

Gender and Astrology: A Study on Astrologer's Ideas on Gender and How They Are
Reflected in Their Interpretation of the Sun and the Moon

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Abstract

This paper examines the interpretation of the Sun and the Moon in astrology. It explores whether astrology expresses socially shared ideas on gender. Some astrologers claim that astrology is not gender-biased, but others believe it is. This study examines the perspectives of practising astrologers on gender concerning the astrological nature of the Sun and the Moon. It concludes that astrological interpretations of the masculine and feminine binary are not clear-cut for all astrologers. Analysis of gendered ideas in astrology must allow some margin for astrologers' interpretation of gendered ideas more broadly.

*To my daimon,
who has brought me here.*

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Introduction

This paper aims to explore whether the interpretation of the Sun and Moon in the current practice of astrology expresses socially shared gender biases. According to sociologist Donna Bobbitt-Zeher, gender bias can be defined as conscious or unconscious stereotyping based on gender.¹ Revisiting this concept has spurred numerous studies that suggest the presence of gender bias in fields such as medicine (Chadwick and Baruah; Strömquist), education (Kroeger, Recker, and Gunn), professional environments (Atir and Ferguson), and psychology (Anonymous).² However, in the case of astrology, little or no research has been conducted. Some astrologers, such as Erin Sullivan, an author and teacher with over 40 years of experience, have claimed that astrology is not gender-biased.³ In contrast, others, such as Chani Nicholas, believed that astrological reasoning does exhibit some prejudice.⁴ This research aims to explore this debate by analyzing the perspectives that practising astrologers have about gender when working with the astrological Sun and Moon, sometimes called 'luminaries'.

According to Kroeger, Recker, and Gunn, it is generally believed that gender is binary: male or female.⁵ In fact, Ivory Faucette, whose work is focused on queer identity (people who express sexual and gender diversity), mentioned that a binary model of gender is deeply rooted in our culture — most governments around the world defining

¹ Donna Bobbitt-Zeher, 'Gender discrimination at work: connecting gender stereotypes, institutional policies, and gender composition of workplace', *Gender and Society* 25.6 (Dec. 2011), 766.

² A. Chadwick and Rosaleen Baruah, 'Gender disparity and implicit gender bias amongst doctors in intensive care medicine: A 'disease' we need to recognize and treat', *Journal of the Intensive Care Society* 21.1 (Feb 2020), 12-17.

Liv Strömquist, *El fruto prohibido*, (Barcelona: Penguin Random House GrupoEditorial, 2018), p. 62, 66-67.

Janice Kroeger, Abigail E. Recker, and Alexandra C. Gunn, 'Tate and the Pink Coat', *YC Young Children* 74.1 (March, 2019), 83-93.

Stav Atir and Melissa J. Ferguson, 'How gender determines the way we speak about professionals', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115.18 (July 10, 2018) 7278-7283.

Anonymous, 'The unfolding and healing of analytic boundary violations: personal, clinical and cultural considerations', *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 50 (2005), 661-691.

³ Erin Sullivan, *The Astrology of Family Dynamics* (York Beach, Maine: Weiser Books, 2001), pp. 45-46.

⁴ Chani Nicholas, 'Why Do Queers Love Astrology?', <https://chaninicholas.com/why-do-queers-love-astrology/> [accessed 12 August 2023].

⁵ Janice Kroeger, Abigail E. Recker, and Alexandra C. Gunn, 'Tate and the Pink Coat', 85.

people as either men or women.⁶ Moreover, Judith Butler described gender as being performative.⁷ For her, it was behavioural and not necessarily linked to biological sexual organs.⁸ People performed the role that was expected of them.⁹

According to Patrick Curry, astrology has had to make 'a series of compromises with a dominant mainstream version of truth'.¹⁰ If this is the case, one may expect astrology to portray current ideas about gender. But the concept of gender has existed in one way or another for millennia. In the *Tetrabiblos*, Ptolemy, an astrologer from the 2nd century, established that 'there are two kinds of nature: male and female'.¹¹ Astrology's gendered nature persisted in the 20th and 21st centuries, where the Moon has been interpreted as feminine while the Sun as masculine. A diverse range of astrologers such as Margaret Hone, Robert Hand, Demetra George, Liz Greene, Howard Sasportas and Clare Martin noted these distinctions in their works.¹² A critical reading of many astrological writings is necessary to understand the binary terms (masculine vs. feminine) and what they mean in astrological contexts. This paper also explores whether there was a tendency to favour qualities associated with the Sun (so-called masculine) over qualities associated with the Moon (so-called feminine).

⁶ Avory Faucette, 'Fucking the Binary for social change: our radically queer agenda', *Counterpoints* 437 (2014), 81.

⁷ Judith Butler, 'Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory', *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (Dec. 1988), 524.

⁸ Judith Butler, 'Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory', 524.

⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY and London: Routledge, 1999), pp. xv-xvi.

¹⁰ Patrick Curry, 'Grounding the Stars: Towards an Ecological Astrology', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1.2 (2007) 213.

¹¹ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans by F. E. Robins (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 41.

¹² Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology* (Romford, Essex, L. N. Fowler & Co. LTD., 1990), p. 24, 26.

Robert Hand, *Horoscope Symbols* (Atglen, PA: Whiteford Press, 1981), pp. 49-50.

Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice* (Auckland, New Zealand: Rubedo Press, 2019), pp. 53-63

Liz Greene, *Relating: An Astrological Guide to Living with Others on a Small Planet* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1978), p. 33.

Howard Sasportas, 'Part 1: The Stages of Childhood' in Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, *The Development of the Personality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1987), pp. 5, 62-63.

Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche Vol. 1* (London: CPA Press, 2005), p. 26.

In order to view the situation comprehensively, the literary review section examines the concept of gender and how gender bias could be expressed. Both ancient and modern astrological texts are studied. Additionally, this paper considers fifteen interviews with professional practising astrologers with varying levels of experience and approaches to astrology. The findings will be discussed in the Findings and Discussion section.

Literary review

This section revisits the concepts of gender and gender bias, as well as some ancient and modern sources on how gender was treated in astrology, particularly in relation to the luminaries.

Of the two natures in astrology

As stated above, Ptolemy established that 'there are two kinds of nature: male and female'.¹³ He claimed that masculinity was active and always superior.¹⁴ The qualitative difference between masculine and feminine was related to Aristotelian theories about temperament, where males were dryer by nature and females were moist.¹⁵ Because it produced dryness, the Sun was considered masculine while the Moon, producing moisture, was feminine.¹⁶ The Sun was related to the day and the Moon to the night.¹⁷

Demetra George, a 21st astrologer who mixed Hellenistic techniques with modern perspectives, also mentioned that planets could 'be classified as belonging to the masculine or feminine gender'.¹⁸ According to her, 'masculine energy is characterized by faster movement and welcomes change' while 'feminine energy moves slower and is resistant to change'.¹⁹ Additionally, astrologer Clare Martin classified the Sun and

¹³ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 41.

¹⁴ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 69.

¹⁵ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 41.

¹⁶ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 41.

¹⁷ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 43.

¹⁸ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, p. 53.

¹⁹ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, p. 61.

Moon as two opposing polarities. The former was 'the masculine principle, reliable, predictable' and the latter was 'the feminine', 'multiple, complex, changeable'.²⁰ Liz Greene, Jungian psychologist and astrologer, had a similar approach. She claimed that all symbolism in astrology fell into these two categories.²¹ Masculine had to do with 'will, consciousness, decision, and impact on the environment, the active principle'.²² When describing the 'feminine energy', she mentioned 'introversion, indrawnness, darkness, feeling, sensuality, stability, orientation toward the subjective world and the past'.²³ For Greene, 'everything stems from the relationship of two polar opposites'.²⁴

But Christian Roesler, a Jungian neuropsychologist, believed that, too often, ideas of masculine and feminine were imbued with cultural bias.²⁵ He quoted the work of Cordelia Fine, who made it evident that women and men performed equally well in mathematical tests when their gender differences were not emphasized.²⁶ His point was that, while gender differences could be found empirically, it may be because of the way members of different genders were treated.²⁷ Thus, clinging to socially charged words like 'masculine' or 'feminine', may carry an unconscious bias for anyone who used them.²⁸

In *Relating*, Greene approached these polarities in an archetypal and symbolic way: 'Masculine and feminine in astrology do not, of course, 'refer to our current social definitions of the terms, but rather to qualities of energy'.²⁹ However, she also claimed that 'the male and female organs are themselves symbols of mysterious archetypal energies'.³⁰ Here, she directly related the masculine-feminine polarity with biology by understanding that sex organs could be a manifestation of archetypal functions.

²⁰ Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche Vol. 1*, pp. 29, 36.

²¹ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 33.

²² Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 33.

²³ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 55.

²⁴ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 55.

²⁵ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), p. 91.

²⁶ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept*, p. 91.

²⁷ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept*, p. 91.

²⁸ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept*, p. 91.

²⁹ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 55.

³⁰ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 20.

'Archetype' was first used by Carl G. Jung to describe an instinctual psychological response.³¹ According to Greene, gendered archetypal tendencies manifested biologically and may vary depending on sex: 'The principle of self-fulfilment by radiating the light of the ego into the world is much more a prerogative of masculine consciousness than of feminine'.³² It is not clear if she justified this claim based on archetypal analysis or social currents and trends. However, just a few lines before, she had suggested that the active masculine principle of the Sun was more 'accessible to men than to women because it reflects an easier impulse for men to make consciousness'.³³ In conclusion, in both ancient and modern times, astrology has found the use of masculine-feminine polarity useful, although these terms have been defined in different ways by different astrologers. These definitions, based on Roesler's idea that the words 'masculine' and 'feminine' may carry bias, might reflect a cultural perspective.³⁴

Conceptualizing gender stereotyping

It is also necessary to define gender and gender bias. This section discusses theories of gender dynamics. In trying to understand them, Sandra Lipsitz Bem spoke of three basic ideas in her work *The Lenses of Gender*.³⁵ Her first claim was that the perceived difference between men and women was presented as biological and, therefore, objectively undeniable while also being highly influenced by religious ideas.³⁶ Her second hypothesis was that androcentrism, or the view of the world from a male perspective, developed as men held positions of power, while women were defined in relation to that power.³⁷ One example she gave is the psychoanalytical idea that women suffered penis envy and that this envy was what allowed *normal* femininity to develop. She continued to claim that psychoanalysis 'has provided yet another

³¹ Carl G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 49.

³² Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 33.

³³ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 33.

³⁴ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept*, p. 91.

³⁵ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).

³⁶ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 6.

³⁷ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 41.

language in which to define women from an androcentric perspective'.³⁸ Bem also addressed gender polarization, explaining that the division between men and women has pervaded 'virtually every aspect of human experience'.³⁹ This extreme opposition has taken the place of assigning completely opposite behaviours to each gender.⁴⁰ A search for academic papers that supported the opposing view in favour of gender polarization resulted in nothing. In fact, most scholars seemed to oppose it. For instance, Elsa Dorlin described the medical practice of exposing a newborn to certain measures to check whether it could be assigned to the expected gender.⁴¹ While 2% of babies did not comply, she believed that the actual rate would be higher, and in fact, quoted a study in which the same measurements were applied to male adults and 45% of them would have been considered intersex.⁴² Dorlin's point was that the so-called natural polarization of sexes based on biology could be questioned.

Judith Butler referred to gender as being performative: it amounts to behaviours that are carried out in front of others so that a person's gender can be perceived accurately.⁴³ In some ways, Butler's ideas resonated with Bem's in that she did not see gender as a biological given:

'What we consider to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. In this way, it showed that what we take to be an "internal" feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts, at an extreme, a hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures'.⁴⁴

In a previous text, Gerda Lerner argued that there were historical reasons why women and men were viewed and treated differently.⁴⁵ Of the many ideas she discussed, only those relevant to this paper are shared here. Lerner claimed that, at some point in history, women's social classes began to be mediated by the class of their husbands.

³⁸ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 62.

³⁹ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 80.

⁴⁰ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 81.

⁴¹ Elsa Dorlin, *Sexo, Género y Sexualidades: Introducción a la Teoría Feminista* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 2009), p. 43.

⁴² Elsa Dorlin, *Sexo, Género y Sexualidades*, p. 43.

⁴³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 180.

⁴⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. xv-xvi.

⁴⁵ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York, NY; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 6.

Women could occupy hierarchical roles while their husbands were away, but power always depended on men.⁴⁶ This idea echoes Bem's thought about androcentrism, or privileging the male experience.⁴⁷ For men, class was associated with the means of production (including reproduction), whereas for women, class was associated with her ties to a man and *his* means of production.⁴⁸ This meant that if a woman could not offer her husband the possibility of reproduction, she would lose her status (because he was the owner of her ability to reproduce).⁴⁹ Finally, Lerner suggested that belief in a feminine divine entity that, in her all-mighty fertility, created the world, developed into myths that portrayed her need to find a male to mate (and thus become his consort). Lerner continued to note how these myths gave rise to a male monotheistic being who could engender the world without the assistance of feminine energy.⁵⁰ Male, then, became descriptive of wholeness, completion and all-mightiness, while female became its incomplete alternative.⁵¹ Thus far, the literature suggests that gender could be understood not only as a biological predisposition but as a social construction, based on Butler's theory.⁵² Moreover, Bem established the idea that gender polarity was pervasive and created gender polarization.⁵³ Lerner added a historical approach to understand the development of different social roles based on gender.⁵⁴

Sun as the light of consciousness, Moon as a reflective body

This section studies some of the symbolic ways in which astrologers treat gender polarity when dealing with the Sun and Moon, starting from astronomical data. NASA explained that the Solar System is located 'in an outer spiral arm of the vast Milky Way galaxy'.⁵⁵ It is called solar because it holds a star called 'Sun' in the centre, from Latin:

⁴⁶ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 70.

⁴⁷ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 41.

⁴⁸ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 215.

⁴⁹ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 111.

⁵⁰ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, pp. 180-1.

⁵¹ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 198.

⁵² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. xv- xvi.

⁵³ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁴ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ NASA, 'Our Solar System', <https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/solar-system/our-solar-system/overview/> [accessed 13 August 2023]

'solis'.⁵⁶ All elements in the solar system are bound to the Sun by gravity.⁵⁷ Astrologer Greene stated that this system could be seen as 'a symbol of a living energy pattern, reflecting at any moment the smaller forms of life contained in it'.⁵⁸ Thus, for astrologers, the Sun and Moon were not merely a large pieces of rock or a massive gas star. Particularly, for Greene, they are symbolic representations of the quality of a moment in time and the qualities of a person born at such time by extension.⁵⁹

When examining the etymology of astrological symbols, Alice Sparkly Kat stated that 'the Sun rules over life'.⁶⁰ According to NASA, without the Sun, there would be no life on Earth.⁶¹ Margaret Hone, writer of the *Modern Textbook of Astrology*, stated that as everything swirled around the Sun, this was 'the most powerful of all horoscopic factors'. She continued to describe it as a 'power-giving body'.⁶² Adding a more symbolic meaning, Demetra George suggested that the Sun described 'the light of the intellect', 'the light of consciousness', 'the use of reason'.⁶³ George defined the astral chart as 'a map of the position of the planets' as seen at the time and place of the person's birth.⁶⁴ She paid attention to whether it was a day chart or a night chart.⁶⁵ She emphasized the idea 'that the night is not necessarily the same hemisphere as where the Moon is located, but rather the hemisphere where the Sun is not'.⁶⁶ As in everyday language, day was defined by the presence of the Sun. The Sun thus had a defining power.

⁵⁶ NASA, 'Our Solar System'.

⁵⁷ NASA, 'Our Solar System'.

⁵⁸ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 25.

⁵⁹ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 24.

⁶⁰ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2011), p. 22.

⁶¹ NASA, 'The Sun and Us' in *A Meeting with the Universe* (Washington DC, 1981)

<https://history.nasa.gov/EP-177/ch3-1.html#:~:text=Without%20the%20Sun%27s%20heat%20and,oxygen%20for%20life%20on%20Earth.> [accessed on 20th August 2023].

⁶² Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 26.

⁶³ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, pp. 47, 91.

⁶⁴ Demetra George, *Astrology and the Authentic Self* (Lake Worth, FL: Ibis Press, 2008), p. 20.

⁶⁵ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, p. 75.

⁶⁶ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, p. 91.

Ptolemy believed that the Moon received power from the Sun.⁶⁷ Clare Martin maintained this argument by stating that 'With no light of its own, the Moon simply reflects the light of the Sun'.⁶⁸ For Demetra George, the Sun represented some higher function, and the Moon symbolized 'the body, the depth of intuitive perception arising from the physical senses, a subjective state of awareness, the use of instinct...'⁶⁹ Thus, the Moon was symbolically given power that depended on the Sun and had to do with subjectivity instead of the objectivity of the real world. Emphasizing the Sun's power, Sparkly Kat mentioned it as a symbol of culture.⁷⁰ Colonialism used the image of the Sun to convey the idea that the light of civilization would bring order to wild places.⁷¹

Greene delineated the differential drives of the Sun and Moon. The Sun was about the urge to express oneself and fulfil one's potential but also aimed to develop an independent ego.⁷² Contrastingly, the Moon talked about an 'urge towards unconsciousness, toward the past and towards immersion in the flow of feeling'.⁷³ She also mentioned 'comfort' and 'the satisfaction of emotional needs'.⁷⁴ Additionally, she related the Moon to nature.⁷⁵ Kari Mari Norgaard, Professor of Psychology and Environmental Science, also explored the idea that women were socially seen as more attuned to the natural, embodied world while men were more rational. But she questioned if this was always the case.⁷⁶ To summarize, the astronomical understanding of the Sun's relevance seemed to mirror the centrality of the astrological Sun and its life-giving qualities. Historically and astrologically, the Sun has been taken as a beacon of light and, thus, truth. On the other hand, the Moon has been relegated to the past, body, and nurture. The developing urge of the Sun has been associated with masculinity, the Moon with femininity.

⁶⁷ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche Vol 1.*, p. 34.

⁶⁹ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, p. 76.

⁷⁰ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, p. 25.

⁷¹ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, p. 24.

⁷² Liz Greene, *Relating*, pp. 33-34.

⁷³ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 33.

⁷⁴ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 34.

⁷⁵ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 35.

⁷⁶ Kari Mari Norgaard, 'Moon Phases, Menstrual Cycles, and Mother Earth: the Construction of a Special Relationship between Women and Nature', *Ethics and Environment* 4.2,(2000), 207.

The Sun as father, the Moon as mother

This section examines the gender binary, as seen in parental figures, often associated with the Sun and the Moon. According to Ptolemy, the Sun could be related to the father figure.⁷⁷ Hone believed that it stood for the ‘masculine principle of fatherhood’.⁷⁸ Additionally, Howard Sasportas, an astrologer who followed an approach similar to Greene’s, added that the father was providing the ‘necessary image to separate the child from the mother’ in order for him to grow in a healthy way. Good aspects to the Sun would indicate a positive experience of fatherhood.⁷⁹ Aspects are particular distances between different elements of the chart that may modify the expression of the factors involved.⁸⁰ Sasportas believed that ‘the father creates heroes’, meaning that the Sun was related to a self-discovery quest.⁸¹

As the Sun represented the father, the Moon was often seen as representative of the mother. Sparkly Kat criticized this idea and stated that the perception of the Moon as a feminine nurturing figure was a recent one.⁸² However, Ptolemy clearly stated that the Moon was of a feminine quality.⁸³ He also said that it could represent the mother figure.⁸⁴ Hone, consistent with her previous reasoning, spoke of ‘the feminine principle of motherhood’.⁸⁵ Sasportas also stated that this was ‘about the mother’ and that ‘we all have it somewhere in the chart’, meaning that everyone has the experience of motherhood.⁸⁶ Some people have undergone upbringing experiences devoid of maternal presence, but then such an absence may be a distinctive facet of their maternal encounters. This unique perspective on motherhood might be read through the examination of the lunar aspects within their astrological chart.⁸⁷ A wide variety of astrologers, then, have interpreted the Sun as father and the Moon as mother.

⁷⁷ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 241.

⁷⁸ Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 24.

⁷⁹ Howard Sasportas, ‘Part 1: The Stages of Childhood’, pp. 62-63.

⁸⁰ Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 180.

⁸¹ Howard Sasportas, ‘Part 1: The Stages of Childhood’, pp. 62-63.

⁸² Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, p. 52.

⁸³ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 241.

⁸⁴ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 241.

⁸⁵ Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 26.

⁸⁶ Howard Sasportas, ‘Part 1: The Stages of Childhood’, pp. 67-68.

⁸⁷ Howard Sasportas, ‘Part 1: The Stages of Childhood’, pp. 67-68.

According to academic and professional astrologer James R. Lewis, Greene was one of the astrologers who promoted a different reading of astrological symbolism and reshaped the way astrologers worked.⁸⁸ When she referred to the Sun as masculine energy and the Moon as feminine energy, she emphasized that she was speaking at an archetypal level.⁸⁹ In this way, she avoided categorizing ‘father’ and ‘mother’ only as concrete parental figures but as parental psychological functions. This allowed for a new way of reading the chart. From then on, when astrologers thought about the mother, they could express the client’s experience of motherhood without needing to describe the physical mother. Recent research in the field of archetypes and neuropsychology has suggested that archetypes may be emergent, meaning that they may not be inherited in DNA but emerge within the psyche, given certain conditions.⁹⁰ Jean Knox emphasized that ‘there may be no such thing as an archetypal mother but, instead, there is an image schema of containment’.⁹¹ When saying this, she separated the meaning of the archetype from the personification of it. In this way, gender was also removed from it. When Greene described the symbolic Sun and Moon as one’s subjective image, she was following a similar approach.⁹² The *experience* of motherhood or fatherhood emerged when *relating* to the people that carried those roles.⁹³ But she also believed these symbols to describe the physical parent: ‘the Moon is also a symbol of the mother, both personal and archetypal’.⁹⁴ In sum, the record suggested that at some point, some astrologers started to see the Sun and the Moon not as the client’s physical parents but as psychological functions that could be projected onto people. This approach seems to be supported by a more recent understanding of archetypes, which portrayed them as emergent processes and thus allow deprogramming gendered aspects of the archetypes.

⁸⁸ ‘Temperament in Jungian Psychology’ in James R. Lewis, *The Astrology Book* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 2003), p. 656.

⁸⁹ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 55.

⁹⁰ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung’s Archetype Concept*, p. 104.

⁹¹ Jean Knox, *Archetype, Attachment, Analysis* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), p. 94.

⁹² Liz Greene, ‘Mothers and Matriarchy: the Mythology and Psychology of the Moon’, in Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, *The Luminaries* (York Beach, ME: Weiser Books, 1992), p. 27.

⁹³ Liz Greene, ‘The Parental Marriage in the Horoscope’, in Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, *The Development of the Personality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1987), p. 88.

⁹⁴ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 33.

The Lunation Cycle

This section studies the relationship between the astrological Sun and Moon as viewed by astrologer Dane Rudhyar, who was described by Nicholas Campion as ‘the patriarch of American Astrology in the 1970s-1980s’ and as ‘pivotal’.⁹⁵ He developed a model for astrological interpretation based on the lunation phase in which the person was born, claiming that the Sun was not the ‘only factor of fundamental importance’.⁹⁶ This model promoted a dialogue between the so-called masculine energy of the Sun and the feminine energy of the Moon. It could be seen as the intention to integrate both ends instead of creating polarization. He wrote that the eight lunation-based personality types were ‘the result of the soli-lunar relationship’, which emphasized this hope for union.⁹⁷ But the language he used contains stereotypical modes of understanding gender if Bem’s theory of androcentrism is applied.⁹⁸ By using lunation types in interpretations, astrologers could understand ‘the archetypal purpose revealed by the zodiacal degree of the natal Sun’.⁹⁹ So here again, the Moon, the feminine principle was placed in order to serve the masculine one. Rudhyar added:

‘The Moon, according to ancient astrologers, reflects the countenance of the Sun, somewhat as a quiet pool of water reflects the Sun disc. Likewise, a woman, when closely identified with a man, normally reflects the spiritual-mental character- the ‘light’ of him who fertilises her body and her psyche. (...) When mentally and psychically developed, she also helps to give substance to and release into objectivity, the spiritual-mental vision of her inspirer; or shall we say, “in-spiriter”?’¹⁰⁰

This idea also seems to resonate strongly with Lerner’s thought: that masculinity took over the possibility of creation.¹⁰¹ In Rudyard’s view, it was the light of the Sun that fecundated the body of the Moon. The Moon was just a receptacle for the solar potent creativity. The Moon function was to give substance, to give a material shape to the

⁹⁵ Nicholas Campion, *History of Western Astrology Vol. 2* (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 256, 259.

⁹⁶ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle* (Santa Fe, NM: Aurora Press, 1982), pp. 37-38.

⁹⁷ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle*, p. 39.

⁹⁸ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 62.

⁹⁹ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle*, p. 20.

¹⁰¹ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 198.

inspiring light of the Sun. To conclude, Rudyard's approach stimulated the perception of the Sun and Moon as an intertwined dialogue that could promote the integration of these two principles. But to do this, he used language and images that expressed a binary approach to gender. The Sun was seen as the carrier of life and the Moon was the body that gave substance to that life.

Is Astrology gender biased?

Most, if not all of the ancient astrological writings were authored by men. The lack of diversity may have the potential to give only a male's perspective. Furthermore, as seen in the previous section, astrological texts often use gendered language, such as assigning feminine attributes to the Moon and masculine attributes to the Sun, which may reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes. At this point, this paper will examine astrologers' reflections on their use of gender.

Astrologer Chani Nicholas, who according to Rolling Stone magazine 'weaves activism into most of her writing, appealing to a generation particularly interested in issues such as racism, sexism and gun control', shared how she felt when she learned about the masculine/feminine polarity in astrology.¹⁰² She explained her disappointment as fire and air appeared to be the signs that had fun and were uplifting. She added: 'It automatically set up this paradigm that 'female' was bad and 'male' was good'.¹⁰³ However, in a later article, she stated that astrology could attract people whose sexuality or gender diverted from the heteronormative 'because we [astrologers] see gender as a vast cosmology of options, not a system with two small choices'.¹⁰⁴ Nicholas Champion moved in favour of a similar idea: 'there has always been an

¹⁰² Ariana Igneri, 'Meet the Woman Bringing Social Justice', *Rolling Stone*, 1 June, 2018. <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/meet-the-woman-bringing-social-justice-to-astrology-629153/> [accessed 12 August 2023].

¹⁰³ Sara Coughlin, 'Why the Gender Binary Has No Place in Astrology', *Refinery29*, 29 August 2017 <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/chani-nicholas-horoscope-zodiac-sign-gender-issues> [accessed 12 August 2023].

¹⁰⁴ Chani Nicholas, 'Why Do Queers Love Astrology'.

understanding in astrology, going back to the early times, that there is an internal feminine and an internal masculine'.¹⁰⁵

In his book *Queer Cosmos*, Colin Bedell stated: 'I don't consider astrology an inherently gendered or heteronormative metaphysical system. But I do think that its practitioners are influenced by the patriarchal structures and conditioning that raised them'.¹⁰⁶

Agreeing, Erin Sullivan stated that astrology was not gender biased because the chart could not identify the gender of the person.¹⁰⁷ She also shared her disagreement with practices that imposed ways of behaviour on people depending on their gender: 'it is not astrology that has to change, it is people and ideologies that must and can change'.¹⁰⁸ In relation to the Sun and the Moon, she expressed a propensity to interpret 'the Sun as a father/male type parent: a rising, culminating, setting archetype as a mythic reality; while the Moon as the menses, birthing, goddess, phase-based parent as the mother'.¹⁰⁹ Her main two arguments against astrology being gender biased were: the chart was genderless and astrology was archetypal.¹¹⁰ It seems, then, that astrologers are conscious on astrology's gendered elements. While some of them like Chani Nicholas may believe that there is some bias within the rationale of astrology, there are others who see the bias as coming from the astrologer and not the technique. But, following Sullivan's example, that does not mean that gender can be removed from astrological practice.

Methodology

This section discusses the methodology followed in this paper, and a rationale for the choices made. There is also a section on reflexivity and the possible impact of my own biases. The research proposes fifteen interviews with professional astrologers within a semi-structured format. Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Baily claimed that

¹⁰⁵ Justine Paradis, 'Outside/In: Why is Astrology So Popular Right Now?', *New Hampshire Public Radio*, 16 January 2021 <https://www.nhpr.org/environment/2021-01-16/outside-in-why-is-astrology-so-popular-right-now> [accessed 12 August 2023].

¹⁰⁶ Colin Bedell, *Queer Cosmos* (Jersey City, NJ: Cleis Press, 2019). EPUB file.

¹⁰⁷ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?', *Meridian Magazin* (Issue 175: September 2017), https://www.astro.com/astrology/mer_artikel170901_e.htm [accessed 12 August, 2023].

¹⁰⁸ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'.
¹⁰⁹ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'.
¹¹⁰ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'.
¹¹⁰ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'.

¹⁰⁹ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'.

¹¹⁰ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'.

this approach was useful in learning 'the meaning people attach to experiences'.¹¹¹ This method can provide access to the information needed while also giving the participants freedom to express their points of view, following the suggestions of Judith Bell and Steven Waters.¹¹² Alan Bryman anticipated that interviews allowed the discovery of surprising information.¹¹³ To see 'through the eyes of the people you are studying' could be a way of accessing 'unexpectedly important topics' which is the basic aim of this qualitative research.¹¹⁴ This paper defines 'professional astrologers' as those who have been practising astrology for at least five years for a fee. Participants' anonymity is maintained, as their identity is not the focus of this study. Below is a sample of interview questions, followed by my reasons for asking them:

- 'What kind of astrology do you practise?'. The use of masculine and feminine polarity has been present in traditional astrologers such as Ptolemy as well as 21st century psychological astrologers such as Greene.¹¹⁵ The aim of the question is to see if the approach to gender depended on the style of astrological practice. Quoting Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, diversity is one of the goals of qualitative research.¹¹⁶
- 'How do you interpret the Sun and Moon when working with a chart?'. Hone described the Sun as a 'power-giving body' and as the father figure.¹¹⁷ George spoke of 'the use of reason'.¹¹⁸ Contrarily, she defined the Moon as body, intuition, subjectivity and instinct.¹¹⁹ Sasportas added that the Moon was 'about the mother'.¹²⁰ An open-ended question is intended to learn the

¹¹¹ Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods* (Los Angeles, CA; London: SAGE, 2011), p. 117.

¹¹² Judith Bell and Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers* (London: Open University Press, 2018), p. 216.

¹¹³ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), pp. 46-47.

¹¹⁴ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, pp. 61, 67.

¹¹⁵ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 41.

Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 33.

¹¹⁶ Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 94.

¹¹⁷ Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 25.

¹¹⁸ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, pp. 47, 91.

¹¹⁹ Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, p. 76.

¹²⁰ Howard Sasportas, 'Part 1: The Stages of Childhood', pp. 67-68.

participant's views without imposing these meanings, as advised by Bell and Waters.¹²¹

- 'Some astrologers divide the planets into masculine or feminine planets, usually listing the Moon as feminine and the Sun as masculine. What is your approach and how does this affect your client's work?'. Chani Nicholas expressed that she found applying the qualities of 'masculine' and 'feminine' somewhat biased.¹²² This question aims to see if astrologers still used those terms and how they did so.
- 'Could you describe what you mean by 'feminine' and 'masculine'?'. Greene had stated that these terms did not 'refer to our current social definitions of the terms, but rather to qualities of energy'.¹²³ However, Roesler believed that these words were usually socially charged.¹²⁴ Following on the previous question, the intention here is to see how this polarity is defined.
- 'In your sessions, do you focus more on the Sun or the Moon? Do you think that one of them is more important than the other?'. According to Bem, the feminine tended to be defined from an androcentric point of view.¹²⁵ Lerner believed that a woman's power depended on that of her husband.¹²⁶ While Dane Rudhyar aimed to integrate the different astrological factors, when describing the relationship between the Sun and the Moon, he used the metaphor of the wife that needs a husband to be 'in-spirited' by him.¹²⁷ Furthermore, Hone had described the Sun as 'the most powerful of all horoscopic factors'.¹²⁸ This question addresses whether astrologers see a hierarchy between the Sun and Moon.
- 'In your opinion, would you say astrology is gender-biased?'. Chani Nicholas had expressed her concern about the possibility of astrology being gender-

¹²¹ Judith Bell and Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 192.

¹²² Ariana Igneri, 'Meet the Woman Bringing Social Justice', <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/meet-the-woman-bringing-social-justice-to-astrology-629153/> [accessed 12 August 2023].

¹²³ Liz Greene, *Relating*, p. 55.

¹²⁴ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept*, p. 91.

¹²⁵ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 62.

¹²⁶ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 70.

¹²⁷ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle*, p. 20.

¹²⁸ Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 24.

biased.¹²⁹ However, she also stated that astrologers saw gender as a spectrum.¹³⁰ On the opposite shore, Colin Bedell argued that astrology was not inherently biased.¹³¹ Erin Sullivan stated similar ideas.¹³² This question aims to learn what the participants of this research believe.

In pursuit of comprehensiveness, the project seeks interviewees from different parts of the world as well as different astrological lineages. As stated above, this follows recommendations by Hennink, Hutter and Baily on getting a diverse sample.¹³³ The interviews are to be conducted online through Google Meet, a software that allows recording and automatic transcript, as instructed by Bell and Waters.¹³⁴ To conclude, the intention, then, is to address all of those questions to astrologers who have a wide diverse of approaches in a semi-structured format, that may allow new information to spur.

Considerations

This section discusses some of the reflexive considerations necessary in any research to account for how my own biases may affect the process, an issue mentioned by Bell and Waters.¹³⁵ Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, also suggested that the researcher's subjectivity and personal background should be discussed.¹³⁶ According to Bryman, the insider/outsider position is not necessarily binary but more of a spectrum allowing the combination of both perspectives.¹³⁷ However, it is very likely that all of the interviewees will see me as a complete insider as I am a practicing astrologer as well. Dwyer, S. C. and Buckle, J. L. defined being an insider as 'sharing the characteristic, role, or experience under study with the participants'.¹³⁸ I have been involved with

¹²⁹ Sara Coughlin, 'Why the Gender Binary Has No Place in Astrology'.

¹³⁰ Chani Nicholas, 'Why Do Queers Love Astrology?'.

¹³¹ Colin Bedell, *Queer Cosmos*. EPUB file.

¹³² Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'.

¹³³ Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 92.

¹³⁴ Judith Bell and Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 216.

¹³⁵ Judith Bell and Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 218.

¹³⁶ Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 19.

¹³⁷ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, p. 142.

¹³⁸ S. C. Dwyer and J. L. Buckle, 'The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8.1 (2009), 55.

astrology for 21 years and I have had a stable professional practice for the last four years. In terms of gender, my views could often be labelled as feminist, and my understanding of gender is flexible and fluid. Kenneth Pike used the term 'emic' to represent research from inside a particular system and 'etic' for research conducted from outside a system (etic).¹³⁹ The 'emic perspective' can address the 'attitudes, motives, interests, responses, conflicts, and personality development' of people involved in one specific culture.¹⁴⁰ Based on Hennink, Hutter and Bailey's ideas, my positionality, or emic position, may promote a sense of equalness, leading to rapport with participants.¹⁴¹ But it also demands caution as I might influence the research, a consideration levied by Hennink, Hutter and Bailey.¹⁴² Following their recommendations, I should emphasize at the beginning of the interviews my willingness to learn from the participants and to discover their ideas on the matter.¹⁴³ My influence may be partly reduced by following a flexible structure during the interview, as Bell and Waters suggested.¹⁴⁴ It might offer more freedom of expression and might reduce my directivity.¹⁴⁵ In sum, the aim is to follow a semi-structured approach to reduce the imposition of my bias as I am mostly an insider in the world of astrology. Simultaneously, my position can benefit the research by allowing me to build rapport quickly. Additionally, my non-binary understanding of gender could endanger my research if I am unaware of it.

Findings and discussion

This section is divided into different parts based on the themes that emerged in the literature review and material from the interviews. 'Interview debriefing' presents a reflection on the interviewing process; 'parental figures' discusses parental gender roles assigned to the luminaries; 'archetypes' explores if the archetypal principles of the Sun and the Moon are seen as gendered; 'Moon as body, Sun as spirit' examines

¹³⁹ Kenneth L. Pike, Thomas N. Headland, and Marvin Harris, *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate* (Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications, 1990), p. 28.

¹⁴⁰ Kenneth L. Pike, Thomas N. Headland, and Marvin Harris, *Emics and Etics*, p. 32.

¹⁴¹ Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 127.

¹⁴² Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 19.

¹⁴³ Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 128.

¹⁴⁴ Judith Bell and Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 214.

¹⁴⁵ Judith Bell and Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project*, p. 214.

the association of femininity and the Moon with the material world of nature and masculinity with the spiritual realm; 'blinding light' focusses on the dual power that has been given to the Sun, as a masculine planet, to both give or take power away; and 'biology is destiny' explores whether the process of ascribing genders to the Sun and the Moon is related to biological gender differences in the human body.

Interview debriefing

First, a brief note on how the interviews went. I interviewed people who practised different kinds of astrology. One necessary requirement was that they be professional astrologers. Hennik, Hunter and Bailey called this 'purposive sampling'.¹⁴⁶ While advocating for a miscellaneous group, they also recommended selecting participants who knew about the subject.¹⁴⁷ Eight of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, the other seven, in English. In the former case, I have translated the answers myself, adding footnotes with the original quotes. Participants were numbered: "A1" (Astrologer 1), "A2" (Astrologer 2) and so on, throughout the discussion. The number assigned to each one of them is based on the order in which they were interviewed, which depended on their availability. Ten of them identified as females, the other five as males. The amount of professional practice varied from 5 years up to 50 years.

All of them knew me personally. As they saw me as an insider, one of the difficulties was that in some interviews the participants assumed I already knew and agreed with their ideas. I had to intervene asking to assume that I did not know anything. The other difficulty was the sensitivity of the gender issue. Most of them knew my political beliefs and my approach to sexuality and gender identity, which could be defined as open, modern, non-judgmental and non-pathologizing. This could also have had an impact on their responses, as Hennik, Hutter and Bailey warned.¹⁴⁸ Some astrologers openly declined the invitation to participate. One of them explicitly said that he did not believe 'in the modern nonsense approach to gender'. While this paper reflects on the possibilities of gender bias, the intention is not to challenge astrologers but to describe

¹⁴⁶ Monique M. Hennik, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 92.

¹⁴⁷ Monique M. Hennik, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 92.

¹⁴⁸ Monique M. Hennik, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 126.

and explore their practice and see if it may reflect a cultural bias toward gender (not a personal one). Because of this reaction, I rephrased my invitation, emphasizing that I wanted to explore gender polarity in astrology and how it was applied in professional work. I should add here that all interviewees seemed to me to be open and generous. In summary, the interviews presented certain challenges as I was known to the participants and seen as an insider; however, this familiarity also facilitated the rapid establishment of rapport. Some astrologers declined participation due to differing beliefs, so I revised the invitation. Overall, participants were open and cooperative.

Parental figures

This section discusses whether astrologers interpret the Sun and Moon as father and mother and why. The Oxford English Dictionary defined ‘father’ as the ‘male parent’ and mother as the ‘female parent’.¹⁴⁹ Astrological practice has tended to take the Moon as representative of the mother and the Sun as representative of the father. This approach comes from ancient sources. For example, Ptolemy believed that the Sun could be associated with the father figure.¹⁵⁰ In her *Modern Textbook of Astrology*, Hone wrote that the Sun represented the ‘masculine principle of fatherhood’.¹⁵¹ While Ptolemy also linked the Moon ‘with that [figure] of the mother’, Hone associated it with ‘the feminine principle of motherhood’.¹⁵²

Such approaches, however, may fail to address the experiences of people who are raised without a mother, for instance, in same-sex couples where both partners are men. The idea that ‘Sun is father’ and ‘Moon is mother’ (from now on S=F/M=M theory) could be read as conflicting when a child is raised by members of the same sex or by a single parent. In 2018, a study lead by Andrea Carnaghi claimed that ‘parenting

¹⁴⁹ ‘Father’ in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, July 2023) <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9764826153> [accessed 12 August 2023].

‘Mother’ in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, July 2023) <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1525741166> [accessed 12 August 2023].

¹⁵⁰ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 241.

¹⁵¹ Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 24.

¹⁵² Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 241.

Margaret Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, p. 26.

abilities were questioned when parents were described as of the same sex'.¹⁵³ However, gay couples in which one member portrayed 'feminine' qualities and the other 'masculine' ones were seen as capable of raising a healthy child.¹⁵⁴ Carnaghi believed that this proved the importance of heteronormative parentage explaining that 'exposure to a male and a female model was needed to meet the needs of the son.'¹⁵⁵ Though this study was conducted in Italy and the authors warned about the dangers of generalising the results, it presents a good argument to reflect on Moon/Sun gender role association.

When asked about this, all but one of the astrologers I interviewed claimed not to follow the S=F/M=M theory too strictly. Though nine of them, later on, during the course of the session said they would sometimes rely on it. A15 shared that he used to apply it early on in his career:

'I will usually, when earlier in my career, apply the Sun could be Father. Sun is the father and the Moon is the mother. But I have to say, with my experience, this doesn't really speak to me that much'.

A3 also mentioned that it was an idea that she only employed early on in her practice:

'I used to describe the Sun and Mars as the father and the Moon and Venus as the mother. And I noticed that I don't do that anymore... It's interesting.'

The fact that experienced astrologers have used this approach in the past but have grown away from it may imply that the astrologers' understanding of feminine and masculine principles in astrology might have changed with experience. Another possibility might be that cultural beliefs change with time. As Patrick Curry had

¹⁵³ Andrea Carnaghi, Joel Anderson and Mauro Bianchi, 'On the Origin of Beliefs About the Sexual Orientation and Gender-Rol Development of Children Raised by Gay-Male and Heterosexual Parents: An Italian Study', *Men and Masculinities* (2018), 19.

¹⁵⁴ Andrea Carnaghi, Joel Anderson and Mauro Bianchi, 'On the Origin of Beliefs About the Sexual Orientation and Gender-Rol Development of Children Raised by Gay-Male and Heterosexual Parents: An Italian Study', 20.

¹⁵⁵ Andrea Carnaghi, Joel Anderson and Mauro Bianchi, 'On the Origin of Beliefs About the Sexual Orientation and Gender-Rol Development of Children Raised by Gay-Male and Heterosexual Parents: An Italian Study', 20.

proposed, astrology has made 'a series of compromises with a dominant mainstream version of truth'.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps the 'version of truth' had changed.

Astrologers' ambivalence on the S=F/M=M theory was made evident when most of them affirmed that the Moon did not represent the physical mother, but then referred to the Moon as the mother. This echoed Greene's perspective on the luminaries, wherein she emphasized that the Moon did not represent the biological parent, yet she also utilized the Moon's position and aspects to characterize an individual's physical mother.¹⁵⁷ A2 tried to explain it:

'Yes, yes, yes, yes... okay, whoever has fulfilled the... of course, the quality of containment, the role of nurturing, caring. Also, to the person who was, who is my mother, the one who made motherly mistakes... It could be the first-grade teacher or a grandmother! It doesn't matter... or a grandfather who performed motherly functions, it doesn't matter'.¹⁵⁸

This approach calls Butler's idea that gender was not biological, but performative into relevance. The role of motherhood, then, did not necessarily require a person with a female body; instead, it could be fulfilled by someone who exhibited motherly behaviour and was recognized for them. In some ways, this may be a case of astrologers broadening past binary gender biases as defined by Donna Bobbitt-Zeher, as a way of stereotyping gender roles.¹⁵⁹ The usual definition of sexism was that stereotypical behaviour was assigned to people based on gender but here A2 noted that a man could have performed the functions of the astrological Moon, or mother.¹⁶⁰ A2 and all of the other astrologers I interviewed also emphasized that both a maternal and a parental role were necessary, which strongly resonated with Carnaghi's studies,

¹⁵⁶ Patrick Curry, 'Grounding the Stars: Towards an Ecological Astrology', 213.

¹⁵⁷ Liz Greene, 'Mothers and Matriarchy: the Mythology and Psychology of the Moon', p. 27.

¹⁵⁸ 'Sí, sí, sí, sí... ok quien haya cumplido las... por supuesto la cualidad de contención, la función de nutrir, cuidar. También a la persona que fue, que es mi madre, la que cometió errores de madre... ¡puede ser la maestra de primer grado o una abuela! No importa... o un abuelo que cumplió funciones de madre, no importa'.

¹⁵⁹ Donna Bobbitt-Zeher, 'Gender discrimination at work: connecting gender stereotypes, institutional policies, and gender composition of workplace', *Gender and Society* 25.6 (Dec. 2011), 766.

¹⁶⁰ American Psychological Association, 'Sexism', *APA Dictionary of Psychology* (2023) <https://dictionary.apa.org/sexism> [accessed 13 August 2023]

that though same-sex couples are seen as capable of raising a healthy child, their success in parenthood relied on one of them assuming a feminine role. It also seemed to echo Sullivan's idea that astrology was not gender biased but that the Sun, nevertheless, represented the male type of parent while the Moon was the birthing parent.¹⁶¹

A14 was the only interviewee who utterly believed in the S=F/M=M theory. He explained his point of view from a very direct and matter-of-fact perspective:

'No child can come into this world without a mother. So we start with the story of the mother: What do you know about your mother?'

For him, the interpretation of a person's natal chart began with the Moon as mother, which he saw very literally as the body from which a baby came into life. This followed Sasportas' claim that the Moon could represent the real, physical mother.¹⁶² It also followed Sullivan's view that the Moon was about birthing.¹⁶³ Sasportas's meaning was directly reflected in A14's statement: Everyone had the experience of motherhood, even if it was of an absent and unreachable mother.¹⁶⁴ The same could be said about the father. All people had the Sun somewhere in their chart, and even if they experienced an elusive, absent, abstract figure, everyone had some experience of fatherhood.

Except for A14, most astrologers were somewhat ambivalent about the S=F/M=M theory. Four of them (A1, A6, A10, and A13) seemed to be utterly against it. A10, an expert in horary astrology, shared examples from her practice. Horary Astrology aims to handle specific questions by producing 'accurate answers', as explained in astrologer Barbara Dunn's horary manual.¹⁶⁵ A10 sometimes had been asked questions such as: 'Will my father/mother survive this illness?' or any other that

¹⁶¹ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'

¹⁶² Howard Sasportas, 'Part 1: The Stages of Childhood', p. 67-68.

¹⁶³ Erin Sullivan, 'Is Astrology Gender Biased?'

¹⁶⁴ Howard Sasportas, 'Part 1: The Stages of Childhood', p. 67-68.

¹⁶⁵ Barbara Dunn, *Horary Astrology Re-examined*, (Bournemouth: The Wessex Astrologer, 2009), p. x.

involved parental figures. Her opinion was that though planets may represent a woman or a man based on their gender, it was not always the case. And she added that she would have made wrong interpretations if she had always followed the S=F/M=M theory:

‘No, no, no, no, the truth is that no... because sometimes it is a woman and it is represented by Mars in Aries and it turns out that she is a woman, you know? Strong-willed, athletic, dedicated... No, I repeat, no, no, I couldn't differentiate it. Rather, what I see are the person's characteristics, their attitude, their physicality.’¹⁶⁶

A13, who practised mostly natal astrology and forecasting, justified her position from the statistics she kept for her practice:

‘I couldn't really say that the Sun is masculine anymore because... in fact... When I talk about statistics, I mean this: for example, when you have many factors, like when the father dies or something positive or negative happens to the mother, whatever it may be... the Solar principle isn't always involved. The truth is that it's very clear that Pluto can touch us, it can be on your Moon, and something can happen with your father... not to your mother. Maybe that father has the Moon very strong in his natal chart or the Cancer sign, right? And the same goes for the mother’.¹⁶⁷

When A1 said ‘it can be on your Moon’, she was referring to the doctrine of transits. Astrologer Bernadette Brady explained that a transit occurred when a planet returned to or aligned with a point in the zodiac where it was at the time of birth.¹⁶⁸ According to A1's experience, an important transit to the Moon in a person's chart did not always match a vital event occurring to the mother. In fact, sometimes it corresponded to an incident that might have involved the father. Therefore, the manifestation of transits in external events may have been related to other factors. Thus far, the data gathered

¹⁶⁶ ‘No, no, no, no, la verdad que no, porque a veces es una mujer y está representada por Marte en Aries y resulta que es una mujer, ¿viste?, aguerrida, deportista que se dedica... No, te repito, no, no, no lo sabía distinguir. Más bien lo que veo es las características de la persona, su actitud, su físico’.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Yo no podría ya decir que el Sol es masculino porque... es más... yo, cuando hablo de estadística hablo de esto: por ejemplo, cuando vos a veces, en un montón de factores, cuando por ejemplo fallece el padre o pasa algo con la madre, positivo o negativo, lo que fuera... no están los principios solares siempre involucrados. La verdad es que es muy claro que Plutón puede tocarnos... puede estar sobre tu Luna y pasa algo con tu padre... y no con tu madre. Porque quizás ese padre tiene muy fuerte la Luna en su carta natal o el signo de Cáncer, ¿no? Y lo mismo con la madre’.

¹⁶⁸ Bernadette Brady, *Predictive Astrology: the Eagle and the Lark* (San Francisco, CA: Weiser Books, 1999), p. 45.

here seemed to imply that astrologers applied the S=F/M=M theory variously, meaning that some of them did not relate the luminaries with the physical parents at all. Some, however, did. Only one applied it unquestioned. It's also relevant here that even when an astrologer did not rely on the theory, there still seemed to be a gendered distinction between the Sun and Moon's parental interpretations.

Archetypes

This section explores if the archetypes that underlie the astrological Sun and Moon are perceived as gendered. Greene emphasized that the Sun and Moon could be seen as archetypes which according to Jung were 'patterns of instinctual behaviour'.¹⁶⁹ Greene did not see the S = F / M = M theory as the only way of interpretation.¹⁷⁰ This echoed A3's experience. According to her, the Moon would not represent the mother herself but the person's experience of motherhood:

'People are always saying "My mother did this. And therefore I'm this" ... and I think... "for God's sake, the chart was there before your mother did anything... you draw that out of your mother". I am so aware that, you know, my mother did not cause anything in me. I received her through my Moon'.

In this sense, the Moon did not represent some intrinsic quality of the mother but some emerging process that arose through the interaction between mother and child. A5 shared this sentiment. Though she did not believe that planetary functions were necessarily gendered, it was hard for her not to think of them in these binary terms. On the one hand, she stated:

'I wouldn't talk about 'she' ... (she laughs) you know, you don't look at the planets as being masculine or feminine... You look more at what they do, what they want, their perspective. I talk about their perspective in life.... The perspective of the Moon is to have an emotional life, to feel things'.

¹⁶⁹ Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, *The Luminaries* (York Beach, ME: Weiser Books, 1992), p. vii.

Liz Greene, 'The Parental Marriage in the Horoscope', p. 88.

Carl G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁰ Liz Greene, 'Mothers and Matriarchy: the Mythology and Psychology of the Moon', p. 27.

But then she added that when teaching, it helped to use gendered images for each planet.

'You know... those pictures and images in your life, I think they help to understand... feel the energies involved. Because there I have noticed what I do... I will say 'she', you know, I'm talking about Venus because all the images we have of Venus, it's a woman. Yeah, so I will say 'she', but then in my mind, I say "Well, it could be a man", you know.

To make her point about planetary gender, she mentioned the Venus archetype, which is not central to this study. However, the relevant point here was that, in a teaching environment, she used the genders of the planets as images to help the students understand what the planet was about. In a consultation, she would not see them as gendered. Mythological representations of the planets, which were gendered, were used as an aid in describing planets' archetypal functions to students. Feminine images were more accessible when a planet was associated with being female while the opposite case occurred with masculine planets. But she insisted that the 'perspective' of each planet was intrinsically genderless. Her perception then contradicted Bem's: gender may not have pervaded 'every aspect of human experience'.¹⁷¹ Contrarily, A7 expressed the same ambivalence but concluded that the archetype had an intrinsically gendered nature, which could agree with Bem's ideas:¹⁷²

'This ideal is beyond embodiment, beyond the corrupted world in which there is such high variability... So, of course, Mars can be a man, a woman, a dog, right? It can be, it can manifest itself in a thousand ways... in the archetype.... And the warrior woman participates in that warrior energy, of course, but when we talk about the warrior archetype... The Warrior archetype emerges, or rather, it goes from inside to outside, cuts through, penetrates, and possesses this... ascending impulse. This is prominently masculine, understood as extroverted, active, inside-outside. And I believe that is why the analogy is made with the male sex, because this occurs more often, I mean. The great danger here is getting

¹⁷¹ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 80.

¹⁷² Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 80.

trapped in the image, and then the warrior can only be a man, right?'¹⁷³

Even though he was advising against linking 'masculine' with 'male' in the sense of biology, he insisted on the idea that the archetype had a basic primal nature which could be extroverted or introverted. This difference in direction defined whether it was masculine or feminine. In the embodied world, for example, an archetype could take different shapes, both masculine and feminine. However in the archetypal realm, the archetypes were more fixed, being either masculine or feminine. Roesler pointed out that language and culture could influence the way the words 'masculine' and 'feminine' could be understood.¹⁷⁴ For A7, the basic characteristic of the archetype could be best described this way. For A5, however, it could not. Another noteworthy point that arose from these two interviews was that they both relied on the Venus/Mars planetary pair to express their point more clearly. It may seem that some planets were more easily gendered than others. Perhaps, the Sun and the Moon allowed a more flexible approach to gender than Venus and Mars did.

Moon as body, Sun as spirit

This section discusses interviewee's opinions on relating the Moon to the body and nature, as a feminine planet. Astrologer Clare Martin believed that the Sun described 'our spiritual consciousness'.¹⁷⁵ She related the Moon to the need to be fed for survival.¹⁷⁶ She thus linked the lunar principle with food and eating disorders.¹⁷⁷

Robert Hand also referred to the Moon in grounding, materialistic terms: 'our attitude

¹⁷³ 'Yo creo que yo creo que ahí lo que la teoría astrológica se va al arquetipo y en el arquetipo, vas a una cosa ideal. Que como ideal está fuera de lo encarnado, está fuera del mundo corrupto en el que hay una variabilidad tan alta... Que por supuesto que Marte puede ser un hombre, una mujer, un perro, ¿no? Puede ser, puede expresarse de mil maneras... en arquetipo.... Y la mujer guerrera participa de ese guerrero, claro, pero si hablamos del arquetipo Guerrero... el arquetipo Guerrero sale, o sea, va de dentro para afuera, corta, penetra, tiene este impulso... ascendente. Estos es prominentemente masculino, entendido como extrovertido, activo, dentro-fuera. Y yo creo que que ahí, por eso se hace la analogía con el sexo masculino, porque esto se da más, o sea... El gran peligro de esto es que uno se quede atrapado en la imagen y entonces el guerrero solo puede ser hombre, ¿no?'

¹⁷⁴ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept*, p. 95.

¹⁷⁵ Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche Vol. 1*, p. 32.

¹⁷⁶ Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche Vol. 1*, p. 39.

¹⁷⁷ Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche Vol. 1*, p. 39.

towards being incarnate in the physical universe'.¹⁷⁸ Both of them seemed to relate the Moon to a physical principle. In her interview, A12 explained:

'So the maternal function would be, yes, well, what is typically lunar, right?, providing substance'.¹⁷⁹

For A12, the Moon gave substance, it made the solar essence real, and gave it its shape. A7 explained further:

'Thanks to the Moon, the spirit is embodied. The Moon forms body because, in the end, it is the last sphere and, in this last sphere, let's say... this is the sphere that rules the sublunar world where there is corruption, meaning, 'in the world', 'in the experience of incarnation' '.¹⁸⁰

For him, the Moon was the final gate to access the world of incarnation, where things have a body, and thus get corrupted and die. Alternatively, A3 related the Moon to the body through the experience of being gestated and born through the anatomy of a woman:

'The only thing I can think of is... it's so natural to fall into the Moon and Venus, you know... you take from your mother, she has the same body as you, you just absorb those things so powerfully'.

This astrologer defined the Moon as presence, as the body or the material aspect of reality. She later referred to the requirement to be fed to survive. A15 related the Moon not only to the body but also to nature.

'I usually think that Moon has more things to do with our body than the Sun. The female principle is the Moon and the body, but also the other part of the description was about the relationship between Moon and the Earth'.

Contrarily, the Sun, was often described as being more ineffable. A5 had trouble trying to define it:

¹⁷⁸ Robert Hand, *Horoscope Symbols*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁹ 'Entonces la función materna sería la función ahí, sí, bien, que típicamente lunar, no? de brindar una sustancia'.

¹⁸⁰ 'Gracias a la luna se hace cuerpo el espíritu. La luna hace cuerpo porque, al final, la Luna es la última esfera y en esa última esfera, digamos, es la esfera que rige el mundo sublunar donde hay corrupción, o sea, en el mundo, en la en la experiencia de la encarnación'.

'The Sun is more difficult to define... The Sun is more detached. And it is more, perhaps not in everyday life, perhaps less accessible. What James Hillman calls the spirit'.

A12 also described as ineffable:

' "OK, express your solar qualities, express your singularity" ... What does that mean? Nothing... It doesn't mean anything because it is really ineffable'.¹⁸¹

In contrast to the materialistic aspect of the Moon, she described the Sun as an emptiness:

'It's like there is... like there is an emptiness in the end, right? Which means the solar... if you address the Sun itself like... I mean... it's a star, it's not a planet like the rest, which means it is a system that is burning itself out, isn't it? It's in a state of constant combustion and that which is self-burning is, ultimately, dying... in that permanent self-incineration. So, it's almost as if you could symbolically think of an emptiness there. In that incineration, there is an emptiness that allows all of the other pieces of information to flow and renew in some way... as if from a magnetic quality, it attracts all other qualities and functions from the rest of the system and it uses them as fuel and then it radiates them'.¹⁸²

Here, the Sun was related to emptiness. This greatly contrasted with the qualities usually assigned to masculinity such as clear, trustable, and obvious. The dark and concave womb, an empty place waiting to receive the seed of man, had been more widely associated to the Moon. The idea of emptiness seemed to be revealing. The masculine solar principle was no longer associated with the evident or constant but with the ineffable. Although A12 and A9 had studied in the same school of astrology,

¹⁸¹ "Bueno, expresá tu solaridad, expresá tu singularidad"... ¿eso qué quiere decir?, no... no quiere decir nada porque es realmente inefable.'

¹⁸² 'Es como si fuera... casi como si fuera un espacio vacío, en el fondo, no?, o sea lo solar como... si vas al sol en sí mismo como... o sea es una estrella, no es un planeta como el resto. Con lo cual es un sistema que se está quemando a sí mismo, no? Está en un estado de permanente combustión y eso que se quema a sí mismo, en última instancia está muriendo... en ese quemarse permanentemente. Entonces casi como que ahí simbólicamente pudieras pensar que hay un vacío. En ese quemarse, hay un vacío que entonces deja que todas las otras informaciones circulen y se exuden de alguna manera... como si fuera que desde lo magnético, atrae todas cualidades y las funciones del resto del sistema y las usa como combustible y las irradia'.

the latter said that she read the Sun, and not the Moon, as a descriptor of a person's body and physical disposition:

'Because we all have a physical structure that corresponds to a way of thinking, a way of standing in the world, a way of feeling, I mean our body, our corporeality, right?... The Sun is built up with the things I identify with, so I'm identified with living with a tense neck, I don't even know what it's like to turn my head to the sides anymore... so it's like the angle through which I understand the world and also the one that organizes me to go out and interact with the world'.¹⁸³

Except for A9, all other astrologers related the Moon to the body and the Sun to some ineffable spiritual essence. But this seemed to contradict other ideas. For example, concepts like 'confidence' and 'well-defined' have been associated with the masculine polarity of the Sun, while 'elusive' and 'mysterious' tended to be connected to the Moon. Clare Martin, for instance, described the Sun as 'the masculine principle, reliable, predictable' yet, the Moon as 'the feminine' and then, 'multiple, complex, changeable'.¹⁸⁴ So the association of the Sun with something ineffable seemed contrary to its masculine nature. As Kari Mari Norgaard had mentioned, femininity was often seen as connected to the natural world.¹⁸⁵ However, she criticized this perception.¹⁸⁶ She claimed that femininity was understood as natural and instinctive versus the rationality of masculinity only sometimes.¹⁸⁷ Quite often the masculine polarity was seen in connection with nature, for instance, when thinking about hiking

¹⁸³ 'Porque todos tenemos una estructura física que corresponde con una forma de pensar, una forma de pararme frente al mundo, una forma de sentir, o sea nuestro cuerpo, nuestra corporalidad no?... el sol se va armando con las cosas con las cuales me identifico, entonces yo estoy identificada con vivir con el cuello contracturado, ya ni siquiera sé lo que es girar la cabeza hacia los lados...entonces es como que es el ángulo por el cual entiendo el mundo y también el que me organiza para salir e interactuar por el mundo'.

¹⁸⁴ Clare Martin, *Mapping the Psyche Vol. 1*, pp. 29, 36.

¹⁸⁵ Kari Mari Norgaard, 'Moon Phases, Menstrual Cycles, and Mother Earth: the Construction of a Special Relationship between Women and Nature', 205.

¹⁸⁶ Kari Mari Norgaard, 'Moon Phases, Menstrual Cycles, and Mother Earth: the Construction of a Special Relationship between Women and Nature', 207.

¹⁸⁷ Kari Mari Norgaard, 'Moon Phases, Menstrual Cycles, and Mother Earth: the Construction of a Special Relationship between Women and Nature', 199.

or fishing.¹⁸⁸ Often men were portrayed as more impulsive and women as more civilized.¹⁸⁹ A15 tried to explain the following.

‘But the Moon belongs to night... rather than I think this concept about Moon related to more subtle or more physical or more animal instinct is more because the Moon is related to night, rather than because Moon is a feminine principle... I will say, yes, basically Moon with the physical world or the animal instinct. Sun with more spiritual or abstract and that is... because I think that the word we use for the spirit is kind of always has a higher state and the Sun described that kind of image of a higher state’.

So for A15, it was not a matter of gender polarity but of the opposition between night and day. The darkness of the night correlated with deep-rooted instincts, while the light of the day with the uplifting quality of spirit. Chani Nicholas shared that masculine traits were seen in astrology as uplifting. And A14 agreed:

‘Fire and air are masculine because they go up’.

So masculinity may be seen as uplifting. And this elevating quality connected it to the world of the spirit and the ineffable. The darkness of the night was linked with a grounding experience. The Moon may be a symbol of the connection to the body, nature and the dark aspects of the night. It is significant here that though the masculine polarity was usually related to stability and clarity, it had also been linked to the ineffable, unreachable world of spirit.

Adding to that, Greene mentioned that gaining the qualities of the Sun required a heroic journey.¹⁹⁰ She was referring the work of Joseph Campbell.¹⁹¹ Sasportas had

¹⁸⁸ Kari Mari Norgaard, ‘Moon Phases, Menstrual Cycles, and Mother Earth: the Construction of a Special Relationship between Women and Nature’, 203.

¹⁸⁹ Kari Mari Norgaard, ‘Moon Phases, Menstrual Cycles, and Mother Earth: the Construction of a Special Relationship between Women and Nature’, 204.

¹⁹⁰ Liz Greene, ‘The Hero with a Thousand Faces: the Sun and the Development Of Consciousness’, in Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas, *The Luminaries* (York Beach, ME: Weiser Books, 1992), p. 81.

¹⁹¹ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1949).

linked the Sun to the father and how he created heroes.¹⁹² And Greene believed that one could never fully express the Sun, because it was a process of becoming.¹⁹³ From a Psychoanalytic perspective, this meant that the Sun could represent a path to follow while the Moon spoke to our past. But A12 saw the balance of power between the Sun and the Moon differently. If it was the Moon who gave substance to the Sun, it was actually the Sun who was subjugated to her:

‘So there's a very specific singularity, but as I mentioned before, it can't be fully grasped, it's quite ineffable. That's an ineffable quality of each one of us which, in order to somehow grasp it, to stabilize it, manifests through lunar substance. It then manifests through memory. So, we end up constructing a self-image. The Sun ends up being experienced through the Moon’.¹⁹⁴

She believed that the Sun got locked in the traps of lunar memories. While all of the interviewees related the Moon to memory, this change of emphasis seemed to be empowering the feminine side of the polarity. A4 was the only other astrologer who shared a similar view. She commented on it:

‘How to discover the Moon behind the Sun? As I say, we do identify, yes, and it's a fact, right?, that we identify more with the qualities of the solar zodiac sign. But how much of that is done in the service of what the lunar belonging is asking for?’.¹⁹⁵

So here the Moon was still associated with the feminine qualities of darkness and containment. It was also associated with something elusive, like A15 had suggested. But it seemed to suggest a kind of lunar power that commanded from the shadows. The feminine, seen as a subtle and hidden force, matched the previous ideas shared on the Moon. Rudhyar had suggested that the Moon allowed the discovery of the Sun.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Howard Sasportas, ‘Part 1: The Stages of Childhood’, pp. 62-63.

¹⁹³ Liz Greene, ‘The Hero With A Thousand Faces: The Sun And The Development Of Consciousness’, p. 81.

¹⁹⁴ ‘Entonces hay una singularidad muy específica, pero como te decía antes, que no se puede terminar de agarrar, que es muy inefable. Eso es una cualidad inefable de cada uno de nosotros que, entonces, para poder agarrarla de alguna forma, para que se estabilice, se manifiesta a través de la sustancia lunar. Se manifiesta entonces a través de una memoria. Entonces terminamos construyendo una autoimagen. El sol termina siendo vivido a través de la luna’.

¹⁹⁵ ‘¿Como hacerle piedra libre a la luna atrás del sol? Como digo, nos identificamos sí y es un hecho, no?, que nos identificamos más con las cualidades del signo zodiacal solar. Pero cuánto de eso está puesto al servicio de la de lo que la pertenencia lunar pide?’.

¹⁹⁶ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle*, p. 20.

But A4 and A12 were claiming the opposite. Here, the light of the Moon, filled with memories and past patterns, blinded the psyche from perceiving and expressing the true ineffable essence of the Sun. This powerful ability of the Moon was seen as regressive by A12, and something to work against. So, for her, this feminine power was somewhat barren:

‘So, it's a process of daring to burn or to question or to observe what is mechanical, what is repetitive, those things we hold onto from memory in order to maintain crystallized identities that prevent the expression of new levels of who one can become’.¹⁹⁷

The Sun, a masculine principle, seemed to be associated with progress, the new, creativity and the ineffable while the Moon seemed to be focused on the past, the known, the body. Sparkly Kat explained the Sun as it was a symbol of power and colonization.¹⁹⁸ And Colonization used it as a symbol of progress.¹⁹⁹ Her idea, though applied in a collective macro-scale, may resonate with that of A12: the colonizing light of the Sun as future, as liberation from the feminine dark, regressive nature of the Moon. Future, the ineffable and masculinity seemed to be all weaved together in the Sun, in contrast to the certainty of the lunar past. And thus the idea of the Sun as a process of development resonates with the interviewee's opinions. However, A8 reflected that the Moon also represented a journey of discovery and development:

‘For me, the Moon speaks very much to our belonging. So and that... that's just not a given. I think part of what's happened in, you know, culturally around these interpretations, is that we have that, we might have imported a sense of, you know, progress, masculinity and the Sun... as a direction, as a journey. And something has not been understood about the Moon. So for me, the Moon is about belonging, of course, you know, in our home and how to belong in ourselves, and of course all the other things, our emotional life, our interest in our feelings. But for me, it's about a journey of belonging’.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Y entonces es un proceso de animarse a ir quemando o a ir cuestionando o a ir observando lo que es mecánico, lo que es repetitivo, aquello a lo que nos aferramos desde la memoria por mantener a identidades que están cristalizadas pero que no dejan expresar nuevos niveles de que uno puede ir siendo’.

¹⁹⁸ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Post-Colonial Astrology*, p. 43.

¹⁹⁹ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Post-Colonial Astrology*, p. 43.

This matched the so-called feminine mysterious quality, as she portrayed the Moon as unknown territory, but also coloured it with the masculine quality of development. In summary, masculinity has been described as a trustable, evident quality and femininity as a dark, elusive one. However, when describing the Sun and the Moon, both luminaries seemed to share characteristics on both sides of the polarity. The Sun could be linked to some hard-to-grasp elusive reality, a spiritual one. And the Moon could be linked to an evident one as it was so often linked to the body. But, while most astrologers related the body to the Moon, and to the feminine principle by extension, there was still one who related it to the Sun. Simultaneously, while some related the Sun to a journey, there was one astrologer who saw the Moon as a quest too, one of belonging. By reflecting on Norgaard idea about how gender principles are applied to nature, it seems that a strict polarization and division of qualities between the Sun and the Moon, may not be possible based on the fluidity of astrologers' understandings on gender.²⁰⁰ The idea of a power struggle was also addressed as some astrologers believed that, although the Sun is often thought of as being in command, it could also be subjugated to the lunar needs. This idea is further examined in the next section.

Blinding light

This section discusses the relationship between the Sun and the Moon in terms of light. It examines whether gender has been seen as related to luminosity. A15 mentioned that the Sun had always been a major factor in astrology, because of its commanding nature:

‘The ancient people don't know about the Sun in the center of the solar system. But they did notice the planetary motion... their retrograde and stationary period was related to the Sun rather than the Moon. That's why I think they are aware that the beginning or the ending is related to the Sun. But the Moon also has a cycle. But the Moon's cycle is related to the Sun again...’.

As Bem said: the masculine principle gave definition, order, and status.²⁰¹ Contrarily, A8's had a different view:

²⁰⁰ Kari Mari Norgaard, 'Moon Phases, Menstrual Cycles, and Mother Earth: the Construction of a Special Relationship between Women and Nature', 205.

²⁰¹ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 41.

'it interests me that the Moon used to be the most important planet in traditional astrology and she still is in Horary, right?'

A10 agreed to this. For her, the Moon usually held the key to the question in Horary

Astrology:

'Yes, well, in horary astrology, it's like the wild card, you know? I mean, it's the one that connects to the planets, the Moon... the one that moves the fastest, representing the person who's asking, the question itself, the fugitive, what you've lost, the property you want to buy... So it has a somewhat versatile function, you see? It's very, very flexible, you know? It adapts'.²⁰²

When sharing her experience with natal astrology, she added:

'Well, I'll tell you something, when I used to do birth chart consultations, I didn't always look at the Sun... the Moon, always... obviously!'.²⁰³

A8 described a historical process in which the Sun acquired increasing importance:

'according to the symbolism and the Enlightenment, the Sun, in our modern astrology became more important. So I guess I see that as a pathway, as a journey in terms of how we value those symbols in the chart and... I think it's possible that there is a bit of that still there, that people think the Sun is more important than the Moon'.

This has some resonance with Lerner's theory that the feminine suffered a historical process in which it was subjected to the masculine.²⁰⁴ The power of women reflected the power of their husbands. A8 called this process the Endarkenment, slightly altering astrologer Robert Hand's term to signify the almost extinction of astrology:²⁰⁵

'you know, since the Enlightenment or as I've riffed before, you know, the "Endarkenment", this whole journey, since the

²⁰² 'Sí, bueno, en horaria es el comodín, ¿viste? O sea.... es el que, la luna, une a los planetas, la que más rápido se mueve, representa la persona que pregunta, la pregunta en sí misma, el fugitivo, lo que se te perdió, el inmueble que querés comprar... o sea que tiene una función así un poco... es muy muy dúctil viste?, se acomoda'.

²⁰³ 'Bueno, te voy a decir algo... cuando yo hacía consultas de cartas natales no siempre miraba el Sol... la Luna, siempre... ¡obviamente!'

²⁰⁴ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 70.

²⁰⁵ Robert Hand, 'Towards a Post-Modern Astrology', transcript from British Astrological Association Conference (York, 2005), https://www.astro.com/astrology/in_postmodern_e.htm [accessed 20th August 2023].

Enlightenment and into modernism, wherever we are now, mmm... has been, hasn't it?, a separation from nature, a disconnect from nature, you know, sort of trying to exert more control over the world around us. So, ergo, therefore, a disconnect from ourselves, you know, on that journey, I would say.... Obviously, there's been some sort of rich reclamation and discovery of some other aspects of ourselves in that. And... but I so... I find it interesting, really, just to think about what's been lost in that, so something's been lost, yeah, the imaginable, hasn't it? The emotional has been lost in that, we might say'.

This may be the blinding light of the Sun. And not only blinding but also darkening. Sparkly Kat mentioned how light had the power to both illuminate or reveal and hide.²⁰⁶ She explained how the symbol of the Sun and its luminosity was used as a symbol of royalty and imperialism.²⁰⁷ It was a kind of light that could expose everything without exposing itself.²⁰⁸ With the development of technology, this was further emphasized. Not everyone had access to electrical light. To illuminate a city was to emphasize that the rural world (which was related to the realm of the Moon) was in darkness.²⁰⁹ It also meant that power-holding people had control over the light.²¹⁰ So the Sun, which was related to masculinity and power, could have disempowering, endarkening faculties because it was the brightest body in the sky.

Astrophysicist Cheyenne Polius explained that 'The Sun is so bright during the day that it kind of drowns out the light from the Moon and the stars'.²¹¹ So, the stars are present but cannot be seen during daylight. Horary astrology has found a symbolic significance of this phenomenon. The Sun could symbolize the exposure of truth, according to astrologers Helena Avilar and Luis Ribeiro.²¹² Another astrologer, John

²⁰⁶ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, p. 29.

²⁰⁷ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, pp. 38-39.

²⁰⁸ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, pp. 36.

²⁰⁹ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, pp. 32.

²¹⁰ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, pp. 34.

²¹¹ Jason Bittel, 'Ever wondered why you can see the Moon sometimes during the day?', *The Washington Post*, 20 July 20 2020 https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/ever-wondered-why-you-can-see-the-Moon-sometimes-during-the-day/2020/07/20/c7192eb4-c60c-11ea-b037-f9711f89ee46_story.html [accessed on 30th August 2023].

²¹² Helena Avilar and Luis Ribeiro, *On the Heavenly Spheres* (Tempe, AZ: American Federation of Astrologers Inc., 2010), p.33.

Frawley, explained that the Sun uncovered reality.²¹³ However, planets close to the Sun were considered combust, and lacking power or somewhat invisible. According to the Horary Astrology rules described by William Lilly in *Christian Astrology*: ‘the significator of the Querent combust, shows him or her in great fear, and overpowered by some great person’.²¹⁴ The ‘querent’ is the person who asked an answer from the astrologer.²¹⁵ A10 explained:

‘William Lilly used it a lot in questions about whether someone is going to die or live, and if their significator is approaching the Sun, they're going to die. It's reaching the end of its cycle. So, this... the Sun would basically take away freedom from the planet’.²¹⁶

For A10, the idea of combustion is so important that if the Moon was combust in a chart, she would not even interpret it:

‘I usually tell people that I don't answer these horary questions or I explain to them: ‘Look, the Moon is burnt, this indicates darkness, there won't be any information, you might be missing vital information, which means you can't be free to make a decision with all the cards laid out on the table’’.²¹⁷

Sparkly Kat claimed ‘light was visibility and visibility was power’.²¹⁸ And of all of the celestial objects the Sun, as the brightest, has always held the strength of light. Thus the Sun, in astrological tradition was related to the power of the intellect, the mind, truth and awareness. But also, with the ability to cast light on certain aspects of life while hiding others. And as the Sun was considered a masculine planet, it may be said that this was the power of the masculine polarity: to decide what can be seen, to decide what needs to be hidden. Expanding on Bem's conceptual framework, it becomes apparent that the masculine principle possessed the potential to serve as a

²¹³ John Frawley, *The Horary Textbook* (London: Apprentice Books, 2005), p. 148.

²¹⁴ William Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, ed. by Deborah Houlding (London: Ascella Publications, 1999), p. 54.

²¹⁵ William Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, p. 60.

²¹⁶ ‘William Lilly lo usaba mucho en preguntas sobre si va a morir, si va a vivir y si su significador se está acercando al sol, va a morir. Está llegando al final de su ciclo. O sea, que está... el Sol lo que haría es quitarle libertad al planeta’.

²¹⁷ ‘Yo suelo decirle a la gente que no respondo estas horarias o les explico... “Mirá, la Luna está quemada, esto da oscuridad, no va a haber información, te debe estar faltando información vital, entonces esto te hace que no puedas ser libre para tomar una decisión con todas las cartas sobre la mesa”’.

²¹⁸ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, p. 34.

defining factor.²¹⁹ A11 concurred with this idea in a more personal or psychological interpretation of the Sun, without mentioning combustion:

‘If we start with the Sun, we can get caught up in the... in the daylight, in the shining. “Well, what did you do and how did that happen?”, you know, “Well I got promoted and...” and we miss all the feeling’.

Here A11 was not referring to a historical process but a personal one. If the person focused on the dazzling aspects of the outer world of actions and doings, a connection with feelings and emotions could be lost. When I asked A10 if the Moon could reach a condition in which she could also have the power to subdue other planets in the birth chart, she said:

‘No, no, only the Sun can do that’.²²⁰

So it seemed that only the masculine principle of the Sun had the power to overshadow others. Only its light could be blinding. The masculine principle could define or destroy. But A6 felt that this was not necessarily so if astrologers stopped thinking in masculine/feminine terms:

‘But I mean this... it is light! Like... astrology is about light. But it's not necessarily patriarchal if you don't see the Sun as male’.

For her, it was a matter of language. The Sun was the body that shared light. Removing the masculine/feminine labelling could disengage gender bias. In his book, *The Real Astrology*, John Frawley claimed: ‘The workings of the traditional system are based on light’.²²¹ And later he added: ‘a planet with no light has no power’.²²² A14 also believed that it was not a matter of masculine or feminine principles but a matter of light:

‘The Sun is the source of all light and the solar system. And so the only reason why we can see all of the other planets is because they are reflecting the Sun's light’.

²¹⁹ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 62.

²²⁰ ‘No, no, solo el Sol puede hacer eso’.

²²¹ John Frawley, *The Real Astrology*, p. 64.

²²² John Frawley, *The Real Astrology*, p. 64.

A6, A14 and Frawley then emphasized the light of the Sun, without harping on its masculine nature. However, to separate masculine from feminine, light was used as a determining factor. A1, who mentioned disliking the terms masculine/feminine ended up relating light with a masculine principle:

'I find it more beautiful to say a movement of manifestation and a movement of reabsorption. Obviously, when I say 'manifestation,' the image of the Sun comes to mind. That's why the Sun is referred to as masculine and the night, the reabsorption, the Moon, as feminine'.²²³

The externalizing motion of the masculine principle may resonate with light being expanded from the centre of the Solar System, while a porous darker aspect of the feminine may resonate with the idea of receiving the light. A8 shared some images:

'But principally for me, the masculine is a force that is about light, expansion and direction and the feminine is a force that's about reflection, it can be about dark..., darkness in sense of interior, and inward and containing and holding'.

In this section thus far, the concept of the Sun as masculine had been explored, primarily because of its radiant light symbolizing the expansiveness often associated with masculinity. The Moon, instead, was seen as a place of containment, darkness and reception. The Sun shared its light with the rest of the planets so they could be seen. But it could also outshine them when they went into combustion.

Another concept, closely linked to combustion, that may need to be analysed is that of Cazimi. Astrologer Deborah Houlding explained that a planet was 'Cazimi' when it was in perfect conjunction to the Sun, that is, they shared celestial longitude.²²⁴ Though it was believed that a planet combust was weakened by its proximity to the Sun, when it was Cazimi, the opposite occurred: it was treated as empowered.²²⁵ Cazimi comes

²²³ 'Me parece más lindo decir un movimiento de manifestación y un movimiento de reabsorción. Obviamente que digo manifestación y se me viene más en la luz el sol. Por eso se dice la luz masculina y la noche, la reabsorción, la luna femenina'.

²²⁴ Deborah Houlding, 'combust' in *Glossary of Terms* (2007), <https://www.skyscript.co.uk/gl/combust.html> [accessed 13 August 2023].

²²⁵ Deborah Houlding, 'combust' in *Glossary of Terms* (2007).

from the Arabic *kašmīmī* which means 'as in the heart', because planets here were considered in the heart of the Sun.²²⁶ A10 spoke about this condition and the life-giving properties that the Sun could bestow but she also described it as an extremely vulnerable circumstance:

'what Deborah Houlding was looking at for 30 years is that actually when it's *cazimi*, it's a moment of enormous power but also enormous vulnerability... because it's the moment of conception. So, when the Moon, for example, approaches the Sun, it's purifying itself, preparing to die, and when it's *cazimi*, it's a moment where the entire moment of conception, where everything that... for instance.... in that moment, in that instant, it's already known if you're going to be tall, short, dark-skinned, with green eyes, it's in that instant, so it's super powerful, but on the other hand, it's an instant where there's also a lot of vulnerability. It has potential, but it is only potential. It's not manifested yet'.²²⁷

Here, the light of the Sun was life-giving. And this life-giving quality, this re-birth of a planet, was not only related to the Moon being *cazimi* but to any planet in that condition. This was striking because, if the Moon was seen as the mother, it could be symbolically related to conception. A15 explained:

'I say... even though the Moon rules motherhood, let's say, the Sun is the one who starts and ends the cycles'.

Gerda Lerner explained how the evolution of patriarchy meant that the life-giving force of the feminine goddess was taken by the masculine deities.²²⁸ This was expressed in the Bible, where a male deity created the whole world with no need of a feminine counterpart.²²⁹ This life-giving force of the masculine solar principle could be

Demetra George, *Ancient Astrology in Theory and Practice*, p. 540.

Barbara Dunn, *Horary Astrology Re-examined*, p. 138.

²²⁶ 'Cazimi' in James R. Lewis, *The Astrology Book* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 2003), p. 130.

²²⁷ '¿Se dice eso, no? Que está en el asiento del rey. Pero, por otro lado, lo que Deborah estuvo durante 30 años mirando es que en realidad cuando está *cazimi* es un momento de enorme potencia, pero de enorme vulnerabilidad... porque es el momento de la concepción, entonces cuando la Luna, por ejemplo, se acerca al Sol está depurándose, preparándose para morir y cuando está *cazimi* es un momento donde todo el momento de la concepción, donde todo lo que... por ejemplo... en ese momento, en ese instante, ya se sabe si vos vas a hacer alto, petiso, morocho, con ojos verdes, es en ese instante. Entonces es súper potente pero por otro lado es un instante donde también hay mucha vulnerabilidad. Tiene en potencia pero sólo en potencia. No está actualizada todavía'.

²²⁸ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 180.

²²⁹ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 180.

echoing Lerner's idea. The Sun, giver of life, with no need of a feminine principle. Its fiery ability to enhance vitality was also mentioned by A12, though in a more metaphorical way. She explained how the Moon may represent the past and the Sun may represent one's own sense of identity. And when doing so, she mentioned the combusive nature of the Sun:

'Meanwhile, the Sun continues to radiate; the desirable thing is for this to burn away layers that crystallized in memory'.²³⁰

According to A12, the Moon held memories of the past. And the psyche could get trapped here. The Sun offered vitality by burning those layers of memory, outdated, and allowing the true essence to emerge. The masculine principle could save the renewing self from being locked in the past. She reinforced that this was the reason why she attributed a masculine quality to the Sun:

'And the solar quality in that masculine-differentiating sense, as the most unique and inherent, and more personal, if you will'.²³¹

Thus the life-giving property of the Sun was put against the lunar tendency of creating repetitive mechanisms that fixed the personality in past behaviours and identities. As mentioned in the previous section, this could create the fake illusion that the Sun was openly expressing itself when in fact, it could be being manipulated by the Moon. A4:

'Because my feeling often is that the solar aspect is unconsciously guided by the invisible threads of memory, and it seems to me that it's a great endeavour to learn how to allow the Sun to manifest in a more updated, mature, and individual way. What I sense... my feeling in the therapy room and in my own life, is that the Moon often weaves, manages the threads of our manifestation without us realizing, right?'²³²

²³⁰ 'Mientras tanto lo solar sigue irradiando, lo deseable es que esto vaya quemando capas que se fueron cristalizando en la memoria'.

²³¹ 'Y lo solar en ese sentido masculino-diferenciante, como lo más singular y propio y más individual, si se quiere'.

²³² 'Porque mi sensación muchas veces es que lo solar está como manejado inconscientemente por los hilos invisibles de la memoria, y me parece que es un gran trabajo como aprender a dejar al sol manifestar de una manera más actualizada más madura, más individual. Lo que siento... mi sensación en el consultorio y en la propia vida, es que muchas veces la luna como que teje, maneja los hilos de nuestra manifestación sin que nos demos cuenta, ¿no?'.

This idea questioned who was in command. The Sun was seen to have been fooled by the Moon who was now the directress of people's lives through repetitive mechanisms that originated in the past and prevented the expression of true identity. On some level, this seemed to be in contradiction to Rudhyar's view that the Moon could let us access the Sun. When explaining the Lunation Cycle, he said that the Soli-lunar relationship could help to understand 'the archetypal purpose revealed by the zodiacal degree of the natal Sun'.²³³ Here, however, the opposite seemed true. The Moon was seen as compulsively trying to take command because she offered comfort to the psyche while the Sun offered uncertainty. This seemed to contradict the idea that Sun = masculinity = trustable = evident, as explored in the previous section. To conclude, the Sun's powerful light has been seen both as life-giving (cazimi) and life-taking (combust). The fact that planetary cycles were born when the planet was conjunct to the Sun may resonate with Lerner's view of a male god who created life without the need of a female counterpart. Additionally, when thinking about the Sun and light as collective symbols, the masculine quality of expansiveness became prominent. To share light was also to hide. Applying this view to an individual could express an inner blindness by focusing only on external events. Contrary to this idea, some astrologers saw the Moon as the true directress of people's lives, even if the Sun was believed to be in power. When this occurred, the masculine quality of the Sun was associated with uncertainty instead of certitude. And thus the lunar feminine quality was understood as comforting and securing.

Anatomy is destiny

This section studies how social understandings of biological gender may relate to the polarity associated with the Sun and the Moon. In 1912, Sigmund Freud stated: 'anatomy is destiny'.²³⁴ What he meant was that the biological gender of a person would determine the development of their psychology. He believed that woman's psychology was based on their envy towards men who had a penis. This view has been

²³³ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle*, p. 40.

²³⁴ Sigmund Freud, 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love (Contributions to the Psychology of Love II)', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XI* (London: Hogarth Press, 1978), p. 189.

heavily criticized by the feminist theory as it placed women in a position of inferiority towards men because of a genetic condition that could not be altered. Ideas like Freud's are a part of why Bem claimed that femininity was being defined from an androcentric perspective.²³⁵ Lynda Birke, a biologist from the University of Manchester, opened her book *Feminism and the biological body* with the phrase:

'It is a familiar story; anatomy is destiny, our hormones make us mad or bad, genes determine who we are. And not surprisingly, feminists usually oppose such biological determinism, for so often it seems to fix the status quo. To be determined by biology is to surrender to limitations, to deny the possibility of change'.²³⁶

In contrast to Freud's view, psychoanalyst Karen Horney, in 1939, questioned his statements (though she considered herself a psychoanalyst). She claimed that

'The wish to be a man, as Alfred Adler has pointed out, may be the expression of a wish for all those qualities or privileges which in our culture are regarded as masculine, such as strength, courage, independence, success, sexual freedom, right to choose a partner'.²³⁷

So, there were two opposing views in early psychoanalysis. The first being a Freudian one that claimed that the wish to be a man was based on biology and helped the healthy development of a woman's psyche. Alternatively, Horney saw the gender issue in psychoanalysis as a consequence of cultural restrictions imposed on women. When reflecting on the difference between men and women, A3 mentioned biology. She described the male's sex organ as 'hunter-seeker' and the female one as a 'container':

'that they have hunter-seeker organs and we have container organs and that is so powerful to pay attention to. And that's, that's the difference that I see...'

A13 emphasized that there were undeniable anatomical differences between men and women who might have shaped different roles and thus made astrologers see the Moon as feminine and the Sun as masculine:

²³⁵ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 62.

²³⁶ Lynda Birke, *Feminism and the biological body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 1.

²³⁷ Karen Horney, *New ways in psychoanalysis* (Oxon: Routledge, 1999). EPUB file.

'It's biological, right? Men have 25% more strength, they express the energy of outward action more. Women naturally have this aspect of receiving DNA from a person who isn't them, they receive it, host it, protect it. If they receive something from outside, they protect it, nurture it, care for it, and then bring it outwards. In other words, these are functions'.²³⁸

This idea may be echoing Lerner's work, where female bodies had to produce children.²³⁹ This perception could easily match the astronomical fact that the Moon reflects the light of the Sun, which has the power to give life.²⁴⁰ A7 emphasized Sun's life-giving quality:

'This is telling us, right?, that there is a solar principle of generation, that gives life, it is life-giving'.²⁴¹

A13 continued:

'So, astrologers observed this because it's evident, women host, give birth, care, because they protect that offspring, they have a different brain wiring... even in terms of the brain, today we know there are differences between the brains of women and men. And this leads the astrologer... naturally... to be a product of their time. At that moment, women had the reproductive function, period'.²⁴²

According to Lerner, this early biological distinction between male and female bodies was the beginning of the emergence of patriarchy. It was a 'necessity' for women to focus on 'pregnancy, child-bearing and nursing'.²⁴³ Thus the biological condition

²³⁸ 'Pensemos que tenemos hasta desde lo biológico, esto surge muy claramente, es lo biológico, ¿no? El hombre tiene un 25 % más de fuerza, expresa más la energía de la acción hacia fuera. La mujer tiene naturalmente esta cuestión de recibir el ADN de una persona que no es, lo recibe, lo aloja, lo protege, si recibe algo de fuera, lo protege, lo nutre, lo cuida y luego lo saca al exterior. Es decir, son funciones'.

²³⁹ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 111.

²⁴⁰ NASA, 'The Sun and Us'.

²⁴¹ 'Esto nos habla, ¿no?, de que hay un principio de generación solar, que es el que da la vida, dador de vida'.

²⁴² 'Entonces, los astrólogos veían esto porque es obvio, la mujer aloja, pare, cuida, porque protege esa cría, tiene otro cableado cerebral... hasta de lo cerebral hoy sabemos que diferencias entre los cerebros de la mujer y el varón. Y esto genera que el astrólogo, obviamente, forma parte de su tiempo. En ese momento la mujer tenía la función reproductiva y punto'.

²⁴³ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 41.

became a social reality through history. A13 explained how, what had started as a biological condition, became a cultural belief:

‘And the Moon is related to, of course, with the 28-day cycle of women, with the feminine. All these factors... there are many biological and external factors that are closely connected to what later emerges as a cultural archetype’.²⁴⁴

Though she specified that she was a great supporter of feminism and of the integration of both the Sun’s and Moon’s different functions, she insisted that astrology could not relinquish basic anatomical facts:

‘I see this a lot, that there’s a tendency to ignore the biological foundation of humans as if we were only spiritual beings, and okay, it might be that we have our spirit, our soul, of course. But that doesn’t mean we don’t have this body’.²⁴⁵

A14 also stated that there was an undeniable biological difference:

‘And one thing that the anthropologist did notice is that there are men, there are male bodies throughout the world and they all have penises and balls. They all have the same physiology.’

And he added that over and over again in consultations, men had problems accessing their Moon function. However, the reasons behind this were seen as cultural, not biological:

‘Many men are trained by this culture to selectively feel. So they think that their feeling system is like a light bulb and you can decide that you’re going to feel your feelings at certain times and turn the light switch off’.

A14 seemed to be supporting the idea that culture might have created gender norms that were binding. This could be linked to the performative quality of gender, as

²⁴⁴ ‘Y que la Luna tiene que ver, por supuesto, con el ciclo de 28 días de la mujer de lo femenino. Todos estos factores... hay muchos factores biológicos y del exterior que tienen mucho que ver con lo que después surge como un arquetipo cultural’.

²⁴⁵ ‘Yo lo veo mucho, que hay como un ignorar la base el sustrato biológico del humano como si fuéramos una entidad solamente espiritual y, ok, puede ser que tengamos por supuesto nuestro espíritu, nuestra alma. Pero eso no implica que no tengamos este cuerpo’.

described by Butler.²⁴⁶ Additionally, even if A2 did not apply the S=F/M=M theory, he still believed that women had special access to lunar functions and qualities, which shaped their psychology differently:

‘The fact that the ability to conceive human beings resides in a female body rather than a male body is crucial in shaping the experience of the Moon. A male doesn't have to contemplate whether he wants to carry and give birth to a being within his body or not. A woman cannot avoid considering it. The decision to become a biological mother or not is highly significant in the psychological and evolutionary development of a women’.²⁴⁷

Butler claimed that the compulsory question about motherhood for females was part of the performativity of gender.²⁴⁸ For A2, the question of motherhood was ‘crucial’ because of a biological condition, not a cultural one. The relationship between the Moon and femininity came down to a biological fact: the possibility of giving birth to other people. But it should be said that not all women can give birth. It may be hard to distinguish if this was a biological calling or a cultural one, or if both conditions were intertwined. A2 aligned with Freud, as opposed to Horney: anatomy was destiny, and women were called to decide if they wanted to be biological mothers or not. When asked about men, he replied:

‘Of course, men also face challenges with the Moon... with their capacity for containment, sensitivity, tenderness, the ability to protect, to care for life, and so on, and so forth. However, it's qualitatively different’.²⁴⁹

According to Lerner the difference may rise because women's reproductive quality was a resource that men had found a way to control.²⁵⁰ A woman's position in society depended on the man she was associated with, and this association was based on her

²⁴⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. xxix.

²⁴⁷ ‘El hecho que la posibilidad de engendrar seres humanos sea de cuerpo femenino y no de cuerpo masculino es determinante para condición a la vivencia de la Luna. Un varón no tiene que plantearse si quiere ser, si quieren engendrar un ser dentro de su cuerpo o no. Y una mujer no puede evitar planteárselo. Es muy relevante en el desarrollo evolutivo de una mujer de la psique de una mujer la decisión de ser madre biológica o no. Fuera de toda valoración moral’.

²⁴⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 118.

²⁴⁹ ‘Por supuesto, el varón también tiene desafíos con la Luna... Con su capacidad de contención, con su sensibilidad, con su ternura, con la capacidad de proteger, de cuidar la vida, etcétera, etcétera. Pero es cualitativamente distinta’.

²⁵⁰ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, pp. 212-213.

possibility of giving him children.²⁵¹ From this perspective, women had learned that motherhood was an effective way to be protected by men.²⁵² In the process of socialization, women learn to perform that role. In modern times, mothering as a feminine activity, inaccessible to men, may be one of 'the psychic difficulties' produced by social forms of gender, according to Butler.²⁵³

As mentioned before, A5 felt a bit more unsure about assigning genders to the Sun and the Moon and, even more, in relating those to biological traits. She claimed:

'It is... it is a spectrum, isn't it? [gender] It's not the same as a physical thing. Yeah? And it's not the same as the chart. It gets very complicated! You know, the chart is only showing you the psychological aspect of things and we all have, as we know, a feminine side and we all have a masculine side. So this is where I would use those words... to a certain extent'.

So, for her, biology did not imply a binary assignment of roles. And she would only use the terms masculine and feminine 'to a certain extent'. Here, she agreed with Horney in that biology was not destiny.²⁵⁴ A5 was echoing Campion's idea that everyone had an inner feminine and masculine.²⁵⁵ She also contradicted Bem's perception that two binary opposing genders had infiltrated every aspect of human experience.²⁵⁶ In fact, within the scientific community, the idea that sex was binary has lately seemed to lose consensus. Dorlin had shared how babies who did not fully follow the proper standards of a given gender were subjected to clinical intervention to make their bodies fit within gendered expectations.²⁵⁷ For many years, scientists believed that women's development was the default programme unless specific genes on the Y chromosome were activated.²⁵⁸ However, scientists have recently discovered that

²⁵¹ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 96.

²⁵² Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 92.

²⁵³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. xxv.

²⁵⁴ Horney, K. *New ways in psychoanalysis*. EPUB file.

²⁵⁵ Justine Paradis, 'Outside/In: Why is Astrology So Popular Right Now?'

²⁵⁶ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 80.

²⁵⁷ Elsa Dorlin, *Sexo, Género y Sexualidades*, p. 43.

²⁵⁸ Claire Ainsworth, 'Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic', *Nature* (22 October 2018) <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/sex-redefined-the-idea-of-2-sexes-is-overly-simplistic1/> [accessed on 13 August 2023].

there are also specific genes that promote ovarian development.²⁵⁹ All of these hormones remain active throughout life. These findings point to the possibility of sex not being a static characteristic given at birth.²⁶⁰ Additionally, anthropologists stated that biological sex could be understood as a complex addition of at least six factors: ‘physical appearance, internal anatomy, sexual organs, unique hormonal composition, genetics, and chromosomes’.²⁶¹ The story of María José Martínez Patiño, a professional sportswoman, may be used as an example of how these variations can affect people's lives. She had been examined and classified as a woman due to her female sexual organs.²⁶² However, in 1985, she had forgotten to bring her certificate of womanhood and had to undergo chromosomal analysis before she was allowed to participate in a competition.²⁶³ The results portrayed her as a man: she had XY chromosomes.²⁶⁴ She was not allowed to compete for fear that her biology was giving her an advantage over other female participants.²⁶⁵ This case revealed that ‘though sex has often been related to having a pair of XY chromosomes, this is not always the case’.²⁶⁶ Although biologists are developing and researching these approaches, these particular cases are seen as abnormalities.²⁶⁷ However, according to the United Nations, it is calculated that 1.7% of the world population is intersex.²⁶⁸ It may seem small but it adds up to almost half of the population of the United States (4.23% of the world's population).²⁶⁹

²⁵⁹ Claire Ainsworth, ‘Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic’.

²⁶⁰ Claire Ainsworth, ‘Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic’.

²⁶¹ British Association for Biological Anthropology, ‘BABAQ Statement on Sex Estimation’ (17 October 2022) <https://www.babao.org.uk/news-and-announcements/babao-statement-on-sex/> [accessed 13 August 2023].

²⁶² Pedro Cifuentes, ‘¡La Pati es un tío!’, *El Confidencial* (25 February 2021), https://www.elconfidencial.com/deportes/atletismo/2021-02-25/maria-jose-patino-atletismo-intersexual-genero-deporte_2965083/ [accessed on 13 August 2023].

²⁶³ Pedro Cifuentes, ‘¡La Pati es un tío!’.

²⁶⁴ Pedro Cifuentes, ‘¡La Pati es un tío!’.

²⁶⁵ Pedro Cifuentes, ‘¡La Pati es un tío!’.

²⁶⁶ Claire Ainsworth, ‘Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic’.

²⁶⁷ Claire Ainsworth, ‘Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic’.

²⁶⁸ United Nations, ‘Intersex people’ (2019) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/intersex-people#:~:text=Experts%20estimate%20that%20up%20to,of%20intersex%20human%20rights%20defenders.> [accessed on 13 August 2023].

²⁶⁹ United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ‘2022 Revision of World Population Prospects’ (2022), <https://population.un.org/wpp/> [accessed on 13 August 2023].

The point to be made is that the biological argument may seem objective because it is based on characteristics that seem evident: the external sex organs. But biological sex is made up of different components, most of them invisible to the eye, such as chromosomes.²⁷⁰ The presence of certain elements in anatomy such as sexual organs may seem an obvious way of differentiating men from women but it may actually be hiding other biological testimonies. This is what Bem meant when stating that biological differences were seen as objectively undeniable.²⁷¹ From this perspective, the choice of hierarchizing sexual organs over other pieces of evidence may unconsciously be expressing a cultural approach. As Butler would put it:

‘the *reality* of gender is also in crisis: it becomes unclear how to distinguish the real from the unreal. And this is the occasion in which we come to understand that what we take to be ‘real’, what we invoke as naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and re-visitable reality’.²⁷²

This may imply that when astrologers see the Moon as *naturally* being associated with womanhood because of feminine sexual organs of containment, they may be prioritizing one factor over others. The hierarchization of this element over others, to distinguish gender, may be the result of cultural conditioning. In sum, most of the astrologers I interviewed saw biology as an utter reality that could explain the connection of the Moon to women, as the Moon was linked to nurturing and birthing. A2 explained how it was one’s own biological sex that gave different access to lunar qualities. However, A5, following Campion’s claims, made it very clear that she understood gender as a spectrum that was not necessarily related to one’s physical genital anatomy.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to study the approach of astrologers to gender when interpreting the Sun and Moon. Due to the fact that only fifteen astrologers were interviewed, the results cannot be generalised, which means that these conclusions may serve only as starting points. Some of the astrologers I interviewed agreed that the Moon could be

²⁷⁰ British Association for Biological Anthropology, ‘BABAO Statement on Sex Estimation’.

²⁷¹ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, p. 6.

²⁷² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. xxiii.

seen as a feminine planet, while the Sun could be linked to masculinity. The definition of what this gender polarity meant was treated in different ways. In some cases, masculinity was seen as an externalizing motion and femininity as an internalizing process. In some other cases, the expanding nature of masculinity was related to light, while darkness was related to femininity. This created an easy connection between the Sun as masculine and the Moon as feminine, as the latter reflects the light of the former.

Fourteen of the astrologers were somewhat ambivalent in seeing the Moon in the natal chart as representative of the physical female parent and the Sun of the father. Nine of them said they did not apply this rule but then used it to explain how they read the astrological Moon and Sun. Two of them mentioned how their approach changed over time. The majority kept intermediate beliefs: that the luminaries could describe some characteristics of the parental figures but that they also represented some psychological function. This meant that the lunar role of nurturing, protecting, and caring for a baby could be performed by a male figure, which challenged a genderized approach to the Sun and the Moon. In contrast, there was one astrologer who clearly stated that the Moon and the Sun represented the physical parental figures. The reason behind this was the fact that all humans come from the body of a woman. He believed this had to be present in the chart.

Moving on to a more symbolic way of reading the Sun and the Moon in the chart, the idea of the archetypes of the luminaries as being gendered was explored. One of the interviewees mentioned that it was a good strategy to think in terms of gender when teaching, but not so much when working with an astral chart. For her, the archetypes of the planets were not gendered, they represented perspectives on life. On the opposite end, an astrologer believed that the archetype had an intrinsic nature that could be classified as masculine or feminine even if it expressed itself in the life and body of a woman or man. The idea that the Sun and the Moon may not necessarily represent the physical parental figures but the archetypes of containment and identity

was also explored. Greene said that these were inner subjective images.²⁷³ One of the interviewees also believed that whatever experience a person found in his/her/their mother was not exclusively qualities of the mother, but a manifestation of the person's chart. This could be linked to Knox's ideas of archetypes as emergent and thus, genderless.²⁷⁴

Most of the astrologers believed that the Sun was the life-giving body. Although they associated the Moon with mothering and nurturing, they ensured that it was the Sun who started and ended cycles. Following Lerner's approach to history, this could resonate with the development of a male entity that did not need a female counterpart to create.²⁷⁵ Masculinity could be seen as containing all life, complete in itself, while femininity could be read as the containing receptacle where life can grow.

The Sun, its light and power, was also related to the masculine principle of expansiveness and conquer. Sparky Kat explored this symbol and how the light of the Sun could hide other lights.²⁷⁶ One of the interviewees saw the prominence of solar symbolic thought as part of a masculine drive to separate from nature and move into a position of control. Though this process developed during the Enlightenment, it paralleled an endarkenment in which the Moon and its realm had been forgotten: the world of progression had taken over the world of emotions. Another astrologer saw a similar scheme but in a more personal way. He believed that if people were too focused on the Sun, they would focus on action and achievement and could lose touch with their softer, vulnerable qualities. So the light of the Sun could illuminate but in doing so, it was also endarkening. The concepts of cazimi and combustion could symbolize this dual nature of the Sun: life-giving and life-taking. Some astrologers emphasized that these solar possibilities did not have to do with it being treated as masculine but were more appropriately related to the propagation of its light. However, when defining the masculine principle, the expansion of light was one of the terms used.

²⁷³ Liz Greene, 'Mothers and Matriarchy: the Mythology and Psychology of the Moon', p. 27.

²⁷⁴ Jean Knox, *Archetype, Attachment, Analysis*, p. 94.

²⁷⁵ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 180.

²⁷⁶ Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, p. 38.

A paradox emerged when trying to see why astrologers linked the Moon and femininity to the body while the Sun and the spirit to masculinity. The world of the Spirit and the realm of the Sun was described as ineffable. But this idea was contradicted as the masculine principle was seen as more clear and trustworthy than the feminine one. Simultaneously, all astrologers except one related nature and the body, which has the qualities of presence and manifestation, to the Moon. But this seemed to contradict the relationship of the Moon to ideas of being hidden, unstable and dark. This might imply that the masculine/feminine polarity was not so strictly divided. Both the Sun and the Moon could participate in both ends of the polarity: body and spirit, the ineffable and the evident.

The idea that men and women related differently to the Sun and the Moon seemed to be supported by the biological differences in sex organs, according to some astrologers. This would agree with Freud's view: 'anatomy is destiny'.²⁷⁷ But current scientific ideas have questioned whether this external, seemingly objective manifestation of the sexes is overshadowing other ways of assessing masculinity and femininity. And Butler challenged the 'anatomy is destiny' statement with the idea of 'performative gender'.²⁷⁸ One of the interviewed astrologers was not keen to relate the Moon to feminine body functions so quickly. She stated that gender was a spectrum and not necessarily binary. Therefore, the Sun and the Moon did not have genders per se, according to her.

The soli-lunar relationship was also studied. Dane Rudhyar had suggested that the Moon, casting light from the Sun to Earth, would allow people to learn the meaning of the Sun in their chart.²⁷⁹ But some participants believed that the Moon could take over. The Sun became subjugated to the lunar needs of belonging. This could explain the previous paradox: the Moon was elusive in the sense that it took charge from the dark, making the Sun more ineffable. The latter was hiding behind the repetitive

²⁷⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love', p. 189.

²⁷⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. xxiii.

²⁷⁹ Dane Rudhyar, *The Lunation Cycle*, p. 40.

patterns of the astrological Moon. In this sense, the feminine polarity may be seen as somewhat more powerful and, contradicting Bem's theory, it would be the feminine that defined the masculine, or at least, the expression of it.

In summary, it seems that each astrologer applied the feminine-masculine polarity in their own way. Some read it in the study of the Sun and Moon in a very explicit way. For some others, these concepts were like guiding ideas to help interpret a chart. Roesler had claimed that these terms were too culturally charged and the way many of the interviewees treated the Sun and the Moon seemed to agree with the importance of culture in discussions about gender.²⁸⁰ Following the works of Lerner, Bem and Horney, it is hard to decide if these differences are inscribed in biology or in cultural and historical interpretations of anatomical differences. Nevertheless, it seems that, for astrologers, though the different quality between masculine and feminine is clear-cut, it also allows some margin for fluidity.

Some possible future research could be to study how gender is viewed when treating Venus and Mars. Some astrologers used them as examples when trying to explain what they meant by male and female. This may imply that these planets are more strongly associated with ideas of gender. It could also be significant to study how astrologers have changed their approach to gender as they gain more experience in interpreting charts.

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²⁸⁰ Christian Roesler, *C. G. Jung's Archetype Concept*, p. 91.

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