

What Are Astrologers Saying About ‘The Great Conjunction of 2020’?

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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Abstract

This research explored what practicing astrologers are saying about the Great Conjunction of 2020, a unique year with numerous planetary meetings including the Saturn Pluto conjunction in Capricorn, the Jupiter Pluto conjunction in Capricorn, the Mars Jupiter conjunction in Capricorn, and the Jupiter Saturn conjunction in Aquarius. Astrology offers a knowledge of timekeeping, something that humans have been fascinated with since time immemorial as one considers the Babylonian scribes. Tracking conjunctions was once an inherent part of European culture during the Middle Ages, and great conjunctions played a significant role in the European understanding of history as noted by scholars like Kepler, Peter of Abano, Magnus, and Paul of Middleburg. These European thought leaders took inspiration from Islamic astrologers including Māshā'allāh, Alkindi, Abū Ma'shar, and Ridwan who offered significant teachings in regard to great conjunctions and their impact on culture and civilization. It was Plato's view of planetary cycles as measuring the passage of time that laid the basis for the Persian and Islamic astrologers to apply the themes of an individual's horoscope to the collective's prediction through specific planetary conjunctions.

In order to elucidate the links between the history of astrology and the contemporary practice of astrology, this research used textual sources, a questionnaire, one-on-one interviews, and other contemporary primary sources. Through this research I received thirty-six completed questionnaires from practicing astrologers and conducted four in-depth interviews. Every single astrologer expressed that they thought that the planetary conjunctions of 2020 were significant for the global events, with one astrologer remarking that the Jupiter Saturn conjunction was the end of the world as humanity had known it. These astrologers thought that the conjunctions impacted the collective psyche in an unprecedented way. As Kepler authorized, specifically relating to Jupiter Saturn conjunctions, 'the greater the conjunction, the greater the disturbance exerted on the natural world'. Contemporary astrologers utilized the methods of conjunctional astrology following the legacy given by the Islamic and Medieval European astrologers to forecast for the collective, remarking how planetary cycles, particularly great conjunctions place a mammoth emphasis on global culture and events that impact the collective psyche. This ancient Persian method of tracking of planetary cycles, still used today, anchors modern astrologers to a distant past, and a lineage of astrological intelligence.

Introduction

Journalists and social media buzzed with a great interest in astrology in the midst of the global pandemic of 2020. Based on internet queries one could find articles titled ‘The Biggest Astrological Event of Our Lifetime Arrives on December 21’, ‘Placing the pandemic in time: Astrology and Covid-19’, and ‘Meet the astrology entrepreneurs who turned an awful 2020 into a boom for the \$2.2 billion industry’. Astrologers have leant upon the numerous great planetary meetings or conjunctions that occurred in 2020 – the Saturn Pluto conjunction in Capricorn, the Jupiter Pluto conjunction in Capricorn, the Mars Jupiter conjunction in Capricorn, and the Jupiter Saturn conjunction in Aquarius – as a foundation to explain these times.¹ Many astrologers connected these astronomical events to the COVID-19 pandemic and to the so-called entry into the Aquarian Age, a New Age of consciousness. This research explores what practicing astrologers are saying about the Great Conjunction of 2020, when the two largest planets in our Solar System – Jupiter and Saturn – appeared in the sky just 0.01 degree apart. Using a mix of text-based research from historical accounts, online research of contemporary events, and a qualitative analysis of data obtained from contemporary practicing astrologers, this research aimed to understand how these astrologers perceive the current times and how this relates to the cycles of human history through an astrological language.

The Cyclic Nature of Planetary Conjunctions

Astrology is a vast subject with many definitions that speak of the relationship between an individual’s existence and the living sky. Astrology draws upon how this is experienced on both a personal and societal level, marking cycles of time and space through culture and civilization. The practice and philosophy of astrology allows one to pinpoint events and circumstances within time and space. Patrick Curry defined astrology as, ‘something (just like science, art, and religion) which humans do, and something in which the Earth – where we have evolved, of which we are made, and which makes everything we are, do, and know possible –

¹ Chris McRae, *Great Conjunctions Shifting Times*, (Scottsdale: SEEK-IT PUBLICATIONS, 2021), p. 173-175.

is restored to its rightful place at the centre'.² Nicholas Campion stated that astrology was born before 2,000 BCE when the Mesopotamians began to incorporate stars into their political cosmology, with an intention to sustain social stability by maintaining harmony within the cosmos through a reverence of the seasonal cycles.³ These cycles, guided by solar and lunar movements and the human experience of living within the elemental changes, are experienced through the four seasons, forming the basis of The Great Year.⁴ This concept of the Great Year may be as primordial as the Big Bang itself, as it speaks to the period of one complete course of equinoxes around the ecliptic, which is approximately 25,000 years. Astrologer André Barbault related the Big Bang to the Great Year, the conjunction of all the conjunctions, 'The world started as a nucleus which exploded then which started singing, dancing'.⁵ Barbault commented on how the notion of the Great Year prevails within the astronomical phenomenon of the circular movement of the stars around us. For Barbault the birth of the world was archetypal, an original template for all of Creation, 'The birth of the world could only have occurred when all celestial bodies of the solar system were gathered. A beginning of beginnings'.⁶

A planetary conjunction occurs in classical astrology (as taught by Ptolemy) when two planets meet within the same zodiacal sign or within eight zodiacal degrees of each other, and also at an exact conjunction, when the planets meet in the same degree.⁷ Conjunctions are the first of a series of aspects within a cycle that repeats in the pathways of the Sun, the Moon, and the planets. These astrological and astronomical cycles exemplify the way that life itself is cyclic. Astrologer Charles Harvey defined a cycle as the progressive unfoldment and expression in time of

² Patrick Curry, 'Grounding the Stars: Towards An Ecological Theory', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, Vol 1 no 2 (2007), 210-219, p. 210.

³ Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology Volume I: The Ancient and Classical Worlds* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), p. 36.

⁴ Nicholas Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year: Astrology, Millenarianism and History in the Western Tradition*, (London: Penguin, 1994), (referenced from author's manuscript) pp. 1-15, pp. 8-9.

⁵ Astrological Association, *André Barbault conversation with Lynn Bell* [video]. 2019 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgVYt7IQjJs>> [accessed 21 June 2021].

⁶ Astrological Association, *André Barbault conversation with Lynn Bell* [video].

⁷ Claudius Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.1, trans. F.E. Robbins, (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1930), p. 115; Douglas Block & Demetra George, *Astrology For Yourself*, (Lake Worth, FL: Ibis Press, 2006), pp. 158-159.

some concept which essentially exists outside of time.⁸ He explained the conjunction as a simultaneous death and a renewal of life, as it represents both the completion of a previous cycle and the birth of a new cycle.⁹ Given the immensity of this knowledge, conjunctions may transmit an experience of instability, as completion amidst an initiation of possibility and growth is likely to bring great stress.¹⁰

The Great Conjunction

The movements of Jupiter and Saturn are seen by many astrologers as operating as archetypal forces that impact society with lasting impressions. Harvey wrote about the importance of conjunctions in relationship to history, emphasizing Great Conjunctions as being associated with 'significant endings and beginnings of periods of humanity'.¹¹ Harvey termed Jupiter and Saturn as the Great Chronocrators, or 'rulers of time', where their movements in relation to the outer collective planets have played a crucial role in humanity's history.¹² Giuseppe Bezza, in his research into Jupiter Saturn conjunctions, found that Restoro of Arezzo, a thirteenth century Italian monk, defined their astrological features in his *Composizione del mondo*, specifying that 'Saturn was the first man, who built up houses and roads and cultivated the soil. After Saturn, Jupiter appeared, as a prophet who teaches the way of God, because Jupiter signifies the one who warns while Saturn is the one who is warned'.¹³ H. Darrel Rutkin, referred to Persian astrologer Abū Ma'shar's declaration that Jupiter's twelve year cycle and Saturn's 29.5 year cycle conjoined once every twenty years to form a great conjunction.¹⁴

⁸ Charles Harvey, 'Cycles in Practice', in *Mundane Astrology: The Astrology of Nations and Organisations*, by Michael Baigent, Nicholas Campion, and Charles Harvey, (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press 1984), 2nd edition revised (London: Aquarian Press 1991), author's manuscript, page unknown.

⁹ Harvey, 'Cycles in Practice', in *Mundane Astrology*, author's own manuscript, page unknown.

¹⁰ Harvey, 'Cycles in Practice', in *Mundane Astrology*, author's own manuscript, page unknown.

¹¹ Harvey, 'Cycles in Practice', in *Mundane Astrology*, author's own manuscript, page unknown.

¹² Harvey, 'Cycles in Practice', in *Mundane Astrology*, author's own manuscript, page unknown.

¹³ Giuseppe Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology: Ptolemy, Abu Ma'shar and Their Commentators', in *From Masha'allah to Kepler: Theory and Practice in Medieval and Renaissance Astrology*, ed. by Charles Burnett and Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum (Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press, 2015), pp. 5-48, (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, p. 40).

¹⁴ H. Darrel Rutkin, 'Giuliano Ristori and Filippo Fantoni on Pseudo-Prophets, Great Conjunctions, and Other Astrological Effects', in *From Masha'allah to Kepler: Theory and Practice in Medieval and Renaissance Astrology*, ed. by Charles Burnett and Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum (Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press, 2015), (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, pp. 578-9).

Māshā'allāh a Jewish Arabic astrologer specifically influenced Paul of Middleburg, who referenced his work on planetary conjunctions, particularly in relation to eclipses.¹⁵ This ancient Persian method of tracking of planetary cycles, still used today, anchors Harvey, Barbault, and other modern astrologers to a lineage of astrological intelligence. Humanity's history and concept of time have been etched through these cycles of time. Campion outlined the nature of this tracking, 'For four thousand years from ancient Babylon to the seventeenth century Europe, ritual rebirth of the state was intimately linked to the sacred rising of the sun, and astrology offered a means by which the cosmic state, uniting heaven and earth, might be perfectly managed within the fluctuating cycles of time'.¹⁶ Astrology offers a knowledge of timekeeping, something that humans have been fascinated with since time immemorial as one considers the Babylonian scribes who for roughly seven hundred years kept diaries of 'regular watching', noting both terrestrial and celestial events, planetary positions, mathematical models for future planetary positions, and omens based on birth dates.¹⁷ Although there are various astrological worldviews, one in particular that incorporates Platonic, Stoic, and Jungian thinking speaks of a collective psychology that is influenced by the physical, emotional, and spiritual weather on Earth and in the sky.

Astrology's lineage and methods have fallen into disrepute more than once post seventeenth century. Within *A History of Western Astrology* Jim Tester concluded,

It was only with the beginnings of a rejection in the later nineteenth century of all Western rational thinking in favour of the utterly foreign unreason (not irrationalism) of the East, that astrology – of a sort – was revived. We have brought the story of Western Astrology down to its second death, at the end of the seventeenth century. Only the servant-girl's laughter rings through the eighteenth.¹⁸

¹⁵ Stephan Heilen, 'Paul of Middleburg's *Prognosticum* for the years 1484 to 1504', in *From Masha'allah to Kepler: Theory and Practice in Medieval and Renaissance Astrology*, ed. by Charles Burnett and Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum (Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press, 2015), (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, p. 376).

¹⁶ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 15.

¹⁷ Campion, *A History of Western Astrology Volume I*, p. 75.

¹⁸ Jim Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1987), p.243.

Campion rebutted this, pointing out that, while the casting of horoscopes died out in the eighteenth century, popular astrology continued and astrology as a whole has not only survived well into the twenty-first century, but it is in fact thriving.¹⁹ Contemporary astrologers and academia are reforming the reputation where astrology was seen as irrational or merely for entertainment purposes after the Age of Enlightenment. Thus, this research concentrates on how contemporary astrologers used cyclical planetary conjunctions as a means to interpret the events of 2020, relying on a method that was passed down from the Persians and given authority by Plato in his *Timaeus*. In order to elucidate the links between the history of astrology and the contemporary practice of astrology, this research used textual sources, a questionnaire, one-on-one interviews, and other contemporary primary sources.

Literature Review

European Culture and Planetary Cycles

Rutkin acknowledged that tracking conjunctions was once an inherent part of European culture during the Middle Ages, and that great conjunctions played a significant role in the European understanding of history from at least the thirteenth century with Roger Bacon until well into the seventeenth with Johannes Kepler and Giovanni Battista Riccioli, and ‘Such analyses were also often mixed with prophetic speculation and the interpretation of apocalyptic texts’.²⁰ Kepler was the last major European scholar who combined the study of the stars and planets through the merging of astronomy and astrology.²¹ Kepler’s state included a vision where the solar system provided the key to a system of political management in which society might be governed with intention, ‘The more harmonious the relationships among the planets in the sky, the more the hearts and minds of men commune together, and join in common endeavours, pursuing

¹⁹ Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology Volume II: The Medieval and Modern Worlds* (London: Bloomsbury 2009), p. 177.

²⁰ Rutkin, ‘Giuliano Ristori and Filippo Fantoni on Pseudo-Prophets, Great Conjunctions, and Other Astrological Effects’, (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, p. 576).

²¹ Nicholas Campion, ‘Johannes’ Kepler’s Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century’, *Mediterranean Archaeology & Archaeometry*, (forthcoming, author’s manuscript).

them with united hands; but if they are without guidance and restraint, their means may turn violent'.²² Kepler's astrology spoke of the direct connection between the cosmos and weather patterns on Earth, and it was through this understanding that he was known for his predictions, 'Nor do they bring down heat or cold, dryness or moisture from the sky, but rather they impel the mountains and chasms to pour forth what they have laid up in store'.²³ He lived during the Great Conjunction of 1603, leaving behind a legacy that outlined how the greater the conjunction, the greater the disturbance or force that was exerted on the natural world.²⁴ Peter of Abano, who lived in the thirteenth century, was an Italian physician, philosopher, and astrologer who believed that astrologers could not only predict the future with accuracy, but they could also influence the future and bend it to their will with a proper occult understanding of the heavenly bodies, 'The way to capture and store up such celestial influence is by means of images made by human art with due reference to the constellations'.²⁵ His astrology signified the difference between the minor (great) conjunctions which happen every twenty years, to the moderate (great) conjunctions which take place every two hundred and forty years.²⁶ He specified that the conjunctions may precede, even by many years, the events which they give birth to, using the example of the great conjunction that came fifty years prior to the birth of Muhammed.²⁷

Albertus Magnus, c. 1200—1280, was a German medieval scholar who became a Dominican friar and taught Thomas Aquinas.²⁸ He was interested in natural science, believing that the Earth was ruled by the stars.²⁹ Magnus defended that understanding the celestial influence was an important tool that had the ability to

²² John Meeks (ed. and trans.), 'Kepler's Weather Calendar of 1618', *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 14 no 1 and 2, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter (2010) pp. 177-198, p. 196.

²³ Meeks, 'Kepler's Weather Calendar of 1618', p. 179.

²⁴ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet p. 41).

²⁵ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science – During the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era Volume II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), pp. 898-9.

²⁶ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume II*, p. 897.

²⁷ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume II*, p. 898.

²⁸ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume II*, p. 518.

²⁹ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume II*, p. 518.

assist humans live in a fully actualized state of happiness.³⁰ He had much to say about the effects produced by the conjunctions of the planets, ‘ascribing to them great morality and depopulation, or “great accidents and great prodigies and a general change of the state of the elements and of the world”’.³¹ Paul of Middleburg, a professor of astronomy at the University of Padua published his *Prognosticum* in August 1484, where he wrote about the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Scorpio in November later that year.³² He was an avid protector of astrology who held this art of divination in high esteem, claiming that ‘the movements of the stars are God’s instrument for governing the world’ and was known to call out opponents of astrology as being uneducated.³³ In the *Prognosticum* Paul wrote about previous conjunctions, including those connected to the birth of Christ and the rise of Muhammed.³⁴ He went on to predict that the effects of the conjunction of 1484 would bring severe illnesses, misfortune for kings, challenges for those who dwelled in the mountains, extreme suffering to new born babes and mothers who were about to give birth, forms of perversion, extreme climate shifts, and crop failures.³⁵

These Medieval European astrologers identified the specifics of Jupiter Saturn conjunctions. In a passage concerning the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the first degree of Aries, Peter of Abano asserted that this conjunction altered the strength of human nature, affected the length of life, and produced new kingdoms and religions, including the legacies of Moses, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Christ, and Mohammed’.³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, born in 1225 in Italy, was an important Catholic theologian who leaned upon Aristotle’s philosophy. Although he believed that astrology as divination should be condemned, he affirmed that the superior planets (such as Saturn and Jupiter) are ‘the cause of stability and

³⁰ Scott Hendrix, ‘Choosing to be Human: Albert the Great on Self Awareness and Celestial Influence’, *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 12 no 2, Autumn/Winter 2008, pp. 23-41, p. 24.

³¹ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume II*, p. 583.

³² Heilen, ‘Paul of Middleburg’s *Prognosticum* for the years 1484 to 1504’, (Sourced through a tablet p. 376

³³ Heilen, ‘Paul of Middleburg’s *Prognosticum* for the years 1484 to 1504’, (Sourced through a tablet p. 338).

³⁴ Heilen, ‘Paul of Middleburg’s *Prognosticum* for the years 1484 to 1504’, (Sourced through a tablet p. 386).

³⁵ Heilen, ‘Paul of Middleburg’s *Prognosticum* for the years 1484 to 1504’, (Sourced through a tablet p. 376 and pp.388-389).

³⁶ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume II*, p. 897.

continuance in time ... and they perform their actions in a more universal and permanent way. Thus, their influence on terrestrial beings is more powerful'.³⁷ As Aquinas stated, Jupiter and Saturn were known in these times as being the forces of cultural change and signifiers of times, just as is found through Harvey's Great Chronocrators. In his paper on Jupiter and Saturn conjunctions, Bezza noted how Kepler specified that the greatest conjunctions were those of Jupiter and Saturn.³⁸ In consideration of contemporary astrology, one must understand that Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto had yet to be discovered or named.

The Islamic Influence

European thought leaders took inspiration from Islamic civilization and astrology, particularly by means of tracking planetary conjunctions, emphasizing that they had a palpable impact on events and culture. In *Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology*, Bezza wrote how medieval astrologers, including Peter of Abano, Nicole Oresme, and Pierre d'Ailly, based their philosophy – which he termed Medieval Scholasticism – on Persian and Arab astrologers like Abū Ma'shar and Alkindi.³⁹ Abū Ma'shar Ja'far ben Muhammad al-Balkhi, born in 787 and died in 886, was known by many as Albumasar and was the most celebrated of all the ninth century Bagdad astrologers.⁴⁰ He was an influential person amongst astrologers, philosophers, and theologians alike in both the Persian and the Latin Christian cultures.⁴¹ Abū Ma'shar stated that the slowest moving planets indicate the greatest long term change,

We say that when the conjunction of the two superior planets necessitate something in the changes of religions and dynasties, the changes of the Sharias and the Sunnas, the occurrence of important matters, the change of the kingdom, the death of kings and the kinds of occurrence of prophets, revelation, and miracles in religions and dynasties.⁴²

³⁷ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet, p. 38).

³⁸ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet, p. 41).

³⁹ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet, p. 29).

⁴⁰ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science – During the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era Volume I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), p. 649.

⁴¹ Charles Burnett, 'The Certitude of Astrology: The Scientific Methodology of al-Qabīṣī and abū Ma'shar', *Early Science and Medicine*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (2002), pp. 198-213, p. 212.

⁴² Abū Ma'shar, *On Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties (On the Great Conjunctions)*, ed. and trans. Keiji Yamamoto and Charles Burnett, 2 Vols., (Leiden: Brill 2000), p. 35.

Abū Ma'shar differentiated the Jupiter and Saturn twenty year conjunction, where every 240 years the conjunction becomes a 'greater' conjunction as an elemental shift occurs (fire, earth, air, or water), quite often bringing about great change within the culture, namely politics and religion, and after four cycles of elemental shifts which measures roughly 960 years, the conjunctions return to the first zodiacal sign making the 'greatest' conjunction.⁴³ Meanwhile, Ibn Ridwan, an Arab Egyptian born physician, astronomer and astrologer, declared that the 'conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter have great effectiveness in signifying the changes of kingdoms and religions and the migrations of the peoples from one place to another'.⁴⁴ Alkindi, another mathematician, physician, and philosopher from Baghdad was the teacher of Abū Ma'shar. He created an astrological treatise which was a political prediction that was the first instance of the theory of conjunctions in Arabian astrology.⁴⁵ Alkindi's theory that most likely was the inspiration of Abū Ma'shar's conjunctionist doctrine, offered a hierarchy of causes threaded into teachings on the planetary rhythms of Jupiter Saturn conjunctions as an explanation for the course of history.⁴⁶ Alkindi emphasized how these great conjunctions 'exert a great influence not only upon the world of nature, but upon political and religious events', and how particularly the great conjunctions of Jupiter Saturn opened new periods in history.⁴⁷

Bezza noted that the techniques of tracking great conjunctions belonged to the Persian and Arabic astrologers; however, the roots of this philosophy were to be found within specific doctrines of Greek astrology.⁴⁸ He reported that Greek genethliology, known as the practice of casting an individual's horoscope was sourced from Ptolemy, Dorotheus, Paul of Alexandria, and Vettius Valens by the Persians, thereby building one of the principles of historical astrology (or general astrology as Bezza termed it), the revolution of the years, as foundational to

⁴³ Rutkin, 'Giuliano Ristori and Filippo Fantoni on Pseudo-Prophets, Great Conjunctions, and Other Astrological Effects', (Sourced through a tablet pp. 578-9).

⁴⁴ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet p. 48).

⁴⁵ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume I*, p. 649.

⁴⁶ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet pp. 33-35).

⁴⁷ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume I*, p. 649.

⁴⁸ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet pp. 29-31).

Islamic Astrology.⁴⁹ Greek genethliology justified the foundation of the doctrine of the revolutions of the world-years, which spoke to the regular sequence of motions of the superior planets Jupiter and Saturn.⁵⁰ This doctrine formed a cosmic structure of political and religious changes, and the overarching historical evolution. The Greek structure of the nativity or birth chart was offered as a template, which was then transferred from the individual to the collective, allowing for the conjunctionist doctrine to become ‘a theory provided with a marvellous regularity, capable of establishing planetary periodization and able to explain the course of history’.⁵¹ Therefore, underpinning Persian and Hellenistic astrological thought lies the foundation of Plato’s philosophy of the cosmos.

Plato’s *Timaeus*: Time and Conjunctions

In the *Timaeus*, Plato described the beginnings of the creation as, ‘... this Cosmos has verily come into existence as a Living Creature endowed with soul and reason owing to the providence of God’.⁵² Plato, the Greek philosopher who lived ca. 429—347 BCE, remarked about the purpose of tracking time, stating that the Sun, Moon, and planets were created for this aspiration, relaying they ‘came into existence for the determining and preserving of the numbers of Time’.⁵³ His cosmology articulated a world of exquisite alignment, ‘For God desired that ... all things should be good and nothing evil ... He brought it into order out of disorder, deeming that the former state is in all ways better than the latter’.⁵⁴ He outlined how when forces merged, they became one, ‘... the terms are interchangeable, and being interchangeable they all form a unity’.⁵⁵ A conjunction, as defined by Plato, was one that impacted the Earth and all of her inhabitants,

And Earth... she being the first and eldest of all the gods which have come into existence within the Heaven... and the relative reversals and progressions of their orbits, and which of the gods meet in the conjunctions... send upon men unable to calculate alarming portents of the

⁴⁹ Bezza, ‘Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology’, (Sourced through a tablet pp. 31-33).

⁵⁰ Bezza, ‘Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology’, (Sourced through a tablet p. 33).

⁵¹ Bezza, ‘Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology’, (Sourced through a tablet p. 33).

⁵² Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. by R.G. Bury, (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1929), section 30 C.

⁵³ Plato, *Timaeus*, section 38 B.

⁵⁴ Plato, *Timaeus*, section 30 B-C.

⁵⁵ Plato, *Timaeus*, section 32 C.

things which shall come to pass hereafter, to describe all this without an inspection of models of these movement would be labour in vain.⁵⁶

Plato's philosophy not only defined the conjunction, but also spoke to the ramifications of the force of this union. As a merging occurs, the separate identities form together as a brand-new identity. Conjunctions convey snapshots of time within space, signifying a specific quality of the moment. Campion observed that time, which is often subject to the debate as to whether it is linear or cyclic, '... is a mystery, and to say that it is one thing or the other, cyclical or linear, concrete or abstract, is to imagine that a mystery can be understood. This is the myth promoted by both fundamental religion and much modern science'.⁵⁷ Campion referred to Jung's reflections on the moment of time, 'Whatever is born or done at this particular moment of time, has the quality of this moment of time'.⁵⁸ Therefore, time has remained like a great code for humanity to decipher; however beyond the mystery, what may be the most tangible to track is the quality of the moment.

The Collective's Psychic Process

Astrology has long been seen as a form of historical and collective consciousness. Michael Baigent utilized Carl Jung's theories to base mundane astrology within the collective psyche, 'The psychology of the individual is reflected in the psychology of the nation', wrote Jung, 'The same principles which operate in individuals are seen operating in nations'.⁵⁹ Baigent accentuated that it was particularly the transpersonal planets that mark the signatures of the culture, 'Transpersonal planets relate to the historical, political and social spheres: they are Uranus, Neptune and Pluto'.⁶⁰ He noted that Saturn stands on the division between the personal and transpersonal, the 'dweller of the threshold,' and is a symbol of the boundary between the personal unconscious and collective unconscious.⁶¹ Liz

⁵⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, section 40 C-D.

⁵⁷ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions*, p. 18.

⁵⁹ Michael Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', in *Mundane Astrology: The Astrology of Nations and Organisations*, by Michael Baigent, Nicholas Campion, and Charles Harvey, (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press 1984), 2nd edition revised (London: Aquarian Press 1991), author's own manuscript, page unknown.

⁶⁰ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

⁶¹ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

Greene captured the essence of Saturn's process, which conjures being and becoming as found within Plato's *Timaeus*,

Saturn symbolizes a psychic process as well as a quality of kind of experience. He is not merely a representative of pain, restriction, and discipline; he is also a symbol of the psychic process, natural to all human beings, by which an individual may utilize the experiences of pain, restriction, and discipline as a means for greater consciousness and fulfilment.⁶²

She noted that Saturn was often associated with themes of hard work, frustration, and limitations, and that even Saturn's lighter side encourages one to be disciplined and wise.⁶³ Greene noted that Pluto heralds the death of religions and cosmologies, offering an intense vision that fills the void of the death as 'Pluto is the great time-keeper of the collective'.⁶⁴ Therefore Pluto connects to myths of the underworld, ruling over the souls of the unborn and those who have died.⁶⁵ Greene explained that:

Saturn and Pluto have several things in common, and they often overlap in their mythological and religious correspondences. Both have an association with darkness, with destruction, and with ... the depths of chaos out of which new life or greater consciousness is born. They symbolize two phases of the same psychic process. Both planets lead the individual into darkness, and both carry the suggestion of wisdom through suffering and purification through the ordeal by fire. Both are related to the process of the growth of consciousness which is always accompanied by struggle. In a sense Saturn guards the entry to Pluto's realm for it is the collapse of external values which leads eventually to the burning ground.⁶⁶

Essentially these planetary archetypes are symbols for that which is beyond intellectual comprehension, demonstrating the psychological stages of growth that occur only through great challenge and loss.⁶⁷ Greene, while pointing out that it is useless to tell the average person that their pain is part of the evolution of a collective experience because their pain is their pain, also noted that the

⁶² Liz Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 2011), p. 10.

⁶³ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁴ Liz Greene, *The Outer Planets and Their Cycles: The Astrology of the Collective*, (Sebastopol: CRCS Publications, 1996), p. 25.

⁶⁵ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.140.

⁶⁶ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p. 141.

⁶⁷ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.141.

experience of the collective reflects how 'the soul of the earth itself is preparing for initiation into a higher sphere of consciousness and that his personal struggle is intimately connected with this larger struggle'.⁶⁸ One's personal suffering may mirror the adversity of the collective, cultural experience.

In Summary

Campion emphasised the desire across time and civilizations to study the sky to make sense of this human experience. He was inspired by Clive Ruggles' statement, 'Developing an understanding of these perceptions is a crucial component of Western anthropologists', archaeologists' and historians' efforts to comprehend human conceptions and actions both in the past and in the present'.⁶⁹ Barbault called time a phenomenon of continuance, and in turn defined a conjunction as a phenomenon, 'When we talk about a conjunction, we must consider it with respect to the continuance of its cycle. We can't separate it from the previous conjunction or from the one which is starting'.⁷⁰ Referencing planetary cycles allows one to understand how all consciousness is connected; according to Harvey, astrology has been the lighthouse of the cyclic view of creation:

We have allowed a preoccupation with minutiae and with the particulars and fragmentary aspects of our tradition to distract us from the sheer magnitude and power of the vision that astrology offers. In consequence mundane astrology has over the past centuries gradually lost sight of the ancient vision of Plato and his predecessors, with this emphasis upon the collective importance of all the planetary synods taken together.⁷¹

With his astute knowledge of planetary cycles, Barbault wrote in 2011 about the likelihood that humanity would be 'seriously threatened by a new pandemic in 2020-2021' as the Jupiter-Saturn-Pluto conjunction 'lends itself to great imbalance, and that the world of international business would most likely be affected'.⁷² He argued that the true value of astrology must be fully reinstated, and

⁶⁸ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.17.

⁶⁹ Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript).

⁷⁰ Astrological Association, *André Barbault conversation with Lynn Bell* [video].

⁷¹ Harvey, 'Cycles in Practice', in *Mundane Astrology*, author's own manuscript, page unknown.

⁷² André Barbault, 'An Overview of Pandemics', *The Astrological Journal*, May/June (2020), pp. 5-8, (p.7). (Note: article was originally written on 8, June 2011 in Paris)

that is the witnessing and identifying of planetary cycles.⁷³ This practice of tracking planetary cycles was commonplace for the scholars of Medieval Europe, a legacy that was passed down from the Islamic astrologers including Māshā'allāh, Alkindi, Abū Ma'shar, and Ridwan. As Ridwan established 'the conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter have great effectiveness in signifying the changes of kingdoms and religions and the migrations of the peoples from one place to another'.⁷⁴ This research explored how these techniques given by the Islamic astrologers and practiced by Medieval astrologers are thriving amongst contemporary astrology.

Methodology

The Research Process

Through combined text-based research from historical accounts, online research of contemporary events, and a data query of professionally practicing astrologers. I looked to cultural commentary, including articles, blog posts, social media posts, and podcasts from 2019 through 2021 in regard to the conjunctions of 2020 and the global pandemic with an intention to gather insights into the history of yesterday, coming to the research question through a curiosity of wondering how to connect the current events with the historical practice of astrology. Essentially the intention was to inquire how relevant astrology is for the contemporary world, and how practicing astrologers today view this practice in the midst of a global pandemic. A questionnaire and four interviews offered the opportunity to connect with professional astrologers globally to gain direct insights into what astrologers had to say about these current events in correlation to the astrology. Knowing that this was emic, or insider research as I am a practicing astrologer who has written and taught publicly about the alignments of the astrology of 2020, there was a strong focus throughout the research to comply with ethical standards to ensure the results were as free from bias as possible.⁷⁵ Emic research is focused on

⁷³ André Barbault, 'Planetary Cycles and their Interferences', published in *Les Cahiers Astrologiques Julliet-Aout 1946*, date unknown, translation: Beatrice Boucher, <<https://www.icaquarius.nl/england-articles/planetary-cycles-and-interferences.htm>> [accessed 29 July 2021].

⁷⁴ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet p. 48).

⁷⁵ Judith Bell, *Doing your Research Project* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), p. 55.

studying and understanding the subjective meanings people attach to their experiences.⁷⁶ Kenneth Pike distinguished the difference between etic and emic in his *Linguistic Concepts*, with etic stemming from phonetic and emic stemming from phonemic.⁷⁷ Where emic is drawing from the meaning and etic is the actual structure of the sound; therefore, emic research draws from the being rooted within the culture that is being analysed.

I used a qualitative approach to this research; thus, this project was concerned with individuals' perceptions of the world, knowing that, when dealing with human beings, social facts are essentially non-existent.⁷⁸ This approach is grounded in listening to people relaying their own insights with an intention to remain curious, open-minded, and empathic throughout the process.⁷⁹ In reference to the University's expectations and to maintain integrity, a commitment to follow ethical guidelines throughout the research was upheld, which included informed consent of the participants of the questionnaire and interviews.⁸⁰ All participants in the questionnaire and interview process were offered the opportunity to remain anonymous and the data was treated with the greatest amount of confidentiality. Participants were informed that the research was to be assessed by the University for examination purposes only and should the question of publication arise at a later date, permission would be sought from the participants.⁸¹ Any participant who requested a write-up of the results was granted access to the finished dissertation.

Extensive internet research was conducted to gather a sense of how the astrology of 2020 was being reported in articles, blogs, and social media spaces. Sources including Plato's *Timaeus*, Abū Ma'shar, Kepler, Baigent, Campion, and Popper's *The Poverty of Historicism* inspired the rationale that formed the questionnaire,

⁷⁶ Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, & Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, (Los Angeles; London: SAGE, 2011), p. 14.

⁷⁷ Karl J. Franklin, *K.L Pike on Etic vs. Emic: A Review and Interview*, Summer Institute of Linguistics, 27 November 1996, by <https://www.sil.org/about/klp/interviews-tributes/karl-franklin-interview>, [accessed 8th November 2021].

⁷⁸ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 9.

⁷⁹ Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, pp. 60-62.

⁸¹ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 56.

which is found in the appendix of this dissertation. A query was crafted that was tailored to the mindset of astrologers, with intentional wording of the questions.⁸² The majority of the questions allowed for either a yes or no response, as it was essential to pre-empt the obstacle that many participants would be constrained by time and might come to the questionnaire with a short attention span due to the increased overstimulation of technology and burnout during the pandemic. I chose to allow only a few of the questions for an open-ended response, as Bell pointed out that some form of content analysis is required for verbal material, therefore this would simplify the data management process.⁸³ There was a conscious decision to avoid questions around gender, location, astrological sect, etc. so that succinct information would best serve the data filtering process. After careful editing the questionnaire was sent out via an invitation from my university email address to professional emails collected from practicing astrologers' websites. An invitation was also posted to two professional astrological organizations on Facebook, including The Organization for Professional Astrology, with a deadline of three weeks from the launch of the questionnaire. I received thirty-six completed questionnaires. Because the questionnaire was created through Google Forms, the majority of the information was automatically analysed with a summary sheet as suggested to begin the data analysis.⁸⁴ In addition to the summary sheet, I created various bar and pie charts to see the results from various perspectives. The answers from the few open-ended questions were gathered and copied onto a separate sheet of paper to take notice of the words and themes that began to emerge.⁸⁵ These responses were also entered into a wordle software which created word maps that brought a visual element to the recurring thoughts from the participants.

Once the data from the questionnaires was compiled, four online interviews were undertaken which offered a more in-depth approach than the questionnaires. These interviews were conducted through Zoom with an unstructured interview style, believing that this would allow for a wealth of valuable data.⁸⁶ To prepare for

⁸² Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 160.

⁸³ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 159.

⁸⁴ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 231.

⁸⁵ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 232.

⁸⁶ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 181.

the interviews I utilized Bell's checklist, ensuring that I knew exactly what I wanted to learn from the sessions and why I needed this information; I then devised an outline of the questions, so that I could be sensitive to how to be free from bias.⁸⁷ These questions were refined before the interviews took place, and included a loose structure that included an introduction, opening questions, key questions, and closing questions.⁸⁸ The interviews were recorded with consent, noting that integrity, professionalism, and good manners were all essential to the flow of the process, and I followed up the interviews with thank you emails. Throughout the interview process, I held to my aim of being reflexive, as it was important that I maintained awareness of my role in the research process so as to foster a successful rapport between myself and the participant; I knew that if the participant became uncomfortable, this would affect the data generated.⁸⁹

As the data analysis is a circular process, I spent time combing over the annotations in the transcripts to understand the views of each participant, in their own words.⁹⁰ To analyse the data from the interviews, I worked with the software Tetra Insights, which allowed me to upload the audio files of each interview, create annotations, and add metadata tags. The tags or codes within Tetra Insights offered a way to create coding to refer to a topic, issue, idea or opinion that was evident in the data, creating topical markers to index the information so that it was easy to locate each space within the data where a specific topic was discussed.⁹¹ Deductive codes included words and concepts that I expected to garner from the research, and inductive codes included terms that came from the participants outside of the deductive codes.⁹² Upon careful filtering of the questionnaires and interviews the findings were written up to explore what astrologers said about events of 2020, in order to understand how to bridge the astrology of current times to the history of astrology. Each interviewee was given a pseudonym to protect their identity within the findings.

⁸⁷ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, pp. 189-192.

⁸⁸ Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 112-113.

⁸⁹ Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 20.

⁹⁰ Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 208.

⁹¹ Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 216-217.

⁹² Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 218.

A Process to Maintain Rigour

Research was gathered from various online sources, as these sources can provide filtered information that has the ability to stimulate new conversations in the same way a conversation with another may do.⁹³ The method of utilizing a questionnaire and interviews was chosen in order to obtain a wide range of responses in order to fulfil the objectives of this study and to answer key questions in as succinct an amount of time as possible.⁹⁴ Questionnaires may conceal tone of voice and hesitation, therefore interviews offer an opportunity to follow up on ideas, probe response, and investigate on a deeper level.⁹⁵ Throughout the research journey I held a commitment to uphold academic neutrality, as ethics in qualitative research include informed consent, a commitment to the process of minimization of harm, anonymity, and confidentiality.⁹⁶ With an awareness of how bias may easily influence a research project, it was important throughout the entire process to find comprehensive sources for the literature review and the inquiry process, and to stay critical of the data along the path.⁹⁷

Findings

The Astrological Predictions of 2020

The year of 2020 was tumultuous for humanity with numerous conjunctions, including the Saturn Pluto conjunction in January, a Mars Jupiter conjunction in March, three Jupiter Pluto conjunctions throughout the year, and the Jupiter Saturn conjunction that occurred on Winter Solstice. Emily Chan published an article in *Vogue* stating ‘For decades, astrologers have been predicting that 2020 would be a year of massive global upheaval’.⁹⁸ Chan wrote that astrology suggested that change was perhaps on the horizon, quoting Chani Nicholas, ‘It is the end of one cycle and the beginning of another – a cause for hope, but a hope

⁹³ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 143.

⁹⁴ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 123.

⁹⁵ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 178.

⁹⁶ Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 63.

⁹⁷ Bell, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 187.

⁹⁸ Emily Chan, ‘Astrologers Predicted 2020 Would Be Dramatically Life-Changing. So What’s Next?’, *Vogue*, 21 May 2020. <<https://www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/astrologers-predict-whats-next>, accessed Spring and November 2021>, [accessed March and November 2021].

based on our willingness to participate in recreating our world'.⁹⁹ Nicholas's charge reflected Karl Popper's discussion on historicism, where he wrote that how those who wish to transform or remodel the social science must do so with a practical approach and methodology.¹⁰⁰ Campion elucidated Popper's historicist/activist thinking as he wrote about how some people feel they have a 'moral obligation to impose their standards of behaviour and principles on other people'.¹⁰¹ Nicholas, a prolific pop astrologer, accentuated how 2020 was 'full of age-defining astrology', informing her readers with regular email broadcasts, writing that one astrological era had ended and another had begun due to the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, with 'a once-in-a-200-year opportunity to make necessary adjustments needed to begin the long process of shifting course'.¹⁰² For Nicholas this conjunction in Aquarius would outsmart the system, and this fresh cycle would offer new technologies and alternative forms of communication where information would become the contemporary currency because, 'Air signs are never at a loss for words, new ideas to pontificate upon, or people to talk to, but they do lack in warmth, groundedness, and the ability to stay emotionally related. We'll need to make sure we don't lose our humanity in favour of our big ideas'.¹⁰³ She said that it was times like these that

Have us straddling a gaping chasm, one that asks us to bear witness to what is decaying while at the same time tending to what is emerging. Our systems are archaic and long overdue a reconstruction. In true Aquarius fashion, we must leave enough space between our personal attachments and the needs of the collective in order for the most innovative ideas to emerge.¹⁰⁴

Eric Francis, another long-time practicing astrologer, sent emails to his readers relaying how the Jupiter Saturn conjunction invoked, 'A future different from the

⁹⁹ Chan, 'Astrologers Predicted 2020 Would Be Dramatically Life-Changing. So What's Next?'.

¹⁰⁰ Karl Popper, 'The Poverty of Historicism, II. A Criticism of Historicist Methods', *Economia*, Vol. 11, No. 43 (1944), pp. 119-137, pp.120-123.

¹⁰¹ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 4.

¹⁰² Chani Nicholas, 'The Great Conjunction is Coming' (email newsletter sent to Danielle Goldstein, 5 December 2020).

¹⁰³ Chani Nicholas, 'Horoscopes for the Great Conjunction' (email newsletter sent to Danielle Goldstein, 20 December 2020).

¹⁰⁴ Nicholas, 'Horoscopes for the Great Conjunction'.

past' and the Aquarian theme 'We Need One Another'.¹⁰⁵ He remarked how ironic he found the Jupiter Saturn conjunction, in which both planets were shifting into Aquarius for the first time since 1405, that people were being told to stay apart, while his own belief was that it is essential for people to cooperate with one another, summon the humanitarian spirit of honestly recognizing how much people need and depend on one another, and also depend on knowing it's safe to breathe.¹⁰⁶ Francis's astrology marked the Jupiter Saturn cycle as the most significant for the astrology of 2020, 'This takes place in a sign that could — if we want — be about power to the people. Yet Aquarius also has a dark side, and we've seen plenty of it this year'.¹⁰⁷ Amelia Quint mentioned in her article for *Allure* that the global pandemic and the 'inspiring activism' of 2020 were just the beginning of the changes coming 'as the Great Conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn will activate the culture politically, socially, and personally... It's the kind of intensity you can use to make big, positive changes in your life'.¹⁰⁸ She spoke of the potential optimism of the Jupiter Saturn conjunction in Aquarius where she outlined specific political shifts towards progressive thought, and how Aquarius is associated with an open-hearted and open-minded values.¹⁰⁹

Omri Elisha studied how astrological services were in high demand during the Covid-19 pandemic, 'From private consultation to horoscopic forecasts across multiple media, people are eager to know when the pandemic will end and how it will affect their lives in the long run'.¹¹⁰ Emma Rosenblum, the editor in chief for the lifestyle category at Bustle Digital Group, stated for *The New York Times* that 'Astrology for us is a consistently high-performing category across all our sites ... In place of traditional religions and spirituality, I think some people – particularly in

¹⁰⁵ Eric Francis, 'I Seek a Future Different From the Past' (email newsletter sent to Danielle Goldstein, 16 December 2020).

¹⁰⁶ Francis, 'I Seek a Future Different From the Past'.

¹⁰⁷ Eric Francis, 'The Great Conjunction: Jupiter and Saturn on the Solstice' (email newsletter sent to Danielle Goldstein, 20 December 2020).

¹⁰⁸ Amelia Quint, 'The Biggest Astrological Event of Our Lifetime Arrives on December 21', *Allure*, In the Stars column, 18 December 18, 2020. <<https://www.allure.com/story/great-conjunction-saturn-jupiter-2020>> [accessed January 2021 and November 2021].

¹⁰⁹ Quint, 'The Biggest Astrological Event of Our Lifetime'.

¹¹⁰ Omri Elisha, 'Placing the Pandemic in Time: Astrology and Covid-19', *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere*, 13 August 2020. <<https://tif.ssrc.org/2020/08/13/placing-the-pandemic-in-time-astrology-and-covid-19/>> [accessed January and November 2021].

this time of such uncertainty – are doubling down even more on horoscopes’.¹¹¹ Steph Koyfman noted the comfort that astrology gives as it signifies archetypal patterns, allowing ‘people to put words to what they’re already feeling and that helps them feel witnessed ... It’s also a way of orienting yourself in history and time. It helps take you beyond, oh my God, why is this happening to me? This is just how time works. It’s a cycle.’¹¹² Elisha reflected how essential astrology could be for integrating history ‘Analysing this cosmological perspective as a form of historical consciousness, rather than just a function of occult superstition or “fortune telling” is an important step toward better scholarly understanding of how people who practice and engage with astrology perceive the moral valences of time’.¹¹³ Many experienced profound pressure in the year of 2020, and astrology’s reputation was amplified because of its ability to put the events into perspective, while simultaneously offering a timeline of hope and possibility beyond the intensity of the present moment.

The Questionnaire Results

I received thirty-six completed questionnaires from practicing astrologers. Every single astrologer expressed that they thought that the planetary conjunctions of 2020 were significant for the global events that occurred during the year. As Barbault taught, ‘Cosmic imbalance arises when powerful planets gather in clusters around the Sun’.¹¹⁴ One astrologer remarked that the Jupiter Saturn conjunction was the end of the world as humanity had known it. These astrologers thought that the conjunctions impacted the collective psyche in an unprecedented way. As Kepler authorized, specifically relating to Jupiter Saturn conjunctions, ‘the greater the conjunction, the greater the disturbance exerted on the natural world’.¹¹⁵ Astrologer Bill Herbst noted how Jupiter Saturn cycles have great psychological ramifications that in turn affect the collective unconscious, ‘... they are much more about group-oriented behaviour within society and culture,

¹¹¹ Hayley Phelan, ‘Will Coronavirus Kill Astrology? The Pandemic has Affected All of Us. Who saw it coming?’, *The New York Times*, 9 May 2020.
<<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/09/style/coronavirus-astrology-predictions.html>>
[accessed Nov 2021].

¹¹² Phelan, ‘Will Coronavirus Kill Astrology?’.

¹¹³ Elisha, ‘Placing the Pandemic in Time: Astrology and Covid-19’.

¹¹⁴ Barbault, ‘An Overview of Pandemics’, p.6.

¹¹⁵ Bezza, ‘Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology’, (Sourced through a tablet p. 41).

indicating the evolving drama of collective trends across the bell curve as we move through changing patterns in the archetype field'.¹¹⁶ According to Jung, the collective unconscious contains the vast storehouse of patterns of emotional and mental behaviours that have been generated in myths, religions, and philosophies throughout history since the beginning of time and which influence cultures and entire nations.¹¹⁷ Greene further defined Jung's collective unconscious as 'the deep strata of the human psyche which are common to us all' and how this is something that very little is known about, as it is a mysterious underground system.¹¹⁸ Baigent specified Jung's basic principles of the psyche – which views both the conscious and unconscious psychic occurrences as being as real as the body, greater than the ego, and at its deepest level, connected to all other human beings.¹¹⁹ Jung compared political mass movements to psychic epidemics, what he termed as *mass psychoses*; states of collective consciousness that fall into the realm of psychopathology.¹²⁰ Greene discovered in her research that the outer planets often shatter one's entrenched views about the nature of reality.¹²¹ As the conjunctions of 2020 shattered collective reality, something died, and something was born.

Within the questionnaire, one astrologer discussed that they believe collective issues must be dealt with in a collective way, that a new meaning of life emerged from the pandemic. In an interview conducted in late 2020, Campion stated that the impact of these times was felt by the entire collective of Earth, 'In my view, this has to be the first-ever global crisis in human history. All previous crises in history only occupied a part of the globe, like the Second World War'.¹²² Each astrologer who participated in the questionnaire agreed that the conjunctions of 2020 were significant for global events, yet only twenty-three answered positively that they believe their astrology practice was a part of the collective psychology, as seen in

¹¹⁶ Bill Herbst, 'The 2020s A Perspective from Civilizational Astrology', *The Mountain Astrologer*, Issue 209 (February/March 2020), pp. 21-27, p. 22.

¹¹⁷ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

¹¹⁸ Greene, *The Outer Planets and Their Cycles: The Astrology of the Collective*, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

¹²⁰ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

¹²¹ Greene, *The Outer Planets and Their Cycles: The Astrology of the Collective*, p. 34.

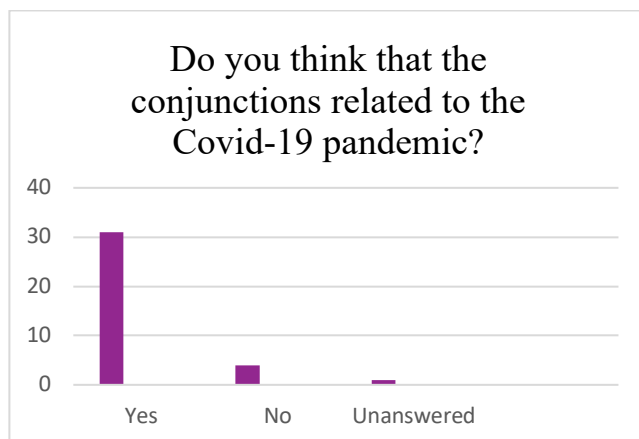
¹²² Jenn Zahrt, 'Through a Glass Darkly: An Interview with Nick Campion', *The Mountain Astrologer*, Issue 214 (December 2020/January 2021), pp.40-47 and 98-99, p. 47.

figure 1. Within Thorndike's reflection of medieval European scholars' knowledge of the power of the conjunctions, there was an emphasis on how the conjunction is for the macrocosm, a forecast of fate for the culture at large.¹²³ Varying scholars throughout history from Abu Ma'shar, to Barbault, to Greene found instances of how great conjunctions impacted the collective psyche, ultimately demonstrating the deep interconnectedness between all beings.

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Thirty-one of the astrologers who participated in the questionnaire agreed that the COVID-19 health crisis was a direct manifestation of the conjunctions of 2020, utilizing terms like 'hardship', 'constriction', and 'limitation'. Astrologers remarked

¹²³ Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science Volume I*, p. 649.

that Saturn Pluto times are often difficult, and that COVID-19 emerged due to the purging sensation of Pluto, the restriction and isolation incited by Saturn, and the trauma of the Saturn Pluto meeting the expansive nature of Jupiter, spreading the pandemic worldwide. In an article for *The Mountain Astrologer*, Nina Gryphon referenced Islamic astrologer al-Qabisi's wisdom on the Great Conjunction, where he specified that this marriage occurring with an elemental shift into the air signs portends novel disease and mass epidemics of great magnitude as it was the second most powerful astronomical shift, related to the European plague that killed over 30% of the population.¹²⁴ One participant responded that the Saturn Pluto conjunction mirrored the pandemics of the Spanish flu of 1918 and AIDS. Paul of Middleburg forecasted in his *Prognosticum*, declaring the conjunction of 1484 would bring severe illness, and great suffering, specifically through misery for the virtuous, prosperity for the wicked, and extreme climate conditions.¹²⁵ This demonstrated how the tradition of tracking planetary conjunctions in mundane astrology assists in knowing what may be coming. Anne Whitaker remarked that on 22 March, 2020, just as Saturn entered airy Aquarius, the UK government declared a COVID-19 shelter in place, '... it seemed as though the human global community had literally taken to air en masse via Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Facebook, etc. – a powerful, immediate, adaptive response to the world locked down'.¹²⁶ Jo Yurcaba wrote that it wasn't just that COVID-19 took over 240,000 lives in the US, in addition millions lost their jobs, many spent holidays in isolation, and this all transpired amidst protests of police violence, great political division, and the death of beloved civil rights leaders.¹²⁷ One astrologer remarked on how the reaction to COVID-19 offered a rare historical time, as the world had to reorganize on a grand level, from all branches of institutions and governments to community networks and intimate family structures. Campion reported on how Kepler specifically referenced that the

¹²⁴ Nina Gryphon, 'Astrology of COVID-19/Coronavirus', *The Mountain Astrologer*, Issue 211, (June/July 2020), pp. 21-27 & 34, pp. 22-23.

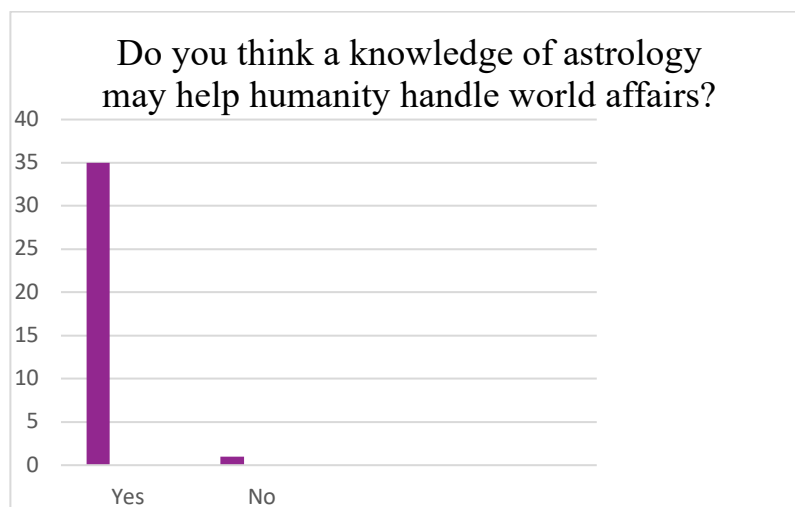
¹²⁵ Heilen, 'Paul of Middleburg's *Prognosticum* for the years 1484 to 1504', (Sourced through a tablet p. 376, pp. 388-389).

¹²⁶ Anne Whitaker, 'Waning and Waxing Crescents: Windows to the Future The Jupiter-Saturn Cycles', *The Mountain Astrologer*, Issue 214 (December 2020/January 2021), pp. 48-53, p. 49.

¹²⁷ Jo Yurcaba, 'Is 2020 Turning Us All Into Pessimists?', *Very Well Mind*, 18 November 2020. <https://www.verywellmind.com/is-2020-turning-us-all-into-pessimists-5088037> [accessed November 7, 2021].

planetary conjunctions of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn could bring about a stirring within the collective soul that could result in both political volatility and cultural disturbance.¹²⁸ An astrologer wrote that they believed that the conjunctions of 2020 were responsible for the restructuring of society and culture, particularly because ‘conjunctions of Saturn and Pluto tend to bring substantial issues regarding structural, governmental, and societal transformations, which can include large-scale death. Having Jupiter and an Eclipse all in the same sign with the Saturn Pluto conjunction made the issue global. It was the perfect storm, and our world is changed forever’. Green emphasized that Saturn Pluto conjunctions bring great endings, where one may perpetuate the destruction of an aspect of society or one must facilitate its transformation.¹²⁹ Ibn Ridwan remarked how these conjunctions have a great effectiveness in shifting the kingdoms and religions.¹³⁰ In the modern day this translated to the massive transformations the world witnessed through a global lockdown due to a pandemic, volatile financial markets, and an increased digitized world.

Figure 3.

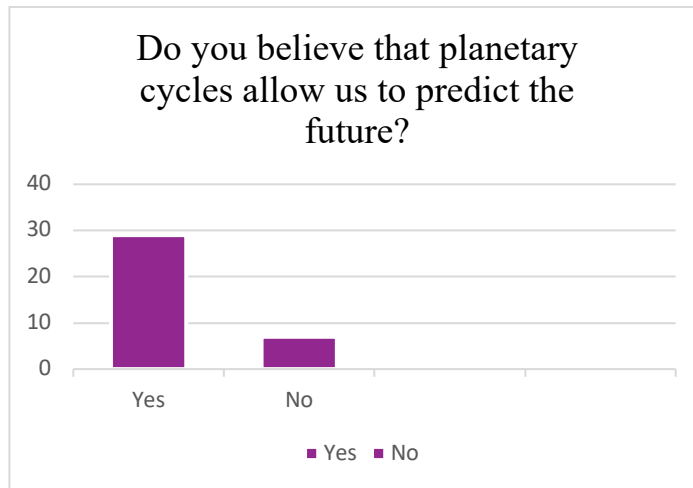


¹²⁸ Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript).

¹²⁹ Greene, *The Outer Planets and Their Cycles: The Astrology of the Collective*, p. 44.

¹³⁰ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, p. 48 of 849).

Figure 4.



The results demonstrated that thirty-five astrologers agreed that astrology may help humanity handle world affairs; meanwhile, the majority of participants expressed the belief that planetary cycles allow humanity to predict the future. These two questions both describe how astrology may assist the collective, yet seven astrologers did not agree that planetary cycles allow a prediction of the future. This discrepancy gives rise to the curiosity of wishing to know more about what knowledge of the history of astrology that these astrologers have been exposed to. Bezza relayed that the European Medieval scholars relied upon Arabic theory and the Islamic astrologers, particularly noting the significance of the conjunctionist doctrine.¹³¹ As Campion pointed out, contemporary astrologers utilize technique in their practice of astrology, yet often do not study the texts of the generations of astrologers that have come before, thereby an understanding of this rich history has been lost in contemporary astrology.¹³² Baigent noted that both Aquinas and Roger Bacon believed that when it came to collective predictions, astrologers were often very accurate, as he sourced Bacon's remark, '... while the individual by an effort of will may resist the force of the stars, in masses of men the power of the constellations usually prevails...'.¹³³ This solid lineage of predictive techniques offered Baigent the evidence to justify the serious

¹³¹ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet p. 49).

¹³² Zahrt, 'Through a Glass Darkly: An Interview with Nick Campion', p. 98.

¹³³ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

applications of mundane astrology, otherwise known as the astrology of the collective.¹³⁴

Figure 5.

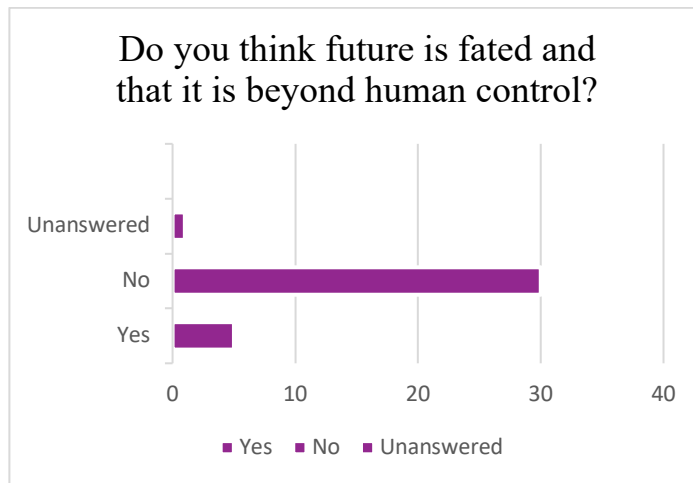
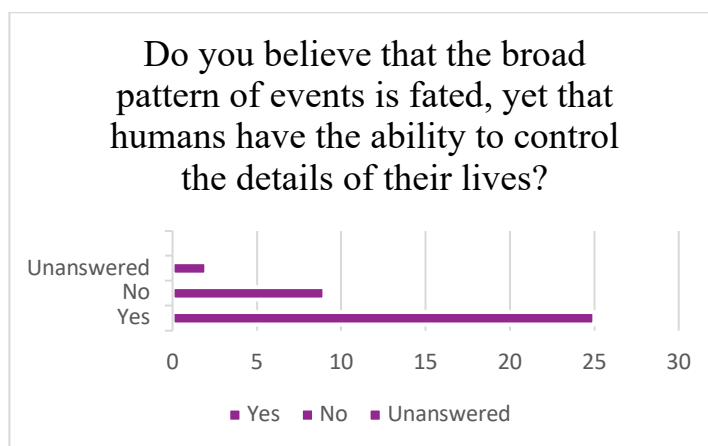


Figure 6.



The majority of astrologers who participated in the questionnaire do not believe that the future is fated and beyond human control; however, twenty-five stated that they do believe that the pattern of events that occur in the world are fated, yet humans have the ability to control the details of their lives. One participant reflected that astrology offers possibilities, however it is on each human to make the choice in how to utilize these options. This concept is well reflected in Popper's theory on astrology, as he noted that astrology shares with historicism a destiny that may be predicted, and therefore that humans have an influence, particularly if

¹³⁴ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

they know what is to come.¹³⁵ Bernadette Brady offered how the practice of astrology is an attempt to know the workings of fate, 'a desire to bring into awareness the activity of a believed agency which directs human life', where fate is at the core of this practice of astrology, as one may connect their own experiences to the patterns of the celestial movements.¹³⁶ One person remarked how astrology offers the timing of specific activations, however that does not mean one can predict exactly how the energies will be experienced. Another responded 'I think that there are multiple options for the future, and I don't think things are beyond human control. I think things happen, and we make choices and react accordingly'. These perspectives connect to Kepler's cosmic influence which determined that astronomical forces had a great impact, yet were not deterministic, 'the stars do not determine, but rather influence human affairs, and that despite their strongly stimulating nature, they nevertheless, leave full scope for the exercise of freedom'.¹³⁷ One astrologer wrote how energies have a broad range of expression, and that each person arrives to meet these celestial frequencies from their unique viewpoint and attitude which was formed and developed by their birth pattern, and then influenced by the environs and beings this person encountered through life. They went on to explain how that concept can be applied to the collective as well, as 'each person's consciousness contributes to the collective consciousness, which then affects larger events'. Greene affirmed this concept of fate extending beyond the personal experience to the societal generations. She wrote how generations are impacted by these planetary forces, 'an impersonal order...that reminds us perpetually of the limits of nature which we transgress at our peril... Pluto sounds the drumbeat of recurrent historical cycles...it marks the ordained end, the advent of fate'.¹³⁸

One astrologer reflected how humanity is in a serious, long term relationship with the cosmos and that they believe there's an undeniable mystery in the interplay between human control and fate. Greene wrote of the psyche's journey, implying the ramifications of an unconscious level of participation which pulls the

¹³⁵ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p.10.

¹³⁶ Bernadette Brady, 'Living with Fate: The Lifestyle of Contemporary Astrologers' *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* (Equinox Publishing Ltd. 2019), pp. 31-43, p. 32.

¹³⁷ Meeks, 'Kepler's Weather Calendar of 1618', p. 199.

¹³⁸ Liz Greene, *The Astrology of Fate*, (London: Mandala 1989), p. 54.

individual and the collective into an experience of pain, isolation, and suffering.¹³⁹ One participant expressed the belief that it is up to a human's consciousness evolution to shift the fates, 'I believe that the broad cycles and themes are fated, yet we have the ability to influence and shift the outcome with our behaviours, which are controlled by our free will. The more consciousness we have, the greater our power of free will'. This perspective requires a level of participation for culture to evolve; that was also discussed in Campion's writings on Popper's historicism, where Campion reflected on how Popper defined historical change as predetermined and teleological and although an individual had free will, their activist participation was necessary to help history move forward, ultimately to be of greater service.¹⁴⁰ Campion considered the emergence of Aquarian Age historicism to be the result of innovations within astrological practices and techniques post 1890, which also included psychological astrology, sun sign astrology, and esoteric astrology.¹⁴¹ After receiving questionnaires from over 300 astrologers in his Ph.D. thesis, *Prophecy, Cosmology, and the New Age Movement*, he noted that over half of these practicing astrologers believed that a New Age was beginning and that this was the Age of Aquarius.¹⁴² In my own research nineteen respondents believed that this entry into a new age was in relationship to the Age of Aquarius, while fifteen said that it was not. Perhaps one could consider that astrologers in 2020 were generally feeling more pessimistic than they were nearly two decades prior, therefore this melancholy may have been reflected in their responses to the questionnaire, as one social worker remarked that 2020 was 'the worst year ever'.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.143.

¹⁴⁰ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p.4.

¹⁴¹ Campion, *Astrology and Popular Religion in the Modern West*, pp. 212-217.

¹⁴² Campion, *Astrology and Popular Religion in the Modern West*, p. 183.

¹⁴³ Yurcaba, 'Is 2020 Turning Us All Into Pessimists?'

Figure 7.

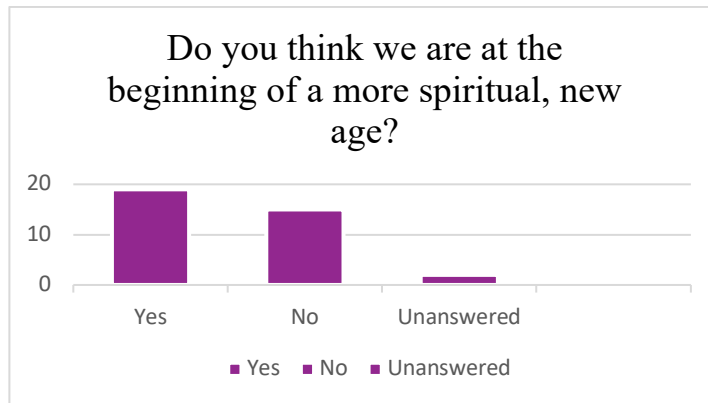
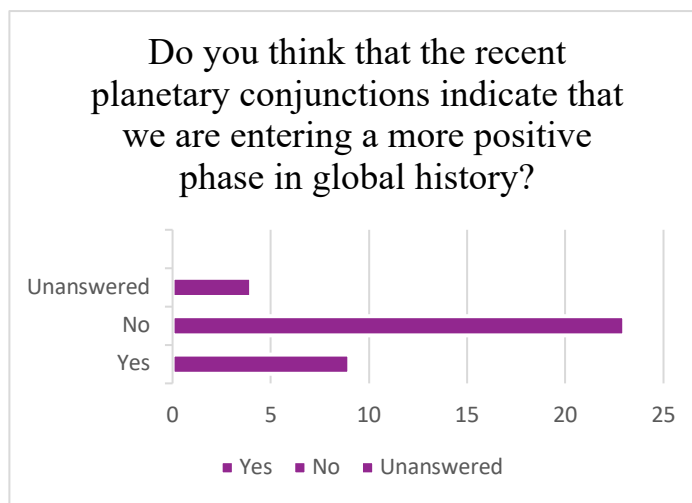


Figure 8.



The conjunctions of 2020 seemed to bring an air of despair to the astrologers who answered the questionnaire, as twenty-three stated that they do not believe humanity is entering a more positive phase in global history. Baigent pointed out the significance of Jung's warning of how highly charged the collective force is, and how it is seemingly possible for the masses to experience mental illness, or psychotic breakdown, which he termed as a 'psychic epidemic'.¹⁴⁴ Gallup's Negative Experience Index annually tracks the experiences of people worldwide in over one hundred countries. The post 2020 results demonstrated that, collectively, the world was feeling the lowest it had in fifteen years, and many participants felt

¹⁴⁴ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

worry, stress, sadness, and anger.¹⁴⁵ Nosheen Iqbal wrote how the nation of Britain had never felt more fearful or sad, that many were overwhelmed with pessimism and despair, which was the result of COVID-19.¹⁴⁶ A report published by BritainThinks shared how more than two-thirds of 2,000 adult respondents aged 18-65 reported feeling hopeless throughout the UK; meanwhile those who were optimistic were able to sustain that mood due to financial affluence.¹⁴⁷ As one participant noted, 'We can use astrology as a remediation in attempt to redirect, substitute, soften the blow, or have a hand in fate, but even so there are things beyond our control, and not everyone has the privilege or tools to respond'. Although many conjunctions occurred in 2020, the meeting of Saturn Pluto alone offered a dark shade of gloom, as Greene defined that these conjunctions bring about intense sensations like rage, frustration, and impotence, with a desire to shake structures loose, 'it is a kind of death, for the individual's entire conscious frame of reference becomes meaningless'.¹⁴⁸

Figure 9.



Despite the challenges of 2020 many astrologers have seen an increase in their practice. Nicholas responded that she believes that because of the conditions,

¹⁴⁵ Julie Ray, '2020 Sets Records for Negative Emotions' *Gallup News*, 20 July 2021. <<https://news.gallup.com/poll/352205/2020-sets-records-negative-emotions.aspx>> [accessed Nov. 2021].

¹⁴⁶ Nosheen Iqbal, 'Pessimism casts dark cloud over UK as fear of a new lockdown grows', *The Guardian*, 11 October 2020 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/11/pessimism-casts-dark-cloud-over-uk-as-fear-of-new-coronavirus-lockdown-grows>> [accessed November 7, 2021].

¹⁴⁷ Iqbal, 'Pessimism casts dark cloud over UK as fear of a new lockdown grows'.

¹⁴⁸ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.145.

people are open and curious to understand the times.¹⁴⁹ Astrologers at large have witnessed greater bookings with clients, and a general increased interest from people wishing to study astrology.¹⁵⁰ Herbst reflected that, 'Civilization isn't moving through a time of sweetness and light, and the crises that humanity faces are increasing, not diminishing'.¹⁵¹ That being said, the astrologers who answered the questionnaire for this research, expressed that, although planetary cycles affect periods of time, and these cannot be shifted, what may change is how one chooses to experience these transformations, 'Astrology suggests the "weather" and while we may not be able to change the weather patterns, we have free will to react to it, and make shifts based on it, as we see fit'. Another astrologer reflected that it is a person's choices that shape their reality, 'There are external circumstances we cannot control, but with our free will, we can control our responses to our environment, and thereby mould our future in that way'. As Abu Ma'shar proclaimed, the greater the conjunction, the greater the disturbance that would be felt by the collective; this theory was validated by how the numerous conjunctions of 2020 affected the entire global community unlike ever noted before in human history.¹⁵²

The Interviews

Elizabeth

Elizabeth described herself as a psychological humanistic astrologer that is interested in mundane events and how they are reflected in astrology. She noted that 'there is this very dynamic and intimate connection between everything that is going on in the news and what is happening between the planets', expressing that her motivation with astrology is to educate people about the current events in relation to what is happening with the planets. She is dedicated to bringing the world situations into her writing and sharing that reflection with her clients. She spoke to how humans are affected by what's happening in the greater

¹⁴⁹ Kaplan and Stenberg, 'Meet the Astrology Entrepreneurs Who Turned an Awful 2020 into a Boom for the \$2.2 Billion Industry'.

¹⁵⁰ Kaplan and Stenberg, 'Meet the Astrology Entrepreneurs Who Turned an Awful 2020 into a Boom for the \$2.2 Billion Industry'.

¹⁵¹ Herbst, 'The 2020s A Perspective from Civilizational Astrology', p. 27.

¹⁵² Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, p. 41).

environment and how post 2020 people were experiencing residual melancholy because of an absorption of the intense situations in the world. Elizabeth believes that the conjunction is one of the most powerful aspects, where there is an ending and beginning simultaneously. She stressed that it is more than that, as the planets in turn must create a relationship with one another. This relationship may be extraordinarily intense, with 'strange, unusual, and dynamic happenings, because of that merging, that crucible of these two planets in the small space of the conjunction, they don't really have room to be themselves, they are forever merged with each other'. Like Barbault, Elizabeth believes that a great conjunction is worthy of skilled study, and that astrologers owe it to these epic alignments to invest time to understand the depths and dynamics of the changes that occur through the period. She was born during the Saturn Pluto conjunction in 1947 from a lineage of astrologers which included her Austrian grandmother who studied the stars in addition to being a farmer's wife. Elizabeth noted that in many ways her entire life is a mirror of a Saturn Pluto conjunction. These great conjunctions bring about large issues that cannot be ignored. She relayed that, 'They are in the vernacular. They are in the zeitgeist'. Elizabeth believes that great conjunctions create major social upheaval of some sort and acknowledged how it is easy to reference this when one looks to history. Islamic astrologers were some of the authorities on great conjunctions who have inspired astrologers into contemporary times on how to forecast for the collective.¹⁵³ She remarked that there are many ways these aspects can be used, and that often humanity is exposed to the worst ways the aspects affect the culture and individual lives through media. She spoke how it is important to find a balance between the worst expression and the best expression, to 'speak to them in honourable terms, or inspiring terms'. She said that planetary conditions point one in a direction, bringing a topic into the forefront of one's life. Elizabeth mentioned how the astrology of 2020 ushered in heavy Capricorn themes where Saturn and Pluto desired to have order. She traced this conjunction back to 1981 and 1947, also emphasizing how significant the Pluto sign shift from Sagittarius into Capricorn was in 2008, and the increased extremism and authoritarian sentiments she has

¹⁵³ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, pp. 29-31).

witnessed within the US government since that transition. She stated that at the root of this trend are these planetary alignments, 'There is a latency with Pluto's energy, there is a matrix, and something ignites. An aspect of the matrix. The matrix can be latent for years. And then something comes along and ignites a piece of that. And we have to pay attention to that and deal with the various iterations because some of them are very extreme'. Elizabeth explained that technology changed humanity's lives in both wonderful and destructive ways, and that the collective is attempting to cope with that, however, it is only becoming more and more complex with climate change and the rise of artificial intelligence.

Concerning fate, she expressed that astrology is 'fated in the sense that we have to work on certain areas, and as we are asked to work in those areas, we are going to see what is wrong, and the issues that need to be fixed will be more obvious. But it doesn't mean we can't overcome. It is a matter of will and understanding'.

Elizabeth stressed that in her practice it is important to ask her clients what the best expression of the energy of a particular planetary condition is, because she mentioned how often it is emphasized what the worst expressions are stating, 'We have to figure out how to use our energy in the most effective and positive way, to make our individual lives better and our society and our collective life better'. She spoke of how she doesn't believe there is enough press and media capturing the positives and how one may be lifted up through any crisis. She works with her clients so that they may look at what they are receiving or perceiving instead of just reacting without thinking, teaching them to understand that when a planet is in a certain position it is asking one to focus on that area of their life. Elizabeth explained how a person's perception and attitude in any given moment is actually forming their future. She said it is important to prepare for an aspect that is coming, to anticipate it and to collaborate with it, so that when it arrives, one is alert and able to handle the expression that may take form. She believes that astrology prepares people how to better handle their lives, both personally and collectively. She expressed that humans could impact time, and that knowing the future makes a difference, which reflects to how Kepler stated that the astrological influences impel the elements to pour forth what they have laid up in store.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Meeks, 'Kepler's Weather Calendar of 1618', p. 179.

Elizabeth's approach is fresh in the sense that her intention is to prepare for an aspect, to collaborate with it. Elizabeth stated that with intense astrology it is essential for people to work locally in their communities, and personally within their own lives. Ultimately, Elizabeth has faith in humanity.

Richard

Richard practices sidereal and constellation astrology, believing that astrology is the cosmic mirror as it is involved in every single facet of life. Richard stated that the conjunction is the purest of aspects, a union of energy, much like Greene's reflection that, 'through the experience of merging with another, there is a temporary death and the potential of a rebirth where two become one'.¹⁵⁵ Similar to how Abu Ma'shar taught, Richard continued that a conjunction may represent a shift in the culture at large, especially when the societal planets come together. Richard referred to the importance of the Saturn Pluto conjunction of 2020, as it was also compounded by the Pluto Eris squares and the Eclipses, ultimately shifting the world greatly, 'in terms of the transformation of systems, the breakdown of systems, that seed is going to be very important for the next thirty years or so'. Richard referenced the era of Reaganomics as an important connection to the astrology of 2020 where globalism became even more palpable through the world's financial system and the increased digitization of money. For Richard's astrology, the last stages of the Piscean Age have only increased the effects of capitalism on the world, and with that there have been many unchecked and unregulated technologies. Richard spoke of how the rise of artificial intelligence could be very problematic for humans, yet perhaps the journey of humanity includes a fusion with artificial intelligence. He stated that he considers the topic of fate versus free will often, knowing that this inquiry makes it clear that he does not have a defined answer. In the past he gravitated towards a free will destiny, then moved towards fate, and is currently immersed in the paradoxical nature of the journey, stressing that he would like to believe humans have the ability to affect future outcomes. Richard said that he currently leans towards pessimism about the future, especially post 2020, as he began consciously tracking the night sky since the first lockdown in early 2020, and witnessed more and more

¹⁵⁵ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.144.

satellites going up and diminishing the darkness, an act that is synonymous with the living sky becoming the global internet. Richard expressed defeatism in his ability to enact change, as he correlated the brighter night sky coinciding with the recent massive international wealth transfer. This sentiment was in alignment with Herbst's reflection on how Saturn Pluto cycles bring about authoritarian coercive force, even at times with the approval of the public, 'The cycle is not characterized by hope or optimism, but is instead a defensive response to fearful expectation, a kind of striking out in self-protection against perceived threats (both real and imagined)'.¹⁵⁶ However, Richard also spoke of the quantum leaps in consciousness that may be available for humans in these times. Although he believes the concept of 'awakening' is often overused, he spoke of the relationship between physics, string theory, and the possibility that many realities may simultaneously exist; that the Age of Aquarius could bring substantial upgrades for humanity. Richard believes this New Age could be beneficial for society, where the egalitarian nature of Aquarius could affect the world in a positive way. For Richard, Aquarius signifies the holy grail, offering great wisdom, abundance, clarity, and wisdom.

John

John is a 62-year-old astrologer from Belgium, who has been teaching Dutch, English, and German to political immigrants for many years. He practices sidereal astrology and began studying in the 1990's with David Frawley. John said that everything in an individual's life, from mundane reality to politics, is connected through astrology. He spoke of how the Saturn Pluto conjunction of 2020 correlated directly to COVID-19, defining Saturn as isolation and Pluto as death. He referred back to *Cosmos and Psyche*, where Richard Tarnas marked the effects of the conjunction, which began in 2018 and culminated in early December 2021. John described how challenging it was teaching various immigrants throughout the pandemic, as he witnessed his students suffering in an attempt to keep up with their daily lives amidst the quarantine lifestyle that the global lockdown required. He reflected on the unique challenge for many of his students, whose only device

¹⁵⁶ Bill Herbst, 'The 2020 Jupiter-Saturn-Pluto Alignments: Collective and Personal Dimensions', *The Mountain Astrologer*, Issue 202 (December 2018/January 2019), pp.33-37, p.33.

was a smartphone, and how distracting it was for them to sign on in the room of a small apartment with multiple children in the background quite often screaming or crying. John noted how Saturn Pluto conjunctions occur approximately thirty-seven years apart, stating the importance of tracing back to the previous cycle, which occurred within the timeframe of 1981-1984, a period that John stated the Reagan administration in the United States allowed for large pharmaceutical companies to be free from liability from adverse side effects for medicines and vaccines, a consequence that was playing out in 2020. Kepler wrote about how the alignments of the planets could produce violent outcomes if they lack guidance and restraint, and it could be argued that global culture as a whole has lacked discipline and humanitarianism for many conjunctions.¹⁵⁷

John's astrology is based in the Vedas, and he emphasized how through these teachings humanity was rising up from the Kali Bronze Age and was headed towards the Kali Silver Age. According to him, the influence of Pluto brought mortality to the cultural forefront, so that there was great transformation coming in all systems, particularly governmental. As something dies, something new emerges. Saturn's influence brought about a severity of resources, including food and electricity, and, like the grim reaper, 'capitalism becomes grimmer, that it has its hold on the people, on their freedom of movement'. This sentiment is in alignment with Greene's reflection on Saturn Pluto conjunctions where she stated this marriage brings about an opportunity for great depth of knowledge that is only obtainable through the experience of destruction and pain, where a magnetic process occurs and all that is desired is torn away, so that one may find a centre beyond the realm of emotional attachment.¹⁵⁸ John expressed fate as a very real experience, known as karma in Eastern philosophy, with a belief that Western astrologers promise too much, offering that one should never underestimate the karma a person has. He spoke of how 'the change will come from the planet itself, the consciousness of this planet, this Gaia'. His interpretation of this consciousness was an experience of greater suffering for humanity, namely in the form of drastic Earth changes including earthquakes, tornadoes, and colder winters, much as

¹⁵⁷ Meeks, 'Kepler's Weather Calendar of 1618', p. 196.

¹⁵⁸ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.142.

Campion reflected, '... such bliss can only be recovered after a collective death, a traumatic upheaval of the most distressing kind'.¹⁵⁹ Greene wrote, 'Rebirth is an archetypal experience... Death is always necessary for there to be new life'.¹⁶⁰ John believes that sadhana, or devotional spiritual practice with a pure and open heart is the only way to leverage one's fate.

Mark

Mark is an Arizona based astrologer with an evolutionary astrological practice that is focused on spiritual and psychological development in relationship to planetary cycles. He believes that 'astrology delivers a certain content, a type of information coded through symbols'. Mark reflected back to his presentations prior to 2020, noting that he taught that the time before 2020 would be different from the time after 2020. He said that many astrologers knew that 2020 would be a turning point in history, and that the astrology '... was daunting... it's a compilation of alignments... where each of these alignments occurred in the course of history at one time or another, but never in such a short amount of time with this frequency'. In one way or another, many astrologers knew it was going to be a very deep dismantling of structure, from politics to economics to health and culture. He added, 'We all knew about it. The question is, could that have prevented the pandemic if we were heard? Is astrology and its prediction helpful for humanity?' His speculation was that there could have been much better preparation in place. Kepler's cosmic state offered a way to support political and cultural transformation through an astrological understanding.

Mark knew that great conjunctions signified extremely challenging chapters of history, threatening the personal and collective sense of security, remarking how in the past empires had fallen around a Saturn Pluto conjunction. With this sort of conjunction comes 'a deep redistribution of power on a global level, redistribution means that power is taken away and given to others... (which) can create a vacuum of a loss of trust, a vacuum of power... all kinds of forces trying to grab that empty chair and that can be extremely dangerous'. This statement is

¹⁵⁹ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.143.

congruent to when Bezza referenced Giuliano Ristori to articulate how the outer planets would offer the greatest transformation as their influence brought extreme precision, 'Furthermore, the same proportion is found between the luminaries and the superior planets as between a large crystal and a small diamond: in the crystal there is a larger quantity and greater virtue, but in the diamond, there is more effectiveness'.¹⁶¹ It was discussed that although the luminaries emit more light, the superior planets are more noble as they are closer to source, and therefore their impact has a vast resonance. Mark felt that a global pandemic or military conflict was inevitable with this conjunction, as the 1918 pandemic followed the ending of the World War. He specified that he knew that it would be 'a pandemic effecting everyone, not just an AIDS pandemic in the 1980s where it affected a certain number of people'. This intentional tracking and understanding of time was exactly what Kepler did in the seventeenth century by noting how specific conjunctions were precedents for demonstrations of war and unrest.¹⁶² Mark pointed out that what was unique about this particular Saturn Pluto conjunction is that they were both in Capricorn, a sign ruled by Saturn, and because each of these planets was conjunct their nodal axis, placing each on the ecliptic, therefore it incited more pressure. He suggested that the issues that were highlighted during the year of 2020 were not actually 2020's problems. As one considers issues such as overpopulation, the misuse of resources, and global pollution, he explained that these were problems that came to a climax from decades of neglect, rooted in previous cycles. Great conjunctions are planetary cycles with an acute vibration. This is in a similar vein to when Barbault articulated that it is necessary for astrologers to track these cycles from a large timespan, a wide perspective.¹⁶³ In regard to artificial intelligence, Mark expressed that he believes that humanity needs to explore controversial places, and that ultimately artificial intelligence deserves a chance. However, he urged the importance of this exploration being directed with the right use.

Mark offered hope about the future, reflecting on his optimism in human nature with the acknowledgement that astrology is not about the planets, because they

¹⁶¹ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet p. 41).

¹⁶² Meeks, 'Kepler's Weather Calendar of 1618', p. 197.

¹⁶³ Astrological Association, *André Barbault conversation with Lynn Bell* [video].

are merely just forces of nature. He explained that if one considers any intense planetary alignment, the planets themselves don't mean any harm. He relayed that there is a lesson to be experienced at specific time intervals,

I look at the planet as a clock. So, it's time now for Saturn, its time now for Jupiter and what this means is not good or bad, it's just what is. And we are built of these materials. What is better, the liver or the pancreas or the lungs? They are all necessary.

For Mark the Piscean Age was all about a higher reality, about transcending the world through spirituality, which also included the birth of the Internet, thereby connecting humans so that boundaries dissolved. In the Age of Aquarius, he believes that humans are to bring the kingdom of heaven to Earth, so that the sky comes to the Earth plane, and humans develop their own god spark. He noted that there has always been a shadow side to humanity, and there always will be, that 'the potential to eliminate life has been constantly present, and yet, we have recovered. We have rose from those ashes'. He stated that if life was completely fated, humans would be able to predict it with precision. He mentioned that he has worked alongside colleagues who practice various kinds of astrology ranging from traditional, modern, and Vedic, and that he has never known an astrologer to forecast with one hundred percent accuracy. However, as Campion pointed out, within Kepler's cosmology, only a slice of the solar system is visible, which was why his predictive system allowed for uncertainty, rather than being deterministic and assuming fixed outcomes.¹⁶⁴ Mark believes that astrology helps people mitigate extremes, 'They are engaging more, and they are responding more quickly'. He summed up that when one understands the intention a transit offers, then the person has the potential to make the best of any situation. He added that humans begin fated, and as there is an education on how to navigate the streams of life, then free will emerges. Mark stated that

free will is an advanced stage of human evolution... we make progress, and we solve our relationships... the ability to make more informed decisions and become more conscious creates a different reality', however that

¹⁶⁴ Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript).

ultimately 'we are fated to the truth and that is something that is beyond our free will.

He explained that one cannot control that the alarm bell is ringing, or halt a specific planetary alignment from happening, however one does have a choice in where they take the experience, 'Astrology doesn't give you an end, a limit to how deep you can go. You can experience something on a very superficial level or a much deeper level, and it's the same alignment'.

Summation of Findings

These findings explored how the conjunctions of 2020 brought out key themes for astrologers, most importantly that the collective was undeniably affected, both consciously and unconsciously. Previous pandemics from the Black Plague, AIDS, Spanish Flu were connected to great conjunctions, and the year 2020 demonstrated that through the emergence of COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic both unified humanity through a worldwide crisis, with an emphasis on an airy, global connectivity through the Internet, yet it also simultaneously separated people from their communities, jobs, and their ability to gather in person, eroding most of the pleasurable aspects of society. This emerged as an overall sense of melancholy and despair that many people around the planet were expressing, which was compounded by the incredible amount of loss and grief. Perhaps the pressures of the pandemic, mixed with the foreboding sensation of the Saturn Pluto conjunction, inhibited many astrologers from feeling hopeful about the future, leaving them pessimistic regarding whether humanity was entering a new, more spiritual age after all. During 2020, there was a growing interest in astrology, evidence by the fact that, despite the lockdowns, many astrologers experienced an increase in their businesses. Many of the astrologers who participated in this research presented a sense that although certain events are fated through the means of astrology, each individual has the ability to take charge of their own life to make conscious choices about what they will actually do, given any challenge at hand. Ultimately these contemporary astrologers were following in a long lineage that included the techniques of medieval philosophers that were passed down through texts and teachings – like the Arabic doctrine of "Great Conjunction" – that relayed the origins of how astrologers interpreted complex situations through the

rhythm of conjunctions.¹⁶⁵ Each of the four practicing astrologers who were interviewed in this study specifically pointed to the Saturn Pluto conjunction that occurred in January of 2020 as the most significant alignment that instigated the global health and financial crisis of 2020. These four astrologers also all spoke of artificial intelligence and climate change as being important factors to consider for humanity's future.

Conclusion

This research explored astrologers' understandings of the planetary conjunctions of 2020 in relation to current events and the history of so-called conjunctional astrology. My research used text based historical sources, contemporary primary sources, and qualitative analysis involving thirty-six astrologers that included both a questionnaire and one-on-one interviews to explore how relevant astrology is for the contemporary world, and what was being transmitted in relation to the Great Conjunction of 2020. As Brady stated in regard to astrology, 'There are varying definitions of astrology and these all speak of a believed union between the heavens and an individual human life'.¹⁶⁶ Astrology is an ancient practice with roots that extend back to Mesopotamia as a means to celebrate cycles such as the Great Year that was poeticised by Plato's order of the spheres, as he declared how this divine wisdom demonstrated the celestial perfection of the nature of time noting that when two (or more) astronomical bodies meet up to form a conjunction, they may bring an initiation of possibility and growth that incites instability, great stress, death, and renewal.¹⁶⁷ Planetary cycles in general teach the respective cyclical nature of time, highlighting how everything is interconnected and interrelated through layers of cycles of time and consciousness. Plato's view of a planetary cycles as measuring the passage of time laid the basis for the Persian and Islamic astrologers and philosophers to apply the

¹⁶⁵ Heilen, 'Paul of Middleburg's *Prognosticum* for the years 1484 to 1504', (Sourced through a tablet p. 386).

¹⁶⁶ Brady, 'Living with Fate: The Lifestyle of Contemporary Astrologers', p. 31.

¹⁶⁷ Harvey, "Cycles in Practice", in *Mundane Astrology*, author's own manuscript, page unknown.

themes of an individual's horoscope to the collective's prediction through specific planetary conjunctions.¹⁶⁸

Tracking of time is an important theme for astrologers, particularly as perceived through the lens of the Great Chronocrators and other planets including Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Islamic astrologers like Alkindi, Abu Ma'shar, Māshā'allāh, and Ridwan are some of the authorities on the planetary alignments, particularly the great conjunction, that have inspired astrologers well into modernity on how to forecast for the collective.¹⁶⁹ Al-Kindi's most prominent student, Abu Ma'shar, created core texts within the tradition of tracking planetary cycles.¹⁷⁰ The Great Chronocrators offer three types of great conjunctions as given by Abu Ma'shar, including the 20-year cycles that form a great conjunction, the 240-year cycles which become a greater conjunction as an elemental shift occurs, and the 960-year cycles that move through all four elements. Abu Ma'shar stated that the shifts of conjunctions signified the birth of prophets, but he also warned that within alignments like the Mars Jupiter Saturn conjunctions, dynasties and religions would fall and new civilizations would rise.¹⁷¹ Medieval European astrologers like Peter of Abano, Magnus, and Aquinas utilized this Arabic wisdom to justify their proclamations.¹⁷² As Kepler instructed, planetary configurations were known to bring about volatility within the collective psychology and extreme acts which could result in violence or death.¹⁷³ Kepler taught that the greater conjunction, the greater disturbance for humanity. Cycles of time form a concept of collective psychology that Plato, the Stoics, Jung, and Greene spoke of – where the physical, emotional, and spiritual weather on Earth and in the sky directly affects the human experience. Essentially, through this relationship, the boundary between the conscious and the unconscious psyche of an individual fades, similar to how the

¹⁶⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, section 38C; Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet pp. 29-31).

¹⁶⁹ Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through a tablet pp. 29-31).

¹⁷⁰ Rutkin, 'Giuliano Ristori and Filippo Fantoni on Pseudo-Prophets, Great Conjunctions, and Other Astrological Effects', (Sourced through a tablet p. 579).

¹⁷¹ Rutkin, 'Giuliano Ristori and Filippo Fantoni on Pseudo-Prophets, Great Conjunctions, and Other Astrological Effects', (Sourced through a tablet p. 579).

¹⁷² Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, p. 29).

¹⁷³ Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript).

boundary between the individual and the culture dissolves. As Baigent outlined, astrology offers a language to relay the notion of a collective psychology.¹⁷⁴ As outlined in this research, the year 2020 was unique from an astrological lens as there were multiple Great Conjunctions including the Saturn Pluto in Capricorn, Mars Pluto in Capricorn, Jupiter Pluto in Capricorn, and Jupiter Saturn in Aquarius. This research intended to create an inquiry in regard to the conjunctions of 2020 to discover if astrologers connected the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ask if they believed the human collective was entering a new age, and how they were feeling about this. The methodology of this research involved inviting over forty professional practising astrologers to participate in an academically sound questionnaire. I connected with professional astrologers globally to gain direct insights into what astrologers had to express about these current events through thirty-six completed questionnaires and four unstructured one-on-one interviews. In addition, I looked to cultural commentary that included social media, email broadcasts, articles, and journals. Knowing that this was emic research, there was a clear intention throughout the research process to comply with ethical standards as offered by authorities like Bell to ensure the results were as free from bias as possible.

Planetary Cycles and the Future

The questionnaire results offered that practicing astrologers believed that the conjunctions of 2020 impacted the collective in an unprecedented way, as every single astrologer that participated in this research agreed that the conjunctions were significant for global events. Thirty-one astrologers responded within the questionnaire that COVID-19 was a direct manifestation of the conjunctions, referencing previous pandemics including AIDS and the Spanish Flu. More people were feeling pessimistic, and this grimness could have simply just been the impact of all of the conjunctions coming together, as the Gallup Global Emotions poll measured that 2020 had the highest 'negative experience' index since 2006. One astrologer reflected, 'Why would we think things improve? At any moment cataclysms can occur, wars, attacks, climate, or nuclear problems, devastating viruses, bacteria, or cancers'. Overall, astrologers who participated in this research

¹⁷⁴ Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.

expressed more melancholic emotions through their responses, and twenty-three responded that they did not think we were entering a more positive phase in global history. A collective death was experienced, in that the status quo seemed forever changed. One astrologer wrote, 'It was interesting to be an astrologer and have a baby in 2020. His natal chart is very profound, and he will be part of the end of the old collective. The (Jupiter Saturn) conjunction in December will serve as a reset button'. This inquiry began with an assumption that many practising astrologers connected these astronomical events of 2020 to an entry into the Aquarian Age as the Jupiter Saturn 'greater conjunction' aligned at the first degrees of Aquarius. After careful consideration of the data there remains more questions than answers when it comes to contemporary astrologer's perspective on the Age of Aquarius, which would require deeper and more thorough research. Campion opened this topic in his Ph.D. thesis nearly two decades prior to this analysis, finding that many astrologers were hopeful of a new Aquarian Age. In this project, nineteen astrologers answered that we were at the beginning of a more spiritual, new age, and eighteen answered that this does have a relationship to the Age of Aquarius, while fifteen answered that it was not and three did not respond. Astrologers who participated in this exploration largely conveyed that for them, everything is connected to astrology, much like when Barbault stated, 'We see on a macrocosmic level what is occurring on the cellular level of a person'.¹⁷⁵ However, only twenty-three astrologers accounted that they believe their astrology practice is a part of collective psychology (three left the question blank), which offers an opportunity for further academic investigation. Thirty astrologers responded that they do not think the future is fated and beyond human control, while twenty-five stated that they believe that humans have the ability to control the details of their lives amongst larger cycles that are fated. One respondent wrote that the collective is more prone to acting out planetary aspects than the individual, as individuals have a greater ability to choose how to direct planetary energy which is related to destiny. They went on to explain that providence is a blanket concept that through myth is linked to acts of the gods through forces of nature like extreme weather phenomena. Another astrologer added that the more consciousness people have, the stronger their ability to exert free will becomes. Nicholas stated in an

¹⁷⁵ Astrological Association, *André Barbault conversation with Lynn Bell* [video].

interview with a Popperian historicist/activist flair, that the collective must work for what is to come. Each astrologer who participated in this research agreed that planetary cycles help predict the future.

Collaborating with Astrology

Elizabeth articulated how her practice of astrology focuses on the mundane day to day and that the individual meets a particular moment in time as a continuum of current events. She described the conjunction to be one of the most powerful aspects as in a complete moment there was a death and a birth, thereby creating a very intense relationship, where these two (or more) bodies do not have space for their own individual influence and are forever merged. It is this paradox that transmits the immense uncertainty that one may experience living through a conjunction. Richard shared how the conjunction is the purest of astrological aspects, representing a shift in the culture at large. Elizabeth relayed of how a great conjunction creates major social upheaval. She emphasized that a great conjunction is a noteworthy aspect that deserves intentional study, as it is an epic alignment that astrologers would benefit from investing their attention to fully digest the dynamic shifts that are emitted from this meeting. Mark noted that in the years leading up to 2020 he had been teaching his students and writing in publications that there would be a time before 2020 and a time after 2020. He knew that great conjunctions signified extremely challenging chapters in history with a redistribution of power that often brought about some form of suffering and stress, and that this could be experienced through military conflicts or a pandemic.

This pandemic was experienced through large scale loss and an unprecedented global lockdown of the entire world. In the interview process, each astrologer expressed belief that the Saturn Pluto conjunction held the greatest weight of influence in regard to COVID-19 pandemic, the governmental and financial global shifts, and the sense of isolation many experienced. John expressed the profound transformation that occurred because of the Saturn Pluto conjunction, with Saturn severing resources and revealing the grimness of late-stage capitalism, while Pluto brought morality to the cultural forefront, particularly within governmental

systems. He noted how in 2020 Saturn and Pluto brought isolation and death specifically by means of COVID-19, describing how this challenged the day to day living for his students. Both John and Richard connected the Saturn Pluto conjunction of 2020 to the 1982 Saturn Pluto conjunction and the globalism sparked by Reaganomics that began the digitization process of money, emphasizing the importance of astrologers tracking any cycle beyond the specific moment. Elizabeth also traced the Saturn Pluto meeting beyond 1982, to 1947 where extremism and authoritarian sentiments were seeded that are most likely still reverberating today. She described how she was born during that 1947 Saturn Pluto conjunction; therefore she experiences the nature of this conjunction daily. Greene lectured on the significance to query people born during intense outer planetary alignments, as they most likely would be able to speak to its affects more than most people.¹⁷⁶ Mark brought to light that because both Saturn and Pluto were on their nodal axis during their alignment, there was a distinct pressure, and that the problems highlighted in 2020 were actually from decades of build-up in regard to concerns around pollution, a misuse of natural resources, and increasing overpopulation.

Richard remarked that at times he struggles with defeatism and his ability to enact change. He connected this to his concern with more satellites filling up the sky, diminishing the darkness to be viewed at night, and how for him this brighter night sky was congruent with a massive international wealth transfer. Richard did emphasize the quantum leaps in consciousness that people may be able to access in these times, and that the Age of Aquarius could bring upgrades for humanity, benefiting society, where the egalitarian nature of Aquarius would serve all aspects of culture, offering more wisdom and abundance. John shared his belief that the change that is needed will come from the consciousness of the planet, from Gaia, in the form of increased Earth shifts. He believes that a devoted spiritual practice is the only way to leverage one's fate, meanwhile Mark reflected that if life was fully fated humans, namely skilled astrologers would have an ability to predict with full accuracy. For Elizabeth humans are fated in that the astrological alignments force one to focus on a particular area of their life, and that

¹⁷⁶ Greene, 'The Outer Planets & Their Cycles', p. 39.

one has the ability to overcome any challenge through their will. Elizabeth believes that the media doesn't relay enough of the positive, and that this is something important to consider in regard to the collective psyche, as one's perception at any moment may influence the form of the future. She said that her astrological practice helps her clients determine where they are being challenged in their life, so that they may use their energy in the most effective and positive way, as when one makes their individual life better it makes the collective life better, which is an example of Popper's historicist/activist concept. Elizabeth affirmed that humans impact time, and that knowing the future makes a difference, as a knowledge of the stars is an opportunity to prepare for an aspect, to collaborate with astrology.

A Flourishing Legacy

After inquiring thirty-six practising contemporary astrologers, this research elucidates that astrology is currently flourishing based on many astrologers confirming their practice has grown despite the pandemic, and the press and social media channels like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok amplify this sentiment. Profound transformation was experienced collectively within the year of 2020, particularly impressed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the restructuring of society that occurred due to these great conjunctions resulted in large scale loss, an unprecedented global lockdown of the world, and massive change within politics, financial markets, governments, institutions, local communities, work sectors, familial relations, eldercare, education, and health care very much like the Islamic astrologers reported on their great cultural shifts. However, the majority of astrologers who participated in this research do not feel positive about this phase of global history. All four astrologers interviewed agreed that the Saturn Pluto conjunction carried the greatest weight of the 2020 conjunctions, and echoing Greene, who remarked that Saturn and Pluto both conjure forces from the depths of chaos, bringing darkness and destruction, ultimately for the growth of consciousness.¹⁷⁷ Seventy percent of those who participated in this research believe their astrology is a part of collective psychology, and as Greene acknowledged, the collective journey is an initiatory journey for higher consciousness. The majority of these astrologers do not believe the future is fated

¹⁷⁷ Greene, *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil*, p.141.

beyond human control, and twenty-five specified that they believe humans have the ability to control the details of their lives. Both Mark and Elizabeth spoke in a similar vein in that the planets are simply forces of nature, meaning that they are free from meaning any harm. These planetary forces bring specific lessons at particular time intervals, birthing large collective events beyond control, therefore it is the individual who may have the ability to direct the planetary energy. Essentially, humans impact time. The Great Chronocrators shifted from an earth cycle which began in 1802 to an air cycle in 2020, a 'greater conjunction' or a great mutation, which some astrologers harkened to a new beginning with increased global connectivity that is lighter and faster than humanity had ever experienced. One astrologer wrote how humanity would witness increased telecommunication and perhaps even teleportation. Campion noted that time and the quality of life shifts like a pendulum, 'in which the universe is pictured as a vast clock, the pendulum swings from, say, permissiveness to puritanism and back again. One age may be peaceful, another warlike, one prosperous, another poor. Such images of time correspond directly to theories of history'.¹⁷⁸ Many astrologers shared concluding thoughts that stated that they knew that 2020 would be a turning point in history.

Kepler was one of the last well-respected astrologers of Renaissance Europe, and Campion noted that the tragedy of his astrological reformations was that they essentially died out alongside the academic credibility of the practice of astrology in the late seventeenth century.¹⁷⁹ Tester proclaimed that beyond the seventeenth century, astrology was merely a form of parlour tricks, or cheap divination, however Campion rebutted this argument, commenting on how astrology has thrived well into contemporary times.¹⁸⁰ Like Kepler, many practicing astrologers reflected through this research that astrology may assist in managing world affairs, as his cosmology was one that expressed that if the future was known, it could then be managed for the betterment of society.¹⁸¹ Contemporary astrologers,

¹⁷⁸ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript).

¹⁸⁰ Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* p. 243 and Campion, *A History of Western Astrology Volume II*, p. 177.

¹⁸¹ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 3.

regardless of the intentions of their starry practice are assuming a role as modern day messengers and recordkeepers. Astrology offers a means to name and observe patterns through time and space, alongside history and current events.

Thus, astrology is a valuable tool, as Kepler claimed, 'a noble pearl'. Although astrology has been often lumped into New Age categories within the past one hundred years, like a kaleidoscope there are many definitions, philosophies, and ways of experiencing this cultural art, science, and ancient practice that stretches back to the Mesopotamian scribes. As a form of record keeping this technology offers an opportunity to stay on the pulse of what is current and what is coming, while simultaneously looking to the past to know what patterns preceded that are likely to be influencing the present moment, as Elisha named, 'historical consciousness'. Astrologers are essentially historians as they utilize primary and secondary sources to make general commentary on the specific times they are living within. Richard J. Evans wrote that historians are attempting to 'understand the past as the people who lived in it understood it, even while deciphering hieroglyphs of interconnectedness of which they had been largely unaware.'¹⁸² Evans defined that history never actually repeats itself, as nothing ever happens twice in the same exact conditions or same exact way; historians are led by their contemporary day concerns, and that they are never actually free from bias.¹⁸³ Therefore, history is an interpretive discipline.¹⁸⁴ History may never precisely repeat itself; however, life is cyclic, and astrology offers a means for people to track and contemplate the cycles. As Campion stated in reference to time, time could be linear, cyclical, or a combination of these two, which forms a cyclic pattern that is simultaneously moving forward in rhythmic way like waves or spirals.¹⁸⁵ Barbault expressed how essential it was for humanity to take stock in astrological wisdom, to allow for a synthesis of all the disciplines, 'and intend to give Man a place not only on Earth, but in the whole universe'.¹⁸⁶ To encapsulate

¹⁸² Richard J. Evans, 'In Defence of History', (London: Granta Books, 1997), p. 17

¹⁸³ Richard J. Evans, 'In Defence of History', p. 59 and p. 86.

¹⁸⁴ Richard J. Evans, 'In Defence of History', p. 103.

¹⁸⁵ Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 1.

¹⁸⁶ Seven Doc, *Andre' Barbault, l'astrologie au coeur/Astrology at Heart -Trailer*, 2019 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F54wHwdWQHg>> [accessed 21 June 2021].

the diamond precision of the outer planets and their unique vibratory long-term cycles is a gift for humanity, and a means to continue the lineage of starkeeping tradition. Ultimately, great conjunctions are planetary cycles with an acute vibration that creates a resonance to shift entire nations and cultures. What is clear is that contemporary astrologers, notably Barbault, predicted that massive transformation and tension was coming in 2020 given their knowledge of the tradition of interpreting history in relation to planetary cycles which finds its foundations in Plato and was developed by a series of astrologers from Abu Ma'shar and Māshā'allāh to Johannes Kepler. They utilized the methods of conjunctional astrology following the legacy given by the Islamic and Medieval European astrologers to forecast for the collective, remarking how planetary cycles, particularly great conjunctions place a mammoth emphasis on global culture and events that imprint the collective psyche. The evidence of this research partially substantiates Karl Popper's view that prediction of a determined future encourages attempts to change the future rather than give in to it, and rebuts Tester's conclusion that astrology died out in the seventeenth century. By contrast, the Persian and Medieval tradition of conjunctionist astrology is thriving, and modern astrologers are passionate about how celestial knowledge may positively shape the collective psyche's experience.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Below is the questionnaire that I sent out to over forty astrologers. Each question had a yes or no tick box except for questions 3b, 8b, 10, 13, and 14. Each question was able to be skipped if the person preferred, except for one required question which the participant had to tick either yes or no to allow me to use their data within this post graduate research project.

1. Do you think that a knowledge of astrology may help humanity manage world affairs?¹⁸⁷

2. Do you believe that planetary cycles allow us to predict the future? ¹⁸⁸

3a. Do you think future is fated and that it is beyond human control? ¹⁸⁹

3b. Would you like to say more about your thoughts to the future being fated or beyond human control?

4. Do you believe that the broad pattern of events is fated, yet that humans have the ability to control the details of their lives? ¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Kepler believed that astrology could serve as a means to keep social order in service to government so as to preserve a society's stability, 'Kepler himself, like all astronomers, worked from models of the material universe (the movements of the sun, moon and planets), on the basis of which he proposed a model for how political affairs operated in accord with the wider, cosmic, material, environment, and how solutions as to how such affairs might be better managed'. Sourced from Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript). In regard to the management of the future and world affairs Campion stated, 'That is, that if the future can be known, it can be managed'. Sourced from Campion, 'Introduction: History, Time and Ritual' in *The Great Year*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁸ 'In Kepler's political cosmology certain planetary configurations, in particular those between Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, would cause volatility in the collective psychology and indicate a possible risk of political violence. The mechanism was one in which the movements of the planets stirred up the collective soul, and such disturbances then expressed themselves through political volatility, resulting in violent disturbance, following models found in both the *Corpus Hermeticum* and Aquinas'. Sourced from Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript).

¹⁸⁹ Kepler's astrology spoke of the cosmic influence was not deterministic upon humans, however the impact was great and influential, 'His reflections on the war are characteristic of his conviction that the stars do not determine, but rather influence human affairs, and that despite their strongly stimulating nature, they nevertheless, leave full scope for the exercise of freedom'. Found in Meeks, 'Kepler's Weather Calendar of 1618'.

¹⁹⁰ Campion stated how Kepler wrote about how astrology is probabilistic versus deterministic, 'these remedies', he wrote, 'are always in our power, however things may happen, and nothing is absolutely predetermined' (1979, Thesis 71, 104). Sourced from Campion, 'Johannes' Kepler's Political Cosmology, Psychological Astrology and the Archaeology of Knowledge in the Seventeenth Century', (forthcoming, author's manuscript).

5. Do you think we are at the beginning of a more spiritual, new age? ¹⁹¹
6. In your opinion does this have a relationship to the Age of Aquarius? ¹⁹²
7. Do you think that the planetary conjunctions of 2020 were significant for global events? ¹⁹³
- 8a. Do you think that the conjunctions related to Covid-19 pandemic? ¹⁹⁴
- 8b. If you responded yes to that the conjunctions were related to Covid-19, would you briefly describe your thoughts on how they related?
9. Do you think that the recent planetary conjunctions indicate that we are entering a more positive phase in global history? ¹⁹⁵
10. In your astrological practice did you find yourself publicly speaking and/or writing about the Great Conjunction of 2020? If so, would you be willing to provide links or references to these sources online (social media, website, journal links, etc.)?
11. Have you noticed a shift in your astrology practice since the beginning of 2020? ¹⁹⁶
12. Do you consider your astrology practice to be a part of collective psychology? ¹⁹⁷
13. Would you like to add any other thoughts in your own words relating to these topics?
14. Finally, would you be willing to participate in an interview where we could speak more in depth about your beliefs around conjunctions and cycles in astrology? We would meet virtually through zoom. This interview would be about 30-60 minutes in length and would be recorded for research purposes, and your identity would remain anonymous.

¹⁹¹ Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and Popular Religion in the Modern West: Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement*, (London: Routledge, 2016), p.183.

¹⁹² Campion, *Astrology and Popular Religion in the Modern West*, p.183.

¹⁹³ Ibn Ridwan remarked that the 'conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter have great effectiveness in signifying the changes of kingdoms and religions and the migrations of the peoples from one place to another.' Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, p. 48).

¹⁹⁴ Abû Ma'shar offered a hierarchy of causes threaded into a theory that offered a reliable way that through planetary rhythms there was an explanation for the course of history. Found within Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', (Sourced through Scribd through a tablet, pp. 33-35).

¹⁹⁵ Campion, *Astrology and Popular Religion in the Modern West*, pp. 41-49.

¹⁹⁶ Juliana Kaplan and Mark Stenberg, 'Meet the Astrology Entrepreneurs Who Turned an Awful 2020 into a Boom for the \$2.2 Billion Industry', *Business Insider*, 26 December 2020. < <https://www.businessinsider.com/astrology-industry-boomed-during-pandemic-online-entrepreneurs-2020-12> > [accessed March and November 2021].

¹⁹⁷ Baigent outlined that mundane astrology 'bears the same relationship to natal astrology as mass psychology does to individual psychology', Baigent, 'Mundane Astrology and the Collective', author's own manuscript, page unknown.