
Astrology in Hermeticism

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Astrology

Astrology (from Greek: ἄστρον (astron), "star", and λόγος (logos), "theory", "study": lit. study of the stars) is a group of systems, traditions, and beliefs in which knowledge of the apparent relative positions of celestial bodies and related details is held to be useful in understanding, interpreting, and organizing information about personality, human affairs, and other terrestrial matters.

A practitioner of astrology is called an astrologer, or, rarely, an astrologist. Numerous traditions and applications employing astrological concepts have arisen since its earliest recorded beginnings in the 3rd millennium BC. It has played a role in the shaping of culture, early astronomy, and other disciplines throughout history.

Astrology and astronomy were often indistinguishable before the modern era, with the desire for predictive and divinatory knowledge one of the primary motivating factors for astronomical observation. Astronomy began to diverge from astrology after a period of gradual separation from the Renaissance up until the 18th century. Eventually, astronomy distinguished itself as the scientific study of astronomical objects and phenomena without regard to the astrological speculation of these phenomena.

Astrology is often defined as the study of the influences of the cosmos on life on earth. Modern astrologers define astrology as a symbolic language, an art form, and a form of divination. Despite differences of definitions, a common assumption of astrology is the use of celestial placements in order to explain past and present events and predict the future. The scientific community considers astrology a pseudoscience or superstition. Belief in astrology remains widespread, with 31% of Americans believing in it and according to another study 39% considering it scientific.

Core Beliefs

The core beliefs of astrology were prevalent in most of the ancient world and are epitomized in the Hermetic maxim "as above, so below". Tycho Brahe used a similar phrase to summarize his studies in astrology: *suspiciendo despicio*, "by looking up I see downward".^[17]

Although the principle that events in the heavens are mirrored by those on Earth was once generally held in most traditions of astrology around the world, in the West there has historically been a debate among astrologers over the nature of the mechanism behind astrology.

The debate also covers whether or not celestial bodies are only signs or portents of events, or if they are actual causes of events through some sort of force or mechanism.

Although the connection between celestial mechanics and terrestrial dynamics was explored first by Isaac Newton with his development of a universal theory of gravitation, claims that the gravitational effects of the celestial bodies are what accounts for astrological generalizations are not substantiated by scientific research, nor are they advocated by most astrologers.

Most astrological traditions are based on the relative positions and movements of various real or construed celestial bodies and on the construction of implied or calculated celestial patterns as seen at the time and place of the event being studied.

These are chiefly the astrological planets, dwarf planets, the asteroids, the stars, the lunar nodes, Arabic parts and hypothetical planets. The frame of reference for such apparent positions is defined by the tropical or sidereal zodiac of twelve signs on one hand, and by the local horizon (ascendant-descendant axis) and midheaven-*imūm coeli* axis on the other.

This latter (local) frame is typically further divided into the twelve astrological houses. Furthermore, the astrological aspects are used to determine the geometric/angular relationship(s) between the various celestial bodies and angles in the horoscope.

The claim of astrology to predict future trends and developments, or predictive astrology, is based on two main methods: astrological transits and astrological progressions. In astrological transits the ongoing movements of the planets are interpreted for their significance as they transit through space and the horoscope.

In astrological progressions the horoscope is progressed forward in time according to set methods. Most modern astrologers no longer try to forecast actual events, but focus instead on general trends and developments. Skeptics respond that this allows astrologers to avoid making verifiable predictions, and gives them the ability to attach

significance to arbitrary and unrelated events, in a way that suits their purpose.

In the past, astrologers often relied on close observation of celestial objects and the charting of their movements. Modern astrologers use data provided by astronomers which are transformed to a set of astrological tables called ephemerides, showing the changing zodiacal positions of the heavenly bodies through time.

Traditions

Zodiac signs, 16th century European woodcutThere are many traditions of astrology, some of which share similar features due to the transmission of astrological doctrines between cultures. Other traditions developed in isolation and hold different doctrines, though they too share some features due to drawing on similar astronomical sources.

The main traditions used by modern astrologers are:

- Vedic astrology
- Western astrology
- Chinese astrology

Vedic and Western astrology share a common ancestry as horoscopic systems of astrology, in that both traditions focus on the casting of an astrological chart or horoscope, a representation of celestial entities, for an event based on the position of the Sun, Moon, and planets at the moment of the event. However, Vedic astrology uses the sidereal zodiac, linking the signs of the zodiac to their original constellations, while Western astrology uses the tropical zodiac. Because of the precession of the equinoxes, over the centuries the twelve zodiacal signs in Western astrology no longer correspond to the same part of the sky as their original constellations. In effect, in Western astrology the link between sign and constellation has been broken, whereas in Vedic astrology it remains of paramount importance. Other differences between the two traditions include the use of 27 (or 28) nakshatras or lunar mansions, which have been used in India since Vedic times, and the system of planetary periods known as dashas.

In Chinese astrology a quite different tradition has evolved. By contrast to Western and Indian astrology, the twelve signs of the zodiac do not divide the sky, but rather the celestial equator. The Chinese evolved a system where each sign corresponds to one of twelve 'double-hours' that govern the day, and to one of the twelve months. Each sign of the zodiac governs a different year, and combines with a system based on the five elements of Chinese cosmology to give a 60 (12 x 5) year cycle. The term Chinese astrology is used here for convenience, but it must be recognised that versions of the same tradition exist in Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand and other Asian countries.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrology>

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