

Marion March of Encino, CA sent us the following article that appeared on the front page of the Los Angeles Times on April 8, 1982. Her "Letter to the Editor" follows the article.

Character Link to Zodiac Sign

STUDY CONTRADICTS ONE OF BASIC CLAIMS OF ASTROLOGY

By Lee Dembart, Times Science Writer

A French study of the biographies of 2,000 successful people has found that no correlation exists between their character traits and the signs of the zodiac under which they were born.

The study which was conducted over several years, contradicts one of the basic claims of astrology - namely that your character is influenced by your sign.

"The results were completely negative," Michel Gauquelin, the study's director, said Wednesday in a telephone interview from his home in Paris.

Gauquelin, who is director of the Laboratory for the Study of the Relations Between Cosmic Psychophysiological Rhythms, assembled 52,188 character traits from published biographies of 2,000 people and tried to correlate them with the personalities attributed by 8 astrology textbooks to the 12 signs of the zodiac. No traits were omitted, he said.

The subjects, all 20th-Century Europeans, included "sports champions, military men, actors, artists, politicians, scientists and writers," Gauquelin said.

Gauquelin said the astrology textbooks used agreed very closely about which personality traits went with which signs.

For example, he quoted one book's description of an Aries personality: "He is very much of a firebrand or battering-ram. He will forge his way through life with courage, daring, energy and initiative and enterprise. He is the true pioneer. His one-pointedness of aim makes him direct and unable to use subtlety. He is incisive and often satirical in speech, cutting in invective."

Gauquelin also took into account such complicating factors as the Moon sign and Rising sign, in addition to the Sun sign.

But for all 12 signs, a statistical analysis found that the correlations between personality traits and signs of the zodiac were no better than would have been predicted by chance.

"It's an ideal proof," Gauquelin said. "What can I do more?" His paper appears in the current issue of the *Skeptical Inquirer*, a journal dedicated to debunking claims of the paranormal.

But Carroll Righter, whose astrological forecasts appear in more than 300 newspapers, including *The Times*, disputed Gauquelin's findings.

"My investigations show otherwise," Righter said Wednesday. "We have an astrological foundation, and we have looked at a great many charts, and we've found that they do have certain bearings."

Righter's work, which he said involves, "hundreds of people," began in 1963 but has not been published. "We're working on it, though," he said.

Although Gauquelin's present work appears to deflate traditional astrology, he has published several books arguing an equally controversial theory - to wit, that there is a link between the positions of the planets at the time of a person's birth and his future professional career.

For example, he said, successful athletes are more likely to have Mars either rising or setting at the time of birth than are other people.

These claims were attacked two years ago in the *Skeptical Inquirer*, which is now publishing Gauquelin's work on the zodiac. Kendrick Frazier, the journal's editor, said he did not think that Gauquelin's espousal of the Mars effect should disqualify him from serious research on astrology.

It is not unknown for a scientist to do very good work in one area and very poor work in another, Frazier said.

Gauquelin, incidentally, is a Scorpio. He said that traditional astrology would probably find a close link between his personality and that attributed to Scorpions. "I am skeptical and inquisitive in my research," he said.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR BASIC CLAIMS OF ASTROLOGY

I was not sure if I should be surprised or amused at your front page coverage of your science writer's recent article regarding a study contradicting Astrology's "Basic Claims" (his description).

Michel and Francoise Gauquelin are known and respected in the astrological and scientific community. They have written many books and done much research. The study in question was done a few years ago and elicited much interest but little excitement, since no serious astrologer would ever claim that one sign of the zodiac could describe a person. For this reason professional astrologers smile at the thought that the world is divided into just 12 types, as Sun Sign Astrology practiced by most newspapers, would have you believe. But it does serve as a charming way to get the layman interested in real Astrology!

Astrology does not claim to be an exact science, at best it falls into the category of inexact sciences as does medicine or psychology, or it could be called a technique or art. The art or technique of synthesizing many factors in order to describe the "whole person". Just as a doctor would not diagnose tuberculosis based on one cough and a psychologist would not analyze a person suicidal based on one statement, so a professional astrologer would not judge a person's character based on one planet in one sign of the zodiac.

Most astrologers are willing to accept the result of serious research as done by the Gauquelins, even if it contradicts some previously held concepts. That does not seem to be the case with Kendrick Frazier, editor of the *"Skeptical Inquirer"*, who thought Michel Gauquelin's research "excellent and scientific" when the results agreed with his (Frazier's) beliefs, but "poor work" when they did not. And that approach is "scientific"? Forgive me for remaining "skeptical".
