillation activities and the existence of a spatial and temporal aspect.²¹

Archetypes

Participant 5 sees archetypal patterns of equal value in celestial constellations and in people. In their opinion, these patterns can be found in analogue form to the cosmic conditions in individual people. The Swiss psychologist and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung worked intensively with archetypal images. In her book 'Jung`s studies in astrology: prophecy, magic, and the qualities of time', the British psychoanalyst and astrologer Liz Greene goes into this in detail in the context of astrology and quotes Jung: 'The sun, moon and planets were the exponents, so to speak, of certain psychological or physical constituents of the human character; and this is why astrology can give more or less valid information about character . . . The religious mysteries of later antiquity were all concerned with freeing man from the Heimarmene; in other words, with freeing him from the compulsive quality of the foundations of his own character.'²² C. G. Jung made a significant contribution to the development of psychological astrology.

Evaluation of the interviews

The interviews are semi-structured and I made sure to create a trusting atmosphere for a personal presentation within the framework of an in-depth interview. I conducted a total of two interviews.

²⁰ James Oschman, 'Energy Medicine. The Scientific Basis', 2nd edition, 2016, Elsevier, Edinburgh, London, New York, Oxford and Toronto.

²¹ Hans-Peter Dürr and Fanz-Theo Gottwald 'Rupert Sheldrake in der Diskussion – Das Wagnis einer neuen Wissenschaft des Lebens', 1999, Scherz Verlag Bern München Wien, pp. 18-19.

²² Liz Greene, 'Jung`s studies in astrology: prophecy, magic, and the qualities of time', 2018, Routledge, London and New York, p. 15.

Interview 1

After I had not been accepted for an interview by 12th April, a fellow student from my degree programme offered me the opportunity to conduct an interview with her. I conducted the interview on 15th April via MS Team of the University. The interview lasted 40 minutes. The participant reported that she has been involved with astrology for around 30 years. She lives in Berlin and was inspired by a radio programme with the German astrologer Markus Jehle. Since then, she has been intensively involved with astrology and has attended seminars with Markus Jehle at the Berlin training centre of the German Astrological Association (DAV) to learn more about specialist areas of astrology. She is fascinated by the work of the Hungarian philosopher Ervin Laszlo, who, like the British biochemist and biologist Rupert Sheldrake, is concerned with morphogenetic fields. In addition to the four elementary forces of physics, gravity, electromagnetism, the strong nuclear force and the weak nuclear force, there is a fifth force in his holistic view of the world, which he describes as the Psi field or A-field. This field is said to contain a cosmic memory and explain parapsychological phenomena. 'If an event A at one point in space is connected with an event B at a different point, we must assume that A and B are interconnected by a continuous...matrix that has a physical reality much like A and B. A physically real connecting matrix of this kind is best conceptualized as a field.'²³ The participant finds astrology somehow 'magical'. She 'doesn't want to deal with further theories about how astrology works' she told me. We finished the interview at this point.

Interview 2

I conducted the second interview on 17th April with a participant from Austria. At the beginning of the interview, the participant seemed very nervous. She wasn't sure whether I would ask her specialised questions. I gave her an overview of the interview process and described the content. After that, a more relaxed atmosphere emerged, and I was able to begin with the general questions. She had been interested in the signs of the zodiac since her school days. She trained at 'Astromatis', an Austrian school for astrologers, under the guidance of astrologer Marie Luise Mathis and successfully graduated from this school in 2007. She is very interested in parent-child horoscopes. She sees karmic connections in the family and in parent-child relationships. She understands karmic relationships to mean fateful encounters based on the principle of reincarnation, a rebirth of a person's soul into a new body. She sees parent-child relationships as soul connections that are linked to previous lives. Overall, she always assumes that there is a karmic background to relationships, whether private or professional. She sees a causality between the cosmos and people in the presence of archetypes. She believes that the sun, moon and planets represent certain archetypes, and that these archetypes are also present in our time and are reflected in people.

²³ Loye, D. (1998). The fifth field of Ervin Laszlo. *World Futures*, 52(3-4), pp. 393-398.

Conclusion

The number of participants

I had hoped for a higher response rate by addressing the participants personally in the information letter and by including the two chairmen of the respective German-speaking astrological associations. Unfortunately, the experiences of other surveys 'are confirmed and show a response rate of approx. 20%.'²⁴ With 5 responses received, no meaningful evaluation is possible. To plan another survey, the number of participants would therefore have to be considerably higher. For example, all verified members of the associations could be included in the list of participants. Another way to attract potential participants for a survey would be to approach them personally at a congress, as Nicholas Champion did in 1999 and 2002 for the data of his doctoral thesis.²⁵

The number of questions

In this survey, I limited myself to a selection of 6 questions. I wanted to make the survey as simple as possible with as few answers as possible in order to achieve a higher response rate in addition to a personalised approach. The result was unsatisfactory. Five of the six questions could be answered briefly with a single answer or a small selection to tick. I deliberately left the sixth question 'how astrology works' as an open question, and each participant had the opportunity to write their thoughts freely. This allowed me to collect five different opinions on this point. For a future survey, I would ask many more questions. An extension to 30 questions, for example, would probably not reduce the willingness of people to take part in a survey, or if so only marginally. The additional information gained would more than compensate for this. Many more areas could be investigated with the information collected.

The selection of participants

The selection of participants was limited to professional astrologers who are listed in German-speaking astrological professional organisations. On the one hand, the number of participants from these professional organisations should be increased. In addition, I would also include astrologers who are not active in professional organisations. These include, for example, astrologers who are active on social media channels or astrologers who have drawn attention to themselves through publications. In addition to the circle of astrologers, I would also include experts from other disciplines. These include, for example, theologians, anthroposophists, natural scientists such as physicists, doctors or astronomers.

²⁴ Bernadette Brady, 'Theories of fate among present day astrologers', Trinity Saint David University of Wales, 2012, p. 184.

²⁵ Nicholas Campion, 'Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement: The Extent and Nature of Contemporary Belief in Astrology', Study of Religious Department, Bath Spa University College, June 2004, p. 234.

Responses

I received a total of 5 responses and was able to conduct two interviews. The core question of how astrology works was answered differently by all 5 participants. The answers show different aspects. There is a historical arc from the astrological archetypes of antiquity to the present day. Two of the participants put forward new scientific hypotheses for discussion. The existence of a morphogenetic field according to Rupert Sheldrake or a PSI field as described by Ervin Laszlo are mentioned as possible explanations to the question of how astrology works. All participants express the concept of time in different ways. Chronos and kairos, 'similar to a clock that shows the qualities of time', is how one participant describes astrology. For another participant, everything works in periods of time, in cycles.

Astrology has been studied by scientists and scholars from various disciplines for centuries and millennia. In German-speaking countries in the last century, it was the Viennese library director Wilhelm Knappich,²⁶ who dealt intensively with the history of astrology. With the establishment of the Chair of Cultural Astronomy and Astrology, the historical development is currently being researched under the direction of Dr. Nicholas Campion at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. There is great interest in this and the development of modern hypotheses on how astrology works. There is a great need for research in the entire field of astrology.

²⁶ Knappich, Wilhelm ,*Geschichte der Astrologie*, 1988, 2nd revised Edition, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main.

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Swissethics, Swiss Association of Research Ethic Committees, Haus der Akademien, Laupenstrasse 7, CH-3008 Bern, Switzerland.

Informationsblatt für Teilnehmende

Sehr geehrte Frau, sehr geehrter Herr.,

mein Name ist Stefan Benz und ich bin Student in dem Studiengang „**Kulturelle Astronomie und Astrologie**“ (MA) an der Universität von Wales Trinity Saint David.

Sie sind Mitglied eines deutschsprachigen Astrologenverbandes. Bei der Auswahl orientierte ich mich an der Mitgliederliste Ihres Verbandes. Im Rahmen meines Studiums führe ich als Projektarbeit eine Umfrage durch.

Ziel ist es, Einblicke in die Ansichten professioneller Astrologen/innen zu der Frage: „**Wie funktioniert Astrologie**“ zu gewinnen.

Die Befragung erfolgt mittels eines **Fragebogens**. Dieser enthält wenige allgemeine Fragen und die spezifische Frage zur einer möglichen Wirkweise der Astrologie. Das Ausfüllen des Fragebogens dauert etwa 10 Minuten.

Zusätzlich möchte ich mit Teilnehmenden ein **Interview** führen. Dazu steht mir der MS Teams Zugang der Universität zur Verfügung. Die Dauer des Interviews ist individuell, orientiert sich an dem Fragebogen und würde ca. 30 Minuten betragen.

Über eine Teilnahme Ihrerseits an dem Fragebogen würde ich mich sehr freuen. Ebenso über ein zusätzliches Interview mit Ihnen. Dazu würde ich in den kommenden Wochen (Anfang bis Mitte April) gerne einen Termin mit Ihnen vereinbaren.

Vertraulichkeit

Ihre Teilnahme ist freiwillig. Sie können den Fragebogen und das Interview jederzeit abbrechen. Alle Daten werden anonym erhoben, können nicht Ihrer Person zugeordnet werden und werden streng vertraulich behandelt. Ihre Daten werden ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet. Sie können Ihre Einwilligung jederzeit widerrufen.

Einwilligung

Nehmen Sie an der Befragung teil? Bitte kreuzen Sie an:

☐ Ja

☐ Nein

Würden Sie an einem Interview teilnehmen?

☐ Ja

☐ Nein

Name des Teilnehmenden:

E-Mail-Adresse:

Unterschrift:

Datum:

Information sheet for participants

Dear Mrs./Mr.,

my name is Stefan Benz and I am a student on the **Cultural Astronomy and Astrology** (MA) programme at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

You are a member of a German-speaking association of astrologers. I based my selection on the list of members of your association. I am carrying out a survey as part of my degree programme.

The aim is to gain insights into the views of professional astrologers on the question: **‘How does astrology work’**.

The survey is conducted by means of a **questionnaire**. This contains a few general questions and a specific question on a possible mode of action of astrology. It takes about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

I would also like to conduct an **interview** with participants. I have access to the university's MS Teams for this purpose. The duration of the interview is individual, based on the questionnaire and would take about 30 minutes.

I would be very pleased if you would participate in the questionnaire. I would also be pleased to have an additional interview with you. I would be happy to arrange an appointment with you in the coming weeks (early to mid-April).

Confidentiality

Your participation is voluntary. You can cancel the questionnaire and the interview at any time. All data will be collected anonymously, cannot be associated with you personally and will be treated in strict confidence. Your data will be used exclusively for scientific purposes. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

Consent

Are you taking part in the survey? Please tick the box:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Would you participate in an interview?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Name of the participant:

E-mail address:

Signature:

Date: