

The Stars Down to Earth, by T. Adorno

a. People / Organizations: [http://www.edarcepelago.com/classici/AdornoTheodor/Adorno,%20T%20-%20Stars%20Down%20to%20Earth%20&%20Other%20Essays%20\(Routledge,%201994\).pdf](http://www.edarcepelago.com/classici/AdornoTheodor/Adorno,%20T%20-%20Stars%20Down%20to%20Earth%20&%20Other%20Essays%20(Routledge,%201994).pdf)

b. Quotes:

c. General Notes:

- Introduction: Adorno and Authoritarian Irrationalism, by S. Crook (pg. 1)
 - "These four diverse pieces by Adorno are underpinned by a (more-or-less) consistent and coherent account of the powerful tendencies towards authoritarianism and irrationalism operative in mid-twentieth century Western culture" (pg. 2)
 - "Most obviously, **there is no shortage of evidence that authoritarian politics, aggressive ethnic prejudice and extreme nationalism are still with us**" (pg. 2)
 - "It is a truism of debates about postmodernization that **the rationalistic "grand narratives" of enlightenment, progress and emancipation have lost their binding power in the advanced societies**. Such societies evince a curious intertwining of dependence upon and hostility to science and technology. The anti-rationalisms of "New Age" cults, religious fundamentalism and deep ecology develop alongside and make use of the latest communications technologies and the latest findings in science. Adorno's diagnoses of the authoritarian complicities of astrology and occultism are directly relevant to these developments." (pg. 2)
 - "**The remarks which follow do not urge a blanket endorsement of every element in Adorno's theoretical framework, each step in his methodological procedures, or every one of his substantive claims. There is much that is debatable, and a little that is frankly silly, in Adorno's work.** But with all their infelicities, these essays throw down a challenge to students of contemporary culture to come to grips with the crucial, if unfashionable, problem of authoritarian irrationalism. The main dimensions of that challenge can be mapped by three dogmatic propositions." (pg. 2-3)
 - "Authoritarian irrationalism is an integral part of enlightened modernity, not to be thought away as historical relic, unintended consequence or marginal other." (pg. 3)
 - "The affinity between modernity and authoritarian irrationalism must be sought in the psychodynamics of modernity, in the characterological bases and outcomes of processes of cultural, economic, political and social modernization." (pg. 3)
 - "In their common manipulation of the dependency needs of typically late-modern personalities there is a direct continuity between authoritarian irrationalist propaganda and the everyday products of the 'culture industry'." (pg. 3)
 - Authoritarian Irrationalism as Anti-Semitism: The Dark-Side of Enlightened Modernity (pg. 3)
 - "Anti-Semitism is not an historical relic but 'one of the dangers inherent in all more recent culture'" (pg. 5)
 - "**Horkheimer's thesis [is] that bourgeois revolutions have always repressed egoistic and hedonistic demands, thereby producing aggression, terror and the perversion of hopes for 'liberty, equality and fraternity'.** Modern anti-Semitism is the typical expression of that perversion." (pg. 6)
 - "Anti-Semitism is not the antithesis of Enlightenment reason but a morbid version of it in which reflection does not set limits to projection. In such paranoid projections "the world becomes the weak or all-powerful total concept of all that is projected onto it." **Paranoia is a pathological possibility built-in to all conceptual thinking, the "dark side of cognition" and the typical symptom of the "half-educated."** Anti-Semitism is a form of paranoid projection which has long been at the heart of Western culture, and it can be expected to flourish as social conditions swell the ranks of the disgruntled "half-educated." This argument is central to the link which Adorno establishes between the "irrationalism" of fascist anti-Semitism and superficially harmless phenomena such as Astrology." (pg. 6-7)
 - ◆ "Adorno's account of the modern prevalence of anti-Semitism/prejudice and its link with authoritarianism needs to be understood in relation to his model of the psychodynamics of modern culture" (pg. 8)
 - "No clear link is established between anti-Semitism and the logic of enlightenment." (pg. 6)
 - Fascism, Anti-Semitism and the Psychodynamics of Modernity (pg. 8)
 - "**The account of authoritarianism and anti-Semitism developed by Adorno and other members of the Institute in the 1940s is heavily dependent upon Freudian theory.** Freudianism was the vehicle through which the Institute moved away from the rigidities and superficialities of their earlier reductionist accounts of the phenomena." (pg. 9)
 - "The dynamics of fascist regimes, fascist movements and fascist propaganda are conceptualized almost exclusively in psychoanalytic terms in Adorno's work." (pg. 9)
 - ◆ "**Adorno's Freudianism is a dynamic theory in which the "self" is shaped and re-shaped in the interplay between what Freud termed the "psychic apparatus" and historically developing social and cultural conditions.**" (pg. 9)
 - "**The relationship which the fascist follower bears to the leader, a relationship which Adorno sees as definitive of fascism, is fundamentally masochistic.** However, the leader permits, and sometimes requires, the follower to give vent to sadistic impulses. A review of three issues associated with this relationship can structure this account of Adorno's theory of the psychodynamics of fascism. First, the question arises of how individuals come to be in a position where masochistic surrender to a fascist leader appears attractive. Second, the nature of the libidinal bond between leader and follower requires explanation. Third, these issues bear on the murderous aggression associated with fascism" (pg. 10)
 - "In a nice analogy Adorno and Horkheimer liken the fate of the individual to that of the corner-shop which gives way to the economically more advanced supermarket" (pg. 10)
 - "**The leader's power and charisma function for the follower as a narcissistic projection of his own ego-ideal, a projection with which he then identifies.** However, the judicious leader must take care not to appear entirely awesome, entirely severed from the ordinary life of the follower. To paraphrase Adorno, **the leader must remain enough like the follower to appeal to those elements of narcissism which remain attached to the follower's own ego.** This is why, in Adorno's colourful phrase, "Hitler posed as a composite of King Kong and the suburban barber." **The fascist leader is the "great little man," embodying in enlarged form all the collective virtues of the little men who are his followers**" (pg. 11)
 - "It is a major theme in Adorno's analysis of fascist propaganda that it is in fact not taken altogether seriously by its audiences. As he writes, 'Hitler was liked, not in spite of his cheap antics but just because of them, because of his false tones and his clowning'" (pg. 12)
 - "**For Adorno there is a fundamental symmetry between mass-culture and fascism, both of which feed-off and reproduce immature character structures with high, almost child-like, dependency needs.** Radio soap operas, newspaper astrology columns and fascist propaganda share the characteristic that they operate by at once meeting and manipulating the dependency needs of the pseudo-individual" (pg. 10-11)
 - "**Violent atrocities are much more than accidental "excesses" of fascism: for Adorno they are a manifestation of its basic psychodynamic**

principles in at least three important senses. First, aggression and destructiveness are at the core of the sadomasochistic ambivalence of fascism. Either more or less explicitly, depending upon context, fascist propaganda incites sadistic violence against the “enemy.” German Nazis might explicitly demand that “Jewish blood must flow,” while Martin Luther Thomas can only hint that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin,” but the promise is the same: what authority had forbidden, the authority of the leader now requires. In the promise and performance of permitted bloodletting, fascism enacts the fusion between its fundamental conformism and its pseudo-revolutionary activism as a “movement.” Second, the masochistic counterpoint to this sadistic other-directed aggression is a drive to self-destruction. For the fascist, “destruction [is] a substitute for his deepest and most inhibited desires . . . annihilation is the psychological substitute for the millennium.” In this spirit, Hitler promised (and delivered) “night and fog” to the nation which had failed him. Third, Adorno frequently draws attention to the ritual character of fascist, and particularly anti-Semitic, violence: “at the hub of the fascist, anti-Semitic, propaganda ritual is the desire for ritual murder.” The ritual element serves a number of functions. Most obviously, it connects with the syncretic paraphernalia of uniforms, insignia, oaths of loyalty and initiation rites which served to bind the follower to the Nazi “movement.” The syndrome is re-enacted by those criminal gangs for whom the commission of murder is a final initiation rite. At a deeper psychodynamic level the ritual elements of fascist aggression are “simply the organised imitation of magic practices, the mimesis of mimesis.” Here, the element of pretense, of an acting out which is not altogether real fuses with the notion of ritual as a sanctioned expression of affect. Reasserting his dominant theme, Adorno insists that “this loosening of self-control, the merging of one’s impulses with a ritual scheme is closely related to the universal psychological weakening of the self-contained individual.”” (pg. 12-13)

- Dependence and Conformity: Linking Fascism and the Culture Industry (pg. 13)
 - “For Adorno the prejudice, aggression and conformism of fascism could not be dismissed as a heteronomous intrusion into the otherwise civilized order of modern society. On the contrary, fascism is at home in capitalist modernity. If it is a form of “irrationalism” its roots are none the less also those of what now passes for “reason.” It was because he saw fascism as a possibility built into the very fabric of modern capitalism that Adorno was muted in his celebration of the defeat of its Italian and German manifestations. To state the case crudely, Adorno saw the commodified American culture of mass-consumption, movies, jazz and radio serials as putting into play the same basic psychodynamic principles that formed the basis of fascism: psychological dependency and social conformism” (pg. 13)
 - “The rhetoric of fascist propaganda is simply a less censored version of the ubiquitous rhetoric of the culture industry.” (pg. 19)
 - “While its effects might be deadly, fascist propaganda is not altogether “serious.” Fascist agitators do not present their audiences with considered lectures on the shortcomings of the democratic theory of the state, or even with exhortatory sermons in the traditional sense. The audience who turn out to see and hear the fascist agitator expect a good show. For Adorno “show” is indeed the right word. “The achievement of the self-styled leader is a performance reminiscent of the theater, of sport, and of so-called religious revivals.” (pg. 19)
 - “The content does not matter, the “show” consists of the agitator’s glibness, his “mysterious gift of speech” manifested in a mixture of “maudlin ecstasy and senseless chatter.”” (pg. 20)
 - “Adorno hesitates to characterize fascist propaganda as simply “irrational.” As he puts it, “the term, irrationality, is much too vague to describe sufficiently so complex a psychological phenomenon.” However, his own views on the complex interplay of the rational and irrational in his material are not entirely worked out. Rather, a number of different themes emerge at different points in the texts. Of course, this observation is not necessarily a criticism of Adorno, for whom it would be distortion wholly typical of “identity thinking” to attempt to capture so ambivalent a phenomenon as fascist propaganda under a single, self-consistent, concept” (pg. 22)
 - “The gratifications which fascism provides are “irrational” for Adorno because they are illusory: “there is no real pleasure or joy, but only the release of one’s own feeling of unhappiness.” However, and as Adorno the Freudian also recognizes, from the standpoint of the psychic economy these “irrational” gratifications have their own “rationality.” They make the best of a bad job in the same way as do neurotic symptoms” (pg. 22)
 - ◆ “When social “reality” models itself after a paranoid system, paranoid thinking is an eminently “rational” response” (pg. 24)
- Does Adorno Still Matter? (pg. 24)
 - “Adorno’s twin theses that, first, authoritarian irrationalism lies at the core of enlightened modernity and that, second, the culture industry is implicated in authoritarian irrationalism have a legitimate claim on the attention of students of contemporary culture” (pg. 24)
 - “Adorno possessed an unusually acute sense of the gravitational pull exerted by “identity thinking” in the study of culture.” (pg. 25)
 - “It follows that the spirit of Adorno’s project for a critical theory of authoritarianism and its relationship with the wider culture requires a closer attention than he himself gave to the rhetorical, persuasive, dimension of authoritarian discourse.” (pg. 28)
 - “To state the case dogmatically, little sense can be made of Adorno without reference to three axioms. First, the “character” of the human individual is the dynamic product of a life-history which is, in turn, shaped by broader social and cultural influences. Second, character structure has “depth” in the sense that its complex dynamics are not fully present to self-consciousness. Third, the “unconscious” dimensions of character are implicated in the ways human individuals orient themselves to social interactions and cultural meanings. If these axioms are rejected, little sense can be made of Adorno’s two major hypotheses: that first, social and cultural developments in late capitalism produce typically “weak” character structures with high dependency needs and that second, those dependency needs are routinely manipulated by diverse interests, from fascist agitators to commercial advertisers” (pg. 29-30)
 - “However, while there is no doubt that Adorno regarded Freudian theory as the most highly developed framework in which to articulate those axioms and hypotheses, it need not be regarded as the only possible one. This is another way of saying that Adorno’s analyses of the psychodynamics of fascism and the culture industry do not automatically collapse even if it is granted that Freudianism is discredited. His hypotheses could be articulated, and made available for investigation, in a number of other discourses of the human subject, from interactionist social psychology to postmodernist culture theory.” (pg. 30)
 - “Adorno’s concern, rather, is with the way fascist propaganda works, the threat it poses, in democratic societies” (pg. 31)
- Change and Popular Culture (pg. 32)
 - “It is surely possible to preserve Adorno’s basic insight here without agreeing with every tendentious judgement he makes about popular genres” (pg. 34)
 - “...it does no service to Adorno to try to defend every word of the essays collected here. An attempt has been made to indicate where some of the major problems lie. In the end, Adorno’s work on authoritarian irrationalism matters because if we read it critically, but without reliance on those caricatures which have been so influential, it can raise profoundly unsettling questions about contemporary culture. To read these essays in that way is to ask how far dependency has become the typical condition of the “self” in advanced societies, how deeply authoritarian currents run through our superficially pluralistic cultures, and how free our beliefs and opinions are from a pervasive undercurrent of irrationalism.” (pg. 38)
- The Stars Down to Earth, by T. Adorno (pg. 46)
 - Introduction (pg. 46)
 - “Various mass movements spread all over the world in which people seem to act against their own rational interests of self-preservation and the “pursuit of happiness” have been evident now for a considerable length of time. It would be a mistake, however, to call such mass phenomena

- entirely "irrational," to regard them as completely disconnected from individual and collective ego aims. In fact, most of them are based on an exaggeration and distortion of such ego aims rather than on their neglect" (pg. 46)
- "...even when whole nations assume the role of profiteers of Realpolitik, this rationality is only partial and dubious. While the **calculations of self-interest are pushed to extremes**, the view of the totality of factors, and in particular, of the effects of such a policy upon the whole seems to be strangely curtailed. **Overly shrewd concentration on self-interest results in a crippling of the capacity to look beyond the limits of self-interest and this finally works against itself. Irrationality is not necessarily a force operating outside the range of rationality: it may result from the processes of rational self-preservation 'run amuck'**" (pg. 47)
 - **"It is the pattern of interacting rational and irrational forces in modern mass movements upon which our studies hope to throw some light"** (pg. 47)
 - "...the collective paranoia of one particular nation...seems to spring from more universal social and cultural conditions. One of the most important contributions psychiatry and psychoanalytically-oriented sociology can make in this respect is to reveal certain mechanisms which cannot be grasped adequately either in terms of being sensible or in terms of delusions" (pg. 47)
 - "...it should be possible to analyze the inner structure of such movements on a small test-tube scale, as it were, and at a time when they do not yet manifest themselves so directly and threateningly that there is no time left for objective and detached research." (pg. 48)
 - ◆ **"The type of people we are concerned with take astrology for granted, much like psychiatry, symphony concerts or political parties; they accept it because it exists, without much reflection,** provided only that their own psychological demands somehow correspond to the offer. They are hardly interested in the justification of the system" (pg. 49)
 - ◇ "The modern occultist movements, including astrology, are more or less artificial rehashes of old and by-gone superstitions, susceptibility for which is kept awake by certain social and psychological conditions while the resuscitated creeds remain basically discordant with today's universal state of enlightenment. The absence of ultimate "seriousness" which, incidentally, makes such phenomena by no means less serious with regard to their social implications – is as significant of our time as the emergence of secondary occultism *per se*." (pg. 49)
 - "As always with arguments intended to discredit interest in the specific modernity of phenomena by stressing that there is nothing new under the sun, this objection is both true and false. **It is true in as much as the institutionalization of superstition is by no means novel; it is false in so far as this institutionalization has reached, by means of mass production, a quantity which is likely to result in a new quality of attitudes and behavior and in that the gap between the systems of superstition and the general state of mind has been widened tremendously.**" (pg. 50)
 - "We may here refer only to the aforementioned detachment of large groups of believers from the "working" of superstition, and to their interest in net results rather than in supposedly supernatural powers. **They don't even see the sorcerers at work anymore nor are they allowed to listen to their abracadabra. They simply "get the dope."**" (pg. 50)
 - **"...pseudorationality [is] the very same traits that play such a conspicuous role in totalitarian social movements, its calculative though spurious adaptation to realistic needs"** (pg. 51)
 - **"People always wanted to learn from occult signs what to expect and do; in fact, superstition is largely a residue of animistic magical practices by which ancient humanity tried to influence or control the course of events.** But the sobriety, nay the overrealism, of our material at the expense of anything remotely reminiscent of the supernatural seems to be one of its most paradoxical and challenging features. Overrealism in itself may be, in some directions, irrational, in the sense of that overdeveloped and self-destructive shrewdness of self-interest, pointed out before. In addition it will be proved during the course of our study that astrological irrationality has largely been reduced to a purely formal characteristic: abstract authority." (pg. 51)
 - "In view of the interweaving of rational and irrational elements, **we are mainly interested in the direct or indirect "messages" conveyed by the material to its consumers:** such messages combine irrationality (in as much as they aim at blind acceptance and presuppose unconscious anger in the consumers) and rationality (in as much as they deal with more or less practical everyday problems for which they pretend to offer the most helpful answer)." (pg. 51-52)
 - "In the whole field of mass communications, the "hidden meaning" is not truly unconscious at all, but represents a layer which is neither quite admitted nor quite repressed – the sphere of innuendo, the winking of an eye and 'you know what I mean'" (pg. 54)
 - ◆ **"Shifting responsibility from the manipulators to the manipulated is a widespread ideological pattern."** (pg. 54)
 - Basic Situation of the Column (pg. 56)
 - "There are only isolated manifestations of obvious superstition or overt irrationalities. **Irrationality is rather kept in the background,** defining the basis of the whole approach: it is treated as a matter of course that the various prognoses and the corresponding advice are derived from the stars" (pg. 56)
 - "Everything sounds respectable, sedate and sensible and astrology as such is treated as something established and socially recognized, an uncontroversial element of our culture, as though it were somewhat bashful of its own shadiness." (pg. 56)
 - "The only difference is that **the writer leans on his distinctly magical and irrational authority** which seems to be strangely out of proportion with the common-sense content of what he has to offer. This discrepancy cannot be regarded as accidental. **The common-sense advice itself contains, as will be shown later, many spurious "pseudo-rational" elements, calling for some authoritarian backing to be effective.** At the same time, the reluctance of the readers to be "sensible" in just the way the column advocates it, may make for a response which can only be overcome by conjuring up the image of some absolute power" (pg. 56-57)
 - **"The irrationality of the source is not only kept remote, but is also treated as impersonal and thing-like: there is an underlying philosophy of what might be called naturalist supernaturalism."** (pg. 57)
 - "The source remains entirely abstract, unapproachable and anonymous. This reflects the type of irrationality in which the total order of our life presents itself to most individuals: opaqueness and inscrutability. **Naive persons fail to look through the complexities of a highly organized and institutionalized society, but even the sophisticated ones cannot understand it in plain terms of consistency and reason, but are faced with antagonism and absurdities,** the most blatant of which is the threat brought to mankind by the very same technology which was furthered in order to make life easier. **Who wants to survive under present conditions is tempted to "accept" such absurdities,** like the verdict of the stars, rather than to penetrate them by thinking which means discomfort in many directions. In this respect, astrology is truly in harmony with a ubiquitous trend. In as much as the social system is the "fate" of most individuals independent of their will and interest, it is projected upon the stars in order thus to obtain a higher degree of dignity and justification in which the individuals hope to participate themselves. At the same time, the idea that the stars, if one only reads them correctly, offer some advice mitigates the very same fear of the inexorability of social processes the stargazer himself creates" (pg. 57-58)
 - ◆ "the discrepancy between the rational and the irrational aspects of the column is expressive of a tension inherent in social reality itself. **"To be rational" means not questioning irrational conditions, but to make the best of them from the viewpoint of one's private interests"** (pg. 58)
 - ◇ **cf. Dialectic of Enlightenment - "Stoicism - which is the bourgeois philosophy - makes it easier for the privileged to look what threatens them in the eye by dwelling on the suffering of others. It affirms the general by elevating private existence, as*

- protection from it, to the status of a principle. The private sphere of the bourgeois is an upper-class cultural asset which has come down in the world" - Authors (pg. 76)
https://www.binseelsnotes.com/files/uqgd/d7b063_953afaba2f084591b714c04d28d46b5e.pdf
- ◇ *cf. March 22, 2023 entry - G. W. F. Hegel, in his *Philosophy of History, while accepting the fact that "the philosophy of the time stood related to religion"* (pg. 420), says "Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism - although within their common sphere opposed to each other, had the same general purport, viz. rendering the soul absolutely indifferent to everything which the real world had to offer. These philosophies...produced in man a self-reliant immobility" (pg. 407). Hegel continues saying, "Stoicism taught only that the Negative is not - that pain must not be recognized as a veritable existence" (pg. 413).
 - "A truly unconscious aspect, primitive and possibly decisive, but never allowed to come to the fore in the column, should at least be suggested. Indulgence in astrology may provide those who fall for it with a substitute for sexual pleasure of a passive nature. It means primarily submission to unbridled strength of the absolute power." (pg. 58)
 - ◆ "Communion with the stars is an almost unrecognizable and therefore tolerable substitute of the forbidden relation with an omnipotent father figure." (pg. 58)
 - The Column and the Astrological Magazines (pg. 59)
 - "They reiterate continuously that they are not determinists. Here they fall in line with the pattern of modern mass culture which protests the more fanatically about the tenets of individualism and the freedom of the will, the more actual freedom of action vanishes. **Astrology attempts to get away from crude and unpopular fatalism by establishing outward forces operating on the individual's decision, including the individual's own character, but leaves the ultimate choice to him.** This has significant socio-psychological implications" (pg. 60)
 - "Astrology undertakes the constant encouragement of people to take decisions, no matter how inconsequential they may be. It is practically directed towards action in spite of all the lofty talk about cosmic secrets and profound meditation. Thus, the very gesture of astrology, its basic presumption that everyone has to make up his mind at every moment falls in line with what will later come out with respect to the specific content of astrological counseling: its leaning towards extroversion" (pg. 60)
 - "According to this concept, **freedom consists of the individual's taking upon himself voluntarily what is inevitable anyway. The empty shell of liberty is solicitously kept intact.** If the individual acts according to given conjunctions, everything will go right, if he does not, everything will go wrong. Sometimes it is quite frankly stated that the individual should adjust himself to certain constellations. One might say that there is in astrology an implicit metaphysics of adjustment behind the concretistic advice of adjustment in everyday life." (pg. 60-61)
 - "It may be reiterated that the climate of semi-erudition is the fertile breeding-ground for astrology because here primary naivete, the unreflecting acceptance of the existent has been lost whereas at the same time neither the power of thinking nor positive knowledge has been developed sufficiently. The semi-erudite vaguely wants to understand and is also driven by the narcissistic wish to prove superior to the plain people but he is not in a position to carry through complicated and detached intellectual operations. To him, astrology, just as other irrational creeds like racism, provides a short-cut by bringing the complex to a handy formula and offering at the same time the pleasant gratification that he who feels to be excluded from educational privileges nevertheless belongs to the minority of those who are "in the know." " (pg. 61)
 - "A kind of middle way between realism and paranoid fantasies is sought in the political harangues of the magazine. Several times, though always somewhat vaguely, the magazines accuse disruptive minorities, **leaving it open who is meant.**" (pg. 62)
 - "Nevertheless **the heavy employment of the "impending doom"** device is hardly accidental. It **encourages the addressee's destructive urges and feeds on their discomfort in civilization, while at the same time stirring up a bellicose mood.**" (pg. 63)
 - ◆ *T. Adorno, in *The Culture Industry*, says "One of the most conspicuous features of the agitator's speeches [is] namely the absence of a positive programme and of anything they might 'give', as well as the paradoxical prevalence of threat and denial..." (pg. 141).
https://www.binseelsnotes.com/files/uqgd/d7b063_4170f7463db2436983f96ef4f46439e2.pdf
 - "Mention should be made of the theory of Ernst Simmel that delusions such as totalitarian anti-Semitism are within the individual "isolated" and at the same time collectivized, thus preventing the individual from actually becoming psychotic. This structure is reflected by the dichotomy here under discussion. It is as though astrology has to provide gratifications to aggressive urges on the level of the imaginary, but is not allowed to interfere too obviously with the "normal" functioning of the individual in reality. Rather than impairing the individual's reality testing it at least superficially tries to strengthen his capacity." (pg. 67)
 - "As is generally known since Freud, the dream is the protector of sleep by fulfilling conscious and unconscious wishes, which waking life is incapable of gratifying, by hallucinatory imagery. The dream content has often been likened in its function to psychotic delusions. It is as though the ego protected itself from the onslaught of instinctual material by its translation into dreams. This is relatively innocuous because it is generally confined to the ideational sphere" (pg. 67)
 - ◆ "Astrology offers an analogy to this split between irrationality of the dream and rationality of the waking state. The similarity may be characterized not so much by delusion as by the function of keeping the individual "normal," whatever that may be, by channeling and to a certain extent neutralizing some of the individual's more threatening id impulses." (pg. 67)
 - "It is precisely this predigested character of astrology which produces its appearance of being normal and socially accepted and tends to obliterate the borderline between the rational and the irrational that is generally so marked with regard to dream and waking. Much like cultural industry, astrology tends to do away with the distinction of fact and fiction: its content is often overrealistic while suggesting attitudes which are based on an entirely irrational source, such as the advice to forbear entering into business ventures on some particular day. Though astrology does not have as wild an appearance as dreams or delusions, it is just this fictitious reasonableness that allows delusional urges to make their inroad into real life without overtly clashing with ego controls. **Irrationality is covered up very carefully.** Most of the raw material coped with as well as the advice tendered by astrological sources are extremely down-to-earth. In fact too much so, but their synthesis, the law according to which the reasonable attitudes are applied to "realistic situations," is arbitrary and entirely opaque. This may be an adequate description of the configuration of the rational and the irrational in astrology which is actually the object of this study. The confusion of these elements is also likely to define the potential danger represented by astrology as a mass phenomenon" (pg. 69)
 - "Yet the fact that people "choose" astrology - which is not presented to them as natural as religion is to traditionally brought up persons, but requires some initiative on the adept's part - somehow indicates a lack of intellectual integration which may be partly due to the opaqueness of today's social world calling for intellectual short-cuts and partly also to expanding semi-erudition" (pg. 69)
 - ◆ "...the psychological gain is extremely questionable in so far as it tends to hide actual circumstances and obstructs true recognition and correction. Interest in astrology, like a phobic symptom, may well absorb all other anxiety objects and may ultimately become an obsessive interest of the afflicted individual or group" (pg. 69)
 - The Underlying Psychology (pg. 70)
 - "...apparently specific references are always so general that they can be made to fit all the time: everyone has some hunch or idea on any given day or may in retrospect flatter himself by thinking that he had one, and everyone, particularly the semi-erudite, would gladly accept being characterized as the owner of a keen mind. Thus, **the paradox of the column is solved by the makeshift of pseudo-individualization**" (pg. 70)

- addressees are much more polymorphous. The columnist starts from the generalized assumption that his readers are regressive, warped persons, and all the major dimensions of regression actually involved in most defects of intellect and personality, are somehow taken care of and catered to. In order to understand how this works, one will have to distinguish between the image of the addressee, which is projected by the columnist, and the columnist's real underlying estimate of his readers." (pg. 86)
- **"In astrology as in compulsive neurosis, one has to keep very strictly to some rule, command or advice without ever being able to say why. It is just this "blindness" of obedience which seems to be fused with the overwhelming and frightening power of the command."** (pg. 87)
 - "Just as advice from the stars enhances irrational authoritarian dependence and submissiveness, reference to inscrutable and inexorable laws which one somehow has to imitate by one's own rigid behavior strengthens the compulsive potential with the addressee." (pg. 87)
 - The Bi-Phasic Approach (pg. 89)
 - **"It has been mentioned before that the column aims at promoting conventional, conformist and contented attitudes and that any insights into negative aspects of reality are kept under control by making everything dependent on the individual rather than on objective conditions.** The individual is promised the solution to everything if he complies with certain requirements and avoids certain negative stereotypes. He is prevented from really acknowledging the very same difficulties which drive him into the arms of astrology" (pg. 89)
 - **"People with a weak ego or objectively incapable of molding their own fate show a certain readiness to shift their responsibility to the abstract time factor which absolves them of their failures** and promotes their hope as though they could expect relief from all their ills from the very simple fact that things move on and more particularly that most sufferings are likely to be forgotten – the capacity of memory actually being linked with a strong development of the ego. This psychological disposition is both strengthened and utilized by the column which enhances the confidence in time by giving it the mystical connotation that time is somehow expressive of the verdict of the stars" (pg. 95)
 - Work and Pleasure (pg. 97)
 - "Work completely severed from the element of playfulness becomes drab and monotonous, a tendency which is consummated by the complete quantification of industrial work. Pleasure when equally isolated from the "serious" content of life, becomes silly, meaningless and sheer "entertainment" and ultimately it is a mere means of reproducing one's working capacity, whereas the real substance of any non-utilitarian activity lies in the way it faces and sublimates reality problems: *res severa verum gaudium*. The complete severance of work and play as an attitudinal pattern of the total personality may justly be called a process of disintegration strangely concomitant with the integration of utilitarian operations for the sake of which this dichotomy has been introduced" (pg. 97-98)
 - "It is one of the major tenets of the column, possibly the most important of all, that pleasure itself is permissible only if it serves ultimately some ulterior purpose of success and self-promotion" (pg. 101)
 - Adjustment and Individuality (pg. 105)
 - "The nucleus of the bi-phasic approach is the maintenance of the division of work and pleasure subjecting the latter to the former's rule" (pg. 105)
 - **"The grain of truth contained in...notions is abused for conformist purposes."** (pg. 111)
 - **ideology is the dismembered rehearsal of this.*
 - "Astrology, and occultism as a whole, has as indicated before a strong urge to overcome suspicions of magical practices in a rationalized business culture. Science is the bad conscience of occultism and the more irrational the justification of its pretenses, the more it is stressed that there is nothing phony about it." (pg. 127)
 - Ruggedness and Dependence (pg. 128)
 - "Human relationships are viewed in an authoritarian way, organized according to an implicit hierarchy of the strong and the weak, and, accordingly, almost entirely on the ruggedness vs. dependence level." (pg. 133)
 - Categories of Human Relationships (pg.134)
 - "...potential anxieties and hostilities associated with dependence are removed: the image of those on whom the addressee depends is unequivocally positive. This is the easier the more they are outsiders: the less he knows their shortcomings. The parasitic aspect of dependency is brought out by the continuous reference to benefits to be expected from them. An attempt is made to transform narcissistic losses into the gain of getting rid of the burden of autonomous responsibility and, possibly, adding some masochistic gratifications" (pg. 140)
 - "...the column tends to reinforce guilt feelings, compulsive patterns and various other unconscious motivations instead of working against them. It tends to make the socially dependent even more dependent psychologically (pg. 142)
 - **"There is something like the idea of the "Big Brother" as the ultimate authority of totalitarian states**, as developed in Orwell's 1984, involved in the concept of the friends of the astrological column. Erik H. Erikson has developed the idea in psychoanalytic terms" (pg. 143)
 - Conclusion (pg. 152)
 - "It is this susceptibility much more than astrology as such which deserves attention; we want to utilize our studies of astrology as a kind of key to more widespread social and psychological potentialities. In other words, we want to analyze astrology in order to find out what it indicates as a "symptom" of some tendencies of our society as well as of typical psychological trends among those this society embraces." (pg. 153)
 - "Obviously, the first concept that comes to mind in this connection is that of social and psychological dependence. Our analysis of the *Los Angeles Times* column has pointed out in detail how dependency needs of the audience are presupposed, fostered and exploited continuously" (pg. 153)
 - ◆ **"...the socialization of life, the "seizure" of the individual by innumerable channels of organization has certainly increased.**" (pg. 154)
 - ◇ "While the basic dependence of the individual on the social body, and in a highly irrational form, has always prevailed, this dependence was at least "veiled" to many people during the classical era of liberalism where people had come to think of themselves as self-sustaining monads. This veil has now been drawn apart and people begin to face their own dependence much more than they used to 80 years ago; largely because the processes of social control are no longer those of an anonymous market which decides the economic fate of the individual in terms of offer and demand" (pg. 154)
 - "It may be this mounting obviousness of dependence rather than an increase of dependence per se which makes itself felt today and prepares the minds of the people for astrology as well as for totalitarian creeds. Paradoxically, a higher amount of insight might result in a reversion to attitudes that prevailed long before the rise of modern capitalism. For, **while people recognize their dependence and often enough venture the opinion that they are mere pawns, it is extremely difficult for them to face this dependence unmitigated. Society is made of those whom it comprises.** If the latter would fully admit their dependence on man-made conditions, they would somehow have to blame themselves, would have to recognize not only their impotence but also that they are the cause of this impotence and would have to take responsibilities which today are extremely hard to take. This may be one of the reasons why they like so much to project their dependence upon something else, be it a conspiracy of Wall Street bankers or the constellation of the stars. What drives people into the arms of the various kinds of "prophets of deceit" is not only their sense of dependence and their wish to attribute this dependence to some "higher" and ultimately more justifiable sources, but it is also their wish to reinforce their own dependence, not to have to take matters into their own hands – a wish, true, which is ultimately engendered by the pressure under which they live." (pg. 154-155)

- ◆ "Anyhow, the world appears to most people today more as a "system" than ever before, covered by an all-comprising net of organization with no loopholes where the individual could "hide" in face of the ever-present demands and tests of a society ruled by a hierarchical business set-up and coming pretty close to what we called "verwaltete Welt," a world caught by administration." (pg. 155)
- **"It is this reality situation which has so many and obvious similarities with paranoid systems of thinking that it seems to invite such patterns of intellectual behavior, as well as compulsive attitudes.** The similarity between the social and the paranoid system consists not only of the closedness and centralized structure as such but also of the fact that the "system" under which most people feel they work has to them an irrational aspect itself. That is to say, **they feel that everything is linked up with everything else and that they have no way out, but at the same time the whole mechanism is so complicated that they fail to understand its raison d'être and even more, they suspect that this closed and systematic organization of society does not really serve their wants and needs, but has a fetishistic, self-perpetuating "irrational" quality, strangely alienated from the life that is thus being structured.**" (pg. 155-156)
 - **"The system thus characterized, the "verwaltete Welt," has a threatening aspect per se.** In order to do full justice to such needs as the one satisfied by astrology, one has to be aware of the ever-threatening impact of society. **The feeling of being "caught," the impossibility for most people to regard themselves by any stretch of imagination as the masters of their own fate, is only one of the elements of this threat. Another one, more deep-lying both psychologically and sociologically, is that our social system, in spite of its closedness and the ingenuity of its technological functioning, seems actually to move towards self-destruction"** (pg. 156)
 - ◆ "The sense of an underlying crisis has never disappeared since the First World War..." (pg. 156)
 - ◇ "The more people profess official optimism, the more profoundly they are probably affected by this mood of doom, the idea, correct or erroneous, that the present state of affairs somehow must lead towards a total explosion and that the individual can do very little about it" (pg. 156-157)
- **"...astrology mirrors exactly the opaqueness of the empirical world** and implies so little transcendent faith, is so opaque itself that it can be easily accepted by supposedly sceptical, disillusioned people. The intellectual attitude it is expressive of is one of disoriented agnosticism. The cult of God has been replaced by the cult of facts, just as the fatal entities of astrology, the stars, are themselves viewed as facts, things, ruled by mechanical laws" (pg. 157)
 - "Auguste Comte's postulate that positivism should become a kind of religion is fulfilled ironically – **science is hypostatized as an ultimate, absolute truth.**" (pg. 157)
 - ◆ "...just as adherents of philosophical empiricism seem to be more susceptible for organized secondary superstition than speculative thinkers, **extreme empiricism, teaching absolute obedience of the mind to given data, "facts," has no principle such as the idea of reason, by which to distinguish the possible from the impossible,** and thus the development of enlightenment overreaches itself and **produces a mentality often no longer able to resist mythological temptations.** It may also be mentioned that the modern science, which has replaced more and more categories which once interpreted events as though they were meaningful, tends to promote a kind of opaqueness which at least for the uninitiated is hard to distinguish from an equally opaque and non-transparent thesis such as the dependence of the individual human fate on stellar constellations. **While the astrological way of thinking is indicative of a "disillusioned" world, it enhances disillusion by surrendering the idea of the human even more completely to blind nature than it actually is"** (pg. 158)
 - "The drabness of a commodity society which does not allow any quality to exist for its own sake, but levels down everything to a function of universal exchange seems to be unbearable and any panacea is embraced that promises to gild it. **Instead of the complicated, strenuous and difficult intellectual processes which might overcome the feeling of drabness by understanding what really makes the world so drab, a desperate short-cut is sought which offers both spurious understanding and flight into a supposedly higher realm"** (pg. 158)
 - ◆ **"...the mystery celebrated by astrology is empty** – the movements of the stars, supposedly explaining everything, explain nothing and even if the whole hypothesis were true it would have to be explained why and how the stars come to determine human life, an explanation that hasn't even been attempted by astrology. **A veneer of scientific rationality has been fused with blind acceptance of undemonstrable contentions and the spurious exaltation of the factual"** (pg. 159)
- "What is really happening is that, concomitantly with the ever-increasing belief in "facts," **information has a tendency to replace intellectual penetration and reflection"** (pg. 161)
 - "...there is, on the one hand, a wealth of material and knowledge, but the relationship is more one of formal order and classification than one which would open up the supposedly stubborn facts by interpretation and understanding" (pg. 161)
 - ◆ **"...astrology presents the bill for the neglect of interpretative thinking for the sake of fact gathering"** (pg. 161)
- **"Precisely this type, both sceptical and insufficiently equipped intellectually, a type hardly capable of integrating the various intellectual functions torn apart by the division of labor seems to be on the upsurge today"** (pg. 162)
- "Speaking in general terms, the astrological ideology resembles, in all its major characteristics, the mentality of the "high scorers" of the "Authoritarian Personality." It was, in fact, this similarity which induced us to undertake the present study." (pg. 163)
 - **"It offers the advantage of veiling all deeper-lying causes of distress and thus promoting acceptance of the given. Moreover, by strengthening the sense of fatality, dependence and obedience, it paralyzes the will to change objective conditions in any respect and relegates all worries to a private plane promising a cure**—all by the very same compliance which prevents a change of conditions. It can easily be seen how well this suits the over-all purpose of the prevailing ideology of today's cultural industry; to reproduce the status quo within the mind of the people" (pg. 164)
- "But just this sect-like character, the claim of something particular and apocryphal to be all-comprehensive and exclusive, is indicative of a most sinister social potential: the transition of an emasculated liberal ideology to a totalitarian one. Just as those who can read the phony signs of the stars believe that they are in the know, **the followers of totalitarian parties believe that their special panaceas are universally valid and feel justified in imposing them as a general rule"** (pg. 164)
 - **"...today's world, which offers such a strong reality basis for everybody's sense of being persecuted, calls for paranoid characters"** (pg. 165-166)
 - ◆ "Hitler was certainly psychologically abnormal, but **it was just this abnormality which created the spell** that allowed his success with the German masses. It may well be said that it is precisely the element of madness that paralyzes and attracts followers of mass movements of all kinds; a structure to which it is a corollary that people never quite fully believe what they pretend to believe and therefore overdo their own beliefs, prone to translate them into violent action at short notice." (pg. 166)
- "Perhaps it may be regarded as symbolic that, at the beginning of the era that seems to come to its end, **the philosopher Leibniz who was the first to introduce the concept of the unconscious,** was also the one who stated that, notwithstanding his tolerant and peaceable mind – he sometimes signed himself Pacidius – **he felt profound contempt only for those activities of the mind which aimed at deception** and named as the main example for such activities astrology." (pg. 166)

- These Against Occultism (pg. 172)
 - **"The tendency to occultism is a symptom of the regression in consciousness.** This has lost the power to think the unconditional and to endure the conditional. Instead of defining both, in their unity and difference, by conceptual labor, it mixes them indiscriminately. The unconditional becomes fact, the conditional an immediate essence" (pg. 172)
 - "The veiled tendency of society towards disaster lulls its victims in a false revelation, with a hallucinated phenomenon" (pg. 172)
 - **"The occultist draws the ultimate conclusion** from the fetish-character of commodities..." (pg. 173)
 - "Because objects have frozen in the cold light of reason, lost their illusory animation, the social quality that now animates them is given an independent existence both natural and supernatural, a thing among things" (pg. 173)
 - "By its regression to magic under late capitalism, thought is assimilated to late capitalist forms" (pg. 173)
 - "The hypnotic power exerted by things occult resembles totalitarian terror: in present-day processes the two are merged" (pg. 174)
 - **"Integration itself proves in the end to be an ideology for disintegration** into power groups which exterminate each other. He who integrates is lost." (pg. 174)
 - **"Occultism is a reflex-action to the subjectification of all meaning, the complement of reification.** If, to the living, objective reality seems deaf as never before, they try to elicit meaning from it by saying abracadabra. Meaning is attributed indiscriminately to the next worse thing: the rationality of the real, no longer quite convincing, is replaced by hopping tables and rays from heaps of earth. The ofal of the phenomenal world becomes, to sick consciousness, the *mundus intelligibilis*." (pg. 174)
 - The power of occultism, as of Fascism, to which it is connected by thought patterns of the ilk of anti-Semitism, is not only pathic. Rather, it lies in the fact that in the lesser panaceas, as in superimposed pictures, **consciousness famished for truth** imagines it is grasping a dimly present knowledge diligently denied to it by official progress in all its forms. It is the knowledge that society, by virtually excluding the possibility of spontaneous change, is gravitating towards total catastrophe." (pg. 174-175)
 - "Occultists rightly feel drawn towards childish monstrous scientific fantasies." (pg. 175)
 - "Superstition is knowledge, because it sees together the ciphers of destruction scattered on the social surface; it is folly because in all its death-wish it still clings to illusions: expecting from the transfigured shape of society misplaced in the skies an answer that only a study of real society can give." (pg. 175)
 - **"Occultism is the metaphysic of dunces"** (pg. 175)
 - "For occultists are practical folk. Not driven by vain curiosity, they are looking for tips" (pg. 177)
 - "The cardinal sin of occultism is the contamination of mind and existence, the latter becoming itself an attribute of mind. Mind arose out of existence, as an organ for keeping alive. In reflecting existence, however, it becomes at the same time something else. The existent negates itself as thought upon itself. Such negation is mind's element. To attribute to it positive existence, even of a higher order, would be to deliver it up to what it opposes." (pg. 178)
 - "In the concept of mind-in-itself, consciousness has ontologically justified and perpetuated privilege by making it independent of the social principle by which it is constituted. Such ideology explodes in occultism: it is Idealism come full circle. Just by virtue of the rigid antithesis of being and mind, the latter becomes a department of being." (pg. 178)
 - "The doctrine of the existence of the spirit [is] the ultimate exaltation of bourgeois consciousness..." (pg. 179)
 - "On this the occultists live: their mysticism is the enfant terrible of the mystical moment in Hegel. They take speculation to the point of fraudulent bankruptcy. In passing off determinate being as mind, they put objectified mind to the test of existence, which must prove negative. No spirit exists" (pg. 179)
- Research Project on Anti-Semitism: Idea of the Project (pg. 181)
 - "The purpose of this project is to show that **anti-Semitism is one of the dangers inherent in all more recent culture.**" (pg. 182)
 - **"The growing custom of suppressing important elements of the truth for so-called tactical reasons is taking on more and more dangerous traits.** It easily leads to an optimism which is satisfied to bask in general concepts such as the rights of man, progress, enlightenment, etc., without realizing that in the present phase of society these concepts tend to become mere phrases, just as the fascist advocates of persecution cynically charge." (pg. 182-183)
 - "As long as anti-Semitism exists as a constant undercurrent in social life, its influence reaches all groups of the population and it can always be rekindled by suitable propaganda." (pg. 183)

d. Further Readings:

- Psychoanalysis and the Occult, by G. Devereux
- The Causes of Anti-Semitism in the United States, by Lee J. Levinger