

THE VALIDITY OF ASTROLOGICAL STATEMENTS¹

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Astrological reports contain statements about dispositions and behaviours of the individuals under consideration. Because astrologers base their reports on variables such as time and place of birth and not on personal observation or testing of their clients, one might regard these statements as predictions. The validity of such reports may be evaluated retroactively after the subjects have died, or longitudinally, or by comparing their content with information provided by secondary sources. We took the latter approach in our investigation.

We obtained 30 astrological reports for 30 different individuals. We found that these reports contained 293 testable statements which were subsequently scored. If a subject possessed a particular characteristic according to the astrologer, this was scored as plus (+); if the astrological report did not include the characteristic, it was scored minus (-). Further, we solicited evaluations from psychologists who knew the respective subjects well and had been in a position to evaluate them extensively.

We found that in 187 cases the astrologer and the psychologist agreed that the subject possessed a particular characteristic; in 66 cases the astrologer ascribed a characteristic but the psychologist did not; in 19 cases they agreed that the subject did not have the characteristic; in 10 cases the psychologist ascribed one whereas the astrologer did not. In 11 cases identified by the astrologer the psychologist did not make a pronouncement.

Disregarding the latter 11 instances, we noted that the astrologer and the psychologist agreed on 206 cases and disagreed on 76. This 73% agreement level was significant ($\chi^2 = 17.41$, $p < .001$), indicating that there is great similarity between astrological and psychological statements concerning particular persons.

We approached the analysis from a different angle by assuming that there always will be chance similarities between statements originating from these two sources. We determined the chance score by comparing the astrological report for each individual, not with its corresponding psychological report but with that of a randomly chosen fellow subject of the same sex. We found there was agreement with respect to 140 of the 282 (293 - 11) statements; agreement of 50% as compared to the original 73%. A binomial test for large samples with correction for continuity gave a z of 7.7 ($p < .001$).

The findings suggest that those who value psychodiagnosis must also value astrological reports. It should be noted, however, that the design favoured the astrologer because we limited the investigation to statements which originated from the astrological reports. In other words, we conformed ourselves to the frame of reference of the astrologer. Moreover, we should not disregard the possibility that an astrologer speaks in such general terms that the report almost always will apply to someone. On the other hand, the same statement could be made of many psychological reports.

Accepted April 4, 1988.

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