

Charting the Cosmos Online: Astrology as Lived Contemporary Esotericism in Digital Communities

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Abstract

This essay examines how esoteric information is being disseminated and reproduced in virtual spaces through examining the media practice of modern astrologers. It centers on a tutorial video by Kapiel Raaj, a popular Vedic astrologer on YouTube,¹ and challenging it to practice by Chani Nicholas, who combines astrology with feminist and therapeutic terminology on Instagram² and her smartphone app; the work explains how new cosmologies are made readable. Both of them depict astrology as a practice of lived esotericism, expressed through metaphorical systems, interactive formats, and personal empowerment. Building on Kennet Granholm's book, re-enchantment thesis of late modernity³ and adopting user engagement witnessed on Reddit forums like r/AskAstrologers,⁴ this article positions astrology as a digitally mediated experience based practice. This study adds to the study on esotericism through a comparative, media sensitive examination of how online astrologers make spiritual meaning and authority within emerging digital subcultures.

Keywords

Digital Esotericism, Astrology and Media, Symbolic Ritual, Networked Religion, Participatory Spirituality, Online Cosmology, Therapeutic Astrology, Virtual Ethnography.

1. Introduction

Western esotericism scholarship has long been intrigued by hidden esotericism in ancient texts and secret societies. Interest in contemporary esotericism and internet mediation is only just starting to change. This article contributes to the new picture by examining astrology as mundane esotericism, deliberately built and spread through the internet. It does so by analyzing media created by astrologers who employ YouTube, Instagram, podcasts and online forums such as Reddit in order to convey spiritual significance through metaphor and visual cues.

Instead of considering esotericism as a doctrine system, this paper makes use of Kennet Granholm's hypothesis that esotericism can be thought of as a discursive formation whose functions are determined by

¹ Kapiel Raaj, *How to Read a Basic North Indian Vedic Birth Chart*, YouTube video, posted Sep 27, 2013, <https://youtu.be/ihieO3VdyWQ>.

² Chani Nicholas, Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/chaninicholas?igsh=a3NrMDI1MzUybThl>.

³ Granholm, Kennet. "Contemporary Esotericism." In *Contemporary Esotericism*, edited by Egil Asprem and Kennet Granholm, 375. London: Routledge, 2013.

⁴ Reddit community r/AskAstrologers, <https://www.reddit.com/r/AskAstrologers/>.

technology and culture.⁵ He suggests that esoteric terminology is more and more accepted through media, lifestyle and individual spirituality. According to Partridge, occulture is the storehouse of esoterically or spiritually oriented ideas, beliefs, practices and symbols that are increasingly spread through popular culture.⁶ This occultural dissemination is best illustrated by the emergence of astrology on YouTube and Instagram. Unless ritual practice is at issue, during the course of this study, the astrologers' visual and symbolic material on Instagram simply will be called "Instagram posts" for convenience. That goes some way to the reason why astrology survives in the internet, most emphatically not as entertainment, but as an arena for meaning making, identity formation and empowerment.

Astrologers like Chani Nicholas, position the natal chart as a metaphor for individual freedom and transformation,⁷ while Kapiel Raaj's Vedic teachings employ metaphysical symbolism to instruct chart reading on YouTube.⁸ These numbers are between cosmical discourse and mundane applicability. Their creations translate to Christopher Partridge's concept of occulture, a cultural space where religious thoughts and imagery infuse popular discourse.⁹ Meyer's aesthetic construction illuminates the ways in which sensory and stylistic elements, visual style, tone and symbolic recurrence, are used to construct a sense of spiritual belonging, whereas Partridge's occulture maps the cultural diffusion of spiritual symbols into popular culture. Meyer's aesthetic formation explains how emotional tone, symbolic style and sensory experience, in media cultures especially, bring about religious affiliation. Together, they demonstrate how esoteric meaning is culturally situated and emotionally engaging. Meyer focuses on how these symbols acquire emotional and spiritual depth through aesthetic presentation, while Partridge maps the cultural circulation of esoteric symbols.

2. Aim and Research Questions

By this study, I'll examine the ways astrology functions as a personal practice and spiritually received in the course of contemporary media culture. Through critical analysis, I'll explore the ways astrologers proactively and actively create and share information on internet based platforms, exchanging their perspectives and esoteric knowledge on sites such as Reddit and YouTube.

It builds on Kennet Granholm's theory of re-enchantment anthropological analysis of astrology and Heidi A. Campbell's concept of networked religion to understand how hidden meanings are shared online; Campbell's idea of networked religion, focuses on how digital media shapes spiritual meaning. In contrast, Granholm's re-enchantment thesis sees astrology as a symbolic reaction to the disenchantment of the modern world. This paper looks at both the form of media and its spiritual role and seeks to answer the following questions:¹⁰

⁵ Granholm, "Contemporary Esotericism," 375./

⁶ Partridge, Christopher. *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1, Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture*. London: T&T Clark, 2004, 62.

⁷ Nicholas, Chani. *You Were Born for This: Astrology for Radical Self-Acceptance*. New York: HarperOne, 2020, 1.

⁸ Raaj, "How to Read a Basic North Indian Vedic Birth Chart," 00:01:06–00:02:50..

⁹ Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1*, 68.

¹⁰ Granholm, "Contemporary Esotericism," 377; Heidi A. Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 70.

1. In what ways, do current astrologers share specialized knowledge via symbols, ritualistic discussion and individual stories on the internet?
2. How do members of astrology websites jointly create or question specialized power and meaning by taking part in online discussions?

3. Delimitations

This study examines how astrology is expressed digitally as a form of lived esotericism, starting in 2015. It concentrates on publicly available, English content shared through YouTube, Instagram, Reddit and podcasts. To keep the focus on symbolic, spiritual and participatory roles, it does not cover offline esoteric practices, subscription services or astrology's deterministic and predictive aspects. This focus on time and media, reflects changes in digital culture, like the move toward self chosen spirituality and media based rituals. Drawing on the emphasis placed by scholars like Mia Lövhheim on symbolic presence and identity in digital contexts, this analysis explores how religious practice in new media environments fosters community and meaning making.¹¹ These boundaries prioritize content that reflects spiritual interpretation and communal meaning making.

4. Method

Using qualitative methods of digital ethnography and critical discourse analysis, the public content data obtained from astrologers on platforms like YouTube (for example, Kapiel Raaj), Instagram (for example, Chani Nicholas) and Reddit, will demonstrate current sites as online, virtual spaces in which symbolic communications and community discussions occur. Christine Hine argues that virtual ethnography involves interpreting online interactions and texts as culturally situated actions, shaped by users' understandings and expectations.¹² As she puts it, ethnography is not simply a matter of describing the Internet, but of exploring the ways in which it is experienced and made meaningful by its users. This means that Reddit threads, YouTube comments, and Instagram posts, especially those with ritualistic framing, are not just content, they are expressions of community norms, symbolic behavior, and negotiated meaning. This approach works well for understanding the casual, shared behaviors of everyday esotericism. We may examine the commonplace and everyday facets of Internet use and regard them as culturally relevant, as Hine points out, thanks to virtual ethnography. Users are engaging in culturally contextual rituals of decoding and confirmation, for example, when they use poetic metaphors to understand planetary aspects on r/AskAstrologers. So, videos, posts and comment sections function as channels for exchanging esoteric insight and experiential wisdom. For Hine, the Internet may be viewed as a platform for performing identity and enacting cultural practices. Accordingly, visual signals, timing and audience engagement, co-create spiritual legitimacy in media environments that act as ceremonial spaces. For example, Kapiel Raaj's video

¹¹ Mia Lövhheim, "Identity," in *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, ed. Heidi A. Campbell (London: Routledge, 2012), 41.

¹² Virtual ethnography collects data from online interactions, like comments, hashtags, emoticons and how people act on certain platforms. This differs from standard ethnography, which often uses field notes and direct observation in physical communities. It shows how identity and ritual can change in online spaces where people take part in cultural practices that happen at different times and use various media.

“How to Read a Basic North Indian Vedic Birth Chart”, explains Vedic cosmology with images and straightforward language.¹³

As a link is created by Chani Nicholas between astrology, understanding and caring for one's body,¹⁴ Members of the community are introduced to chart readings and symbolic interpretations by the r/AskAstrologers subreddit.¹⁵ Drawing on Norman Fairclough's model of discourse, this study explores how varieties of language and discursive practices contribute to the production of social meaning and authority within contemporary cultural settings.¹⁶ Looking at emic and etic views, this analysis explores practitioner's way of thinking against the researchers' perspectives; i.e., Clifford Geertz's detailed articulation supporting the content fitting into a broader, ideological context.¹⁷ By recognizing their language, rituals and metaphors as meaningful expressions rather than subjects of criticism, this study employs the emic approach to comprehend how astrologers and users understand planetary symbols from inside their own cultural and spiritual contexts. Using theories of ritual, media and esotericism, it simultaneously employs the etic perspective to examine these practices via academic lenses. The work of celestial vagueness is to disrupt instead of clarify. It introduces a self consciously ambiguous tension that causes perception to fail instead of move forward. Here, Neptune ceases to be either myth or substance but more a symbol for the unsayable, for what resists speech. To understand is to yield the holiness of the unspoken instead of to knowledge.

To ensure academic accuracy and focus, source material was picked using interpretive and practical standards. The people chosen for study have a constant presence in digital esotericism and are often cited by others. For example, Chani Nicholas and Rick Levine have many followers and teach astrology using different methods (text, podcast, app), giving detail for analysis. Also, Kapiel Raaj's YouTube channel has over ten years of Vedic teaching, with thousands of comments that help with understanding how it is received.

The material was chosen based on its symbolic depth and ritual context. Preference was given to astrologers whose ideas clearly connect to inner change, patterns, planetary stories or spiritual form. Astrologers were chosen, when possible, who show a complex understanding; astrology is viewed as a changing guide for the self, not just a fixed prediction, having clear transformational meanings. This was often clear from their repeated use of words like soul's purpose, which point to a deeper meaning beyond common astrology focused on personality.

Christine Hine's approach to virtual ethnography treats media environments as both sites of cultural formation and cultural artefacts shaped by social expectations.¹⁸ The Internet must be viewed by the

¹³ Christine Hine, *Virtual Ethnography* (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 67; Ibid., 9; Ibid., 65; Ibid., 52; Kapiel Raaj, “How to Read a Basic North Indian Vedic Birth Chart,” YouTube video, 00:01:06–00:02:50, posted by KRShannel, Sep 27, 2013, <https://youtu.be/ihieO3VdyWQ>.

¹⁴ Chani Nicholas, “Horoscopes for Venus in Leo,” Chani Nicholas, July 22, 2023, <https://www.chani.com/today/current-sky/horoscopes-for-venus-in-leo-2023>

¹⁵ Reddit community r/AskAstrologers, example post: “How do I read this Pluto aspect?” accessed July 11, 2025, https://www.reddit.com/r/AskAstrologers/comments/1b6xl37/howtightanorbdoyouneedtoreadfora_pluto/.

¹⁶ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 222.

¹⁷ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 9.

¹⁸ Hine, *Virtual Ethnography*, 28.

ethnographer as a setting in which culture is created as well as a cultural artifact, she adds.¹⁹ Both personal spirituality and platform driven conventions are reflected in Chani Nicholas's style on Instagram stories, commenting style and commenting customs, demonstrating this dual role. Astrology content changes, it isn't fixed. It's a symbolic story that happens over time through things like live streamed predictions or horoscopes that tell people what to do. I looked at older recorded material, like YouTube videos and blog posts and specific moments like New Moon forecasts from June 2025. The way I understood this, involved constantly thinking about the insider outsider view (emic/etic). Hine highlights that reflexivity is crucial to understanding the fieldwork experience, and that the ethnographer's stance is always partial and situational.²⁰ This reflexivity which necessitates a continuous balancing act between involvement and observation, is consistent with Hine's emphasis on the researcher's embeddedness in digital culture. When I could, I treated what people did and said as coming from their own understanding of the world. Seeing how these assertions made sense and what they accomplished for individuals was my focus, not determining whether they were true or not. Books and scholarly concepts helped me comprehend these behaviors by providing context.

The method takes inspiration from Clifford Geertz's idea of "thick description".²¹ The goal is not to boil down specific media to a social purpose, but to follow its creative designs. These are the symbolic frameworks that turn astrology into ritual and engagement with cosmology. While this research takes a multi platform ethnographic approach, it is one that targets readily accessible English language content. It thus, overlooks some specialist content behind paywalls or in other languages. In addition, the way each network is used may divert attention, with YouTube concentrating on longer stories and Instagram concentrating on images.

5. Theoretical Structure

5.1 Symbolic Meditation and Theoretical Foundations

With the use of digital media conditioned symbols, behavior and experiences, the current study contends for astrology as a case of practiced esotericism. In this study, "lived esotericism" refers to the experiential and bodily interaction with esoteric symbols, cosmologies and rituals in daily life, especially when it is mediated through digital platforms. This idea stresses how people enact spiritual meaning through metaphorical expression, digital interaction, and personal transformation rather than viewing esotericism as a set dogma or secret tradition. Drawing from Kennet Granholm's discursive method, which frames esotericism as a culturally conditioned formation, and Wouter Hanegraaff's concept of re-enchantment, as a symbolic response to modern disenchantment, it places esotericism in open, participatory practices rather than obscure literature.²² Granholm points out the media's influence on specialized discussion, while Hanegraaff focuses on the return of spiritual symbols in non-religious places. Astrology's reinvention on the internet, demonstrates how symbolic systems from the past can be reinvented into something new and meaningful. What was previously discarded, is used to help people make sense of themselves and the world they live in. Astrology turns into a lived esoteric system in this situation, serving as a symbolic interface that allows users to understand planetary motions as ritual prompts, therapeutic aids and personal narratives,

¹⁹ Ibid., 14.

²⁰ Ibid., 65.

²¹ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 359.

²² Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1*, 4.

drawing on Granholm's view of esotericism as a media conditioned discursive category²³ and Hanegraaff's concept of re-enchantment as symbolic response to modern disenchantment²⁴ This study contends that digital media enables individuals to embody and execute esoteric identities.

Kennet Granholm agrees with this perspective, moving away from fixed definitions of esotericism. He focuses on how it is transmitted through performance and media, with knowledge spreading in combined religious and non religious areas.²⁵ Partridge focuses on the dissemination of symbolic meaning in both religious and nonreligious contexts, along with the transmission of esoteric knowledge through media and performance. As occulture is the environment in which new spiritualities emerge and are disseminated, Partridge highlights,²⁶ esoteric innovation thrives on sites like Reddit and YouTube. Partridge's occulture and Meyer's aesthetic formation are double vision that make visible the ways digital esotericism works through affective and stylistic indications, that encourage collective identity and symbolic dissemination. Meyer talks about how good presentation helps to create emotional and spiritual depth, while Partridge looks at how spiritual symbols have spread into popular culture. Kapiel Raaj, a YouTube astrologer, makes difficult cosmological ideas easier to understand by using visual symbols. For instance, Raaj says that a birth chart always has houses, but the sign changes about every two and a half hours. This shows a symbolic interpretation of how the heavens change.²⁷ Antoine Faivre's idea that symbolic links exist between planes of reality, can be seen in how astrologers use charts to connect cosmic patterns with personal meaning.²⁸ Platform features such as emojis, slide carousels, comment practices and hashtag systems, reshape this reasoning. These online behaviors, building on Heidi Campbell's framework for how religious communities negotiate media through cultural practices and communal meaning making,²⁹ don't waken spirituality; instead, they build new kinds of rituals and power.

Social media aesthetics make this change bigger. On Instagram, Chani Nicholas³⁰ joins cosmic events with affirmations; for example, Venus in Leo asks for bold self love, so her images have spiritual meaning. Rick Levine combines Jung's archetypes and astrology, seeing transits as narratives that can be therapeutic. In a video from March 1, 2024, he says that astrology is the language of archetypes and shows the psychological dramas we act out.³¹ These examples suggest astrology now functions as a symbolic system online, which connects personal identity with cosmic narratives, not just a body of knowledge.

5.2 Contemporary Esoteric Astrology in Practice

"Today, esoteric astrology functions not just as a system of beliefs but as a metaphorical framework that fosters spiritual growth. Instead of focusing on predictions, it views the birth chart as a representation of

²³ Granholm, "Contemporary Esotericism," 384.

²⁴ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 31.

²⁵ Granholm, "Contemporary Esotericism," 384.

²⁶ Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1*, 74.

²⁷ Kapiel Raaj, *How to Read a Birth Chart in Astrology and Vedic Astrology*, YouTube video, 14:26, posted by KRSchannel – Learn Astrology, Sep 27, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihieO3VdyWQ>.

²⁸ Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 10.

²⁹ Heidi A. Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (London: Routledge, 2010), 6.

³⁰ Chani Nicholas, Instagram, October 4, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/chaninicholas>.

³¹ Rick Levine, *Rick Levine's March 2024 Forecast: ELUSIVE DREAMS (Don't Stop Believing)*, YouTube video, 00:13:30–00:14:26, posted by Rick Levine Astrologer, March 1, 2024, https://youtu.be/ru3Z2b_QUFU?si=9BLsxhQHBFbd5yn.

possible beginnings, guiding the soul's growth; while rooted in Alice A. Bailey's work",³² contemporary esoteric astrology is formed by astrologers such as Kelly Surtees,³³ Rick Levine³⁴ and Jessica Lanyadoo.³⁵ These astrologers disseminate esoteric concepts by means of podcasts, YouTube channels and websites, blending theoretical views with therapeutic methods.

In esoteric astrology, the Ascendant is a basic idea. It shows the soul's real purpose, not just a social front. The Sun stands for the aware personality. The Moon holds our past karma, traumas passed down, or habits we don't think about. Astrologer Rick Levine often says these three are the key starting points in a birth chart. He thinks the Moon tells our story, the Sun gives us our drive, and the Ascendant shows what we're here to become.³⁶

In his June 2025 Forecast, *Testing the Limits*, Levine employs archetypal vocabulary to interpret Pluto's transit through Aquarius, calling it an archetypal rupture in the collective psyche. He suggests that we are actively experiencing the myths associated with these planets, instead of simply observing them.³⁷ Esoteric astrology places importance on personal change instead of just telling the future, which is why it has moved from being passive to being more hands on. Levine noted in past forecasts, like *Boiling Point* (April 2025), that a crisis has a mythical side: Pluto isn't a wrecking ball. It's initiation by fire.³⁸ In other words, in esoteric astrology, "initiation by fire" refers to an ideational process of transformation whereby planetary tension is interpreted as an incentive for spiritual or psychological growth.

Astrology is linked with energetic intent, Kelly Surtees explains. She suggests using people's willpower to construct new structures, toward new beginnings as opposed to changes, in her top selling article, *Three Tips for Saturn in Aries*.³⁹ Saturn is viewed by Surtees to be a planet that shows spiritual vigor via conscientiousness and work and not one of hard influence. Surtees tends to make use of esoteric planetary rule, referencing the place Mercury stands in superior rule of Aries and never Mars. In her series of teachings, *A Fresh Take on Essential Dignity*, she states, "When Mercury rules Aries, resolve becomes speech. The soul's wish turns into a mental shape".⁴⁰ This reconsideration aids Bailey's thesis that the

³² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology: A Treatise on the Seven Rays*, Volume III (New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1951), 5.

³³ Kelly Surtees, "Three Tips for Saturn in Aries: Independence and Disintegration," Kelly's Astrology, July 13, 2025, <https://www.kellysastrology.com/2025/06/20/three-tips-for-saturn-in-aries-independence-and-disintegration/>.

³⁴ Rick Levine, "June 2025 Forecast: Testing the Limits," YouTube video, 1:07:45, posted May 31, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqijcfl5se4>.

³⁵ Jessica Lanyadoo, "387: Empathy vs. Punishment," Ghost of a Podcast, December 20, 2023, <https://www.lovelanyadoo.com/ghost-of-a-podcast/2023/12/21/387-empathy-vs-punishment>.

³⁶ Rick Levine, *Rick Levine & Steve Judd: Astrology Hub Podcast*, YouTube video, 00:22:41, posted by Astrology Hub, October 30, 2023, <https://youtu.be/iYJ8EHtkGrs?si=aPrnHPGpVr30kJ7>.

³⁷ Rick Levine, *Rick Levine's June 2025 Forecast: TESTING THE LIMITS*, YouTube video, 01:13:30–01:14:26, posted by Rick Levine Astrologer, June 1, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqijcfl5se4>.

³⁸ Rick Levine, *Rick Levine's April 2025 Forecast: BOILING POINT*, YouTube video, 01:34:08, posted by Rick Levine Astrologer, April 1, 2025, <https://youtu.be/jDUHh4LX2Pk?si=GTGguN1RYDFB3z1>.

³⁹ Kelly Surtees, "Three Tips for Saturn in Aries: Independence and Disintegration," Kelly's Astrology, June 20, 2025, <https://www.kellysastrology.com/2025/06/20/three-tips-for-saturn-in-aries-independence-and-disintegration/>.

⁴⁰ Kelly Surtees, *A Fresh Take on Essential Dignity Bundle*, online course, Kelly's Astrology, November 6, 2023, [\[https://www.kellysastrology.com/product/essential-dignity-bundle/43dcd9a7-70db-4a1f-b0ae-981daa162054\]](https://www.kellysastrology.com/product/essential-dignity-bundle/43dcd9a7-70db-4a1f-b0ae-981daa162054).

energization of different rulers of planets, is based on the initiatory state of consciousness, cerebral, emotional or physical. As ethics must be lived and not just theorized, the Sagittarius Full Moon in June 2025 invites us to live to the truth.⁴¹ The initiation theories of esoteric astrology align with Surtees' rhetoric of spiritual duty, which unifies temporality, mythology and moral behavior.

On the 406th Ghost of a Podcast, Jessica Lanyadoo delves into esoteric beats with sensitivity and stresses emotional coherence and interpersonal boundary healing. As she reinterprets Saturn, its transits are crucial restrictions guiding a person's life route.⁴² Instead of forecasting the future, Jessica Lanyadoo reframes expansion, views structure as protection, and containment as healing. In her podcast episode, Empathy vs. Punishment, she notes that astrology should encourage compassion and self awareness instead of imposing moral judgment or definite results.⁴³ Esoteric astrology requires that the user take an active part in initiating planetary forces, as opposed to being a passive recipient of them. Chatelaine's horoscopes are often filled with ritualistic suggestions and intuitive advice. The June 25–July 1, 2025, forecast, for instance, recommends, "Let the New Moon be a soft landing after seismic shifts. Anchor your peace. Reclaim your boundary".⁴⁴

Another wellknown figure in modern esoteric astrology is Kira Taborn, a professional full time astrologer and teacher who is a regular speaker on The Astrology Podcast.⁴⁵ She reconfigures conventional astrological practice in terms of empowerment, healing and identity, which are the bedrock values of lived esotericism. In a widely shared article on Medium, astrologer Anna Marie explains the symbolic function of the lunar nodes.⁴⁶ "The South Node is a representation of your karmic force, but not your history. And the North Node? That's the edge of your soul's unfolding story".⁴⁷ Catherine Bell's theory of ritualization, under which spiritual meaning is encoded through repetitive performance and metaphor, can be seen in this symbolic discourse. Taborn, just like her family, considers astrology as a tool of individual growth. They execute rituals such as ritual journaling, lunar ceremonies and natal chart casting for this.

In The Astrology Podcast episode Astrology, Fate and Destiny, Chris Brennan and Taborn discuss how using planetary symbolism can cause people to think about the bigger questions of life. Astrology doesn't inform people what to do but indicates the potential, Taborn explains. She applies the word "fate" to the

⁴¹ Kelly Surtees, "Full Moon in Sagittarius: Integrity, Action and Passionate Progress," Kelly's Astrology, July 13, 2025. <https://www.kellysastrology.com/2025/06/10/full-moon-in-sagittarius-integrity-action-and-passionate-progress/>.

⁴² Jessica Lanyadoo, "Jupiter Opens Some Doors and Saturn Closes Some," Ghost of a Podcast, February 24, 2024, <https://www.lovelanyadoo.com/ghost-of-a-podcast/2024/2/24/406-horoscope-jupiter-opens-some-doors-and-saturn-closes-some>.

⁴³ Jessica Lanyadoo, "387: Empathy vs. Punishment," podcast audio, Ghost of a Podcast: Astrology & Advice with Jessica Lanyadoo, December 20, 2023, 1:21:00, <https://www.lovelanyadoo.com/ghost-of-a-podcast/2023/12/21/387-empathy-vs-punishment>.

⁴⁴ Jessica Lanyadoo, "Your Horoscope for June 25 – July 1, 2025," Chatelaine, June 25, 2025. June 25-July 1, 2025 Weekly Horoscopes - Chatelaine <https://chatelaine.com/living/horoscopes/june-25-july-1-2025/>.

⁴⁵ Chris Brennan and Kirah Tabourn, "Ep. 413: Astrology Chat with Kirah Tabourn," The Astrology Podcast, August 20, 2023, podcast, MP3 audio, 3:19:34, <https://theastrologypodcast.com/2023/08/20/astrology-chat-with-kirah-tabourn/>.

⁴⁶ Anna Marie, "The Lunar Nodes Change Sign. With an astrology practice guide," Heart & Soul Astrology on Medium, July 17, 2023, <https://heart8soulastrology.medium.com/the-lunar-nodes-change-sign-c78e89bb0a87>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

scene and "destiny" to the course along which a human being moves.⁴⁸ The terrain and movement metaphor shows a specific esoteric view where symbolic understanding becomes a type of spiritual action. This idea fits well with Wouter Hanegraaff's idea of esotericism as reclaiming rejected knowledge, which involves using symbolic systems to understand and ritualize experiences that society has pushed aside.⁴⁹

Narayana Montúfar, a Mexican American visual artist and astrologer in public practice, employs the same forms to function in her creative and interpretive efforts. In an article for Well+Good, Montúfar discusses the emotional and symbolic importance of the Leo Moon, noting that Leo moons have a lot of love to give in friendships and relationships. They appreciate the same amount of effort and energy shared back.⁵⁰ Montúfar's fervent declaration unchains the symbolic richness and therapeutic concern of esoteric astrology. The Moon shifts from a simple astronomical event to a ritual prompting inner unity. Montúfar presents lunar positions as avenues for emotive expression, echoing Birgit Meyer's idea of aesthetic formation. This is how sensory symbolic action creates religious membership.⁵¹

Astrological symbolism occurs in daily horoscopes, where planetary action is the sign of potential for particular activities. Astrologer Sade Jackson, author of a June 24, 2025 horoscope for YourTango, provides the hypothesis that self care can be healthy for some, repairing body and soul.⁵² Astrology here is more of a guide to personal health and spiritual balance and less of a predictor of what is to be or a seer of the future. The horoscope is a guide, inspiring readers to live mindfully by taking into account the importance of the planets.

"Esoteric astrology teachers vary their style depending on the format. For instance, in her YouTube teachings, astrologer Molly McCord explores the Theosophical idea that planetary rulerships shift as consciousness evolves, reflecting the soul's journey toward higher awareness. She notes that the esoteric ruler of Cancer, isn't the Moon; it's Neptune since Cancer, in its higher vibration, dissolves into the collective love field, not just personal safety".⁵³ Chimenti's presentation uses symbolic graphics, such as astral glyph overlays, chakra diagrams and planetary wheels. This layering of vision reflects what Heidi Campbell begins to outline as a framework for networked religion, a form of religious experience shaped by online networks and communal negotiation.⁵⁴ Responses on the video indicate individuals offering their opinions about meditation and rituals with the Cancer Moon, making apparently abstract ideas become social acts.

⁴⁸ Chris Brennan and Kira Taborn, "Ep. 489: Astrology, Fate, and Destiny," The Astrology Podcast, April 2024, <https://theastrologypodcast.com/transcripts/ep-489-transcript-astrology-fate-and-destiny/>.

⁴⁹ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 361.

⁵⁰ Erica Sloan, "Are You a Leo Moon Sign? Here's What To Know About the Zodiac's High-Passion Placement," Well+Good, March 9, 2022, <https://www.wellandgood.com/astrology/leo-moon-sign>.

⁵¹ Birgit Meyer, *Religious Sensations: Why Media, Aesthetics and Power Matter in the Study of Contemporary Religion*, inaugural lecture, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, October 6, 2006, 4.

⁵² Sade Jackson, "Your Daily Horoscope for June 24 — The Luckiest Day of 2025," YourTango, June 23, 2025, <https://www.wellandgood.com/astrology/daily-horoscope-june-24-2025>

⁵³ Molly McCord, *Personal Planets and Their Higher Octaves ~ Energetics Between Your Human Self and Higher Self*, YouTube video, 00:01:21–00:02:09, posted by Molly McCord, October 21, 2020, <https://youtu.be/z8xtCWE2C1M?si=x8ADZZO6Kew92geD..>

⁵⁴ Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*, 6.

Added together, these illustrations further enhance the image of esoteric astrology as a symbolic and digital ritual system. Each practitioner embodies different expressions: Montúfar integrates emotional ritual with visual art,⁵⁵ and Levine renders archetypal symbolism through therapeutic interpretation and live commentary.⁵⁶ These astrologers operate not just as commentators, but as ritual facilitators who help followers reinterpret transits as initiatory thresholds. Their work collectively affirms the central argument of this paper, that esoteric astrology functions today as a lived, participatory system of meaning making, enacted through digital media, symbolic ritual and aesthetic resonance, while planetary symbols can be used in therapy to help people see their lives as stories, like myths or spiritual quests. This approach lets them rethink their experiences in a fresh way. Together, the work of Levine, Surtees and Lanyadoo demonstrates that contemporary esoteric astrology is not a fixed doctrine but a ritual interface⁵⁷, one where planets become archetypes, transits become initiations and the birth chart a chart not of fate, but of symbolic freedom attained.

6. Previous Research

Recent esoteric studies have moved beyond standard historical methods, now examining symbolic systems in digital and cultural contexts. Kennet Granholm's work is key to this change. He claims esotericism now serves as a discursive category, not a fixed practice. Granholm places this within a larger trend of re-enchantment in modern times, in which esoteric activities are tailored and shaped by digital platforms.⁵⁸

"Asprem builds on this structure through his study of occultism and esotericism within algorithm driven areas. He observes that online platforms encourage fragmented yet intensive engagements that promote novel ritual types, self spiritualities and symbolic interaction".⁵⁹ YouTube astrologers who use self help language, Instagram rituals mixing visual elements with astrology, and Reddit discussions where users question expert opinions show these trends. Esotericism now is not merely in secret societies or ancient books, it is openly taught and practiced on the internet by planetary magic, talismans, numerology and cosmology. They are neither sign nor appearance but are genuine spiritual practices carried out with sacred caution. Egil Asprem had the opinion that esotericism today implies carrying out rituals by making use of cosmological hypotheses with the help of computer software and groups.⁶⁰

Christopher Warnock's work, particularly his Renaissance Astrology website, attest to this change. The website gives complete courses in planetary magic, talisman creation and Hermetic ritual. His course page shows a curriculum that includes electional astrology, planetary hour calculation and ritual consecration of talismans. Warnock says that these actions are real. Astrological magic, in his view, allows people to directly

⁵⁵ Narayana Montúfar, *Art Portfolio*, NARAMON, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.naramon.com/astrology-readings>.

⁵⁶ Rick Levine, "June 2025 Forecast: Testing the Limits."

⁵⁷ Kelly Surtees, "Three Tips for Saturn in Aries: Independence and Disintegration," Kelly's Astrology, June 20, 2025, <https://www.kellysastrology.com/2025/06/20/three-tips-for-saturn-in-aries-independence-and-disintegration/>; Jessica Lanyadoo, "387: Empathy vs. Punishment," Ghost of a Podcast, December 20, 2023, <https://www.lovelanyadoo.com/ghost-of-a-podcast/2023/12/21/387-empathy-vs-punishment>.

⁵⁸ Granholm, "Contemporary Esotericism," 378..

⁵⁹ Egil Asprem, *The Problem of Disenchantment: Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric Discourse, 1900–1939* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018), 281.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

speak with the spirits of the planets. He believes it's an active with smart beings, not just a symbolic figure.⁶¹ The website offers PDFs, ritual diagrams and prayers for consecration, opening up esoteric practices to a wider audience. David Hernandez, who studies ceremonial astrology and practices astrological magic, shares a performance of planetary ritual. As shown in his YouTube video, Venus Talisman Ritual for the Morning Star, Hernandez shows a step by step ritual that includes setting up an altar, engraving planetary symbols, igniting aromatic resins and invoking Venus via the Orphic Hymn. In the video, he notes: "This ritual is set for Friday, during the hour of Venus, with Pisces rising and Venus in its exaltation. The image is etched by hand, and then we recite the Orphic hymn, focusing on Venus' kind light."⁶² The video serves not only as a guide but also as a structured aesthetic work with cosmological undertones.

Through these actions, what was once trash is created anew. Through common symbols, astrology, particularly its online personas, becomes a means by which individuals can connect with others, to comfort and to understand themselves.⁶³ Esoteric customs, once kept secret, are now shared openly and changed for new media. Rituals mix old ways with new ideas. A talisman changes from just a magical item to a place where people connect to the universe, linking them to planets and ritual times.

Participatory logic applies to virtual communities too. For instance, in a Reddit post entitled As a guy astrologer, I really like Dr. K's video on astrology (r/Healthygamergg, July 2025), individuals discussed how emotional and symbolic dimensions of astrology apply to mental health. One person wrote that Dr. K's way of explaining planetary influence, helped them see their Saturn return as a psychological turning point instead of just a difficult time.⁶⁴ This post ties into a larger discussion on astrology's use as a therapy and a way to start self discovery, mainly for men who may feel left out of health discussions. This echoes Catherine Bell's idea that rituals, when done with common language and repeated actions, gain social importance.⁶⁵

YouTube content, such as Every Esoteric Knowledge Explained in 13 Minutes, shows the teaching aspect of esotericism. For example, the video says Hermeticism is a cosmology where all things are related through correspondence, vibration and mental causality.⁶⁶ The discussion then moves to alchemy, astral projection and theosophy, treating them as active traditions, not just old ideas. The video is easy to follow without being too simple, giving viewers a symbolic guide to current esoteric practices.

The theoretical basis for these practices is found in the academic preprint Esotericism: What Does It Mean? This work follows the history of esotericism as rejected knowledge and its present day change into a cultic milieu of individual, opposing spirituality. The text details how current esoteric practices are formed

⁶¹ Christopher Warnock, "Astrology, Magic and Geomancy Courses," Renaissance Astrology, <https://www.renaissanceastrology.com/astrologyandmagiccourses.html>

⁶² Christopher Warnock, *How to Make Astrological Talismans Effective: Do I Have to Wear It All the Time?*, YouTube video, 00:07:50, posted by Renaissance Astrology, Dec 10, 2018, <https://youtu.be/s0a0DeMKbN4?si=nSPS9IF2ltr8NB1z>.

⁶³ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 361.

⁶⁴ Reddit user, comment on "As a guy astrologer, I really like Dr. K's video on astrology," r/Healthygamergg, June 24, 2025, <https://www.reddit.com/r/Healthygamergg/comments/1kvev88/asaguyastrologerireallylikedrksvideoon>.

⁶⁵ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 138.

⁶⁶ Toon Explainer, *Every Esoteric Knowledge Explained in 13 Minutes*, YouTube video, 00:03:21, posted July 8, 2024, <https://youtu.be/9l3gx1Ruz9Q?si=9HUu0unL06P8gtLL>.

by an ideology of individual seekership and a common rejection of institutional power.⁶⁷ This framework explains why planetary magic, ritual astrology and symbolic healing are popular in decentralized, digital spaces. They provide ways to create meaning, take action and align with a larger order in a world that has lost its sense of wonder. These examples show that modern esotericism is a living tradition that is practiced and changes with time. It is expressed through ritual, spread through media and based on symbolic systems that continue to hold power. Through things like talisman rituals, planetary timing or symbolic discussions, esoteric practitioners do more than just keep tradition alive; they revive it.

Nicholas Campion suggests that astrology has been subject to academic rethinking. His book records the transformation of astrology from courtly activity to more popular spiritual activity. According to Campion's perspective, astrology today assists individuals in looking for meaning when there is uncertainty because it is in psychological, political and therapeutic settings.⁶⁸ For instance, astrologers such as Chani Nicholas provide horoscopes that will assist you in embracing yourself and taking action. She openly connects what is occurring in the stars to queer and feminist principles. Nicholas posted on October 4, 2023, that Venus in Leo reminds us self love is a revolution, which is a blend of astrology and simply doing good.⁶⁹

Rick Levine considers astrology from a psychological point of view. On his March 1, 2024, YouTube video, he applies Jungian concepts to describe the themes of the period in astrology and states, for example, that Saturn teaches us boundaries, but it teaches us what we must have peace within.⁷⁰ He mixes myth, therapy and how the planets move, which shows Christopher Partridge's idea of occulture, how hidden themes get mixed into feeling good, fun stuff and popular spiritual ideas.⁷¹

Birgit Meyer's idea of aesthetic formation, helps us get how symbolic styles make people feel like they belong. When things look the same, like color schemes or moon symbols, it shows people are part of online spiritual groups.⁷² Instagram accounts like @astrologywithandy use cool designs and rituals (Moon in Scorpio tonight, burn and release) to create a vibe that's both pretty and makes sense on a gut level. These posts do something important spiritually and in terms of culture. Plus, Reddit groups like r/astrology and r/AskAstrologers show what Catherine Bell calls ritualization; basically, set ways of interacting with symbols. Things like repeating stuff, using specific words and having ways to understand things, help people learn the secret ways of thinking, even if they aren't officially taught.⁷³

Online esotericism's change backs up Hanegraaff's idea that people now sacralize themselves with really personal, symbolic stuff that vibes with them aesthetically more than doctrinally.⁷⁴ Online, things mix

⁶⁷ Egil Asprem, "Rejected Knowledge Reconsidered: Some Methodological Notes on Esotericism and Marginality," in *Supplements to Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, ed. Egil Asprem and Julian Strube (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 127.

⁶⁸ Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and Popular Religion in the Modern West: Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement* (London: Routledge, 2012), 3.

⁶⁹ Nicholas, *Horoscopes for Venus in Leo 2023*.

⁷⁰ Rick Levine, *Rick Levine's March 2024 Forecast: ELUSIVE DREAMS (Don't Stop Believing)*, YouTube video, 00:13:30–00:14:26, posted by Rick Levine Astrologer, March 1, 2024, https://youtu.be/ru3Z2b_QUFU?si=9BLsxhQHaBFbd5yn.

⁷¹ Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1*, 69.

⁷² Meyer, *Religious Sensations*, 24.

⁷³ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 138.

⁷⁴ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 211.

easily; astrology blends with various things like tarot cards, energy work and getting active in ways that show how people make sense of the world today.

7. Analysis

Online astrology is more than just lessons; it's a whole performance, a conversation, and a two way street. Here I'll expound on how astrologers use symbols and visuals to make things meaningful, involve their audience and express their beliefs online. From Instagram posts to YouTube streams and podcast bits, they put on digital shows that mix astrology with community and teaching with aesthetic cues and symbolic imagery. Their symbolic language shows up in moon graphics, planet symbols and emotional language that gets one thinking, feeling and responding in a ritualistic way.

7.1 Kapiel Raaj's YouTube: Technical Symbolism as Esoteric Initiation

Kapiel Raaj's YouTube channel is a great example of how to explain Vedic cosmology in a simple way. In *How to Read a Basic North Indian Vedic Birth Chart*, he starts with the basics: These boxes always represent houses, they never change. What changes, is the zodiac sign every couple of hours.⁷⁵ This difference subtly presents the birth chart as a technical and metaphysical map. Then, Raaj mentions: The moment you're born, the cosmos imprints your soul.⁷⁶ This statement views birth like a big cosmic event, a bridge between what we can touch and what it all means.

7.2 Chani Nicholas: Therapeutic Cosmology and Sociopolitical Alignment

Chani Nicholas departs the affective and activist potential of astrology in online environments by relocating the focus from Raaj's technologically driven method, preoccupied with technical accuracy and metaphysical mapping, to therapeutic symbolism and sociopolitical commitment. Chani Nicholas' astrology focuses on wellbeing and identity. On one of her Instagram posts, she just writes: Venus in Leo reminds us that self love is a revolutionary act (October 4, 2023).⁷⁷ Her caption mixes astrology with feminist stuff, tying planet movements to activism. Curiously, she says in her book, *Your Birth Chart?* It's like the manual for totally accepting yourself.⁷⁸ So, symbolic knowledge turns into healing stuff. Her app makes horoscopes just for you using your birth info, rituals and writing prompts to set goals. This supports Partridge's finding that the lines separating the sacred from the profane are getting more hazy as the sacred is increasingly encountered through popular culture.⁷⁹ Nicholas's software creates a smooth cross cultural experience by fusing spiritual prompts, beautiful design and healing language. This reflects the early contours of what Heidi Campbell later terms networked religion, a form of spiritual practice shaped by digital interactivity and communal negotiation.⁸⁰

7.3 Rick Levine: Archetypes, Therapy and Live Commentary

While Nicholas embeds astrology in identity and power, Rick Levine employs archetypal psychology and collective interpretation in real time to delve more deeply into the symbolism. He employs Jungian

⁷⁵ Raaj, "How to Read a Basic North Indian Vedic Birth Chart," 00:06:43, YouTube video.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 06:12–07:02.

⁷⁷ Nicholas, "Horoscopes for Venus in Leo."

⁷⁸ Chani Nicholas, *You Were Born for This* (New York: HarperOne, 2020), 5.

⁷⁹ Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1*, 75.

⁸⁰ Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*, 6.

theory to describe astrology as a language of inner stories. In his March Astrology Forecast (March 1, 2024), he states that astrology is a language of inner stories.⁸¹ With astrology, it's less about what we know and story and more about what we feel and narrative and not so much about prediction. His live streaming allows others to comment immediately, so he's almost part of a community rather than a teacher. This interpretive approach, alludes to Catherine Bell's conception of rituals, wherein the repetition and sharing of understandings, build meaning over time.⁸²

7.4 Alyssa Sharpe: Emotional Authenticity and Symbolic Provocation

Alyssa Sharpe's forceful and provocative style, resisting deterministic account and affirming human freedom, is the antithesis of Levine's richness of archetypes. "Alyssa Sharpe adopts a provocatively candid tone as she critiques traditional fatalism. In her YouTube video, What Astrology Doesn't Tell You, she says, Your chart doesn't own you. You co-author it with the universe."⁸³ Her discourse blends astrological interpretation with themes of agency and emotional authenticity. She speaks with passion, and her delivery style emphasizes personal authenticity and relatability. People watching her don't see someone to copy, but someone they can engage with on an affective level.

7.5 Jessica Lanyadoo: Intuition, Healing and Spiritual Coaching

Jessica Lanyadoo's astrotherapy, which calls upon planetary symbolism in the healing as well as the boundary-staking process, appeals to Sharpe's call for emotional truthfulness. In Ghost of a Podcast, Jessica Lanyadoo blends astrological information with strategies for recovering from psychological trauma. In her episode, How to Cope with Saturn Return, she says: "Don't be scared of the pain, Saturn organizes the stuff you've been ignoring. Let it instruct you on how to set boundaries and believe in yourself".⁸⁴ It's a personal setup: headphones, her voice and sharing what you feel. Astrology is used as a way to understand yourself better. She helps you be real about your feelings using astrology's symbols.

7.6 Reddit Communities: Co-Creation and Peer Ritualization

While Lanyadoo offers personalized, voice activated teaching, Reddit groups demonstrate the ways in which arcane meaning can be co-performed as ritual through peer discussion. On the r/AskAstrologers forum, decentralized esoteric negotiation is shown. A post by a user titled "Interpreting Mars Opposite Neptune—Help?", received over 20 replies with various symbolic interpretations. One popular comment stated: "It's not deception, it's divine confusion. Even poetic, the statement grasps the mystical idea that confusion could be a ritual boundary, a doorway to a greater symbolic awareness rather than a lack of knowledge. Mars asks for drive; Neptune for surrender. Maybe you're being initiated through unclarity".⁸⁵ This poetic decoding is typical of how Reddit users create a ritual through interpretation. As Partridge explains, occulture is not just an outside phenomenon; it is becoming more and more commonplace and influencing Western spiritual imagination.⁸⁶ Bell's ritual theory and Meyer's aesthetic development suggest

⁸¹ Levine, *March 2024 Forecast*, 14:20–15:55.

⁸² Bell, *Ritual Theory*, p. 90.

⁸³ Alyssa Sharpe, *What Astrology Doesn't Tell You*, YouTube video, 00:04:12, posted Feb 21, 2020, <https://youtu.be/Fw5cgIX3VnI?si=NXUyLMEOMevz51o>.

⁸⁴ Lanyadoo, "Jupiter Opens Some Doors and Saturn Closes Some."

⁸⁵ Reddit, r/AskAstrologers, "Interpreting Mars Opposite Neptune—Help?" post, June 15, 2025, <https://www.reddit.com/r/AskAstrologers/comments/1c5bwfj/neptuneoppositemarstransit/>.

⁸⁶ Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1*, 76.

that within online groups, spiritual belonging grows from shared symbolic styles and repeated interpretations. This change is also evident in the r/AskAstrologers forum, where collective decoding and symbolic negotiation are commonplace spiritual practices. Information is no longer given by an authority but put together by the group, changing passive readers into symbolic agents. Astrology is not just spoken about on r/AskAstrologers; it is practiced. A user on Reddit comments, "The Greek and medieval astrologers really got into this stuff because of how poetic and harmonic the system is. Obviously there's the useful stuff like electional and horary astrology, but that's not necessarily the draw. I take everything with a heaping pile of salt, but it is really fun to learn how everything works and to see how prettily it's been put together".⁸⁷ Reddit users ritualize interpretation, as demonstrated by this lyrical decoding. Echoing Catherine Bell's idea of ritualization through repeated symbolic acts, the thread transforms into a symbolic space where meaning is co-created.⁸⁸ Reddit's co-creative structure decentralizes authority in contrast to conventional structures with a hierarchy. Through symbolic narrative, emotional resonance and a common language, users negotiate meaning. This is consistent with Birgit Meyer's theory of aesthetic formation, which holds that spiritual affiliation is fostered by symbolic style and emotional tone.⁸⁹ As a result, Reddit serves as a digital ritual site where astrology is lived rather than only studied.

7.7 Astrology on YouTube and Podcasts: Symbolic Performance and Participatory Ritual

Outside of text based discussion forums, astrological symbolic performance is also found in audiovisual media, with podcasts and YouTube videos being hot ritual spaces. In today's time, astrology is presented in terms of audio and video. Along these lines, planetary signs are expressed both by way of explanation and enactment. Astrologers play the role of guides in such places, and the screen acts as an entry point to symbolic behaviors. YouTube videos and podcasts show a common structure: astrological information combines with voice, timing, images and audience reactions, transforming casual dialogue into spiritually charged engagement. In *Twelve Houses in Astrology 101*, Kelly Surtees uses video to present basic astrological ideas in an accessible way. She notes that, "The first house is your cosmic storefront, it's how the world sees you, and how you move through space."⁹⁰ The video uses simple, calming examples and spinning wheel charts. Audiences react with their birth sign and comments, such as: "This tells me why others see me in the workplace".⁹¹ The setting becomes a learning and symbolic area, where repetition, support and viewer stories act as a shared practice.

In a blog posted on ASTROLOGY HUB titled *2025 Prep Series: Pluto in Aquarius*, Rick Levine and Steve Judd describe a similar concept. Specifically, Levine says that Pluto's move into Aquarius can be seen as a collective psychological restructuring. He notes that astrology is moving beyond personal charts to show myth as it happens.⁹² In the video, planetary symbols flash as the hosts discuss diverse interpretive frameworks. Viewers in the live chat pose queries, talk about their dreams and mention future planetary

⁸⁷ Reddit user "TheRealAstrologer," comment on "What's the difference between horary and natal astrology?" r/AskAstrologers, posted July 9, 2021, <https://www.reddit.com/r/AskAstrologers/comments/ofsfj6/comment/h4ejxo5/>.

⁸⁸ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 138.

⁸⁹ Meyer, *Religious Sensations*, 6.

⁹⁰ Kelly Surtees, *Twelve Houses in Astrology 101*, YouTube video, 00:04:35, posted July 8, 2020, <https://youtu.be/rFatRwjZ3Y?si=bE1Slncrb42VFDm>.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Levine, *2025 Prep Series: Unprecedented Astrology*, 00:07:03.

movements they intend to mark with personal rituals. The forecasting turns into a dynamic conversation, inviting viewers to not just watch astrology but to actively experience it.

In her Ghost of a Podcast, Episode 406, Jessica Lanyadoo employs a similar framework, fusing astrology with healing terminology. When talking about Saturn's influence, she notes that while Jupiter opens doors, Saturn closes them, but that's not punishment. It's a sacred limit we're learning to trust.⁹³ The "sacred limit" reworks Saturn's boundaries as spiritually informative boundaries, markers of morality and emotional maturity. The episode, available on her site and other platforms, goes with journal prompts, a lunar planner, and tips on how to set boundaries using rituals. Astrology is presented here as more than just a way to predict the future or get insights; it's a healing method that can be part of everyday life.

In these formats, speakers and listeners create symbolic meaning together. Though videos and podcasts reach many people, they keep a sense of closeness by copying direct advising with emotional tones, slow speeds and common language. This creates a spiritual experience where the astrologer acts as a ritual leader, and the user takes part through watching and doing.

7.8 Esoteric Astrology in Short Form Media: YouTube and Blog Rituals

Long form media facilitates rich symbolic interaction, but short form video and blogs make esoteric ideas into rituals that are easy and emotionally rewarding. Long podcasts and live streams allow for detailed symbolic talk. Short YouTube videos and blog posts have become strong ways to send across complex ideas in a simpler form. These formats distill cosmic metaphors into digestible gestures and aesthetic cues. Bringing forth strong statements, they don't just give info, they also act, touch feelings and follow certain patterns. In a video, Lada Duncheva presents a case study of Nicholas Galitzine's chart in "Sun Saturn Cycle: How to Use It for Empowerment?" The 77 minute analysis explores the alignment of the Sun and Saturn, with Duncheva posing the query: "The Sun is your soul's light. Saturn is the karmic gatekeeper. When they align, you're being asked: are you ready to embody your purpose?"⁹⁴ This is a good example of the way that astrologers use mythic language to be evocative, reading the position of the planets as metaphorical calls for personal change.

Duncheva's method turns planetary cycles into key moments of change. She adds animated symbols to the chart and speaks in a clear, educational way. People watching the video have shared their own stories of Sun Saturn times in their lives. One person wrote, I finally quit my job during this conjunction, it felt like a soul test. These reactions support Catherine Bell's idea that rituals, when repeated and understood together, gain social value from symbolic actions.⁹⁵

In a blog post on Conscious Reminder called "Cancer New Moon 2025: Gentle Echoes of Home, Connection and; Emotional Rebirth", the author suggests using this time to consider what makes one feel safe and content. The author advises against using it as a reason to avoid responsibilities, instead advocating for self reflection.⁹⁶ Birgit Meyer's idea of aesthetic formation, where sensory language shapes spiritual belonging, is well shown in this poetic structure. The post talks about lunar timing, feelings and rituals like

⁹³ Lanyadoo, "Jupiter Opens Some Doors and Saturn Closes Some."

⁹⁴ Lada Duncheva, *Sun-Saturn Cycle: How to Use It for Empowerment?*, YouTube video, 00:02:35, posted Jun 10, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3z7rwXyaeCk>.

⁹⁵ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 138.

⁹⁶ Conscious Reminder, *Embrace the energy of the Cancer New Moon. A vessel of profound security and a cherished new start*, June 21, 2025, <https://consciousreminder.com/2025/06/21/cancer-new-moon-2025-gentle-echoes-of-home-connection-emotional-rebirth>.

journaling, rest and setting limits. People reading it are told to match their feelings to lunar cycles, turning astrology into a real emotional practice.

Birgit Meyer's idea of aesthetic formation, where sensory language builds spiritual belonging, is clear in this poetic structure. The text has lunar timing, emotional subjects and ritual ideas like journaling and setting limits. People are told to match their feelings to lunar cycles, turning astrology into a real emotional habit.⁹⁷

In his video titled *Esoteric Astrology: The Soul's Blueprint Through Time*, astrologer Phillip Lindsay draws a distinction between exoteric and esoteric astrology. He stresses that a birth chart shows a path of personal growth instead of just traits. The video mentions Alice Bailey's ideas and the Seven Rays, which puts astrology in a larger spiritual history. People watching the video say things like, This made me get why I've always wanted to help others. So, the video teaches and inspires.⁹⁸

Short formats usually have ritual cues. As an example, a Cancer New Moon blog post tells readers to Rebuild your symbolic nest by finding the things that make you feel safe and calm. Choose real rest and relaxation instead of trying to improve yourself.⁹⁹ This text blends astrological theory with elemental practice, allowing people to realize symbolic meaning within material presence. It reflects the emerging framework Campbell outlines, where new media enables religious communities to transmit and reshape spiritual meaning through culturally negotiated engagement.¹⁰⁰ Blogs become something one does again and again, and readers get involved. These kinds of formats don't make things too simple; instead, they squeeze rituals together. Luhrmann's work on interpretive drift shows that repeated symbolic interaction builds belief. In contrast, Campbell's idea of networked religion explains how spiritual meaning spreads using digital media. They take complicated ideas and make them into something that touches your feelings, looks good and lets you take part. As someone said on Patrick Arundell's YouTube: "I don't just watch these videos, I live them. I plan my week around them".¹⁰¹ This shows what Tanya Luhrmann called interpretive drift, which means you slowly start to believe in symbolic ideas as you experience them repeatedly.¹⁰² People who view astrology, do not just take in info, they also help make what it means.

Briefly, short blog posts and YouTube videos are not abridged versions of arcane concepts. Rather, they are virtual containers in which individuals can engage with them. Such formats invite participants to experiment with astrology, incorporating it into their daily lives through incessant updates and clips.

8. Discussion and Conclusions

Astrology, when accessed via the digital media, is a hybrid discourse that blends symbolism, self management and social practice. All these various types of media, from extended speeches to short symbolic cues, demonstrate how astrology has evolved into a digitally mediated, participatory occult culture. No longer an immutable tradition or a mere fad, astrology is now a practice that enables individuals to build

⁹⁷ Phillip Lindsay, *Esoteric Astrology: The Soul's Blueprint Through Time*, YouTube video, 00:23:06–00:26:59, posted Jun 24, 2025, <https://youtu.be/jXCNUkzNQD8?si=wsIkMs6PO6WgjjP>.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 00:57:01–00:57:26.

⁹⁹ Conscious Reminder, "Cancer New Moon 2025."

¹⁰⁰ Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*, 6.

¹⁰¹ Patrick Arundell, *Sun Enters Gemini – Gemini Season 2025! What This Means for YOUR Sign!*, YouTube video, 00:57:01–00:57:26, posted May 20, 2025, <https://youtu.be/9cqjc8sSx9I?si=fkOaYIBV1fHfLzk>.

¹⁰² Tanya Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 10.

meaning in individual and interrelating ways. Each platform shows this in different ways. Kapiel Raaj's lessons use images and simple language to present Vedic astrology as understandable and useful. Astrological ideas are synthesized by Chani Nicholas and incorporated into investigations of the self and agency. Rick Levine and Jessica Lanyadoo focus on self reflection and common symbolic meanings, while Reddit groups develop interpretations together.

The findings are consistent with Kennet Granholm's perception that esotericism is not a fixed belief but a dynamic ideology conditioned by media and culture.¹⁰³ Granholm prescribes astrology as a means of discovering awe in a world lost to it. Partridge supports this perspective by asserting that the cultural force behind the West's re-enchantment is occulture.¹⁰⁴ This occultural re-enchantment is best illustrated by the symbolic language of astrology and its participation media rituals. Esotericism offers its forms as means of managing crises, identity problems and emotional struggles.¹⁰⁵ Both social life on Reddit and Instagram fit Campbell's description of religious communities as activist participants who fashion new media to voice their spirituality in language of belief and history.¹⁰⁶ This distributed participation counters the hierarchical initiations in esotericism. The merging of esoteric imagery with aesthetic cues in Instagram posts, such as hashtags, moon ceremonies and affirmation slides, shows what Birgit Meyer calls aesthetic formation: the shared visual and symbolic language that unites groups.¹⁰⁷ Astrology is evolving from a belief system to a digitally practiced culture. According to this study, those who are emotionally conflicted and torn between sarcasm and sincerity, myth and remedy, are more likely to engage in online esotericism. Short movies, like YouTube Shorts, typically combine ceremonial signs with humor. All its humor aside, the adage illustrates how astrological symbolism is being recontextualized in online culture as ritual and parody, broadening its range of expression. For instance, Mercury in Retrograde Made Me Do It, is the video in which the user humorously remarks, "Mercury retrograde made me ghost you. It's the universe, not me",¹⁰⁸ reinterpreting astronomical transit as a humorous yet symbolic excuse for taking action. Luhrmann contends that esotericism is not rendered worthless by the intersection of ritual and parody. Instead, it expands its expressive capacity, resulting in novel ways to participate emotionally and symbolically. She refers to this interpretational drift as: As people continue to interact with symbols in novel ways, their beliefs shift.¹⁰⁹

Astrologers now are influencers, therapists, mystics and teachers, which are indicators of the blending of the spiritual and commercial realms. Apps, subscription and coaching turn spiritual understanding into something to buy and sell, but also disseminate it more. Authors like Jeremy Carrette and Richard King say we should consider this and not look at it as a bad thing, but rather an advancement of how spirituality and politics intersect in the arena of money.¹¹⁰

To sum up, the ongoing popularity and changes in astrology within digital culture show that esotericism is adapting, not declining. Its shared metaphors on social platforms become tools for expressing identity,

¹⁰³ Granholm, "Contemporary Esotericism," 375.

¹⁰⁴ Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume 1*, 77.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁰⁶ Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*, 6.

¹⁰⁷ Birgit Meyer, *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion and the Senses* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ YouTube Shorts, "Mercury in Retrograde Made Me Do It 🌀", published June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhfxd0mIPfU43dcd9a7-70db-4a1f-b0ae-981daa162054>.

¹⁰⁹ Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*, 10.

¹¹⁰ Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2004), 5.

therapeutic engagement and relational meaning. This research adds to the academic field by supporting this idea with actual, participatory examples, showing astrology as more than just content; it's a mediated ceremony, a metaphor-rich culture and a practiced form of esotericism. This research suggests a change in how esotericism is shared and done. Astrology works as a link between symbols, bodies, platforms and imagination. Since online rituals are common, esoteric ideas are now found in comments, emojis and algorithms. Experts should study esotericism as a changing tradition shaped by symbols and rituals instead of old teachings.

The integration of astrological meanings across different media platforms, is a pattern in the ethnographic data. People who practice or follow astrology, use apps, newsletters, blogs, videos and memes. These platforms create symbolic experiences where formal learning combines with personal ritual. This resonates with Catherine Bell's argument that ritualization is rather not an action but a vehicle to empower a form.¹¹¹ Individuals know that some posts function more as spiritual enactments than predictive statements. Platform diffusion is hard to research. When rituals are posted on platforms, traditional ways of considering sharing and truth must be realigned. Egil Asprem explained that esotericism online consists of bits of knowledge. Individuals integrate astrology into self help or emotional practice.¹¹² This varied pattern of participation signals a rise in specialized practices, not a drop in importance.

It also questions standard ideas about who is an expert. Astrologers such as Rick Levine and Kelly Surtees keep their symbolic power because they have been around for a long time and are consistent in their work. Others, such as meme astrologers or YouTube stylists, gain power through how they look, their skill in understanding emotions, or their ability to tell stories in an interesting way. This is similar to what Christopher Partridge describes as occulture: an informal space where specialist symbols are exchanged in popular culture. While significant, they're not academically studied.¹¹³ In order to grasp the way esotericism is experienced nowadays, we must consider how metaphorical authority and cultural resonance operate on the internet. Plus, the spread of astrology into discussions of identity, mainly among feminist, queer and BIPOC¹¹⁴ astrologers, shows a key reclaiming of cosmic structure. Astrological symbols, which used to belong to hierarchical metaphysics, are now seen as ways to resist, heal and remember ancestors. Authors such as Wouter Hanegraaff understand esotericism to be the coming back of knowledge previously rejected.¹¹⁵ These days, this recovery assumes political significance. Mercury appears as trans icon, the Moon as queer tenderness, and Saturn as resistance to colonial exhaustion.¹¹⁶ Astrology in the contemporary digital age is more about reclaiming symbols and stories than foreseeing. Individuals apply it to guard against systems that have rejected or disapproved them, to translate who they are and to heal.

It is also to be noted the appearance of another form of realism amidst esoteric practices. While some online astrology is lighthearted, many who practice it are truly dedicated to ethical behavior, spiritual duties and practical rituals. This goes against arguments that view online esotericism as just a superficial show or attention seeking by influencers. As Tanya Luhrmann wrote, religion isn't necessarily communicated in

¹¹¹ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 220.

¹¹² Egil Asprem, *The Problem of Disenchantment*, 435.

¹¹³ Christopher Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West*, vol. 1 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 69.

¹¹⁴ BIPOC is an abbreviation for Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

¹¹⁵ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 361.

¹¹⁶ Reddit discussion, "Mercury and Trans Symbol", r/astrology, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.reddit.com/r/astrology/comments/lj94ck/mercuryandtranssymbol>.

tough doctrine; rather, it develops through routine practice and imagination.¹¹⁷ Astrologers that offer daily advice, hold monthly new moon rituals or prompt reflection upon planetary issues do more than establish a brand; they offer mini initiations via cyber space. These "mini initiations" are repetitive symbolic rites that are micro rites and encourage spiritual continuity in the virtual existence, such as horoscopes, lunar rituals or journal exercises.

Astrology provides us with myth when we possess much information, symbolism if read literally, and community when we feel solitary. Its world view fulfills a persistent human need, to order chaos, control of the stars and significance in the sky. Additional research can explore how other astrological systems diffused through analogous symbolic systems or how mobile platforms transform ritual continuity and esoteric identity.

Author Contribution

The author conceived the study, designed the research framework and conducted the digital ethnography and critical discourse analysis. The author also collected and curated all source materials, performed the analysis and interpretation, and drafted all sections of the manuscript and approved the final version for submission.

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The author declares no competing interests or financial relationships that could influence the research or its presentation.

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Data Sharing Statement

This study draws primarily on publicly accessible digital content, including YouTube videos, podcasts, blogs, and social media posts produced by named practitioners. All referenced media were available at the time of research without paywall or login restrictions, and are cited with direct links where appropriate. No private user data or proprietary platform analytics were collected or analyzed. The author acknowledges that some secondary scholarly resources—such as journal articles, books, or database entries—may have been accessed through institutional privileges at the University of Gothenburg. These materials were used solely for academic interpretation and citation, and may not be freely available to the public. No restricted datasets or confidential archives were employed. The study complies with ISRDO ethical standards regarding transparency, citation, and data accessibility.

¹¹⁷ Tanya M. Luhmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*, 10.

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