

nation. At this moment was that in which language invaded the
 universal problematic; that in which, are the absence of a centre
 or, origin, became everything, became a system where the particular stru-
 the central signified. The original or the transcendental signified is no signi-
 never absolutely present. The signified extends the domain and the
 absence of the transcendental signified extends the ego, and outward personal
 interplay of signification and infinitum. Entered primarily by the Ascendant;
 Belief in the validity of a "viewpoint" that are taken from parents
 order (theory), has to be questioned as to whether this point (from parents)
 centre. Thus viewpoints found in science depend on a privileged temperar
 viewpoint by which is to some extent validated by the consistency of the
 the system. Levi-Strauss, in contrast to the privileged views of the hesa, 'p
 notion: only an engineer, who creates a perfectly consistent system which is
 since had a broken origin of his own discourse and has broken or with subjectivity
 forms of old bric-a-brac, following from various discourses, to be taken into account.
 such an engineer does not really exist while being as consistent as account.
 possible no scientist, or theorist can create a system, he is the viewer of the
 level of this engineer. The inevitably borrowed concepts of the scene which
 which may themselves be open to criticism. Disciplines, identification sugg
 though not in terms of their centres, external when their object, or one co-
 internal - their method); if you take that is away, there remains the around
 conceptual structure which is free to make suggestions with the other bits of a pers
 ures, but each element in the structure appears to be completely central sul
 brought over to another structure, since its meaning has been linked by a resul
 differences, to other links in its own structure. These views of the place of
 issues/problems that arise from them are brought back into Graham
 Douglas's paper, which demonstrates the a total play - and affinities' a total
 between various structures thus showing their broad application, desire
 once the privileged application of disciplines of sciences and 'arts' are
 abandoned, and thus shows a common logical bases in both 'arts' also reg
 and 'sciences' in (both 'arts' of obvious Empiricism for astrology which
 refuses to be classified under either category).
 In relation to Levi-Strauss's analysis of myth, Derrida says:
 there is no unity or absolute source of the myth sense. Everything
 begins with the structuring of the configuration (the relations) approach which
 discourse on this identifi- structure, the myth that man cannot
 itself have an absolute subject or an absolute centre. In order not
 to short change the form and the movement of the myth, of that
 violence which consists in centering a language which describes science, w
 an agentic structure, be avoided. Criticism of context is therefore
 in this context to the scientific or philosophical discourse, to a broad
 it is necessary to therefore scientific or philosophical discourse, to a broad
 upon the epistemic which absolutely requires which is the abso-
 requirement is that also go back to the source of the centre, to

RADICAL

ASTROLOGY

A SET OF DISCUSSION PAPERS:

ASTROLOGY AND THEORY

martin budd
bernie jaye

graham douglas
patrick curry

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RADICAL ASTROLOGY

A SET OF DISCUSSION PAPERS: ASTROLOGY AND THEORY

- 1 Introduction: Astrology and Theory
- 2 Astrology/History/Foucault - Martin Budd
- 3 Astrology and Semiotics I - Martin Budd
- 4 Astrology and Semiotics II - Graham Douglas
- 5 An Aporia for Astrology - Patrick Curry
- 6 Astrology and Feminism - Bernie Jaye

* * * * *

The papers are intended to promote discussion.
Please send us your comments/criticisms/etc.
The papers will later be published in book form.
Discount from the price of the book will be
given to those who have submitted detailed comments.

* * * * *

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"Aporia is a figure whereby the speaker sheweth that he doubteth, either where to begin for the multitude of matter, or what to do or say in some strange ambiguous thing." (1657)

Introduction

This essay is several things. It is a description of the world of modern English astrology; it is a critique of that world; and it is a prolegomena to the kind of involvement with, or study of astrology that I now see as desirable. In so far as the question can be justly asked, why have anything at all to do with astrology, my essay is also an 'aporia'.

In contemporary English astrology, it is possible to discern at least three distinct camps, with three different orientations toward astrology. My descriptions of each are drawn from personal observation, representative literature, and some empirical investigation by Newton (1981-2) and Lewandowski (1982). Although the attitudes I sketch out can not be associated with any specific individuals, they do have institutional substructures (however loosely organized); they also tend to have a 'hero(s)', who exemplifies and justifies those views to their holders.

I have used five rough-hewn conceptual dimensions, which suggested themselves in considering the material:

- (1) Radical/conservative (in a non-normative sense) toward astrology; a part of this consideration is the extent to which the person's beliefs about astrology are in/corrigible by 'outside' evidence.
- (2) Social marginality, in relation to the overall social context.
- (3) Elitist/populist.
- (4) Philosophically materialist/idealist.
- (5) Explicit/implicit, i.e. the extent to which rules of astrological interpretation are specified and adhered to.

The four attitudes are:

- (1) Hermeneutic astrology, to be found in the Astrological Lodge of London; related issues and people include (besides hermeneutics) phenomenology, mysticism, Heidegger (and Gadamer).
- (2) Psychological astrology, to be found mainly in the Astrological Association; 'humanistic' astrology/psychology, Theosophy, Jung (and Rudhyar et al.).
- (3) Scientific astrology, to be found in a small group called AIR ('Astrological Information and Research') and elsewhere; philosophy/sociology of science, positivism, empiricism, Gauquelin (and Dean).
- (4) Structuralist astrology, to be found in RAG ('Radical Astrology Group'); semiotics, post-structuralism or deconstruction, Derrida (and Foucault).

My critique of all these positions proceeds in relation to this criterion: given the parlous state of the world today, and the amount of human suffering, and given also that acting in a concerted, intelligent and compassionate way could change some of

that situation for the better, - what is a relatively progressive (as opposed to reactionary) way to be involved with astrology? That is the question I would like to begin, at least, to answer. It is not my purpose to attach philosophical or political identities to certain persons or groups.

One last point about titles: both this essay's and my book's. I was once going to write a book called 'An Alpheus for Astrology.' Alpheus was the river that Hercules diverted to clean out the accumulated filth of the Augean stables. That was the state I saw astrology to be in. Now matters seem rather more complicated. What river is pure? Nonetheless, there are degrees of pollution; and some poisons can heal, in small doses. Failing an Alpheus, an Aporia will have to do. But it remains a point of difference (among others) between myself and the other authors in these Papers: that while I think the study of astrology has much to offer, I also think it needs radicalizing more than it presently stands to radicalize.

Note:- For helpful discussion and comments, I am very grateful to Suzanna Curry, Ray Keenoy, Angus Clarke, Nick Campion, Charles Harvey, Geoffrey Cornelius, Graham Douglas, Martin Budd, and Olgierd Lewandowski.

There is a glossary of terms at the end of the essay, before the references.

Hermeneutic Astrology (HA)

Hermeneutic astrology is a recent development, whose present institutional home is a much older organization, the Astrological Lodge of London (until recently, of the Theosophical Society). The latter group came into being in 1915, as part of the great occult revival of the time. The (now) larger Astrological Association broke away in 1958. Just a few years ago, the elected positions within the Astrological Lodge were taken by a number of its younger members, who have since set the Lodge on a new and remarkable course. Institutionally, it is no longer under the aegis of the T.S. Similarly, the pre-eminent philosophical tenets are no longer theosophical or even 'occult', but rather are those of M. Heidegger and H.-G. Gadamer, which (for brevity) I will call 'hermeneutics'. Finally, the paradigmatic kind of astrology advocated is not natal but horary and mundane, especially according to 17th century rules.

I should make it clear that HA is not necessarily typical of the bulk of Lodge members, many of whom still practice primarily natal astrology and have never heard of Heidegger. Nonetheless, it is the kind of astrology unceasingly practiced, and preached, by the Lodge leaders.

In the view of HA, such astrology is, when correctly understood and practised, precisely and powerfully 'true', in the sense of spiritually helpful. That is - and this is the distinctive point - astrology is seen as essentially a way of preserving and developing a 'magical' attitude, at a time and in a society that is hostile to such an attitude. Such an attitude is identified with the kind of mystical experience described in mystical and religious literature, and in Heidegger's philosophy. And by the same token, the 'enemy' is identified as science, particularly technological science, and accompanying practical-manipulative-realist attitudes.

The kind of astrology seen as best realizing a magical attunement with the universe is strictly traditional, and usually horary or mundane. Natal astrology, by contrast, is perceived as introducing an unwanted (and all too human) fuzziness into astrological judgement; the strict rules of horary, by contrast, permit sharp judgements. (See Cornelius, 1978-9).

The purpose of the judgement is not primarily to learn anything new about the subject of the chart, or to communicate such a thing to others. Instead of this - the traditional point of astrology - the point for HA is to confirm (or disconfirm) that at the moment intuitively (preferably inspiredly) chosen as the time for the chart, the chooser (or subject) was in harmony or unity with the universe (or object), as represented by the topic of the chart. For this reason, literal beginnings "in objective time" are frowned on. And what confirms a state of unity is the "radicality" of the chart in question - e.g. the closeness of the appropriate planets (by traditional rulerships) to the M.C. or other angles, or by aspect - preferably in minutes, rather than degrees, of arc in longitude. (Of course, a 'non-radical' chart can be disconfirming. What it can't disconfirm, however, is the efficacy of astrology.)

A good chart interpretation by a Lodge leader is a remarkable hermeneutic exercise. It can point out (create?) and elaborate meanings, and levels of meaning, that are inexhaustible by any means. In this, it works in a way very similar to literary

intrude; the more so since, as I have said, that is not its goal. This kind of astrology is a craft or art - not a 'useful tool' (which is more the attitude of psychological astrology), and certainly not a science. Its point is self-realization - "astrology is the direct expression (the astrologer's) own condition." More than that, "Even if we vaguely recognize the potential of astrology as a way of self-understanding, we shirk away from seeing ourselves in the naked light of astrology." (Watson, 1981) A hard act to follow, but try we must.

Philosophically, this attitude may be described as solipscism. By HA's own insistence, and that of Heidegger, it is not theism, and obviously not materialism. But solipscism is a species of idealism, which HA also disavows - but not, I think, very convincingly.

In its attitude toward astrological doctrine, HA is highly conservative. As remarked earlier, it prefers older, traditional astrology to newer variants. (I have heard it mooted by HA stalwarts that the real downfall of astrology began with the Greeks, circa 2nd century A.D.) This attitude protects astrology against all but the most insistent 'outside' empirical evidence; the only testimony permitted epistemological weight is the attitude and astrological competence of the testifier, and other *prima facie* astrological evidence. (For example, of the latter, a horary chart to decide whether or not astrology is valid! at one Lodge talk. My point that there was no way the chart could answer in the negative met with incomprehension.) In a sense, therefore, HA is psychologically the most comfortable with astrology, because it is so well-protected.

In relation to the overall social context, however, the HA group is highly marginal. I suspect these two facets are not unrelated; with apologies for the amateur sociology, the marginalizing beliefs probably become charged with greater-than-usual significance; consequently they become both individualizing and precious, and must be protected; the strengthened unconventional convictions lead to further social definition as marginal, and so on.

It goes almost without saying that HA is elitist or esoteric; the Way is narrow, and many (or in this case, a few) are called, but few (even fewer) are chosen.

Let us turn to the 'heroes'. In this context, it isn't difficult to understand the appeal of Heidegger - a powerfully obscure thinker, turned towards 'Being' and away from social trivia, or indeed, humanness as most of us know it; an uncompromisingly anti-scientific traditionalist and Romantic; the clearing in the Forest ... (or Twickenham, at a pinch). Heidegger's notoriously tortuous prose style is an attraction for some - evidence that he is wrestling with issues that defy simple, superficial expression - and equally a repulsion for others - evidence that he doesn't really have much to say. But there is one big problem concerning Heidegger, the substance of which seems fairly clear-cut, at least to begin with. That problem is the nature of both Heidegger and his philosophy in relation to Nazism. Briefly, to start with his personal involvement, Heidegger acted as Rector of Freiburg University in 1933-4 under the Nazi regime. During this period, he appeared on platforms with prominent uniformed Nazis, and extolled "the inner truth and greatness of this movement" (National Socialism).

On the other hand, according to R. Kearney (1983) and others,

of 'stemming the tide.' Perhaps the truth is somewhere in between - it was ambivalent. In any case, Heidegger never, in the forty-odd years up till his death in 1976, undertook to clarify, justify or explain his position. As K. Vonnegut has written of Celine, "it may at last be possible to perceive a twisted kind of honour in his declining to speak of remorse or to offer excuses of any kind" (1982, p.273). Or I may be being too harsh. But the principal issue, it seems to me, is whether or not Heidegger's philosophy, which is so influential in the HA view, is objectively sympathetic to reactionary extremes. In trying to decide this, it is not necessary to examine his life in great detail, so much as what he wrote and said.

To my mind, there is little question that such an examination shows Heidegger to be deeply reactionary. The emphasis on 'rootedness' and 'authenticity,' shared with National Socialism, is not an accident. To quote George Steiner (1978, p.118).

There is in Heidegger's supposition, itself at once metaphorical and mesmeric, that it is not man who speaks where language is most fully effective, but 'language itself through man,' an ominous hint of Hitler's brand of inspiration, of the Nazi use of the human voice as a trumpet played upon an immense numinous (also a favourite word of Jung's, note) agencies beyond the puny will or judgement of rational man. This motive of dehumanization is key ... The idiom of the purely ontological blends with that of the inhuman. (My emphasis).

This passage is worth remembering: the motif identified will re-appear elsewhere.

I would like the reader to be clear that I am not identifying any persons (or groups) with extremism; I am pointing out such elements in a view, as I will be doing again later. Such elements are (I maintain) implicit in the view, objectively speaking, regardless of whether the holders of the views are aware of them or not.

Other discussions (among many) which could be looked at are Gellner (1982), who sees the roots of modern fascism partly in Romanticism (which "had always been rather keen on das Daemonische, which excites in a way that reason cannot"); and Tebbitt (1982), who points to the choice

Between (1) the defence of the constricted formal rationalism disguised as ... universal reason; (2) the reversal to irrationalism exploiting the hidden but increasingly visible weaknesses of this formal system; and (3) the emergence of a more expansive and realistic rationalism. It should be noted that Heidegger is an unambiguous and explicitly advocate of the second of these forces. (p.21)

However sympathetic one may feel for the second force as against the first, it is not an adequate substitute for the third. That fact is surely one lesson to be drawn from the short-lived resurgence of Romantic irrationalism in pre-war Germany and again in the late 1960s and early 1970s (both times accompanied by a renewal of interest in occultism and astrology).

More recently, the philosophy of HA has enjoyed a vogue in academia; for example, Rorty (1980) presents a heroic trinity of Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Dewey. The pairing of the first two is certainly plausible, and an exaltation of ineffability and "that which cannot be said" (to which the young English philosopher F.P. Ramsey is supposed to have replied, "Yes and you can't

whistle it either.'). Note the direct inhibition (or prohibition) or critique; the importance of socio-cultural 'language games' and consequently the emphasis on who is speaking, rather than what is being said (see Lakatos (1978b), brilliantly, if polemically, on the "Wittgensteinian Thought-police").

Let one think that elitist conservatism comes in ugly apparel, a story of Russell's concerning Wittgenstein might be instructive.

I told him he ought not simply to state what he thinks true, but to give arguments for it, but he said arguments would spoil its beauty, and that he would feel as if he was dirtying a flower with muddy hands ... I told him I hadn't the heart to say anything against that, and that he had better acquire a slave to state the arguments

Wittgenstein, incidentally, was a major influence on T.S. Kuhn, and the omnipresent 'paradigm'

Mystical anti-reason of the 'beautiful' sort can be heard at astrological lectures everywhere. With HA, however, it has been elevated from a matter of muddle-headed tolerance to a matter of principle and art. It is accompanied by techniques for outflanking logical and empirical criticism - for example, simply disqualifying statements by anyone who does not 'practice' astrology, or even has 'the wrong attitude.' Another common technique has been well-described by P. Bourdieu as "radical out-thinking." He writes that its practitioners'

most reliable annexation strategy is to set himself up as a transcendent consciousness capable of supplying the person or institution to which it addresses itself (in this case, both scientific and 'ordinary' astrology) with a self-truth of which that person or institution has been dispossessed. The typically philosophical strategy of radical out-thinking (one of Heidegger's favourite tactics) ... is used systematically in the struggle against the social sciences ... (1980)

Other strategies used to defend HA, and which are part of the view itself, include: (1) an attempt to devalue so-called "objective time" and prise it apart from moments of significance; (2) a parallel attempt to divorce the "phenomenon of experience" from "the experience of an objective phenomenon" (Cornelius, 1982) and identify astrology solely with the former; (3) a third parallel effort to radically distinguish between the single "unique" case and many cases, and again identify astrology solely with the former; and (4) an echo of the phenomenologists' slogan, 'To the things themselves!' -- in pleas to "let the phenomena emerge by themselves" (Watson, 1981), and to see whether the astrological map "does or does not in fact yield astrological significance" (Cornelius, 1979).

In this last instance particularly, I must alert the reader to a curiously close resemblance to a positivist strategy/attitude which will be encountered later. Both speak of 'facts' (the one astrological, the other scientific) as if these were unproblematic and needed little or no human interpretation or negotiation.

Against the above points, I must assert that (1) there can be no experience without an objective, as well as a subjective, pole; (2) that the so-called unique case can only be made sense of in the context of one's experience of other cases -- to which it has resemblances and differences -- and that the despised 'avaraged' cases are made up just of a multitude of 'unique'

PA in so far as it embodies his, is now more of hindrance than a help - to astrologers and non-astrologers alike.

I have discussed Jung's psychologism. One consequence I have not yet mentioned, although it is too prominent a feature within PA, is the related tendency towards self-absorption. One European interpreter of 'humanistic' astrology, and of Jung and Rudhyar in particular, has said that "The great problem for all of us how to live a balanced and harmonic (sic) life..." (A. Rupert, 1976; in a lecture entitled "The Astrology of Individual Fulfilment"). Well...most of us do try to lead 'a balanced life', but by what stretch of the imagination that "the great problem" for all of us? It is difficult not to reply - nice work if you can get it! Even allowing for a generous interpretation of this statement (which is not untypical in PA), the problems of most people are rather more basic than that. And what foothold for a concerted social action or a politics to meet some of those problems is there in a programme of "individual fulfilment"? Such a programme may have seemed less conservative and self-serving in 1976 than it does in 1983, but I'm afraid the answer then, as now, is 'very little'. And I hardly need add, I hope, that a 'spiritual' or 'occult' packaging does nothing to alter this situation.

In conclusion, PA is the most centrist, tolerant, and possibly muddled of the approaches to astrology discussed here. Muddle is not always a bad thing; it often goes with toleration, for which there is much to be said. While depriving PA of some of the powerfully-felt sense of purpose of HA and scientific astrology, it makes PA a haven to many. Of course, the tolerance of PA has limits - roughly bounded by the metaphysical extremism of HA on the one hand and scientific extremism of the other. Within those limits, however, PA successfully keeps a broad church, including contacts between people and groups (such as all those I am discussing) who might otherwise never meet.

That said, the same attributes make any resolution of issues more unlikely. It is hard not to see the pursuit of astrology as individualistic psychology as, in part, an adaptation to modern ideology. I'm fairly sure it will survive, perhaps even thrive, and continue to help individuals in its way. But while its chances of becoming more self-critical are so low, PA is unlikely exceed offering a 'cosmic' and supportive panacea.

Scientific Astrology SCA

By the term 'scientific astrology', I do not mean the opinion that present-day astrology is a science; I mean the belief that astrology possibly constitutes a proto-science, or a developing one, and that proper scientific research is the way to develop it.

SCA is represented by a small but far-flung network of people conducting and/or following such research. Such people are not typically themselves 'practising' astrologers. They are best represented by the journal Correlation, some of whose editors and associates meet informally, at varying intervals, to discuss and coordinate research.

The position of SCA is more or less opposite that of HA, with PA somewhere in between. Most obviously, SCA has embraced modern

science (which HA abhors), for reasons that are not always well-understood. Certainly there is a desire for scientific recognition and support, to end the centuries-long exile of astrology from Western high culture. And certainly part of the reason for that wish is that exile (which 'scientific astrologers' - actually researchers - share) is lonely, low-status and not much fun, to say nothing of badly-paid. But such exile is also correctly seen as inbred and sterile. Few sights are more pathetic than people talking to themselves, who have obviously forgotten how to talk, and to listen to anyone else. I would guess there is no-one of the SCA persuasion who has not shared the dismay of A. Levy:

I often get the feeling, after talking to astrologers, that they live in a mental fantasy world, a kind of astrological universe where no explanations outside of astrological ones are permitted, and that if the events of the real world do not accord with astrological notions or predictions, then yet another astrological technique will have to be invented to explain it. (1982)

(This attitude has already been discussed, above.) The desire for scientific recognition, then, is not purely self-interest.

SCA sees the remedy for this parlous condition of astrology to be the sharp and sobering air of 'hard facts'. That was certainly the belief of one SCA hero, John Addey. Comparing modern astrology to pre-Galilean, theologically dominated physics, he wrote that "Today, it is the observations of Michel Gauquelin that are supplying the needed 'brute facts'..." (1982). Those facts are arrived at by as scrupulous as possible an application of scientific methods to astrology, in an attempt to root out all wishful thinking and arrive at 'the truth' about astrology.

The attitude of SCA toward astrology, then, is that there is 'something to it' - a core of truth (or "nugget of gold," in Kepler's metaphor, sometimes quoted by Gauquelin), surrounded by a great deal of gullibility and obfuscation. That core may be of great interest and even have great consequences, without necessarily being - at least in the short run - of any practical use.

This position is radical toward astrology; more than any other position here, beliefs about astrology are open to being disconfirmed by evidence and criticism. (I am not suggesting they are totally open; that doesn't occur anywhere, as far as can be seen. But SCA is certainly more open; to the point where negative scientific evidence can, and has, extinguished belief in astrology completely.) In this way, SCA proponents are the most uncomfortable of all in their cognitive relationship to astrology; the ground of their belief is constantly under threat, and relatively unprotected by a ban on non-astrological evidence and explanations - cf. HA.

Socially speaking, SCA is the least marginal of the four. Apart from its closer relation to modern scientific ethos, the number of academic degrees points to at least some measure of integration into the intellectual community.

On both these dimensions, 'radical' and 'marginal', SCA stands roughly opposite HA. But on another, they are similar: SCA tends to be elitist, or esoteric (in a social sense). A scientific and/or academic training is hard-won, and not available - for reasons of resources or disposition - to many. In this respect, SCA stands opposite to the wide appeal of PA. SCA's esotericism extends to the delivering of judgements by a qualified elite - in this case,

a scientific elite; in the case of HA, a hermeneutic elite.

Lastly, the position of ScA philosophically is clearly one of (traditional, non-Marxist) materialism

Who are the ScA heroes? John Addey is one, as already mentioned. Actually, Addey's work on 'harmonics' (1976) spans ScA and PA - the latter not in terms of signs-and-houses (which he actually mistrusted) but of spiritual principles, approachable through a kind of scientific numerology, very much in the spirit of Kepler. That the theory of harmonics tries to connect ScA and PA is both its importance and its problem: it tends to be distrusted as too scientific by PA astrologers, and as too mystical by ScA researchers! Whether or not harmonics will bear out their early promise, chances don't look good. But certainly Addey himself felt strongly that "there is no inconsistency between such (scientific or empirical) observations and the 'higher reason' of a truly philosophical view" (1982).

Personally, I agree, up to a point, with his prescription for astrology. It's not that every (or even necessarily any) body of knowledge must undergo the same kind of purification-by-empiricism as the natural sciences did, starting in the seventeenth century. Simply, astrology in the late 20th century - for purely contingent reasons - would be better for it. But here my opinion overlaps with some problematics in ScA, which requires further exploration below.

Another ScA hero is Geoffrey Dean, with bright sword of Fact, cutting through the Fog of belief. (Don't forget that the heroes of one group tend to appear as the villains for other and opposing groups.) I myself have accused Dean of "positivism"; others have identified him as "empiricist". But as Giddens (1977, p.29) has observed, 'positivist' today is "more a term of abuse than a technical term of philosophy." And Keat (1981) has identified at least four distinct senses of 'positivist': 1) scientism, 2) a positivist conception of science, 3) scientific politics, and 4) value-freedom of facts. In what sense, if any, may Dean's work be called positivist?

His Recent Advances in Natal Astrology (1977) is not just a compendium of research. It asserts a radical distinction between "science and opinions" (on the title page), "Belief versus Truth" (p.3), and "Facts or Fog?" (p.15).

This reminds one of the HA injunction, quoted above, to see whether the astrological chart "does or does not in fact yield astrological significance." Both positions appeal to 'facts' and 'the truth' as non-problematic and therefore decisive. And for that reason, both are misleading and must be rejected. The truth does not come bearing a label marked "The Truth": it must be partly constructed, by human beings, as a theory(s). In this process, the 'underdetermination of theories by facts' - i.e. that facts can never, by themselves, determine completely the theory to be arrived at - is well-known. (See, e.g. M.Hesse, 1980).

Having said this, it is also necessary to add that facts/the phenomena must not be left out of the picture, either! - on pain of a cut-off, self-referential world of Theory, such as we have already remarked many astrologers to inhabit.

The kind of positivism 'Recent Advances' manifests, then,

is more properly called scientism. It has been defined as follows.

... the view that science alone represents a genuine form of human knowledge. (Keat, 1981, p.16)

... science's belief in itself: that is, the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science.

(Habermas, 1972, p.4)

... roughly, the view that the only rationality is scientific rationality ... that only statements with observational content are potentially 'knowledge', and that only they are subject to rational discussion. (Geuss, 1981, p.27)

This subject has been exhaustively analysed and discussed by the above authors as well as Bhaskar (1979), Feyerabend (1976) and Giddens (1977). Assuming (somewhat controversially) Popper's account of science to be positivistic, and Kuhn's account to be irrationalistic, more satisfactory attempts have been made by Lakatos (1978a), Hesse (1980) and Bhaskar. Finally, positivism has been most consistently criticised by the Frankfurt School, especially Habermas. I can only make a few remarks here.

Firstly, I have already mentioned why the position of 'Recent Advances', which is an extreme variant of ScA, must be rejected. As Habermas points out, replacing epistemology with methodology, when attempted rigorously, involves losing the concept of the human subject, who actually does the knowing. Everything apparently becomes a matter of 'objective' knowledge-generation and evaluation, and the individual answers assumed out of existence. This is a sham, of course. And once again, there is an uncomfortable parallel here with the HA loss of the human subject - except as a 'voice' or a 'vehicle' - as well as, to a lesser extent, the PA proneness to seeing the individual as at the mercy of mighty psychic and/or spiritual forces.

Even in its weaker forms, while (rightly) encouraging people to be critical,

the positivist's notion of 'rationality' is too narrow and restricted ... by excluding normative and metaphysical beliefs, preferences, attitudes, etc. from the realm of rational discussion and evaluation, the positivist leaves us without guidance about important areas ... and thereby abandons whole areas of our life to mere contingent taste, arbitrary decision and sheer irrationality. (Geuss, p.28)

In a strictly positivist view, for example, this entire essay - being largely non-empirical - is actually irrational, including any effects it might have on its readers.

On top of these objections, there is the way scientism lends itself to ideological use, so to speak. That is, basic features of our economic, social and political life have in fact resulted from historical human activity, and are therefore, in principle at least, alterable by human activity. What scientism offers the conservative status quo (or status retro, for that matter) is a golden opportunity to present these very features as part of the 'natural', and therefore unchangeable, world. 'Critical Theory' is Habermas' remedy for this situation. There are many problems with it (see Geuss, Keat and Bhaskar), which need not concern us here; what

is obvious is the lack of a strong critical awareness, and the need for it, in every orientation to astrology that I have so far discussed.

As before, I hope it is clear that I don't impute these views to Dean himself. I am here rejecting the extreme view put forth in RA, and representing an element within ScA. For quite apart from the need to discourage scientism as ideology, people cannot live by facts alone. They must and will have meaning, whose relationship to facts, while intimate, are a great deal more complex and problematic than this kind of ScA recognizes.¹

At the same time, as stated earlier, I do think astrology needs some help, of a kind not forthcoming from its 'friends' and self-appointed guardians. I have already criticized both HA and PA as uncritical and mystifying, tending to exalt the inhuman, and therefore (in all this) 'unhelpful'. Against this, a dose of deflationary facts may well help - not for any absolute value they have, but as 'the thing needed'. Such a position, which might be called 'critical positivism', or (after B. Crick) 'left-wing Popperianism', includes a qualified adoption of RA. But unlike full-blown ScA, I do not think that scientific facts alone are going to 'sort out astrology' - for the simple reason that there are moral, normative and (broadly) political considerations at the heart of the matter, which purely empirical science - such as that of RA - leave untouched. It is my main intention in this essay to bring these considerations to light, and to maintain that what astrology 'really needs' are the human sciences - history, anthropology politics

I have left till the end the superhero (or archvillain) in ScA - Michel Gauquelin, and his wife and colleague Francoise. That place is guaranteed by his Herculean labours to turn astrology into a science, and/or show it (and in what parts) to be scientifically untenable. Extraordinarily enough, and to the horror of both believers (especially HA) and enemies of astrology, he appears to have used impeccably scientific methods to find something - so-called 'core of truth'. (See my 1982a) This is a fascinating and highly revealing story, and needs much more scrutiny than I can give it here. But just to point out some of the main features -

The results of this twenty-five years of research (1) fail to support signs, houses or aspects; (2) but support (with some qualifications) the traditional astrological meanings of the planets themselves, and angularity; (3) and were obtained in a way that "stands up to a careful degree of scrutiny, and compares favourably with the best (work) that has been done in psychology, psychiatry, sociology or any of the social sciences" (Eysenck and Nias, 1982, p. 221). (The latter claim is, of course, bitterly disputed by scientists belonging to anti-occult groups.)

For these reasons, Gauquelin's work is the paradigm for ScA; but equally, it is anathema to the anti-scientific astrologers of HA, and the more 'spiritually' oriented astrologers of PA, since by using science to verify some but not all (or even most) of astrology, Gauquelin has succeeded in breaking through the hermetic barrier separating astrology from science. In an effort to stave off this development, which threatens the security of those

on both sides of the barrier, we find an unholy alliance of positivists and hermeneuticists! - for example, L. Jerome's polemical and historically inaccurate account of astrology as 'magic', and G. Cornelius' (1978, p.91) approval of that account. One is forcibly reminded of the way that both the Labour and the Conservative parties in Great Britain are in perfect agreement on the need to oppose proportional representation.

Incidentally, my criticisms may have left some readers with the impression that to oppose astrology is *prima facie* enlightened. It is true that, as I have said, the critical/political dimension is missing in modern astrology, and for that reason astrology - or rather, the uncritical attitude it fosters - lends itself to exploitation by the conservative Right. But it would be incorrect to assume that those anti-astrology are enlightened fellows! The arch-enemy of astrology in America is the CSICOP (Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal) (currently under investigation by the COPRA - Committee for the Prevention of Ridiculous Acronyms). The members of CSICOP are reputed to be as far to the right and as Reaganite as the President could want. That in fact has been a problem between themselves and their equally anti-astrology counterpart in France, the CFEPP (guess); the latter is composed importantly of members of the French Communist Party - for which Stalin, it will be remembered, was an unfortunate error. Whence enlightenment? On the one hand, we have an ideology of reactionary 'reason', on the other an ideology of orthodox Marxist-Leninist rationalism.

Readers may be interested to hear that when one leading anti-astrology scientist was asked what he thought belief in astrology led to, he replied, "Jonestown" (the mass-suicide cult in Guyana). One can see his point ... a long way off. But the choice, fortunately, does not have to be between a cult of reason and a cult of unreason, because science does not have to be the one, nor astrology the other. Above all, a critical study of science and of astrology is the best insurance against cultism tout court.

I once entertained hopes that as science seemed to stand likeliest to change astrology, so too a scientific astrology was likeliest to change science. The effect could be 'positive' - say, a kind of theoretical humanisation of science through the recognition of qualities, formerly thought to be only human, in the fabric of the cosmos. But equally, at least, a scientific astrology might simply pull astrology into the modern maelstrom of state-directed technological-military-industrial practice. Disheartening as that would be, it would not, in fact make democratic political control of that practice any more difficult to achieve, or any more urgent, than it is today.

In any case, both outcomes seem highly unlikely to me now. The question is whether or not the astrological research programme as such will be able to survive, in the face of the preponderance of negative over positive research results, and the difficulty of obtaining sufficient cooperation from the scientific community to even properly replicate the positive findings, let alone explain them. The hopes and ideals of ScA notwithstanding, it will be social and strategic factors, not purely 'scientific' ones, that will decide this in the end.

¹ Dean (1983) makes much more careful and precise claims, which are consequently very effective.

Structuralist Astrology (StA)

Structuralist astrology is by far the newest and numerically smallest position, which makes it premature to attempt more than speculation about where it stands. My impression is that it is conservative towards astrology - more interested in analyzing it as it is, than in changing or improving it - and socially perhaps more marginal than ScA, but less than HA (by reason of its intellectualism). Like them, and unlike PA, it is more elitist than otherwise - its concepts and terminology are not easily mastered.

On the remaining dimensions, I am somewhat at a loss to know where to place StA. The rules of structuralist interpretation are often explicit to the point of prolixity, but so non-empirical as to be almost infinitely flexible, i.e. functionally implicit. This is something it actually shares with much astrology - what it is supposed to interpret and illuminate!

Philosophically, 'structuralism' stretches from the critically materialistic eye of Barthes to the almost pure idealism (disguised as materialism) of Althusser. Indeed, I think the same tension is present within StA.

What we can do is to look at some of the StA heroes, who include Barthes, Derrida and (possibly) Lacan. Firstly, I have little to say about, and less against, R. Barthes. See his Mythologies (transl. 1973), for an introduction to his work. It exemplifies the kind of structuralism most sympathetic to material and historical critique. (Another example might be Foucault, to be mentioned later.) For Barthes, interestingly, "L'astrologie est la littérature du monde petit-bourgeois" (from the French edition of Mythologies). One question he didn't consider is: is that all it is?

I find it difficult to see how a strictly structuralist, synchronic approach to astrology - e.g. Saussurean or Levi-Straussian - would be able to answer anything but 'yes'. It is certainly possible to analyze astrology as a language or totemic system, with fruitful results: see Budd (1981) and Douglas (1981), and my review of the latter (1983). But the limits of a purely structuralist analysis coincide with where a number of possible other kinds of analyses begin - e.g. 1) the realist claims of Gauquelin and others; 2) a historical, diachronic study, aiming to recover the past as it is concealed in astrology, and thereby illuminate the present; even 3) a more muscular sociological study of astrology, the class/status/power aspects of its adherents and so on. Without undertaking in addition, at least some of these other approaches, I see no way that astrology can appear to StA as other than one, probably bourgeois, social construct among many. Such constructs are interesting, of course; but astrology per se would lose a lot of its interest construed in this way.

J. Lacan, I must say, strikes me as pure fraud (as rigorously pure as possible) - "an intellectual mystifier and cultist, with an explanatory system which does not explain and a psychoanalysis which renders human nature infinitely obscure." (Webster, 1981).

A tiny example:

Lacan: "Everything emerges from the structure of the signifier ... Does this explanation satisfy you? Was that the question you asked?"

Q: "No ..."

Lacan: "Look, what I noticed was there was a suture, the pseudo-identification, that exists between what I called the time of terminal arrest of the gesture and what, in another dialectic that I called the dialectic of identificatory haste, I put as the first item, namely the moment of seeing."

(Webster)

Let's compare a sample of Heidegger, one of the major influences on Lacan:

One belongs to the others oneself and enhances their power. The 'others', whom one thus designates in order to cover up the fact of one's belonging to them essentially oneself, are those who proximally and for the most part 'are there' in everyday being-with-one-another. The 'who' is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, the 'they'.

(From Steiner, p.90)

Excellent! But now compare the second-rate efforts of President Reagan at bafflegab:

Q: "That wasn't my question. You answered a question I didn't ask."

Reagan: "I'm answering the question because the question you asked me is - the answer is so obvious. That obviously, after these years of out-of-control and built up to the level they have, there's no one that pretended that you could - this then would have to go to the states for ratification. There would be a period of time before it was actually put in place. And in that period of time, you would have an opportunity to work out a budget which would not have to penalize people who are dependent now, because, on the Government for help."

(New Yorker, 22 Oct. 1982, p.185)

Not bad, but it's obvious what's missing to make it perfect - not enough neologisms! He could have used some lessons from L. Ron Hubbard, or 'Werner Erhard' - or even closer to home, from Alexander Haig, who so successfully

paradoxed his auditioners by abnormalling his responds so that verbs were nouns, nouns verbed and adjectives adverbized. He techniqued a new way to vocabulary his thoughts so as to informationally uncertain anybody listening about what he had actually implicationed ...

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us. This will be to reach some of the goals we are mutually are looking toward.

Apart from contextualizing the situation nuancingly, this may raise an interesting question for StA: if astrology is like a language, or just is one, is this what American astrology is like?

Another hero is Jacques Derrida, a difficult and now influential philosopher who must, I'm afraid - despite his insistence on his playfulness - be taken more seriously. A good introduction exists (Norris, 1982). Obviously it is not possible for me to discuss 'post-structuralism' comprehensively - but here goes. The term itself arises from Derrida's attempt to follow through and make consistent Saussure's original proposition that in a language, the sign is always 'arbitrary'. This is usually explained as meaning that the 'signified' (or concept) in no way justifies or explains what 'signifier' is used to convey it. Derrida follows this through by rendering language, or the 'text', as completely independent from any considerations of reality (empirical or otherwise) or reference. In this 'radically metaphorical' construal, language is (as Seung (1982) nicely puts it) "finally released from the verbal karma of reference and representation". And Derrida uses this strategy to find and criticize in everyone else's texts (including Heidegger's) as "metaphysics of presence" - the desire for and erroneous postulation of certainty, of fixed existence. Derrida correctly perceived that such is the implication of Saussure's original idea, but that Saussure himself failed to realize it.

The trouble is that if you think Saussure's definition was wrong or inadequate in the first place, Derrida's move looks like an amputation for an in-grown toe-nail. The 'toe-nail' is the fact that the Saussurian 'signified' conflates the concept with the thing, so to speak, that the concept is of. The "arbitrary" connection between the signifier and the signified then attaches itself implicitly - and illegitimately - to the connection between the sign as a whole and the thing referred to - which further results in a specious 'independence' of the text from its real, material and historical conditions. Structuralism thus "has no mode of reflecting upon its own origins, as itself the product of a particular set of socio-cultural circumstances..." (Giddens, 1979, p. 28). By the same token, structuralism will not be inclined to focus that way on other phenomena, since history, viewed this way, is reduced to simply one code among others. I need hardly stress that such an approach, within StA or elsewhere, cannot possibly lead to the kind of critical, and self-critical, awareness that I have been arguing for.

It is true that Derrida places his own concepts 'under erasure' to remind one of the constant mutation of all signification. The fact that some readers understand his books (or claim to) shows up the incoherence of his argument, which is not redeemed by a scattering of typographical slashes to show "erasure". Neither is this move a recovery of 'history'. Rather Derrida's sop to random and masterless change is fully in line with what has been correctly called (by Jameson, 1972) "the most scandalous aspect of structuralism, its aggressive anti-humanism". For along with the disappearance of history (into change) goes the human subject,

as actively constituted in historical time.

For further reference, the reader should look at E.P. Thompson's The Poverty of Theory (1978). Thompson explores the intimate connections between Althusser's anti-humanist and anti-empirical structuralism - which extolls history as a "process without a subject", and persons as "bearers of structures" (!) - and the legitimization of Stalinism, e.g. within the French C.P., of which Althusser was a leading theoretician.

Thompson's book should be required reading for astrologers, researchers of all kinds and historians, for its brilliant defence of the need for empirical controls, and of critical history. He shows how Althusser

falsifies the 'dialogue' with empirical evidence inherent in knowledge-production, and in Marx's own practice, and thereby fall continually into modes of thought designated in the Marxist tradition as 'idealist': in particular he confuses the necessary empirical dialogue with empiricism... (and) confiscates reality of its determinant properties, thus reducing the reality to a Theory... (pp. 196, 215)

The reader may recall that above I argued against 'reality' determining anything by itself; but I also said it must not be ignored! Both are attempts to place issues of intense human concern beyond human involvement especially questions and criticism. And therefore both are de-humanizing.

(NB: Thompson has been attacked recently for holding supposedly anti-Marxist ideas of 'value-freedom' (Warde, 1982); but Keat (1981) provides a good defense of the compatibility of V-F with socialism.)

I should add that deconstruction and structuralism can have critical and illuminating applications (see Ryan, 1982). Since they have only very recently been brought to bear on astrology, it is early to ask whether that will be so here. We may, however, look at some of the first such attempts. Douglas (1981) and Budd (1981) present some fascinating elaboration of astrological interpretations, via metaphor and metonymy, etc. But it is worrying that Budd, at least, demonstrates one of StA's hero's cavalier attitude to human and historical reality. He writes, "An astrological message is understood only through a knowledge of astrological symbols and how they relate to each other..." (p. 50). While such a knowledge - a typical concern of StA - is important, it is seriously deficient without also knowing (1) what empirical realities, if any, do they refer to? and (2) who has used these symbols, when, how and for what purpose(s)?

Equally worryingly, when considering the root meanings of (e.g.) the planets by "looking for how they were derived at the beginnings of astrology" - an important historical question - he recommends two utterly unhistorical, even slapdash texts: Carter's Zodiac and the Soul and Rudyard's The Astrology of Personality.

That said, I don't doubt that StA will go on to better analyses of the kind it does well. But so far, there is no reason to think it signals a more 'helpful' way to study or be involved with astrology than the other ways I have discussed.

Brief Glossary**Corrigible**

Open to correction, especially by evidence and/or argument.

Critical

Used in two senses: (1) where a high value is placed on argument and evidence, including (or especially) when it contradicts hypotheses under consideration; (2) as in 'critical theory' - especially that of the Frankfurt School, which considers how concepts are grounded in social reality, and aid or suppress emancipation; also how people unwittingly contribute to their own suppression.

Empiricism

The position that knowledge can be reduced to and/or explained by observable phenomena; but can also be used to mean (esp. as 'empirical') simply including attention to observables.

Epistemology

The study of how people know, how knowledge is possible.

Hermeneutics

Literally, interpretation; the philosophical 'method' of Heidegger and Gadamer (prominently); grew out of phenomenology.

Horary (astrology)

The attempt to answer questions using a chart based on the time and place of posing the question; a part of traditional astrology.

Idealism

Assumes the primacy of the subject (his/her ideas, etc.); "every consistent idealism is ultimately either a theism of some sort or a solipsism." (Suchting)

Materialism

Opposition to idealism; assumes the primacy of the object and in particular the material world (traditional m.), to which Marxist m. would add, the economic and social world.

Methodology

Knowledge of (scientific) methods.

Mundane (astrology)

Draws conclusions about events and/or things using a chart related to their beginning.

Normative

Pertaining to what 'should' be, as distinct from what 'is' (descriptive).

Phenomenology

Philosophical method (esp. of Husserl) attempting to discover how the mind constitutes the world, through careful attention to pre-analytical consciousness.

Rationalism

The position that knowledge can be reduced to and/or based on a set of irreducible 'first principles'; but can also be used to mean (esp. as 'rational') reasoning, using a logic of some sort.

Realism

The position that the truth/falsity of beliefs should be judged by reference to features of the 'real world' usually opposed to relativism. (Realistic factors are those whose existence is not dependent on being known.)

Relify

To turn (conceptually) that which is a relation or process into a thing.

Relativism

The position that the t/f of beliefs should be judged by reference to the speaker's mind and culture; usually opposed to realism.

Solipsism

Assumes the primacy of the self; the world as oneself.

Structuralism

Philosophical, linguistic, literary and anthropological movement which values 'structure' and de-values subjectivity; attempts to discover basic human structures and/or analyze them in order to criticize assumptions (esp. post-structuralism or deconstruction, associated with Derrida); associated with R. Barthes, C. Levi-Strauss, F. de Saussure.

Theism

Assumes the primacy of God; (technically theism, unlike deism, also accepts revelation).

is a 'curative science.'" (Weeks, 1982)

A recent book (Dreyfus and Rabinow) discusses how Foucault was influenced by (no prizes for guessing) structuralism and hermeneutics - 'cf. StA and HA - and how he moved "beyond" both, to "the only method left: a pragmatically oriented historical interpretation." While there are still problems, and I am not an expert here, this sounds very promising. (For a note on Foucault's concept of 'ideology' and modern astrology, see my 1982b.)

Of course, he was also strongly influenced by Marxism - too vast a subject to enter into here, except to say that the dinosaur of orthodox Marxism-Leninism (including its sophisticated Althusserian dressings) and related variants such as forcible (and selective) egalitarianism and state socialism, are all clearly more of a problem than solution. Nonetheless, Marxism as a tradition and orientation is clearly the intellectual source of Foucault's critical impulse, as well as the 'critical theory' of Habermas.

When combined with the liberal-humanist tradition of respect for the individual (regardless of their class membership), the Marxist critical impulse is crucial for what we need. Only then can astrology become part of human history, where it belongs; a part of the story of how human beings, in acting and reacting, have made their own history.

Such a history will need all the positive virtues of all the four schools. What it might do is help to shift the study of astrology, for those pursuing it, into a positive relation to our wider problems; and to move it away from being a cul-de-sac of mystification and triviality.

This may seem like a drop in the bucket. Our collective problems are so vast - nuclear proliferation, armaments spending in the hundreds of billions of pounds, widespread starvation (40 million last year), a deteriorating environment, suppression of human rights everywhere and the rise of the Right in the Western world ... Even the present material, social and political freedoms we do have are no longer "perennial facts of the history of mankind, but historical advances which can easily be lost" (Rossi, p.272). Indeed, given the scale of our crisis, the reader (especially the non-astrologer or scholar) should be quickly forgiven for wondering, what justification can there be for messing about with astrology at all? - at least, with any pretense at more than amusement or diversion?

That question is the sense in which this critique is finally an aporia. It seems to me that a good understanding and appreciation of astrology could contribute something positive, albeit only a drop. Each of us, finally, can only contribute the 'drops' we have; and it seems to me that it would be a waste for those already in this area to use what we know, to help transform it for others. As for any onlookers, I hope this essay has reminded you of similar problems in your area, as well as informed you about the strange world of modern astrology. Because no one is just an on-looker on the larger world, and its crises - of which astrology, and every human project, are a part.

Still, the sense of aporia remains; the question of "what to do or say in some strange ambiguous thing." I like the answer given by the man who was out walking, pulling a piece of string behind him. When asked by someone why he was pulling the string, he said, "Well, you try pushing it."

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