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A SAILOR'S GUIDE TO EARTH

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INTRODUCTION : On the practices of mundane Astrologies :

[[If you know why you're here, you can skip the introduction]]

Astrology, in essence, is of mundane concerns :

Celestial traffics are laid down by astrologers, ancient time keepers, who articulate them through a set of topologies.

These topologies - between the vaults of the sky and the anticipated patterns on earth - are documented and guarded as sacred records, along with their symbolical correlations.

The whole practice functions according to a set of rulerships.

Each sign is traditionally ruled by one of the 6 moving celestial bodies perceivable with the naked eye : The Moon ☾, Saturn ♄, Venus ♀, Mars ♂, Mercury ☿, Jupiter ♃, and the Sun ☉.

In turn, signs are divided into one of four elements :

Earth ▽, Water ▽, Air △, and Fire △.

Each astrological sign in this system can be paired by two: by opposition.

By pair, they form total elemental complementarities, either fire/air or earth/water elemental opposition.

This guide will be a journey through the 3 earth/water oppositions of the system, and their respective associated planets.

These oppositions are what we'll call the axes.

Before we engage in this journey, and in order for you to bear with me, it is essential that I tell you what process I will be taking you through. As a developer of the practice myself, I have been working on connecting these symbolic meanings with their mundane origins, as a geopolitical practice.

The intentions for this work appear to be dual :

First, undertake a comparative study of the philosophical implications and the imaginaries that compose astrology, as a cultural heritage, and as a language through which most of the themes that make up our societies can be articulated.

Second, manipulate and negotiate this language, in order to prepare for future, alternative articulations : provide a margin of interpretation through which we can re-imagine the craft in times of political, cultural, and climatic pressure.

In his masterclass : *From Gafa to Gaïa, the imaginaries of the ĩ* , Alain Damasio suggests a set of key points of inquiry to ensure that the position of the political imaginaries we open, the way we conceive them, and the values they carry, provide a fertile ground for more considerate, or respectable, political models. He shares this perspective on how language, as a vector of emancipation, can always be negotiated, re-invented, and re-invested, but doing so does not come without power. I've boiled down some of the central questions that Alain Damasio spawns during this class into 3 fundamentals of my own concerns, which will make up the overarching framework for the structure of this research :

- **Is the imaginary I open up restrictive or normative?**
- **To whom may it be a form of alterity?**
- **What does it potentialize?**

Each axis, ultimately, will hold one mission : to bring into being, through the study of our historical reverence to stars, new spaces to formulate and discuss mundane concerns; while answering respectively one of the 3 questions formulated above. Hopefully, by moving through these 3 Axes, we'll engage in our questions with nuance, and contribute to a grounded research into the complex meanings they carry.

This double framework should set a stage from which ethical and caring astrological forecasts can emerge, supporting a close investigation of the approaches through which the practice may evolve, a space to sketch out some of the technical and underlying aspects of it.

The reason for the elemental focus will be revealed later.

I hope for this work to be a humble account of my practice, as well as the drafts of a handbook, which hopefully, participates in the collective writing and framing of astrology, as a complex research tool, capable of articulating a language that is both culturally grounded, and politically engaged. A handbook to navigate the current events, equipped with a vocabulary that exposes and investigates power dynamics and patterns. A method of commitment towards social change.

It is important to understand what types of truths we manifest,
and how we engage with them.

I also hope for it to be accessible, and of interest, to anybody – no matter their stance or previous background in astrology.

Skeptics are just as welcome.

PS :

"Any system of meaning is political, because meaning is power, as we all know, though meaning is capricious, and promiscuous, and shape shifting."

How to Tell When You're Going to Die: Astrology for Writers' - Johanna Hedva,
Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, Online Studium Generale lecture

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CHAPTER N°1 : THE SHORE

Research Unit :

Cancer ☾ // ♄ Capricorn -
THE MOON + SATURN

→ Is the imaginary I open up restrictive and normative?

MOON/CANCER: THE GRIT THAT SEEDS THE PEARL

(Ɔ)

*“I’ve been thinking all day about the moon...
... the whole ocean reacts to the full moon, right? In a serious way.
Everything’s ticking around that moon, and if we’re 70% water we must be having some
— at least homeopathic — relationship with the changing cycles of the moon.”*
(Anhoni, 2012)

What makes astrology so substantial, as a tool of meaning, is how every concept runs into each other, connecting in some respect.

It is a system of mapping: Isolating its parts is feasible, but such evaluation would prove to contribute to a poor appreciation of the underlying socio-cultural mechanisms, and the subtleties, that the whole map may reveal.

Each unit of the astrological system can be inspected through an order of progression, a continuum that sketches out a set of paradigms. The generated maps meticulously document the ways in which they **interact** with each other.

“Whenever we speak of [symbolic] contents we move in a world of images that point to something ineffable. We do not know how clear or unclear these images, metaphors, and concepts are in respect of their transcendental object. . . (However) there is no doubt that there is something behind these images that transcends consciousness and operates in such a way that the statements do not vary limitlessly and chaotically, but clearly, all relate to a few basic principles or archetypes.” (Jung, 1938)

According to Carl Jung, archetypes are archaic forms of innate human knowledge passed down from ancestors. Although the number of archetypes is limitless, there are a few particularly notable, recurring archetypal images: *“the chief among them being, the shadow, the wise old man, the child, the mother, the maiden.”* (Jung, 1959)

These archetypes represent universal patterns, images that are part of the collective unconscious.

The sign of Cancer is one of these archetypes, ruled by the moon Ɔ .

In astrology, there’s this triad consisting of the moon, the ocean, and the sign of Cancer.

The crab, living by the shore carrying its home with it, is a nurturing, caring archetype.

It’s the mother archetype. In several mythologies, Mother earth represents the fullness of time, the idea of change within nature, where all things are born and then die.

In the echoing depths of our collective consciousness lies the mother myth,

mother earth, the source of all life and therefore of all death.

A primordial being that also represents chaos.

In Comparative planetology, *Lukas Likavčan* explores different technological tools that allow the study of the planets, including earth, and how the imaginaries they might open, allow for the imagining of a different planet. He studies how new technologies of sensing, capturing, and perceiving -- like those which gave the first-ever glimpse of Earth from the Moon in the 1960s -- might have well produced a transcendental effect on our collective unconscious. He proposes a few archetypal images of the earth: the Planetary, the Globe, the Terrestrial, Earth-without-us, Spectral Earth... Each of these figures is a visual paradigm.

ESS (Earth System Science), as described by *Lukas Likavčan*, is a viewpoint said to have emerged in the '80s, in which the structure and functioning of Earth are understood as a global system: *"a series of complex adaptive systems, that embody evolutionary processes on different spatial and temporal scales.*

[...]—an open system in which organic and inorganic inhabitants, as well as their collectives, metabolize flows of energy, material, and information.

[...] a system of interactions between all of its elements, capable of absorbing and responding to external and internal influences." (Likavčan, 2019)

The first-ever pictures of our planet taken from space, images like "Earthrise" or "The Blue Marble", and the new technologies coming along with them, were constitutive in our understanding of nature as a being as such. Therefore the imaginaries produced behind these pictures open up new ways of imagining the earth, new intimate relationships to it, new spectacles of nature. They completely reshape our understanding of the world, they drastically impact the way we interact with it.

Kant, in the 18th century, already talked about a phenomenon of "transcendental aesthetics" which occurs when the conditions of all sensitive intuition are exposed. When this transcendental shift occurs, the "concepts" and "principles" by which we understand the functions of our world are irreversibly shaken. Kant takes the example of Copernicus: at a time when the whole army of stars was still thought to revolve around us, he shifted the whole imaginaries of the universe, succeeding to provide a better understanding of it. Through the slight mental shift of imagining that the world did not turn around us, but that we turned around the sun, the whole understanding of the -solar- system was forever changed. The pleasures aroused by these spectacles of nature, according to Kant, or by the sights of the starry skies, were capable of generating concepts and ideas with bright futures. Concepts not yet resolved, not yet fully described, but felt. Concepts not proved but experienced: ideas foreshadowing movements of imagination -- and their close to impossible conceptual crystallization.

In medieval times, probably before that, many suspected already that the Moon affected the tides. They also thought the Moon affected human psyche in equally mysterious ways. It's still a known fact, today, in mental health, that people are more excitable around the full moon. Gravitation wasn't thought of as a force that affected destiny, but as a physical force that might, in some ways, affect matter: after all, and in most respects, we're also just agglomerated pieces of earth.

"... in the moment of ritual divination the exclusive dualisms of subject and object, mind and matter, what is outside and up there (including stars) and what is down here and inside (including genes), partially dissolve in awareness of cosmic connection. Multiplicity remains, separation remains, but there is also relatedness, there is participation." (Curry, 2004, p.3) People who menstruate can also experience their bodies in synchronicity with the moon. They were very probably the first observers of the basic periodicity of nature. Periodicity upon which all later scientific observations were made. They were the first to note a correspondence between internal processes they were going through and external processes in nature. "The world-view that separates the observer from the system he observes, that imagines that the universe can be split into mere subjectivity and real objectivity, is not of her doing." (Thomson, 1981, p.97) The moon moves in cycles with our bodies, and it moves our oceans. While Isaac Newton came along to prove the latter, there is, yet, no scientific evidence -- or proven links of causation -- between the moon and menstrual cycles. Nor between any other celestial body and human temperament. Nonetheless, the study of tides originated from the simple observation of existing relationships between the skies and the earth's oceans -- of the unsure response of these oceans to the moon. The study of tides, as the variation of sea levels due to gravitational actions, can now be calculated with precision over periods of several thousands of years.

4.5 billion years ago, Earth was hit by an impact of such violence that some bits of it detached, later agglomerating to form the moon. It's not exactly certain, it's one of the hypotheses. Some moons have formed from gaseous disks of dust while others are thought to have formed independently, then pulled into the gravitational field of planets. Other moons, like ours, were probably the result of cataclysmic collisions. Our Solar System has considerably evolved since its initial formation: so has, and will, our understanding of it.

Early calendars were based on the moon. Full understanding may never be reached, but it is a goal still strived for by most. In the earliest history of humanity, they held sacred status, not only providing the basis for maintaining agricultural cycles, civil events, and hunting purposes, but also came along with stories that engaged in understanding and connecting to the universe.

SATURN/CAPRICORN: THE HARBOUR

(12)

"Consum'd by thee all forms that hourly die,
By thee restor'd, their former place supply;
The world immense in everlasting chains,
Strong and ineffable thy pow'r contains
Father of vast eternity, divine,
O mighty Saturn, various speech is thine:
Blossom of earth and of the starr"

Hymn to Saturn, by Orpheus

In Greek Mythology, the constellation of Capricornus was created by **Saturn** : Immortal Pricus, the father of Sea-Goats, shared Saturn's ability to manipulate time. Sea-goats were honorable creatures. They were favored by the gods and lived in the sea, near the shore, where they could talk, and think. As they grew up, they started wanting to leave the ocean to climb the mountains. Every time they tried to leave, Pricus would go back in time to keep them with him. Eventually, he resigned, letting them leave the ocean. In fear of eternal loneliness, he begged Saturn to let him die... but his immortality was/ is inevitable. To ease his pain, Saturn lets him forsake the oceans to spend the rest of eternity in the sky, watching over his children, as the constellation of Capricornus.

In a sense, our oldest myths are archetypal: they function to organize how we experience certain things. They provide structures, systems of understanding, thought patterns, which we owe to millions of years of human development. Myths and stories are part of our landscapes.

'*In the Desert of Modernity*' was an exhibition that took place in 2008, in Berlin, at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. Its curation aimed at providing a shift in perspectives, re-claiming context for the modern architectural mass-housing projects in North Africa (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco). These *Deserts of Modernity* are the result of colonial settlements: protectorates -- under French and Italian colonial conditions. With the beginning of industrial urbanization processes, new gridworks and models appeared which quickly became ways in which the working class and the Global South were, and are still, governed and controlled. These particular settings were also testing grounds -- devastated laboratories for vast-scale experimentations before their implementation in European Metropolises' suburban or working-class areas.

In The Funambulist Magazine, “Weaponized infrastructure”, Leopold Lambert introduces the issue with a quote of Hubert Lyautey, the first French Resident-General in Morocco between 1912 to 1925: ‘A construction project is worth a battalion’. (Funambulist, 2018) This understanding of architecture and planning as a bio-political tool generates new discourses in the study of our relation to space, as a set of socio-cultural patterns. Most often, master planning is instigated to cement ideologies and perpetuate forms of violence. These architectures and infrastructures, that delineate space, are important components of the Earth-system(s) we inhabit. They are socio-economic articulations based on biopower and control.

"Yet as enlightened as modernist planning may have seemed at the time, and as progressive as it may now seem in retrospect, military technocracy, the white man's burden and a chauvinist sense of purpose – all anchored by the strict paternal genius of the master builder – were also inscribed in the rationalized grid." (Miller, 2008)

The gridworks of capital and empires regulate objects and subjects according to the knowledge created around them, not the other way around.

To talk ‘planetary’ referring to an undivided natural space often lacks to contextualize globalization as the imposition of the same systems of exchange, communication, and belief. Technologies and their history are evidence of the cultural mindsets of a society. Globalization, as a project of instrumentation and programming of Earth, is greatly inherited from colonialism. It suggests a mode of technology similarly aligned with colonial projects -- aggressive territorial expansion, commercial gain, historical patterns of social control. Military ambitions harbor wills of their own.

“In Roman times, Saturn was the one, true king of an imaginary golden age, a rhetorical symbol of nature that existed to criticize existing government powers.[...] Saturn was both the wish for an utopia where the present day government did not exist and the fear of a dystopia where man was subject to the whims of nature unshielded.” (Alice sparkly Kat, 2019)

Saturn is a dry and cold planet.

In ancient astrology, it was thought to be standing at the edge of the solar system.

It was the furthest, and slowest moving planet visible to the naked eye:

delineating the edges of our system.

It takes 30 years for Saturn to complete its elliptical orbit around the Sun.

Saturn could have been a sun itself, if it had attracted enough mass to become one.

Unprosperous at doing so, Saturn sleeps in darkness.

What happens in this axis is that Cancer, the 'mother' archetype, and Capricorn, the 'father' archetype, interact as oppositions. Perhaps this is what makes the Cancer/Capricorn axis so important. The moon, the closest celestial body to earth, is said to underline how we relate to the sense of Home. Saturn, thought to be the furthest, is about discipline and ambition. Together they boil down to what we build for ourselves when we settle for so-called 'homes'. The Cancer/Capricorn axis represents the evolution from the nebulous depths of the emotional ocean waters to the highest top of the mountain peaks.

When they found themselves on the drylands, the sea-goats turned into just goats, losing their ability to think and speak in the process, as their call to duty pushed their emotional interests to the side. Through the evolution of mythology, there was a turning point when the ancient Mother Myths were overthrown by Sun Gods and heroes, the national myth became a thing. Late Chronos, war hero, and god of time, as an all-devouring, all-consuming force, can be traced as far as the Roman empire - This sets the contours of *our* modern empires.

When Saturn is involved, it is all about crisis in general.

What Saturn historically does, in astrology, is that it pushes to reflect on issues related to pressure, trials, tribulation, and control issues. It rules our true, tangible boundaries: the methods that we use to keep societies in order, and what stands for the notion of 'order'. The grounds, the infrastructures, the buildings, the roads, the borders: anything structural, anything that allows passage.

Those who sail, small, seeing their horizon be forever pushed-away, know about the vastitude of the ocean, of the earth, and of the sky.

But the seamless oceans and the boundless skies are deceiving as infinite spaces.

Modern astrology associates Capricorn, the daddy figure, with things like business, authority, bosses, financial success, and worldly power. In this respect, we usually refer modern day to Capricorn as a Goat ~ without a fishtail.

"And it might sound far-fetched, but if you look at your own beliefs, just imagine how quickly you accepted the idea that the ocean is rising and the ecology of our world is collapsing. We can actually imagine that more readily than we can imagine a switch from patriarchal to matriarchal systems of governance — a subtle shift in the way our society works." (Anthoni, 2012)

OVERALL QUESTION FOR THE READING :
Is the imaginary I open up restrictive or normative?

As civilizations, we introduce a certain sense of regularity, of order in what we call nature. This *natural* order of things is originally set by us, by the nature of our mind, by the observations we make of ourselves and our environments.

The impermeability of ideas concerning empirical evidence, and the consequent dismissal of ethics, of values of care, and of collective studies, is damaging, and already widely questioned within different feminist, post-colonial, and anticapitalist approaches to philosophies of science. The structuring of space, of time, and of knowledge -- as we know it -- should continuously, repeatedly, reappear as a subject of political and philosophical dispute: the act of structuring, as part of epochalisation projects, needs to be challenged, relegated, and confronted.

With the sands of our shores together with anything from the nebulous depths of the ocean to the highest mountain peaks, so unwisely treated as an inexhaustible commodity, there is no place or time to discredit or reject any form of philosophy that confronts the established order of things. The rush to expel cosmogonic myths to the periphery of reason cannot simply be justified by the fact that they escape 'modern' equipment for comprehension : It is a philosophy of the mind that is at stake.

CHAPTER N°2: THE GATES OF HADES

Research Unit :

Taurus ♉ // ♏ Scorpio -
VENUS + MARS

To whom may this imaginary be a form of alterity?

VENUS/TAURUS: THE SIN OF SLOTH

(♀)

While **buying** and **selling** may strike as opposites, they are, in fact, inseparable; mutually interdependent. They share an implicit identity, for the simple reason that one cannot exist without the other: two ends of one event, here, a financial transaction.

The same **synthesis** happens in astrological philosophy: when two signs form an opposition, they're said to be complementary; if one manifests uncontrolled, capricious natures, its opposite side will naturally absorb these areas of impulsiveness, digest them into their most disciplined form. It works through **reciprocity**, both ends of one axis need to integrate the principles of its opposite end. Otherwise, their respective strengths are bound to be misunderstood - or worse - abused.

Venus and Mars, historically, have always been understood in a close relationship. 'Women come from Venus and Men come from Mars', they say. Together, they represent feminine and masculine archetypes. Quite ironically, the alchemical process associated with Scorpio, ruled by Mars, is separation.

Everything around this Axis is what happens when we're encountering money or lack thereof. Taurus, ruled by Venus, represents our direct access to needs: what ensures a healthy, or at least bearable, survival on earth: the sense of contentment of having coins in your pocket. Scorpio, on the opposite side, ruled by Mars, represents the money of the collective : Inheritance, taxes, debts!

'The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing' (King James, 1611)

Venus, which rules Taurus, is associated with what's pleasant and enjoyable. In mundane astrology, Venus connects to national resources, financial institutions, courtship, and marriages: social pleasures, as well as diplomacy, ceremonial functions. Venus, the brightest wandering planet visible in the sky, is often associated with love and affection. It is peace but also war. Or the negotiations that lead to peace; diplomatic resolutions. One of the recurrent themes, though, for the category *Negative traits of Taurus*, in modern astrology, which is quite paradoxical here, is laziness. Taurus, ruled by Venus, is said in modern empires to be stubborn, sensual, and 'lazy'.

Feminist science studies often work on reconditioning and enriching reflections around fundamental objectivity of interpretation: working with data is not simply being able to visualize it, but also being able to question what constitutes the context in which it was produced. Paying attention to the contingent relationship between object/subject-formation and imaginative production is necessary.

As one might think, for instance, that *The Sin of Sloth* finds the entirety of its origins in the church, it's a little more complicated than that.

Gayatri Spivak, in *Death of a Discipline*, explains that 'planetary' originally denotes an ambitious ethos of comparatist literary reading, that "locates itself between the text and the world." (Spivak, 2003). Comparative literature, coined by Spivak, emphasizes the importance of paying careful attention to understanding historicism and humanism as not confrontative with modern life, but as 'complementary, even mutually constitutive..' In 'Reading *The Satanic Verses*', she recontextualizes secular rationalities, originating in European Enlightenment philosophies, as serving particular communities of speakers:

"The ethical has to entail the universal, although it must always also be accessible to a singular or a collective cause. The attempt to fashion an ethical universal out of a religious base, which is subsequently not called Christian but simply secular, then goes out of joint with the conjuncture, especially with a (national) subject not of the monopoly-capitalist dominant." (Spivak, 2013)

Otium, was a Latin abstract term that meant formative idleness. In antiquity, there was still a strong understanding of this notion of Otium. It meant withdrawing from daily business (negotium), to engage in activities that were considered to be artistically valuable or enlightening. In ancient Rome, it could have either virtuous or immoral implications. It's only towards the 13th century, idleness starts becoming a sin, or let's say, a social distinction, a bourgeois practice...Along with the mercantile renaissance, and the whole pro-work, anti-idleness philosophies that gradually settled in the collective infra-conscious.

Today, laziness is still associated with both indiscipline and immaturity. It's a serious offense, to be doing nothing productive. It falls under personal responsibility:

If you don't work, you're not participating in the collective effort. If you're poor, it's because you're lazy: this fake meritocracy makes the poor deliberately targeted enemies of society. It's the rich merchants, firmly in place, powerful and dominant, who turn idleness into a scourge. Be that as it may, still today, idleness is criminalized on an institutionalized level. The desire to implore universal ethics as some objective quintessence is always biased. Ethical formations arise out of specific historical circumstances.

“With its throttling, its stasis, its lesions, its neuroses, the capitalist state imposes its norms, establishes its models, imprints its features, assigns its roles, propagates its program... Using every available access route into our organisms, it insinuates into the depths of our insides its roots of death. It usurps our organs, disrupts our vital functions, mutilates our pleasure, subjugates all lived experience to the control of its condemning judgments.” (Guattari, 2007)

At the same time as clocks multiply all-around European cities, businessmen, churches, people of letters, etc, start putting forward the value of time. It's the beginning of the whole *Time is money* thing: time is your most precious possession, and since money meets all needs, there's no better way to spend your time than to work. Idleness needs to be controlled. Gradually the church starts to integrate *laziness* as the refusal of daily labor. Poverty totally shifts from being in the humble image of Christ to being associated with fear, contempt, mistrust. Parallely, labour forms, over and over, are layed out as abusive, destructive. This reflects the set of protocols that hold a capitalist world together. As a means of survival in these deserts of modernity, magic has become a field of labour, nonetheless under constant stress of being marginalized -- sometimes even still criminalized with considerations of being 'false' or 'idle'.

Consortium, is another Latin term, meaning "partnership", "association" or "society". It derives from *consors* ("shared in property"), itself from *con-* ("together") and *sors* ("fate"). One thing that has always allowed people to surpass themselves was collective intelligence, cumulative knowledge, social intelligence. Magic, as a means of making sense of events and experiences builds up a world of the qualitative, not the quantitative. The practices of magic, originally, are all about community, solidarity, participation. People who gather to debate, agree to disagree, do research, share, and pass on. It is exactly this : Idleness.

It does not contribute directly to the ruling sets of order, nor fit within the supremacy of orders regulated by modern technologies. It was a means of collective engagement, but also the refusal of a certain order of things.

With the appearance of early capitalism, a whole world of activity, of values, of beliefs, were criminalized, erased, vilified. They were considered obstacles to social discipline, to labour orders, to this new capitalist society.

MARS/SCORPIO: THE POOR, THE LAZY, THE WITCH

(♃)

A dangerous idea we have is that progress and emancipation were gradual; constant throughout history. It's dangerous because it separates the way we understand our present with the conditions that led to it.

In contrast to what we typically imagine of the Middle Ages, the anti-capitalist resistance movements were pretty politically, and philosophically, sophisticated. Through medieval Europe, in the midst of the shift from feudalism to capitalism, there was both resistance to persistent forms of feudalism, and to the emergence of capitalist economy. A lot of these movements were led by women.

"The goal of capitalist society is to transform life into the capacity to work"

(Federici, 2004)

What Silvia Federici shares in *Caliban and the Witch*, is the need to understand how witch hunts have played -- and are still playing -- a huge role in the way the world is shaped today, and how they are not so much a product of the feudal world, or the religious associations of the middle ages, but more of a result of the political and social transformations taking place towards a capitalist economy. With the appearance of this early capitalism, not only did women's property rights, or right to *work* go into retrograde, but a whole new sexual division of labour was organized. Women, more and more excluded from the workforce, were made in other ways the object of direct appropriation by the state. Such an order can only be implemented by installing a climate of systemic violence. A whole set of practices like abortion, contraception, sex work, were increasingly criminalized or subjected to harsher restrictions. Midwifery and medicine, in general, were taken away from women.

We talk about *violence* like we know and agree exactly on what it means.

There are occurrences of violence but no social *order* maintains itself solely by perpetuating physical forms of violence.

Violence itself is a language we learn to interpret.

Rules or expectations of behaviour – norms.

It is neither present nor absent because it is always potentially present.

Violence is a warning, a threat, the possibility of more violence.

Ultimately, violence has scenarios, nodes, but no contours:

It's not only a set of isolated, spontaneous phenomenons, but rather a product of social corrosion. The abuse of means of control.

It is important to understand this shift in knowledge production as taking place primarily within the secular, economical world, because this very real violence is still happening today, under the different forms of surveillance and capitalism.

“Extraction shrinks possibilities. It works upon people, animals, plants, or the land, and shrinks the futures that can be held, reducing life through indirect pressure. A network of beings is measured by the smallest unit of logics the law can hold: £, \$, €. Futures wither along the pressuring axes of corporate law and logistics” (Van Der Drift, 2019)

Infra- is what is below, beneath. Infrastructure is not only the basic architectures, systems, network technologies and services that support a country, an economy, or any other system, but also what . The philosophies, true aspirations, and doctrines embedded within the minds of whoever is building these networks, what makes up the built in dominant ideologies. To make sure this idea gets translated again, I will paste this one last quote about the matter: "Urban infrastructure is a gear of political power. Its aim is to conquer the territory of the city and hold dominion over certain city relationships. Public space is more than just a polygon delineated by coordinates, it is a factory of social realities." (Peredo, 2017)

The architectures and infrastructures that sustain how the world functions, and define the patterning of social forms -- roads, bridges, communication networks, forms of exchange -- still define the present under unjust terms of right distribution. The possibility to revise architectures as mirroring a whole set of political intentions, hidden beneath structural organizations -- the will to adjust and repair these practices -- is still not enough considered. It is however precisely these acts of infra-structuring time, space, and thought, as part of projects of epochalisation, that still need to be challenged. They surveil and control our bodies, in and out of lands, in and out of rights, in and out of citizenships. They play a massive role in imposing and creating more or less bearable lives.

In online spaces too, for example, most true, communal forms, or non-profit-oriented practices, are pushed to the side: almost made impossible through desirability politics or algorithmic silencings. Expression is being surveilled and used to turn us into commodities. If you're not producing, then you're buying. If you're not buying, then you're the product. Prevailing hygienist discourses are more than too often only just inspired by the desire to control. Ultimately, these platforms are not created to connect us but to make money. Contents are consequently policed.

For the past centuries of human history, in most technological fields, we have been facing the curse of invisible users. Olia Lialina affirms, for example, in a digital media context, that the “Invisible User” is a standardized user, oblivious to his rights, a right that sums them all: the user’s right to literally use the net. The right to adopt and customize technologies in creative, unexpected, unpredictable, participative ways. The right to leave a trace beyond the expectations of the original programmers.

This Axis is sometimes called the Gates of Hades.

The story of this axis is, in reality, that of the lazy, of the poor, and of the witches; The one of any non-conforming minds or bodies that capitalism still continues to ban, vilify, persecute, and criminalize.

The Venus//Mars opposition tells a story, one of how self-assertion - and the parallel *loss of a true sense of community* - have been standing in the way of properly functioning political systems. The destruction of communal regimes and the criminalization of collective, occult, self-organized, and marginalized practices have emerged parallelly to land privatization and capitalism.

Legends still record stories of mortals who entered or were abducted through such gates of Hells.

Capitalism wants us to believe there is no other alternative.

Idle eyes know that it’s not true.

OVERALL QUESTION FOR THE CHAPTER :

To whom may it be a form of alterity?

Every story carries a message, holds philosophical, moral, political positions. By completely discrediting any confronting philosophy, the ideas created around modernity perpetuate biased distinctions between civilized/uncivilized, ruler/powerless, and specialist/layman. In contrast to the dismissal modernity has towards any other belief than the belief in its own authority, the conventions lying within patriarchal beliefs, capitalism, ableism... more of the -isms, *gasping for air* and so many more of what we have to call 'phobias' — though incredibly damaging, are rarely considered irrational so long as their structural formations benefit the power structures in place.

When we're expected to reject the supra-natural, we're consequently asked to take up a particular view of what is 'natural'. This directly embeds the discussion around knowledge production within the context of its imperial and colonial heritage, providing some context for the contours of what I would advocate to call modern Empires: the "military-digital" complexes that exercise power and control over space-time unity.

As an idea, astrology relies on both idleness and collective participation.

As a practice, it relies on 4000 years of cross-cultural -- oral and written -- archive.

Some of this archive -- discredited, obliterated -- is the archive of the same anti-capitalist voices that still, today, are constantly silenced.

Re-admit astrology into the cultural conversation is a radical stand for what both the capital and the state mock, marginalize, ignore -- and sometimes appropriate or exploit. Dealing with this cultural heritage and its significance stipulates a continuous process of negotiation and re-evaluation.

CHAPTER N°3: THE DESERTS OF MODERNITY

Research Unit :

Pisces ♀♀ // ♍ Virgo -

JUPITER + MERCURY

What does this imaginary potentialize?

PISCES/JUPITER : THE GREAT UPHEAVAL

(24)

CONJUNCTION :

An alignment of two planets or other celestial objects so that they appear to be in the same -- or nearly the same -- place in the sky.

This chapter, the Virgo // Pisces axis, will stand as a space to talk about exactly how, and why, this project started. We'll engage in the work.s I hope for this practice to generate, and I'll try to round up some context for the current research I am leading. This research started in the summer of 2020, when I engaged in studying the upcoming Great Conjunction of the month of December (2020), between Jupiter and Saturn.

There is in Jupiter, the ruling planet of Pisces, something that allows for the digestion of reality, the perception and the embodiment of the things we do, a sense of orientation. Only through this digestion can we be leading towards eventual re-orientation. Jupiter is the biggest planet in our system, and the third brightest.

Hopefully, now, you have now also grasped the outlines of Saturn. You know that when Saturn is involved, the events we go through are extreme, visceral and problematic. Saturn commands.

Great Conjunctions of the past ~100 years :

Date :	Degrees (position) :		Conjunct in sign of :	Associated element :
	Jupiter,	Saturn		
1901 28 NOV -	13CP51,	13CP56	> Capricorn ♄	earth ▽
1921 8 SEP -	26VI08,	26VI12	> Virgo ♍	earth ▽
1940 6 AUG -	14TR16,	14TR23	> Taurus ♉	earth ▽
1940 21 OCT -	12TR22,	12TR24 r	> Taurus ♉	earth ▽
1941 13 FEB -	08TR49,	08TR59 r	> Taurus ♉	earth ▽
1961 17 FEB -	24CP46,	24CP59	> Capricorn ♄	earth ▽
1981 1 JAN -	09LI30,	09LI30	> Libra ♎	air ▲
1981 5 MAR -	08LI05,	08LI06 r	> Libra ♎	air ▲
1981 24 JUL -	04LI55,	04LI55 r	> Libra ♎	air ▲
2000 28 MAY -	22TR34,	22TR23	> Taurus ♉	earth ▽
2020 21 DEC -	00AQ19,	00AQ24	> Aquarius ♒	air ▲

There's this cycle of Saturn(♄) and Jupiter(♃).
The furthest, and the largest moving planets in traditional astrology.
They come together every 20 years, roughly : It is called the Great Conjunction.
According to astrological meaning, this cyclical conjunction marks historical eras.
Together, they are **markers of time**. When Jupiter and Saturn come together, there is both the intensity of old forms dying and a new growth taking shape. It is often said that these Great Conjunctions have intense power to shift the focal areas when it comes to both expansion and restriction.

In 2020, Jupiter and Saturn aligned in the air sign of Aquarius.
This conjunction is also known as the Great Upheaval, one which should mark the start of a 130-year cycle, roughly: a new cycle begins that will last until 2159.
Since 1802, Jupiter and Saturn have been aligning in earth signs.
For the past 200 years, they have been conjunct in earth signs.
For the past decade, they have been slowly shifting into constellations representing the sign of air. We had a glimpse of it in the '80s when they conjunct in Libra.

As we have established, colonialism played a central role in the constitution of modern European understanding and shaping of the world. In the Funambulist, *Architecture & Colonialism*, they state these two arguments: "colonialism is not an era, it is a system of military/police, legal, administrative, social, and cultural system of domination; and, architecture is not (only) an aesthetic vessel, it is an apparatus organizing and hierarchizing bodies in space" (Funambulist, 2017).
Infrastructure changes are usually neither initiated, nor conceived by the first affected, but by those who benefit from contracts and investments that directly profit from the construction of such structures, cityscapes, digital platforms, infrastructural data archives. Our daily lives depend as much on the architecture of the building as on that of virtual infrastructures. The same questions of structure, layout, access, route, visibility, protection, and identity run through the physical systems of structures and link up our different uses of technological constructions -- whether physical or digital.

At the time I started this work, I was reading *Architecture of survival*, by Yona Friedmann, where he explains that *Architecture of Survival* can be understood as the opposite of the *survival of architecture* - as a discipline.
His ideas revolve mainly around self-organized systems in urban infrastructure and architecture, defending the idea that master designers cannot, and will never truly, answer the needs of the people. The only way towards satisfying, sustainable outcomes is through systems of self-organization. Yona Friedmann suggests an approach to architecture where architects would only be consultants, supporting collectively determined projects.

"Who's right is it to decide, who holds the power of agency over architecture?
How to ensure this right goes to those to whom it belongs?
How to do it in a world that is heading towards increasing poverty?
How to survive in such a world?" (Friedman, 1978)

During a conjunction, both forces of the planets involved confront their energies, formulating the need to shift focus towards the particular fields of understanding the planets represent. Earth signs are said to focus on oil extraction, heavy machinery, earth industries. Air signs are all about communication networks, information technologies, the internet. It is sometimes said that the extractive forces that have been focusing on earth for the past 200 years will now re-orient their interests towards more intangible concerns: strives towards more data, more control over communication resources.

If there is a shift in the way the quest for power manifests itself, what are the patterns that we can analyze in order to prevent this spread of authoritarian and centralized powers, undermining any real possibility of justice and equality in the future of our infrastructures? How can we articulate ways in which some tactical 'positive' discourses around political architectures can be translated or applied into the realm of the virtual, where the needs to materialize resistance against imperialism, border enforcement, capitalism, and/or patriarchy, are just as urgent.

In Logic Issue 12, titled Commons, they say that: "The information age began with dreams of a common language. The internet would let any network speak to any other. It has since been described as many kinds of places to gather: a public square, a mall, a street, a garden, or utopia, which is another way of saying no (real) place at all." (Logic, 2020) This allegory between physical and digital public space suggests that the projects that are implemented in digital infrastructures might just be intrinsically recognizable patterns, intimately motivated by the same forms of power as those that have been, and are still focusing on harder infrastructures.

Beyond the obviousness of their irreducible material dependencies, they are engaged, at an ideological level, in shaping the same patterns as those inherited from critical moments in the perception of human evolution. The spread of modern technologies. Not only is there inherent violence in their designs, but also this violence translates within the tangible dependencies of these digital platforms. The myth of the cloud, for example: there's no cloud, there are data farms, mass server farms, spread across the world. There is labour that goes into our digital connections, metals that are mined in the global south under armed surveillance. In this context, the increasing proliferation and promise of digital technologies are hugely urging us to shift our shared understandings of the architectural world, and cross-examine it in close relation to the emergence of a new, spacial, digital world.

How can the way we order physical space help us understand the creation of spatial models in the digital? How can we translate patterns of resistance in physical space towards new solutions in our more intangible, digital, (soft), networks ?

It works in reciprocity:

How do both spaces confront? How are they similar?

How can the digital participate in the perception of new, physical, spatial models?

How can both ongoing discourses merge to formulate new forms of dialogues?

Can our apprehension of built environments and inhabitable, delineated spaces become more equitable, more inclusive?

“When we decide to approach architecture as “the discipline that organizes bodies in space,” countless texts can be commissioned and written about how architecture materializes various forms of political violence. Yet, it is much harder to articulate a tactical ‘positive’ discourse about political architectures.” (Funambulist, 2019)

Through cross-examination and juxtaposition, we can participate in emphasizing a need to hold conversations over the varied pervasive methods that have been used on land and in space. Through using the insurgent narrative of this shift of power, and to engage in a process of investigation, these were a few of the questions guiding the beginning of this report. During a Great Upheaval, the urge is to focus the perspective on how technological practices, as fields of expertise, are all facing similar challenges. We need to be looking for analogies, similarities, and translations. We need to become the inhabitants of this imperial world, the ones who transgress its typologies and reclaim its environments. Those who, however, manage to negotiate with these deserts of modernity.

VIRGO/MERCURY: RULES WORK OUT OF NECESSITY

(♄)

"-logy", from "logos", in ancient Greek means: 'speech', 'account', 'story'. It was used to invoke the idea of "gathering", of "collecting", "understanding".

That’s exactly the role of Mercury, who rules Virgo. Mercury is the messenger of the skies. Virgo is the harvest, when we separate the good grain from the bad grain. Before Virgo entered this world, it was spending some time in the most perfect and heavenly place in the universe; when it was sent to earth it felt the urge to redesign and rethink everything that was dysfunctional. Virgo needs to make sure that the way we approach any technical, tangible dependency to a matter is sustainable. That's why it is often understood as an organized, methodological, analytic archetype. It is all about looking for patterns.

“No doubt human life, placed on the earth, is surrounded by automatic processes—by the natural processes of the earth, which, in turn, are surrounded by cosmic processes, and we ourselves are driven by similar forces insofar as we too are a part of organic nature. Our political life, moreover, despite its being the realm of action, also takes place in the midst of processes which we call historical and which tend to become as automatic as natural or cosmic processes, although they were started by men. The truth is that automatism is inherent in all processes, no matter what their origin may be—which is why no single act, and no single event, can ever, once and for all, deliver and save a man, or a nation, or mankind.” (Arendt, 1977, p.168)

Like science fiction, astrology relies on the exercise of political and social anticipation, on speculating the ways we envision future livings together. Even though ideologies can be criticized, and political regimes can be overthrown or disowned, it always leaves behind some kind of heritage, some ways of thinking and feeling, some good old habits. Some obscure and abstruse drives. We are never safe from history repeating itself, it works in cycles. As a magical practice, it is not so much of an ‘escape’ from this world, but rather a set of conditions, contours, coordination points, and timings for the production of a mode of being within and with the world. Contemporary schools of astrology, in this same way, see astrological readings as correlation, not causation, reflecting meaningful coincidences which can help seek insight.

“The positions of the heavens at a particular moment in time, by reflecting the qualities of that moment, also reflect the qualities of anything born at that moment. [...] One does not cause the other; they are synchronous, and mirror each other.” (Greene, 1978)

It is a work of observation carried out simultaneously with a work of interpretation: a search for synchronicity.

It’s in the midst of the Second Millennium BC, in Mesopotamia, that the character of the times started being determined by cycles of heavenly bodies.

This principle was conceived as a wave-like motion, related to processes such as the rise and fall of civilizations, war and peace. These simple representations of affairs would resurface more than a thousand years later in Greek philosophy e.g. Plato (The Great Year) and Aristotle.

In astrology, between a conjunction and an opposition phase, there is an outgoing phase (+) and between the opposition and conjunction an incoming phase (-).

This can be compared to the phases of the Moon. Between New Moon and Full Moon, the moon is in a waxing phase and subsequent waning. These guiding principles are easy to understand, and the basic concept remains the same.

This concept can be retraced pretty much anywhere throughout history.

REVOLUTION (n.)

originally of celestial bodies "course, revolution (of celestial bodies)" (13c.), or directly from Late Latin 'revolutionem' "a revolving"

General sense of "instance of great change in affairs"

When it comes to power struggles, the truths we engage with and the stories we tell each other are at stake. Language is never just there, never neutral, nor innocent. There isn't such a thing as objectivity when it comes to ideologies.

For example, *Revolution*, itself, such an important word in our vocabulary today, comes from 'revolvere' 'revolucion', in Latin. It means overthrowing an established political system, just as much as it means rotating an entire cycle around the sun, coming back to the exact same place, or time.

"Similitude was the basis of many forms of pre-17th century knowledge. An epistemology based on similarity allowed for a rich tradition of magical thinking to thrive. [...] astrology is exactly that : a type of magical thinking, one which relies on two similarity patterns. The first is "emulation," which sees similarities between distant things that seem to answer one another. The second, "analogy," notices the resemblances of relationships between things." (Shorin, 2016)

We sometimes have a tendency to get stuck in the way things have been, when their original calling is to move us forward into the future. That's an age we should be moving out of.

Astrology is a form of fabulation. It doesn't require strict rules or boundaries in the ways science strives for, or capitalism craves to organize labour. It is not something that can be explained, only resonated with. It's not something that can be proven, only experienced. Technically, we can understand the practice of astrology, under most aspects, as a practice of data-gathering, map-making, and pattern-seeking.

Astrology is a fabulation, a performance, the production of a different kind of affect.

An affect thanks to which eventually, we can manage to steer this ship.

OVERALL QUESTION FOR THE READING :

What does it potentialize?

What makes Myth so powerful is its applicability.

All myths have an origin, a reason, a 'truth': the ability to read between the lines of these truths might sometimes be the only way to activate their true abilities and power.

Myths are not irresponsible fabrications, they respond to necessities.

As a language, astrology lays down a framework through which events can be witnessed, articulated, interpreted, archived, and organized: It was crafted and drafted to organize and agence collective responses to the world we observe: as a method, a mechanics, it leads towards ways of expressing theory that uphold conversation as the highest mode of speculation.

As a technology, it has been re-manipulated, re-interpreted, re-crafted, and re-worked by humanity, transculturally and for several thousands of years.

As a mode of investigation, astrology brings together alternative discourses, eventually enriching ongoing conversations.

There is something fundamental about astrology, a sense of timing.

It pushes research to dig into analogies, correlations, and similarities,

into different aspects of the hybrid forms that make up our imaginaries.

It can potentialize revolution.

CONCLUSION :

On the delusion the technical work ∇ is ever morally neutral ∇

Technologies - *languages are* part of these technologies -- have been, and are still, massively utilized, weaponized, and corrupted to service the expansion of authoritative/imperial power dynamics.

As we complete this journey through our 3 water/earth oppositions, it is time to study how these two elements form their complementarity.

∇ **Water**, in Astrology, refers to our deepest emotions, morals, and feelings.

∇ **Earth**, as a whole, is fundamentally linked to matter and substance:

the ground that we stand on, the technical, tangible world.

They are opposites. They merge to remind us that technical work and their moral drives share an implicit identity. One cannot exist without the other.

To this extent, the drive behind the Sailors' guide to Earth was to explore the idea of the impossibility of innocence when it comes to the architect, the myth-writer, the master creator: the delusion that technical work is ever morally neutral.

Thoughts and language alike, are fictions, not objective realities.

When most of our attitudes towards meaning perpetuate entitlement and control, how can we collectively take responsibility for evolving culture over time?

We might just as well recognize that everything we think we know, to some extent, is also fiction, and really, the best we can do is to come up with fictions that respect -- and are sensitive -- to the needs of those we base our fictions on.

The practice of astrology is not only driven by the will to cultivate intuition, thoughtfulness, and empathy, but also to provide an emancipatory language practice, empowering and encouraging collective, participative, generative research.

I hope to have provided an understanding of this practice, as one that is not deterministic, but generative. One that does not strive for precision, but for creativity. One that does not rely on - and even rejects - any causal, fatalistic, or restrictive approach. A practice that supports a shift from top-down hierarchical structures to horizontal networks, able to emphasize and dissect where power dynamics urgently need to be interrogated. A practice that may lay down and create some of the conditions for ethics that inspire positive action in the public realm.

Overall, I hope this work will inspire future uses of that language, through which the rawness of conversations and stories can be fully explored:

extended, expanded, extrapolated always further, or rooted even deeper.

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